ISCTE ◈ Business School
Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

DIGITAL MARKETING: HOW THE BEAUTY MARKET HAS CHANGED WITH
THE EMERGENCE OF DIGITAL INFLUENCERS

Lorena Silveira Batista Genú

Dissertation submitted as a partial requirement for the conferral of
Master of Science in Management

Supervisor:
Prof. Susana Henriques Marques, ISCTE Business School,
Marketing, Operations and General Management Department

September 2019

DIGITAL MARKETING: HOW THE BEAUTY MARKET HAS CHANGED WITH
THE EMERGENCE OF DIGITAL INFLUENCERS

ISCTE ◇ Business School
Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

DIGITAL MARKETING: HOW THE BEAUTY MARKET HAS CHANGED WITH THE
EMERGENCE OF DIGITAL INFLUENCERS

Lorena Silveira Batista Genú

- Spine –

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*I want to start from thanking my supervisor, **Professor Susana Henriques Marques**, for all the support provided, availability, encouragement, guidance, and knowledge shared throughout this whole process.*

*A very special thank you to my lovely **family**, for always being on my side to support me and demonstrate the pride you have on me, for providing good energies and so much love, even at a distance. I love you all.*

*A genuine thank you to my **husband Gustavo**, who has always motivated me during all my path as a management student, for all the weekends and working days we spent together, still supporting each other, helping each other, encourage each other. You are my best friend and love of my life.*

*To my dear **friends**, thank you for supporting me and give me strength, and especially for your friendship.*

*Last but not least, the development of this dissertation was only possible with the participation and contribution of the **participants in this research** for their generosity and their time. I would like to express my genuine gratitude.*

Thank you for all!

SUMMARY

Digital influencers are now one of the primary sources of data to which customers turn when seeking advice and suggestions for pre-purchase in a globe characterized by intense competition. The growing power of digital influencers in the industries where they work can increasingly be realized. The brands should attract customers to their primary goal: sales growth. It is possible in many forms, but digital influencers are one of the most precious strategies. It is because digital influencers have a closer connection with clients. Thus, for instance, bloggers and YouTubers are anticipated to have the confidence of their followers, which is very difficult to hope from any other brand promoter. The ultimate objective of strategy type is to induce those followers to purchase their products and remain loyal to the brands.

In this context, this research seeks to define possible implications of the followers-blogger relationship on the buying conduct of followers of beauty bloggers. The goal is to formulate feasible theories from information observation using inductive reasoning and a methodology combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Although hard to assess, they proved to be a pushed source of data that every customer of cosmetics has in the account. Concerning purchase decisions, the more evident trend is the introduction of brands and new products. The latter has shown the marketing ability of bloggers to generate requirements. All the follower-blogger interaction improves the interest of followers in beauty products and thus boosts the number of products bought per year.

Keywords: Digital Influencers, Bloggers, Beauty Bloggers, Digital Marketing, Purchase intentions.

RESUMO

Os influenciadores digitais são agora uma das principais fontes de dados a que os clientes recorrem quando procuram aconselhamento e sugestões de pré-compra num globo caracterizado por uma concorrência intensa. O poder crescente dos influenciadores digitais nas indústrias pode ser cada vez mais percebido. As marcas devem atrair os clientes para sua meta principal: o crescimento das vendas. Isso é possível de muitas formas, mas os influenciadores digitais são uma das estratégias mais preciosas. Isso ocorre porque os influenciadores digitais têm uma conexão mais próxima com os clientes. Assim, por exemplo, bloggers e Youtubers devem ter a confiança de seus seguidores, o que é muito difícil de esperar de qualquer outro promotor de marca. O objetivo final dessa estratégia é induzir esses seguidores a comprar seus produtos e permanecerem leais às marcas.

Esta pesquisa busca definir possíveis implicações da relação seguidores-blogger na conduta de compra de seguidores de bloggers de beleza. Utilizando raciocínio indutivo e uma metodologia que combina métodos quantitativos e qualitativos, o objetivo é formular teorias viáveis a partir da observação da informação. Apesar de difíceis de avaliar, elas provaram ser uma fonte de dados que todo cliente de cosméticos tem em conta. No que diz respeito às decisões de compra, a tendência mais clara é a introdução de marcas e novos produtos. Este último tem mostrado a capacidade de marketing dos bloggers para gerar requisitos. A interação seguidor-blogger melhora o interesse dos seguidores em produtos de beleza e, assim, aumenta a quantidade de produtos comprados por ano.

Palavras-chave: Influenciadores Digitais, Blogs, Marketing Digital, decisões de compra, Intenções de compra.

"Opportunities don't happen. You create them."

Chris Grosse

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES:

LIST OF TABLES:

LIST OF GRAPHICS:

I - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Na primeira década dos anos 2000, a disseminação da tecnologia Internet 2.0 mudou profundamente a fabricação, o compartilhamento e o uso da informação (Dede, 2008). Blogs: diários online nos quais autores e leitores podem comentar, comunicar e criar comunidades livremente sobre qualquer tema imaginável, de profissional, tecnologia a comida, viagens, animais e política, estão no centro dessa transição (Blood, 2004; Reynolds, 2006).

Agora, os bloggers são uma das principais fontes de dados, para a qual os clientes procuram orientações e sugestões com antecedência. O crescente poder dos blogueiros nos mercados em que trabalham está se tornando cada vez mais aparente. Em questões de fama e poder, algumas celebridades são superadas pelos influenciadores digitais. Nos setores de moda e beleza, a prova é mais evidente, onde seu status crescente é mais perceptível: assentos para desfiles de alta moda na primeira linha, embaixadores da marca, imagens de campanhas, alianças de alta qualidade e produtos de luxo. Os bloggers de ambos os setores superam pessoas e marcas famosas. As marcas visam principalmente o aumento das vendas. Portanto, os clientes devem ser atraídos. É possível fazer isso em muitos aspectos, mas os blogueiros são benéficos. É porque os blogueiros têm uma conexão mais próxima com seus clientes. Os bloggers terão, portanto, a confiança de seus seguidores, o que é muito difícil de esperar de qualquer outra forma de promoção de marca. O objetivo final das marcas é que elas comprem seus produtos.

O objetivo desta pesquisa é detectar o impacto de bloggers do setor específico de cosméticos e beleza em seus seguidores no que diz respeito a variáveis influenciadas ou efeitos tangíveis ou mensuráveis. A decisão baseou-se na preocupação particular do autor, que se vê como um seguidor muito fiel e um entusiasta de cosméticos. O fascínio de como essa conexão pode ser construída sobre uma interação na tela, geralmente conduzida em uma direção, foi uma curiosidade que desencadeou o assunto. A tudo isso, acrescenta-se a relevância do mercado, que continuou a crescer a uma taxa média de 4,5% ao ano no início do século XXI (Lopaciuk & Loboda, 2013). Tendo em mente que o influenciador de beleza número um ganha entre US $ 40.000 e US $ 55.000 por mês (Montes, 2015), e outros bloggers de beleza também estão ganhando dezenas de milhares de dólares (Ledbetter, 2015), este setor está preparado para movimentar grandes quantidades de dinheiro e parece apropriado investigá-lo mais.

De fato, apenas os blogs de beleza considerados são levados em consideração durante esta pesquisa. A palavra "blog de beleza" nesta pesquisa é usada em qualquer conta do Facebook / Instagram / YouTube cujas postagens contêm principalmente conteúdo relacionado a tratamentos / serviços de beleza para cabelos / faciais / corpo, como cosméticos (cuidados com os cabelos, maquiagem, polimento de unhas, esfoliantes) esfoliação etc.) e outros itens de beleza.

Um método indutivo será usado para desenvolver a pesquisa. Há uma questão específica de estudos a esse respeito que será resolvida de pontos de vista distintos para alcançar a maior quantidade possível de resultados. As descobertas serão baseadas em padrões e especificidades de informações coletadas por pesquisas on-line e entrevistas profundas com mulheres.

A questão do estudo: o efeito sobre a conduta de compra dos seguidores da interação com os blogueiros de beleza tem como objetivo descobrir implicações práticas e ajustes à conduta de compra diretamente atribuível aos blogueiros. O objetivo não é dizer se é importante, é descobrir como, quem e quanto isso afeta. É particularmente curioso saber se os impactos são suficientes para fazer a diferença nas práticas de compra para induzir a compra de itens de marca de luxo. É fato que os dados são observados e o máximo possível de informações e conclusões extraídas.

O estudo está estruturado da seguinte forma: primeiro, é apresentada uma revisão da literatura para entender o que foi estudado, reunir resultados de outros estudos que podem ser utilizados como premissas e ampliar o conhecimento. Este capítulo inclui informações sobre a indústria do luxo, suas particularidades e individualidades de fragrâncias e cosméticos e informações sobre blogueiros, sua influência e função de marketing, fases de compra, entre outras. O segundo é delinear a estrutura de referência do estudo e a subparte da questão. Terceiro, descreve a metodologia. As técnicas utilizadas foram qualitativas e quantitativas. Quarto, os resultados de ambas as abordagens são apresentados em conjunto. Os resultados serão abordados e explicados. Finalmente, a conclusão resume as decisões e sugestões para futuras pesquisas.

II – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.   Customer behaviour

Comprehension of consumer behaviour can contribute to the success of the organization. Market leaders continually gather thoughts and analyse buyer behaviour patterns and buy decisions to evaluate future trends (Kumar, John & Senith, 2014).

The first thing that impacts the conduct and types of consumers is culture. According to Rai (2013), people acknowledge and have a strong view in their minds. There are several national and international brands. These perceptions are pinched in their minds because of their culture, lifestyles, and surroundings. Jawahar and Tamizhjyothi (2013) argue that attitudes are formed through experience and learning and that these attitudes can affect the buying of consumer behaviour.

"Identifying particular personality characteristics explain variations in buying, using, and disposing of customer behaviours" (Hoyer, 2010). Consumers need to meet and recognize several demands to comply with the conduct of the customer of the company.

2.2.   Purchasing decision

Purchasing intention refers to the willingness to purchase a particular brand or product (Belch *et al*., 2004). Purchasing intentions also show an individual purchasing a product's probability (Phelps and Hoy, 1996). In many previous studies, it has been used as a dependent variable (Goldsmith *et al*., 2000; Yi, 1990; Saliagas, 1987; Machleit and Wilson, 1988).

Kotler (2000) says that the behaviour of customers occurs when they are encouraged by internal factors and make buying choices based on their personal characteristics and also on the decision-making technique. These variables were included in the selection of a product, brand, distributor, timing, and quantity. Consumers who purchase are always conscious of customers ' value and perceived benefit, i.e., consumer perception of the benefits and value creation, and it is an essential key to client purchasing behaviour predictions. Monroe and Krishnan (1985) argued that purchasing intentions would be affected by the perceived cost and perceived quality and that the higher purchasing intent would be the higher the perceived value and quality.

In extremely involved shopping, the client can search and process all the available information, considering it carefully before buying a product. In general, marketers agree

that consumer choices are a continuing technique suggested by Solomon & Stuart (2000) to organize in five steps:
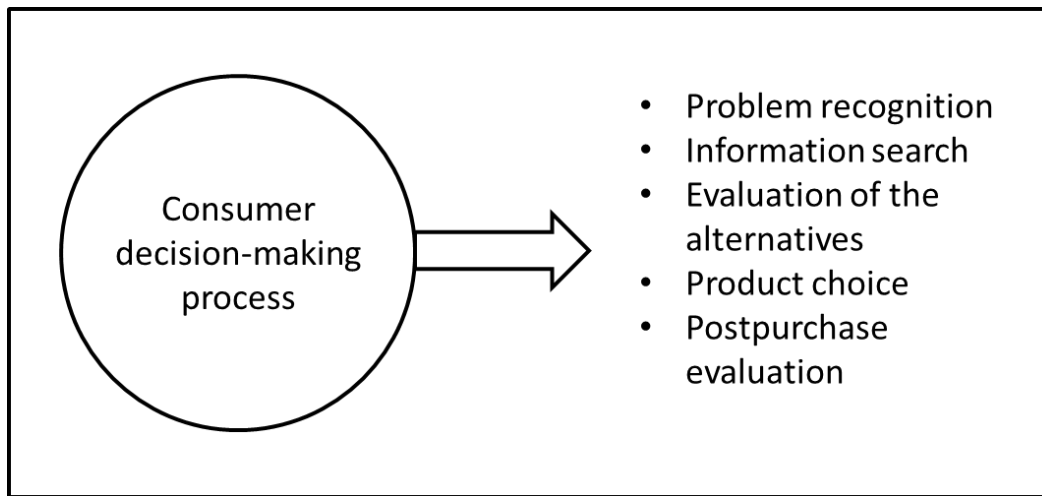
Figure 1: Steps in the consumer decision-making process. Self-constructed image, adapted from Lamb *et al*., 2004.

The five steps shown in the previous figure are a general method that forces the consumer to assess a purchase from product/service recognition. However, it does not assume that all consumer choices are to be made in order in all measures (Lamb *et al*., 2004). Each of these measures has now been discussed further.

2.2.1. *Problem recognition*

Helfer & Orsoni (1996) suggests if an individual is tense due to a difference between his or her aspirations and the situation in which he or she is in, the problem is acknowledged. In acceptance of issues, Solomon & Stuart (2000) acknowledged two separate circumstances: acknowledgment of opportunity and recognition of recognition need. Possibility is conceded when the ideal state is upward, usually when the individual is subjected to different or better-quality components. On the other side, it happens when, for example, the individual leaves a product or is not satisfied with his current situation.

2.2.2. *Information search*

According to Teixeira (2010), purchasing decisions are often made in the context of high uncertainty. Therefore, the client feels that policies must be established to reduce the

perceived risk. One way to decrease the possibility associated with purchasing choices is to search for data.

According to Solomon (2009), the search for information can be divided into two distinct types, internally and externally. Internal search occurs when the individual utilizes his/her memory and prior experience to examine different product alternatives. On the other hand, the external search includes collecting product or service information from reliable external sources, such as experts and leaders of view.

It is not always deliberate to search for information because clients are sometimes passively notified. At this stage, consumers will be subject to marketing, promotions, and several other techniques, even of brands or products that they are not interested in. It results in by-products that can be used or have an effect on future purchasing decisions (Solomon, 2010).

Once the need is acknowledged, the client undergoes a process of finding options to meet this need. It can be done internally, by scanning the memory to obtain previous or external experiences of the item, by insufficient prior understanding, and by increasing the risk of wrong purchasing choices. Key internal sources are private sources such as friends, family, and government, such as professionals.

2.2.3. Evaluation of the alternatives

After collecting all the required data, the customer will first identify a tiny amount of alternatives and lastly restrict his choices, selecting options that are deemed feasible based on evaluation criteria. Smenik and Bamossy (1996) consider the evaluation criteria of the consumer, functional product features (such as value and effectiveness, emotionally perceived satisfaction and prospective benefits resulting from the use of the product or service). Finally, customers will compare other options ' advantages and disadvantages. Given the increasing number of consumer choices, it may be complicated to assess alternatives. Sometimes the consumer is faced with hundreds of separate goods and even variations of the same products (Solomon 2010).

2.2.4. Product Choice

The client selects an alternative in this stage and acts accordingly (Solomon & Stuart, 2000). Kotler (2000) and Du Plessis *et al*. (1994) point out that the client chooses the most significant piece of information, whether internal or external, weighs down the

benefits of each item by choosing either to purchase or not, to delay or not to purchase that specific product.

There are many factors in the purchase choice. These include the item's cost concerning how much money the client can spend, family or colleague views, and the sales and services policies of the marketer. Before the shop, some customers may want to try out a product.

2.2.5. Post purchase evaluation

The purchase remains to be assessed and compared to its initial expectations in this final stage, and after customers have made buying decisions, and these evaluations have three possible outcomes (Li, 2004):

1. Perceived performance expectations leading to a neutral feeling;

2. Perceived issues exceed expectations, leading in favourable hopes and fulfilment disconfirmation; and

3. Perceived performance is lower than expected, resulting in harmful confusion and disappointment.

Consumers tend to evaluate their feelings against their expectations when performing a pick-up evaluation (Kotler 2000; Sheth and Mittal 2004). A good experience can lead to repeated buying while a deception can cause a delay in purchasing.

2.3. Communication

Keller (2001) described marketing communications as the resources that companies use to inform, influence, encourage, and–directly or indirectly–remind consumers of the brands. The author also specified that marketing communications represent a brand's voice, have the ability to associate a brand with a particular individual, place, experience, or thing, and may contribute to higher brand purchases and sustained consumer loyalty. For Keller, the effectiveness of marketing communication is influenced by changes in the characteristics of consumers (demographic, behavioural, etc.), aspects of the communication option itself (nature, brand message content, creative execution, etc.), situation factors, and consumer response (result associated with communication exposure). Marketing communications have the ability to inform prospective consumers about the service options, their availability, specific features, functions, and benefits for Lovelock and Wirtz (2007). The networking information and digitalization transforms

marketing communications into a wide variety of methods for connecting customers and brands. It is necessary to recognize digital "world" as a media setting as something that has distinctive features that differentiate it from traditional business settings in significant respects (Donna, Hoffman and Novak, 1997). The role of the media in marketing communications is translated from the implementation of message policies to a broader knowledge of consumers (Mulhern, 2009). Digital communication tools are any type of communication initiated by the marketing of brands used to communicate and interact with Internet users. The following table shows some examples of traditional digital communication tools used by brands nowadays:

Digital Communication tools	Defitinition	Author(s)
E-mail Marketing	E-mail marketing improves consumer engagement with the brand, increasing purchase intention and encouraging word-of-mouth suggestions. This increased participation has been demonstrated. As a result, effective delivery and open rates of the e-mail marketing campaign, link clicks and brand website traffic can be assessed. Using a permission-based e-mail database can be a valued CRM tool that allows companies to easily and cheaply obtain clients and enhance their customer relationship. Email allows marketers to interactively reach out to their customers with an extra channel to build greater brand identity and consumer loyalty.	Muller, B., *et al* (2008)
Online Brand Communities	A brand community refers to "a group of ardent consumers organized around the lifestyle, activities, and ethos of the brand". Strong brand communities are formed on the basis of understanding the individual and social needs of consumers, and connect consumers along these lines through affiliation with the brand itself. In order for a brand community to be a success – in that it elicits a high level of consumer loyalty, marketing efficiency, and brand authenticity – firms must incorporate brand communities into their overall business strategies, focus on engineering the community rather than building the brand, and allow community members to manage and control themselves, defining only the terms of participation (Fournier and Lee, 2009). Brand groups and online brand communities offer a platform for customers to share data and experience on a particular product or service that, in turn, offers vendors the opportunity to identify consumer needs and promote the participation of brand loyalty.	Casalo, L., Flavian, C., & Guinliu, M. (2008)
Social Media	While the use of social media, guerrilla tactics and experiential campaigns has become more widespread, best practices for the strategic implementation of these continuously evolving marketing tools and their integration into the IMC (Integrated Marketing Communications) strategy have not yet been clearly defined.	Casalo, L., Flavian, C., & Guinliu, M. (2008)
Search Engine optimization	Companies may use paid search advertising to pay for a search engine to serve text ads in response to certain generic or branded keywords. An analysis of website rankings and traffic, impressions, clicks, and referrals can measure the achievement of such a campaign, and these metrics are often easily made accessible through search engines themselves.	Rutz, O. & Bucklin, (2011)

Table 1: Digital Communication tools. Source: Author's own elaboration.

2.3.1. WOM Communication

According to Mowen & Minor (1998:491), Word-of-Mouth communication *refers to an exchange of comments, toughts, or ideas between two or more consumers, none of whom is a marketing source"*. Solomon (2009) defines it as product or service information that individuals transmit to other individuals.

This method of interaction is often referred to as one of the oldest and most effective types of advertising (Sirma, 2009) and has an extremely strong effect on consumer decision-making (Loudon & Bitta, 1988; Mowen & Minor, 1998; Goldenberg *et al*, 2001), affecting consumer attitudes and behavior (Brown & Reingen, 1987).

In the survey from Pruden & Vavra (2004), entitled controlling the Grapevine, 69 % of the interviewees affirmed that, over the course of a year, they relied on a personal recommendation to choose a restaurant, at least once. Interviewees also said to rely on friends to choose where to travel (36%) and to use referrals to decide on computer software and hardware (22%) (Solomon, 2009). Other research by Mowen & Minor (1998) found that the impact of WOM is two times that of radio ads, four times more effective than personal sales, and seven times more effective than newspapers and journals. In addition to traditional ads on all the markets in the sample, according to Razorfish (2015), customers view WOM with a greater importance.

According to Solomon (2010), WOM can get the attention of customers, and since information comes from someone the customer knows, it appears to be more private and trustworthy than messages coming from more structured marketing channels. Therefore, it is interesting to understand how consumers think about products and their personal experience of use. The following reasons were given by Solomon (2009):

- Consumers are very interested in a type of product or event they like to speak about;
- Consumers are knowledge about a product, using interaction as a way to demonstrate it to others;
- A consumer is genuinely concerned about others and wants to educate them to inform about a product.

WOM can be whether positive or negative can be WOM. Sirma (2009:8) describes Positive WOM as *"product-related information transmitted by satisfied consumers to others"* and is a possible result of a consumer's positive attitude towards brands. On the opposite, a negative WOM happens if an unsatisfied customer demonstrates his unhappiness about a product or service and is more heavily weighted than a neutral

WOM. Communication with WOM is negatively affected (Solomon, 2009; Mowen & Minor, 1998).

Research by Smith & Vogt (1995) has shown that negative WOM impacts the reputation of brands and advertising companies and affects the consumer's behavior and desire to purchase a product. Positive WOMs, by comparison, are increasing the likelihood that a customer will buy a certain item (Solomon, 2009). The importance of guidance on decision-making as a phenomenon of group pressure was also emphasized by Fitzsimons and Lehmann (2001). When buyers obtain a recommendation, then decide against it, the selection of the brand becomes less happy and more difficult.

Solomon (2009) indicates in a study that the effect of others ' views sometimes is greater than the individual's own beliefs (Myers & Robertson, 1999). In the above analysis "a better indicator of the purchase was the buyers ' estimation of what their mates wanted the furniture than what they thought of." (Solomon, 2009: 443).

2.4. Social Media and YouTube

Social media phenomenon started with the need for customers to communicate with affordable content and interact with it. Developing a comprehensive discussion system – Usenet (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Social media's first proof has been generated. But as we now know, social media was only developed with a notion of a social network. This concept is based on an internet platform that offers instant communication between users (Edosomwan *et al*., 2011). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define this as an app-based website that enables users to connect, invite friends to access these profiles, and interact with them via private data profiles.

In the 1990s, social networks began. Social networks such as SixDegrees, BlackPlanet, and Asian Avenue have been created in this decade, but niches have been targeted only (Edosomwan *et al*., 2011). Websites like Wikipedia, Friendster, MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn, Hi5, Twitter, and YouTube have encountered the real social networking boom in the last decade (Edosomwan *et al*., 2011).

As companies begin to understand the importance of the Internet as a key component of their communications plans, they are therefore starting to leverage more cost-effective and effective alternative marketing methods when engaging customers than traditional advertising channels. Social media power and sharing capacity come with web

availability. Thirty years ago, something important, excellent or bad was held in one country in this country; this is not so in today's technological landscape.

Over the years, many writers have created it clear from their point of perspective what social media is. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as a community of web-based applications that rely on and enable user-generated content to be developed and exchanged based on Web 2.0, and that may include text, audio, video, and networks in social media content. The first social media was Text, most of them in the form of web blogs. Blogs are the content posted on the user's website. These may include daily newspaper summaries, audio and visual content, such as pictures and videos attached. As Web 2.0 began to explode with the growth and improvement of technological tools and social media is the fruit of the Web itself that started to acquire more impact over the millennia. Soon a lot of social networks emerged and it was adopted by the masses. People were amazed that it was so easy to communicate with friends or family. They were surprised. Mangold and Faulds (2009) argue that social media has been a major factor in influencing various client behavioral aspects such as awareness, data acquisition, opinions, attitudes, procurement behavior, and communication and post-acquisition evaluation. Development of social media has had a profound impact on how client businesses communicate with their audiences. Baines (2010) has observed a reduction in the amount of traditional media over the past several years and an increase in the amount of electronic and social media. That's why we see a lot of interactivity with organizations and their internet consumer base.

Currently, social networks like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are one of the most prevalent internet networks. Social networks that are usually component of social media have become a means of communicating with each other, of creating and sharing content, of promoting one another and one's companies, and of benefiting the user for many other purposes. While websites such as Twitter have a maximum number of characters that you can use in a — tweeting the web, which is 140 characters, there is no limitation on user feedback from other places, such as Facebook and Instagram. Instagram is just for sharing pictures and videos. The video function's time limit is 15 seconds. The brands around the world are used with all these famous networks to promote their products and create as much brand awareness as possible. For watching, watching profiles, writing comments, and reading, there are other interesting characteristics accessible.

Video sharing sites like YouTube allow users to upload and share videos online. Users can also develop their own YouTube channel, where all videos can be stored under one

paraglider. All these users of social media or clients produce content that drives a lot of internet traffic at such places. The monologs of broadcast media, so to speak, are usually converted into social media in social media channels, to be so to many.

According to Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, and Shapiro (2012), "Web 2.0 can be thought of as the technical infrastructure that enables the social phenomenon of collective media and facilitates consumer-generated content. The latter is distinguished by the difference in focus: social media can be thought of as focusing on content, and consumer generation on the creators of that content. Web 2.0 enables the creation and distribution of the content that is social media".

2.4.1. Social Media as a tool of Marketing Communication

The main changes caused by developments in new technologies (mainly the broad world web) challenge traditional marketing communication (Schultz, 2001). The creation of interactive systems that enable businesses and clients to interact directly, according to Schultz (2001), has forced many companies to adopt a two-way plan. On the one hand, it will deliver the message through traditional channels of communication. On the other hand, these companies are simultaneously creating a distinct message program through the latest communication tools that cover the global web.

The fundamental idea that comes to mind when we talk about the "world of online and offline" is "mixed marketing." Mixed marketing is a marketing method that incorporates both traditional and digital marketing and takes advantage of both, according to Dionísio *et al*. (2009).

The world is continuously changing, and the conduct of consumers is changing. Therefore, brands should comply with customer demands and adapt their business strategy. We live in a digital age where branded tools and strategies changed as social media evolved (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2015; Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Against this background, it is understandable that many marketers have already been exposed to social media in their embedded marketing communications (IMC), a strategy of effective communication with their goals (Batra and Keller 2016; Hoffman and Fodor 2010; Edosomwan *et al*. 2011).

Social media enables data to be disseminated faster so that customers can look up, pick, and purchase products from businesses around the world (Vinerean *et al*., 2015).

These internet platforms lead from the growth of traditional marketing for advertising (Zhang and Lin, 2015; Brien, 2010; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) and that is why, by changing one-way communication to two-way and peer-to-peer (Mangold and Faulds, 2009; Deighton and Grayson, 1995), companies aim not only to transfer information to clients but also to be more engaging and comparatively interconnected.

Brands invest heavily in social media since they are a privileged channel of communication to reach current and potential customers (Langaro *et al.*, 2015) by enabling in-time conversations or physical barriers in traditional forms of real-world communication (Zhang and Lin, 2015; Muntinga *et al.*, 2011). It promotes an increased sense of intimacy to foster and maintain the link between the different parties: consumer and consumer (Zhang and Lin 2015; Vinerean *et al.* 2013; Mangold and Faulds 2009). It encourages the consumer-consumer link. It also generates income and revenue (Hollebeek 2014; Kunz and Hakworth 2011; Kasavana *et al.* 2010 in Zhang and Lin 2015) and strengthens customer loyalty and satisfaction.

2.4.2. *Types of Social Media*

In addition to social networks, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) also outlined other types. The two main elements of social media were categorized as classifications, self-presentation/self-disclosure, and social presence/media wealth. Six different types of social media were described by these dimensions, as shown in Figure 2.

		Social presence / Media richness		
		Low	Medium	High
Self-presentation / Self-disclosure	High	Blogs	Social networking sites	Virtual social worlds
	Low	Collaborative projects	Content communities	Virtual game worlds

Figure 2: Platform types for Social Media. Self-constructed image, adapted from Kaplan and Haenlein (2010).

2.5. Digital Marketing

Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (Lazarsfield *et al.*, 1948) were the first to investigate opinion-makers and executives at the moment dominated by powerful media and mass society theories. A leader in perspective can be defined as someone who integrates a

group and has the ability to impact other opinions through a two-stage communication. The information flows from the media through two stages of the communication stream to viewers who interpret the texts and offer to mean to the less active individuals for whom they affect (Lazarsfeld *et al*., 1948) and then communicate them. It implies that individuals are more dependent on interpersonal communication than on media messages, thereby enhancing the power of word-of-mouth communication and vision leaders. Katz and Lazarsfeld (1966) later suggested that a person's membership in distinct social groups impacts procedures of decision-making rather than mass media information. This showed that the public could not be treated as a homogeneous public that replied to a written report in a uniform manner, in turn destroying the concept that society would be an irrational mass of individuals that could easily be persuaded and controlled by scheduled mass communication (Weimann, 1994).

According to Katz (1957), opinion leaders share different elements, which are divided into three dimensions: (i) "which one is" – personality or values held by the individual; (ii) "what one knows" – the expertise or degree of knowledge the individual has regarding a certain product or issue; (iii) "whom one knows" – the number of contacts the individual has as part of their circle of friends and acquaintances (Katz, 1957). Combining these features with behaviors leads to an individual who helps attract other attention to a particular issue or product while at the same time stating how others should respond or act (Katz, 1957). Cosmas & Seth defined a sequence of features that characterize a vision leader in 1980, as indicated in figure 3:

1.	Enjoys life	13.	Has all around knowledge
2.	Has common sense	14.	Evaluates you fairly
3.	Utilizes you to test his or her ideas	15.	Is available when you need him or her
4.	Motivates you to follow his or her ideas	16.	Looks like you
5.	Does not care what social group you associate with	17.	Expresses empathy towards others; identifies with them
6.	Belongs to the same social group as you do	18.	Is wealthy
7.	Can easily evaluate you for what you are	19.	Is mature
8.	Has high degree of professionalism	20.	Makes you follow rules; enforces norms on you
9.	Has strong opinions on many	21.	Quite experienced about life
10.	things Is not modest	22.	Likes to give advice so others will do those things he or she is afraid to do
11.	Is down to earth, practical or pragmatic, not pretentious	23.	Not afraid to give an opinion
12.	Gets jealous of other opinion leader	24.	Does not stand out in a crowd

Figure 3: Attributes of Opinion Leadership. Self-constructed image, adapted from Cosmas and Seth (1980).

Weiman (1994) suggests the effect of opinion leaders can be accomplished through instruction and advice, a role model that can be imitated, persuaded or persuaded by others to influence or spread the concept through the sender and receiver without any intention of effect (Weimann 1994). This is a situation in terms of the impact and intentional attempts of opinion leaders.

2.5.1. Digital Marketing "tools"

Bloggers are the most important influencers in the beauty market, according to the recent studies from Fashionbi (Leggat, 2016). As measurements of the scope of this persuasion, we have the more than 30 million combined listeners following the number one influencer (Yuya) and the 40% click-through rate power of the second largest influencer (Zoella) – 40% of individuals reading a post where she mentions a product actually go and visit the website of the brand for that item (Fashion Business Intelligence, 2016).

Their range of impact plus the fact that they constitute customers ' preferred source of data makes bloggers an outstanding "marketing tool" for brands. Bloggers play a marketing function by spontaneously carrying and recommending products, by reviewing what they are receiving from brands, or by complying efficiently with a partnership. This effective advertising resulting from the connection that followers develop with bloggers is essential to explore as a fresh "instrument" for digital marketing (Leggat, 2016).

For this reason, brands have begun settling contracts and alliances with bloggers that go beyond merely sending products to their homes. "Marketers should use these social media celebrities to influence and endorse their products," as stated by Bishop (2016). And this is exactly what they have been doing.

Many companies are now promoting their products through bloggers to take advantage of the outrageous (sometimes millions) quantity of followers they have. Beauty brands have been more involved in digital instruments for this purpose (King, 2016). Brands have grasped that bloggers have the most significant impact in the present days and are the fresh approach to marketing (Deo, 2015).

In order to achieve the ideal match with the targeted profiles, there are even networks working on linking these bloggers with the products. For instance, Guerlain used this service to partner with various influencers to reach a wider audience (King, 2016). But associations went far beyond paying for product placement and reached levels as recruiting bloggers for roles within the companies of beauty products. An instance of this is the situation of Lisa Eldridge hired as the Lancôme Make-up's new worldwide creative director. It is one of the ways to incorporate the group of bloggers that began to participate in the process of product development (Tyrimou, 2015). Other beauty influencers in this community are the entrepreneurs, producing products under their brand or in cooperation with brands. Jaclyn Hill "Champagne Pop" illuminator in collaboration with Becca (Bousquet, 2015), Camila Coelho's "NightLife" collection of 8 Sigma Beauty goods (Sigma Enterprises, 2016) and Huda Kattan's own brand "HudaBeauty" – Examples of this trend are the same blog name – including eyelids, henna tattoos and, more lately, lip contour pencils (Ghanem, 2016).

The Internet and Web 2.0 offer brands more opportunities for new, exciting, and more effective ways of reaching and influencing their consumers (Marken, 2007). Social media evolution has led in the democratization of corporate communications, with power shifting from advertising departments to opinions of individuals and organizations who like or dislike, comment and share content (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy &

Silvestre, 2011; Dann & Dann, 2011). The social landscape of the internet has converted the ordinary one-to-many media monolog into a multitude of dialogues. Social media has become a consumer product more and more (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger & Shapiro, 2012). The fresh fuel and front line of customer-company interactions have become online discussions. Levine, Locke, Searle & Weinberger (2011) even describe conversations as "new products" that form part of a marketplace of organisations that are continually pitching one another. As social media growth offers excellent opportunities to interact with clients, Mangold and Faulds (2009) advocated long-term social media inclusion into a company's vital marketing communication policy.

The world has 3.9 billion internet users, according to Internet World Statistics, up 976.4 percent since 2000 as of June 2017. Therefore, it is no surprise that businesses are investing in strategies for digital marketing to reach clients more efficiently. Forrester reports: Digital publicity spending will reach $119 billion between 2016 and 2021 by 2021 and a composite annual growth rate of 11% between 2011 and 2017. Besides, digital marketing offers consumers the benefit of efficiency, convenience, richer information, more participatory information, a wide range of products, competitive pricing, cost reduction and a range of products (Bayo-Moriones and Lera-López, 2007). Instead, marketing is now a brand-audience two-way technique (Drury, 2008).

2.6.   Influencer Marketing

A change in consumer decision-making and purchasing procedures is facing the new, nearly linked, and tech-driven world. While clients visit the internet to assist them in making choices or even form views, over 90% of worldwide internet consumers trust gained media, while only 33% trust online banner advertisements (Nielson, 2012). Consumers shape their own beliefs through information they get from a vast selection of online and offline platforms and by focusing on just what they want, customers don't succumb to promotions the way they used to, or the way brands think they used to (Edelman, 2016). Besides, individuals often use mobile devices when looking for something that contributes to a higher predisposition to be affected and involved. Ninety percent of mobile-first customers are agnostic brands, while 73 percent of mobile-first customers make the most advantageous choice on a brand basis (Solis, 2017). It is where there is a central place of impact. Brands are prepared to absorb customers when they are more susceptible to impressions by investing in campaign-oriented programs, identifying

the correct influencers, and promoting strategic and high-quality content with influencer commitment (Solis, 2017).

AdBlock is currently another enormous problem scenario that brands face when they want to achieve their target audience effectively. The Influencer Marketing created a new channel to connect more directly, organically and on a scale with customers in their daily life, so they began using Social Media as a strategy to better attract and maintain their target audience (Adweek, 2015).

Social Media Influencers can increase e-WOM throughout their posts, messages and videos on their own social media profiles by depicting a sort of third-party endorsement that forms audience attitudes (Freberg, Graham, & McGaughey, 2010). Truthfulness and honesty with supporters is not only the main component in promoting brand loyalty, but also feeds on the social power and credibility of influencers (Buyer, 2016).

Strictly speaking, companies do not need to force-feed advertising material to their target audiences by investing in social media influencers and are still able to promote their products or services through someone who is followed daily by a niche of individuals.

2.6.1. Digital Influencer

As a digital influencer (Uzunoglu and Kip, 2014), the evolution of traditional opinion-makers, someone who transmits a message to a broader crowd in social media is seen. The Web 2.0 era describes the opinion maker or leader as someone who has excellent ability to impact customer opinions, behaviours and values and reaches masses of individuals through blogs and social networks (Acar and Polonsky, 2007).

Instead, it is regarded that digital influencers are accessible, trustworthy, intimate, and easy to handle (Abdin, 2016). Influences marketing optimizes the message and makes it available to the broader public, strengthened only by an influencer (Duncan & Nick, 2008). Consumers view the brand or product according to the impact of the influencer, and even specific features can be embraced in an attempt to be like the individual of influence (Kelman, 1961).

Also, companies depend on digital influencers for their online networking followers, generating brand awareness, supporting and mitigating the risk of buying the product (Chatterjee, 2011). In this sense, the empirical research by Chatterjee (2011) recognized measurable influencers and the features of brand messages that can boost recommendation visitors and referrals to social media networks in a company website: (i)

consumer-generated brand messages are significantly more likely to be recommended; (ii) social network users are less likely to recommend brand messages; (iii) a higher share of company posts is more likely to generate referral visits on the company's website. Cosmetics are defined as *preparations applied to improve appearance*. The term had its origin in the 17th century to refer to "*the art of beautifying the body*." Make-up, in turn, is defined as a cosmetic applied to the face to "*enhance or alter the appearance*" (Oxford University Press, 2019).

2.6.1.1. Social Media Influencers

Social media influencers have established a "significant network of follow-up individuals," crediting SMIs as trusted opinion leaders (De Veirman *et al*., 2017). When influencers spread brand texts, it enables to reveal the brand message to consumers not receiving direct brand updates and influencers associated with the brand message (Araujo, Neijens, & Vliegenthart, 2017). Besides, there is an agreement in the literature that opinion seeking plays a significant part in pre-purchase information gathering, as customers seem to be more confident than traditional advertising, mainly family and friends (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996; Roelens, Baecke, & Benoit, 2016). Also, influencers appear to be more available, believable, intimate and more natural to relate than mainstream celebrities due to sharing private life information with their supporters and interacting with them almost immediately (Schau & Gilly, 2003).

The connection between influencers and their supporters is comparable and robust, like a word-of-mouth connection, according to Colliander and Dahlér (2011). Like other WOM approaches, the main factor is to identify an appropriate influencer (Araujo *et al*., 2017) that his audience likes to endorse branded products. The amount of supporters is one of the most commonly used measures to define influencers (De Veirman *et al*., 2017; Liu *et al*., 2015; Roelens *et al*., 2016). The influencer, however, must take into account that his/her testimonials will be permanently available on the internet and spread to an unlimited number of people the influencer may not know (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004). Compared to traditional media with eWOM, the efficacy of influencer messages arises from two points. The first is the relationship between the influencer and the proposed brand, and the second is the credibility of the influencer (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011). Another significant element to be listed is SMI's business viability, which depends on self-branding and micro-celebrity procedures, which are replicable but at the same

moment hard to accomplish because it requires consistency (Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2017). Furthermore, a personal brand is "any well-known person who is the topic of marketing communications attempts" (Thomson, 2006), adding to the equilibrium of their crowd. While private blogs and sites assist in building a solid online identity, social media platforms like Instagram assistance spread their message faster, where recognition and reward are determined by others (Khamis *et al*., 2017).

All in all, brands provide significance and values for the character of customers as a symbolic resource for building and maintaining identity. Consumption, therefore, has a symbolic significance, be it conscious or unconscious (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998). Elliot also relates to lived experience as the practical operations and face-to-face encounters that are taken as fact in our daily life.

Given the literature review undertaken, modern study lags in its entirety behind the assessment of the Phenomenon of Social Media Influencers. Partly owing to the scheduling difficulty of scholars in matching the rapid pace of change in company practices today, there is a wide gap between present company practices and the recent research status quo.

2.7. Bloggers' influence on purchase intention

As the intention to purchase is defined before the actual decision, this means that each activity involved in the process plays a role in influencing the intention to purchase during the pre-purchase phase. As an important source of information, bloggers have their quota. Gastronomy sector has already shown that bloggers are causing their followers to taste intentions (Wang, 2011). Recognized to have a powerful marketing capability, companies want bloggers to promote their products and/or support them through their blogs in the ad format. It has also been discovered that purchasing intent is explained by browsing products in a blog in a fashion context (Vineyard, 2014). In fact, bloggers are responsible for influencing the purchasing intentions of their supporters (During, 2012).

Buying intentions are considered to be a good predictor of effective buying (Vineyard, 2014). That's why brands bet as influencers of these intentions on bloggers. If the plan to buy has an impact on consumers ' actual decision of purchase, then promoting their products through them is in the complete interest of the brands.

Customer attitude and internal variables assessment contribute to the purchasing intention and are critical to predicting customer behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen how5). Buying

intentions can assess the likelihood of a client buying a product, and the higher the willingness of the consumer to buy a good is (Dodds *et al*., 1991; Schiffman and Kanuk, 2000). In collections, options assessments, and decision-making processes, consumers will follow their understanding, preferences, and internal environment (Zeithaml, 1988; Dodds *et al*., 1991; Schiffman and Kanuk, 2000; Yang, 2009).

2.8.   Luxury definition and analysis

From Latin, Luxury means pomp, excess, luxury, vicious indulgence (Skeat, 1888, p. 346); luxury denoted lust, lasciviousness until the 19th century; and is currently referred to as "the state of great comfort or elegance" or as "an inessential, desirable item that is expensive or difficult to obtain" (Oxford University Press, 2019).

If a word has a different significance from the relevant variables around the situation and the speaker, it is luxury. That is why there is no consensus, and there are several definitions. The word shows relative in this sense. Essential things vary from one individual to another, what is costly for another may be deemed cheap, and individuals are different in terms of perceptions of ordinary and extravagant things. It is all connected to different kinds of relativity: regional, temporal, financial, cultural, and situational (Heine, 2012, p. 45).

The guidance on defining luxury which reduces the relativity as mentioned earlier is: to consider a comprehensive view, to disregard the national issues, to take account of the meaning of the fields under development and the social and economic average levels of the regions under construction. Heine's definition (2012) of luxury is: *"Luxury is anything that is desirable and which exceeds necessity and ordinariness. As a general rule, this is defined from a global perspective, for the present and normal conditions. While the entire society evaluates the exclusivity of resources, the desirability of resources and the appearance of luxury are determined by the upper class".*

On the other hand, Bastien and Kapferer (2013) base the difference in meaning on the use of the term. They differentiate between the six senses. "*Luxury*" means inaccessible goods, services, and lives; "*my luxury*", which is personal and usual, not out-of-reach, but unusual, practice or time; "*a luxury*" evoking something extremely desired but not necessary, a hedonistic experience leading to prestige and status; "*luxury sector*" representing brands and businesses seen by colleagues as selling luxury goods or service are Professional Syndicates; "*luxury market*" refers to the complete revenues of luxury

acting businesses, different from luxury brands; and "*luxury strategy*" which relates to the business model.

2.8.1. *Luxury products*

Investigation results show that costumers relate a high level of six major characteristics with luxury products. These characteristics are price, quality, aesthetics, rarity, extraordinariness, and symbolism. From the managerial view, a luxury product is the one that exceeds the limits of what is necessary and ordinary (Heine, 2012). Clarifying, in order to prevent challenging what has already been mentioned, these goods represent the best of their category not only by surpassing – not being at the highest point, but going beyond – the characteristics of others, but also because they have symbolic significance, they are familiar and exceptional (the last three characteristics of luxury connected with clients) which are scarce features of the upper class.

A luxury product is then a movable asset, branded, private owned, and for sale in a B2C market (Heine, 2012). Its physical characteristics, features, and functional value are mainly of objective analysis, whereas any kind of emotion triggered in an individual, and the relevance and status perceived by society are truly subjective. All the spheres – material, individual, and social – are still context-dependent (Loureiro, 2014).

2.8.2. *Luxury brands*

     "There is no luxury without brands" (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009).

A product may well be exceptional in terms of its entirety, but what allows customers to perceive a meaning, to connect it with a dream, to discover a value that goes beyond its functionality and therefore classify it as a luxury item is a brand.

Indeed, diamonds are the only product that is inherently luxurious. These need to be invaluable in no way to any branding (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). For the remainder, luxury branding is available. Like all else in luxury, the "regulations" for defining a luxury brand, and the guidelines for managing it differ from natural products.

Luxury brands can be defined just like these *"associated with products which exceed what is necessary and ordinary compared to the other products of their category"* (Heine, 2012) or from a financial perspective as those "*which price/quality ratio is the highest in the market"* (Nunes de Almeida, 2013). However, we would make the brand of luxury dependent upon the product of luxury, and this is not how it operates. The brand has a

distinctive character and identity. This identity is passed to the customers and ultimately, to the consumers (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009).

There are several sources of identity for brands in general, and there are some particularly related to or more relevant for the luxury world. First of all, a luxury brand is generally named after its founder, who is sometimes mystified (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). As so, the brand carries its founder's legacy and holds this person as the main character of the storytelling, as a reference for inspiration and personality traits. Second, there is a country or place of origin. It determines the culture of the brand, which linked to its geographic and historical roots (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Being also a source of inspiration, it gives more than that to a brand as it influences the perception of the clients. There are countries which are naturally related to luxury due to their history (as France and Italy) and particular craftsmanship abilities (shoemaking, leather accessories manufacturing, etc.). In this manner, when a brand has one of those nations or areas as its origin, it is immediately connected with quality. These two factors are the significant definers of the brand identity, making of a luxury brand a unique and incomparable entity (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). All the products under a luxury brand can be considered luxury products in the sense that they are luxury-branded products, even though not all of them have necessarily to be luxurious (Heine, 2012).

Given all those mentioned above, the luxury brand and its identity is the base for all the individual and social perceptions of status, hierarchy, power, wealth, sophistication, etc. It is the image in the consumers' – and non-consumers' – mind, a social indicator (Heine, 2012; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). This leads to particularity in luxury management: a luxury brand should be recognized, known, wanted by much more people than the actual target and clients. The objective is always to maximize awareness and minimize access. In this way, the luxury brand can effectively work as a wealth sign and creates social distance (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009).

There are several identification sources for brands in particular, and some are mainly linked to or more relevant to the luxury globe. First of all, a luxury brand is usually named after its founder, sometimes mystified (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). As such, the brand bears the legacy of its founder and retains that person as the primary character of storytelling as a reference for inspiration and personality traits. Second, there is the nation or location of origin. It determines the brand culture related to its geographical and historical backgrounds (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Being also a source of inspiration, it provides more than that to a brand as it affects customer perception. Some nations are

naturally linked to luxury owing to their history (such as France and Italy) and specific skills in craftsmanship (shoemaking, manufacturing leather accessories, etc.). In this way, if a brand has any of those countries or regions of origin, it is immediately linked to quality. These two variables are the principal definers of brand identity, making a luxury brand a distinctive and incomparable entity (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). All products under a luxury brand can be regarded as luxury products in the sense that they are luxury branded products, although not all of them necessarily have to be luxurious (Heine, 2012). Given all of the above, the luxury brand and its identities are the basis for all personal and social views of status, hierarchy, authority, wealth, sophistication, etc. It is the picture in the mind of customers–and non-consumers–a social signal (Heine, 2012; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). This leads to a peculiarity in luxury leadership: a luxury brand should be acknowledged, known, wanted by far more individuals than the real goal and customers. The goal is always to maximize consciousness and minimize access. In this manner, the luxury brand can operate efficiently as a sign of riches and create social distance (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009).

2.8.3. Luxury and internet

The use of social media in the luxury beauty sector has triggered many heated discussions as it is seen as a type of interference with the exclusivity of luxury brands by restricting the physical and sexual contact between brand and client.

The increase in the standard of living and consumer education about products has resulted in the democratization of what was initially considered the most expensive goods (Garland, 2008). Also, globalization has led to an enhanced level of competition, leading businesses to develop more exclusive products to distinguish from each other (Vickers & Renand, 2003). Many companies strive to add value to their brand by merely incorporating the word "luxury" or expanding their product portfolio with a luxury range, while others have developed a genuinely luxury-oriented brand as their fundamental company proposition.

Kapferer & Bastien (2009), make clear that the relationship between luxury brands and the internet should solely regard communication. They oppose the idea of online distribution as a natural extension of regular stores, even arguing that luxury products lose their status once online available for sale. The arguments include the lack of personal contact, which is essential in luxury. Also, selling products online would give everyone

first access to them and to information like prices, which reduces the value of the brand and jeopardizes all the effort put on strategic and very exclusive locations for the brick and mortar stores.

This struggle of luxury brands with eCommerce is known and has been long discussed. Anyhow, all brands have had to surrender. The correct way to do it, as Kapferer & Bastien (2009) also suggest, is introducing it accordingly to luxury rules, this is, maximizing awareness but still restricting access. In this case, what is observed is that on luxury brands websites, one can only find the products categorized before as accessible. For example, if accessing the Chanel website, one can confirm that the online store only comprises perfumes, make-up, and skincare products (Chanel, 2016).

2.9. Beauty Market

Cosmetics as products are consumer goods with a wide variety and a significant effect on the retail industry. Cosmetics range from high-end high-fashion products to private label supermarkets for "food" and from specialized fashionable specialty retailers to regular general retailers. Cosmetics markets are constantly and rapidly growing.

2.9.1. The opportunity of Beauty Market

The beauty sector around the world is usually divided into five main segments of the business: skincare, haircare, color (make-up), fragrances, and toiletries. These segments are complementary and, through their diversity, can meet all consumer needs and expectations for cosmetics. Beauty products can also be divided into premium and mass production segments depending on the brand prestige, price, and distribution channels used. Lopaciuk and Loboda (2013) show that 72% of cosmetic sales consists of solids and that 28% contributes to other renowned products.

The positioning of the brand relies on the success and failure of the company. Beauty marketers are continually finding ways to introduce their customers to new and innovative products. They also concentrate on generating the most appealing and appealing ads to attract more and more customers. They can attract customers by providing the best services and ensuring high-quality cosmetic products (Xu Yang, 2012).

III – METHODOLOGY

This study's strategy is an inductive method. Its aim is not to prove/refute the findings or hypotheses of the past research, but rather to "create empirical generalizations." The objective is to formulate valid general results that require a complete response to the research problem, including as much comprehensive data as possible (Research Methodology, 2019).

It involves understanding the influence of beauty bloggers on the buying conduct of supporters and the effect of their buying practices, intentions, and choices. Although many things are already satisfied, there are still many other things to be defined. The objective is to explain the authority of beauty bloggers, not only as of the reason for buying or not buying a specific item but also as the reason for changing the quantity/type/price/place/brand of the bought cosmetic products. As a result, it will be feasible to evaluate the position of beauty bloggers for luxury branded products and if followers are more comfortable purchasing these when following suggestions from bloggers. Therefore, since this thesis does not present a particular business issue (case-study) nor does it offer an innovative project and neither does it study a specific subject within a specific company, this thesis reflects a traditional dissertation.

A blended approach to methods was chosen to achieve this objective. This approach requires both quantitative and qualitative methods to be integrated into the same research (Wisdom & Creswell, 2013). As a result, it was decided to create an internet distributed questionnaire that would allow for exploratory data analysis and conduct individual in-depth interviews that provide an open subjective response for qualitative analysis (Research Methodology, 2019). The results would, therefore, complement each other.

Indeed, most of the drawbacks of quantitative analyzes are the benefits of qualitative analyzes (some of which are described in the following sections) and vice versa. Because of this, the information collected through the two approaches would combine the best of both worlds. In cases such as the one in this study, where both methods are perfectly applicable, a qualitative and quantitative approach should be considered complementary (Jick, 1979). In reality, qualitative data is anticipated to enrich, examine, and clarify quantitative outcomes (Better Evaluation), which is highly essential in an inductive method, using both techniques. It would also be feasible to triangulate with findings from both approaches. It comprises of merging distinct technologies in original research (Denzin, 1978; Jick, 1979) to verify one of them's outcomes with the other's issues. It was

chosen in both instances to evaluate only females as they constitute the clear majority of followers of beauty bloggers as well as the most substantial portion of consumers of cosmetics and make-up products.

Generally speaking, this chapter is meant to explain how this investigation is performed, namely on the questions related to the methods of investigation and also on the sample-related questions. To achieve the goals previously described without sacrificing or contesting the research findings, the tools used in this research are listed in more detail.

3.1.   Research questions

As could be observed in the literature review, adherents trust the bloggers that they follow and are relying on their suggestions. The Bloggers are even considered to be the most significant influencers in the beauty industry (Leggat, 2016). Because of this, brands are in every manner in line with them to enjoy the close relationship between beauty bloggers/influencers and clients.

The literature review also clearly showed that luxury products compete directly with the premium brands in this sector - "cosmetics and fragrances" (Heine, 2012). Product-specific characteristics and market characteristics require a specific business model and a personalized luxury approach that introduces premium strategies such as brand ambassador (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). However, the techniques used to relate to beauty bloggers lagged behind premium brands. Besides, the products considered (cosmetics, make-up) do not precisely fit the general definition of the luxury product, as not all features (no scarcity, no exclusive allocation etc.) are found. As a result of all this, it is tough for regular customers to realize the distinctions between luxury and premium.

Therefore, the overall purpose of this research is to know the impact of beauty blogger on the buying conduct of followers. This involves the influence on your buying habits, intentions, and choices. Although many things are sure, many other things still have to be defined. The objective is not only to explain the authority of beauty bloggers to purchase or not to purchase one item but also to modify the quantity/price/brand of cosmetic goods bought. In this way, the role of beauty bloggers for luxury branded products can be assessed, and if supporters are more comfortable with the suggestions of the bloggers.

Furthermore, a clear view and a thorough understanding of the prospects of the bloggers' followers are essential: their motivation to pursue bloggers, the primary features in the blogger, the reasons for their being an information source, the impacts of the marketing

role of bloggers on them and a profound insight into the relationship followers-bloggers. The framework for analyses and the rules to be followed through studies is the following structure. It was influenced by prior research based on the specific curiosities of the author. (Fernandes, 2013). The general goal–the research issue–is to divide research into particular points. The fragmentation of the issue in smaller ones helps to deal more profoundly with relevant problems and simplifies the answer process with a framework.

Research Problem:

The influence of Digital Influencers on followers' purchase intention.

Research Questions:

1) Beauty Bloggers as the information source for pre-purchase: understand how important they are as a source of information, what makes of them a good source from followers' perspective, how is their role performed in the purchase process of followers, etc.

2) Beauty Bloggers' as a Trigger of Purchase Intentions/Influencer of Decisions: understand if bloggers effectively influence beauty products purchase, affecting the ultimate decision and/or just triggering intentions to buy; assess how followers use bloggers' recommendations: rules to be followed or suggestions?

3) Beauty Bloggers' Changing Old/Introducing New Purchase Habits: understand the extent of bloggers' recommendations effect on purchase behaviour; do beauty bloggers' followers change their purchase habits and/or introduce new ones regarding the categories below?

- o Products
- o Brands
- o Price range
- o Quantity
- o Brand segment

3.2. Research Hypotheses

The research and analysis of a variety of authors on Literature review chapter allows a better comprehension of the concepts that evolve the theme studied in this dissertation. Having said that, based on all the literature and models analysed, the purpose of this chapter is to create hypothesis to answer the questions about the theme.

The proposed conceptual model presented in the following figure meets the indications of the revised literature, as already mentioned, and encompasses three dimensions: Decision process influencing variables, decision making process and the effective purchase decision.

Decision process influencing variables
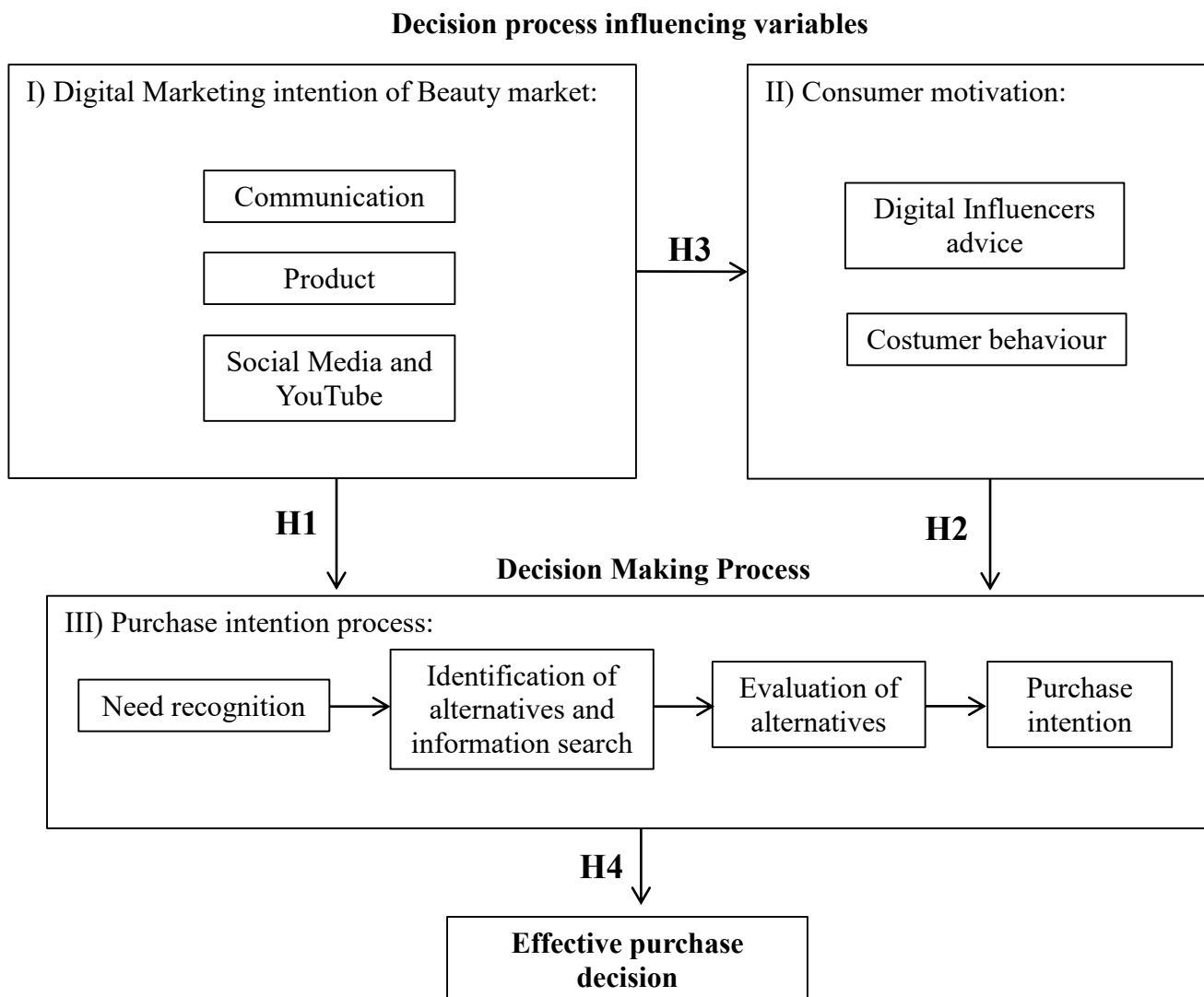
Figure 4: Conceptual model. Source: Self-constructed.

The analysis of the relationships between the variables allows formulating the research hypotheses. Thus, we can establish a parallel between some variables involved in the consumer purchase decision process in order to define the hypotheses to be tested. In effect, the dependent variable is the decision making process and the effective purchase decision. Independent variables are the two dimensions that we will consider as influencing the buying decision process due to the advice of digital influencers.

Based on the main characteristic that leads a client to buy a cosmetic product and show the changes of beauty market, the emergence of Digital Influencers is considered to be the influencing variable of this dissertation.

First, will discuss the theories that come from the conceptual model:

Digital Marketing: Digital tools, such as e-mail, made easier for the consumer to communicate with brands. As a result, the communication between brands and consumers has evolved from a monologue to a dialogue, allowing the exchange of ideas, opinions and experiences, and changing the passive role of consumers to a more proactive one (Dionísio, *et al*, 2009).

Communication: According to Mowen & Minor (1998:491), Word-of-Mouth communication refers to an exchange of comments, thoughts, or ideas between two or more consumers, none of whom is a marketing source". Solomon (2009) defines it as product or service information that individuals transmit to other individuals. According to Solomon (2010) WOM can capture consumer's attention and, since the information comes from someone the consumer knows, it tends to be more reliable and trustworthy than messages from more formal marketing channels.

Product: In this step the consumer selects an alternative among the other options and acts on his choice (Solomon & Stuart, 2000).

Social Media and YouTube: Social media, just like the world where we live in, is a very active and fast-moving domain (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) so brands should fight to not only have a relevant presence but also to become a place in which consumers are constantly motivated to actively participate.

Digital Influencer advice: According to Mowen & Minor (1998:491), Word-of-Mouth communication refers to an exchange of comments, toughts, or ideas between two or more consumers, none of whom is a marketing source". Solomon (2009) defines it as product or service information that individuals transmit to other individuals.

Costumer behaviour: *"It is the study of the processes involved when individual or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires."* Solomon *et al*. (2006:6).

Solomon et al. (2006:6) defines the consumer behaviour as:

" It is the study of the processes involved when individual or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires."

According to some authors cited in Hoffman and Turley (2002) in a more detailed way, the result of these two types of behaviour can be shown through four ways:

1. A desire to stay (approach) or leave (avoid);

2. A desire to further explore and interact (approach) or a tendency to ignore it (avoidance);

3. A desire to communicate with others (approach) or to ignore (avoid);

4. Feelings of satisfaction (approach) or disappointment (avoidance) with the service experience.

Purchase Intention: When purchasing a product or service consumers face a large number of choices and make several decisions. These decisions include, for example, whether to buy or not the product or service, which product or service categories to choose from and which stores, or brands, to buy from (Sheth *et al*.1999).

Purchase decision: Nelson (1974) explores the differences in buying decision-making in relation to the different type of products and distinguishes between search goods and experience goods. According the author consumers are more willing to search and ask for recommendations before deciding on a specific product, consumers are more likely to check and ask for advice before making a decision on a specific product (Nelson, 1974).

Concluding this variables analysis that characterizes the model, it is possible to state the hypothesis to be posteriorly tested.

H1: Brand's presence on Social Media and YouTube, through brand channels, influence the purchase intention process with that brand;

Social media, and YouTube included, provides a closer relationship between customers and brands (Hoffman and Fodor, 2010), which makes every contact with the customers crucial for the fomentation of relationships between brands. For the affective part of the development of the relationship, this effect is even greater. YouTube can have a great potential to explore this affective aspect as a way of being in contact with consumers.

Companies can have different objectives with their communication, and there is no question that one of them is to promote purchase intention. YouTube, as a channel that can touch customers more closely, can be a possible potential to influence their buying intentions. Some authors argue that, in order to stimulate buying intention, innovation needs to be added to the brand's interaction (Kovera *et al.*, 1995), which can be fully achieved by YouTube and Social Media communication.

H2: Digital influencers are viewed by their followers as a source of information for their purchase decision process;

In addition to verify if Digital Influencers personalities are operating as initiators of consumers' purchasing decision process, it is also important to clarify if there is loyalty towards the contents they produce. This will be relevant to understand if recommendation has further impacts on other stages of consumer's purchasing decision process. *"People are tuning in to watch great content from their favorite creators and, as a result, the number of hours people spend watching videos on YouTube is up 60% year-on-year."* (Black, 2015).

H3: Digital influencers through their advice and beauty tips from Social Media and digital communication channels influence consumer behaviour;

According to Kohnen (2011), companies have the need to interact with people, listen and share ideas, and involve as many key people as possible in the realization of their goals. This rule could also be applied to the digital environment and implies that consumers feel engaged and motivated in order to have relevant outcomes for both parties (Graffigna and Gambetti, 2015; Hollebeek *et al.*, 2014).

The world is constantly changing and also the consumer behaviour is. So, it is extremely important that brands follow consumers' needs and adapt its business strategy. We live in a Digital Era in which tools and strategies used by brands have changed due to the emergence of social media (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2015; Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

H4: Digital Influencers' presence and advices on Social Media and YouTube, influence the purchase decision;

The hypotheses formulated will be analyzed empirically, for the sample collected by this investigation, based on the methodological principles presented next.

3.3. Sampling design of the study

3.3.1. Population

The concept of "population" encompasses all elements and characteristics that are the subject of study. (Aaker *et al*. (2004)).

Regarding this study, the main target intended to reach is composed by women, cosmetics' consumers the many responses as possible. Other characteristic of the main target is that is composed by beauty bloggers' followers over 18 years.

3.3.2. Sampling

The definition of the sample is characterized as a finite subset of the population (Aaker *et al*. (2004)). One of the benefits of the sampling is to attempt to resolve the limitation of a considerably high population choice. This means that the expense of sampling can be reduced with the sampling system not only in terms of time but also in terms of financial costs (Aaker *et al*. (2004)). A convenience sampling process is introduced due to various constraints such as time.

The statistical method was used to determine the required number of samples:

$$n = \frac{N \, x \, p \, x \, q \, x \, (Z_{\propto/2})}{p \, x \, q \, x \, (Z_{\propto/2})^2 + (N - 1) \, x \, \mathcal{E}^2}$$

n – Sample dimension;

p – Proportion of individuals belonging to the category under study;

q – Proportion of individuals not belonging to the category under study;

$\mathcal{E}$ – Error Margin;

$\propto$ – Significance level;

$Z \propto/2$ – Value of the normal distribution for a confidence level $= (1 - a)$;

N – Dimension of the population.

The dimension of the population considers the number of female gender habitants in 2018 living in Portugal, means N = 5.423.819. Given that the sample does not perfectly represent the female gender population, a margin of error must be considered, which corresponds to the (maximum) difference between the sample proportion and the actual

population proportion (p). In this case, it will be assumed that p and q are equal to 0.5, the margin of error is 0.05 at a confidence level of 95%. Thus, by consulting the table regarding normal distribution, we can find that with a margin of error of 0.05 and a confidence level of 0.95, the value of $Z_{0.0025}$ is equal to 1.96. The result produces a sample of about 385 individuals as needed to represent the population.

3.4.   Survey Data

Regarding this study, the main target intended to reach is composed by women, cosmetics' consumers; beauty bloggers' followers, the many responses as possible. Nonetheless, it is clear that by the simple fact of distributing it online, the possibility to reach all the population was limited. In this, it was a nonprobability method.

The strategy used was chosen based on the resources available to the author. It consisted of a convenience sampling method by posting the link on Facebook (in private groups and also in the account's wall, appearing in the contacts' feed) with an introductory paragraph in two languages – English and Portuguese– to attract all the connections of the authors' account. This step was very low time-consuming considering the possible reach. Then, to increase the scope, snowball sampling was put in place. Initially, some contacts were particularly asked to share it due to their age range being considerably different from the one of the author and thus is expected to have more connections sharing that characteristic. Then, it developed through some spontaneous shares considered to have resulted from a short line included in the text of the post encouraging contacts to share the link. Simultaneously, to increase the number of answers in a shorter period, individual private messages were sent to several contacts by WhatsApp. This last strategy was more time-consuming.

A quantitative analysis was essential to have objective outcomes, control, and decreased response variability. Previous study studies have influenced the design of the issues (Fernandes, 2016; Vineyard, 2014). The author did the writing of the questions. The questionnaire was subsequently built using Qualtrics (APPENDIX 1: ONLINE SURVEY) - a research software - another person's proofread, and circulated online through social media (Facebook). The chance of reaching a broader and diverse crowd in a shorter moment increased by sharing the connection in a social platform, without geographic or price obstacles. Cosmetics customers were the object of the study, following or not beauty bloggers. Considering that portion of the questionnaire was

directed to blogger followers, it makes all sense for this group to apply it online because they are internet users. Moreover, it makes the two groups more similar to reaching non-followers who are internet users.

Another benefit of online questionnaires is that they enable individuals to respond willingly and do so whenever it is more convenient for them, without the "stress" of a planned moment or even an interviewer's presence. At the time of the reaction, this allows the convenience and a friendly atmosphere plus complete anonymity. It is also anticipated that the latter will ensure honesty and precise responses and decrease the potential cultural constraint when responding to issues such as family revenue or age.

3.4.1. Structure

The questionnaire was designed to take into account the literature review ideas as well as all topics related to the primary research issue that the author wishes to address in this study. It was designed to determine whether, how, why, and to what extent the buy intentions, choices, and practices of beauty bloggers influenced their supporters. Besides, the study was also planned to better understand the consumer connection with luxury branded cosmetics and the role of beauty bloggers in this connection as luxury brand promoters.

The study began with a short introduction to the subject, the author, and the master program to integrate the thesis and questionnaire. A note on the anonymity of the replies was implemented in the same document (Appendix 1: Introductory Note).

Following this introduction, the survey started. It was divided into five parts. The first part (Appendix 1: PART I – Personality Traits) included psychometric questions regarding personality attributes of the respondents. Question 1 aimed to define the respondents' preferred free-time activities, including shopping and surf the Internet, and an open option to add further relevant ones. The objective was to explore the data intending to find a profile or pattern. Question number 2, on the other hand, included thirteen statements to appraise over five point Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The reason to use a five point scale is because short scales like the four point scales proved to be unfavourable, not allowing the respondents to express their feelings adequately. (Preston and Colman, 2000).

Question 3 aimed to identify how much the respondents consider themselves interested in the news of the "Beauty world."

The second part (Appendix 1: PART II – Usage/Ownership and purchase habits) aimed to understand the purchase process and purchase habits in what concerns cosmetics and analyzed the amount and type of cosmetics respondents own and their make-up usage. Question 4 was used as a multiple-choice format to verify how many occasions the respondents wear make-up. Afterward, in order to understand the relationship of the respondent with cosmetics, question 5 and 6 determined the average of cosmetics purchased per month, and how much the respondents spend for each product purchased, question 7 define the preferred places to buy, question 8 the brand segments (luxury, upper premium, high-end specialized, budget-friendly specialized) to which the products owned belong, the question 9 the highest price ever paid for a cosmetic and the question 10 analysed from where comes the influence of recommendations buying beauty products. The information obtained from this part was, once again, expected to show the main differences between beauty bloggers' followers and non-followers and attribute them to a bloggers' effect.

The definition of the term "digital influencers" as for the survey, and this study was presented before starting the third part. Conditional to a definite answer about following digital influencers or not, the third part (Appendix 1: PART III – Digital Influencers) about following beauty bloggers/digital influencers and their influence on the purchase process. This part included questions regarding if the respondents follow digital influencers who give product tips and beauty treatments (question 11), if anytime bought beauty products after the recommendation of a digital influencer (question 12), and a list of characteristics of persuasive information sources (from the ones presented in the literature) to understand which beauty bloggers' attributes are the most valued by followers (question 13).

This would help to answer the first research question about bloggers as an information source. Question 14 included, once again, a five point Likert scale to appraise nine statements about digital influencers. These observations would give quantifiable answers to the three research questions. The aim of the 15 question was to understand the influence of beauty bloggers' regarding cosmetics purchase. Finally, the fourth part (Appendix 1: PART IV – Demographics) intended to collect demographic data of beauty bloggers' followers. Question 18 about gender and question 19 to identify the average age of the respondents.

3.4.2. Limitations

There are some constraints associated with this technique, despite the benefits of it. In the first place, the issues are of a closed response, and some data may be lost in the process to conduct a quantitative analysis. All existing alternatives and all specific cases cannot be included. It is also known that even all respondents living in Portugal, nationality can influence regarding of cultural facts, this can influence a way participants answer closed questions. For instance, some nationalities are more willing than others who are more restricted to choosing extremes in the issue with a response scale (for example, from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." Since the sample contains various nationalities, the replies analysed as the same ("strongly agreed"), at the time of the response, may not have meant the same to the respondents. However, regardless of nationality, these participants live in Portugal, which is the dimension of population considered to be analysed on this dissertation. Besides, only an English version of the study was introduced. Given the possible language obstacles, this could lead to a less precise response.

There are some constraints associated with this technique, despite the benefits of it. In the first location, the issues are of a closed response, and some data may be lost in the process to conduct a quantitative analysis. All existing alternatives and all specific cases cannot be included. In addition, only an English version of the study was introduced. Because of language obstacles, this could lead to a less precise response.

One of the specific constraints for the Internet as a channel for distributing the study (and some in relation to Facebook) is that it limits its reach. First of all, not every purchaser of cosmetics is an Internet user, especially if the earliest customer portfolio is considered. Secondly, the survey was communicated and distributed into personal accounts so that the audience was restricted even with an open link. Lastly, the control is reduced, as precise answers cannot be guaranteed, and conditions are not guaranteed. Even though the questionnaire was only addressed to women, for instance, there was no monitoring over the completion of this questionnaire. Time constraints prevented the study from opening longer and gathering more responses. The sample size is relatively tiny due to these and the channel constraints.

3.5.   Interviews

The author considers the research problem to be one of several parameters which are very subjective. There may be many factors and motivations behind any reply in a quantitative study. Qualitative analysis is required to improve the understanding of what they are, to enrich the analysis, and to improve conclusions about what might seem to be a simple and precise pattern.

One of the primary purpose of this study was to find out how a blogger of beauty is motivated and how the interaction affects followers ' behaviour. Only beauty bloggers ' supporters were the target considered in this methodology. They would complement, enrich, and enhance quantitative outcomes with a more in-depth view.

In profound interviews, the methodology selected for this purpose was individual. The design of the script was influenced by the research problem and issues of research as well as by prior studies (Fernandes, 2013). The form selected was the semi-structured interview (Castelo Branco, 2014) to acquire the most data and best of every interview. There was a script in this sense that contained several questions that operated as instructions only. The script, in reality, did not limit the interview in any manner. The interviewer would adjust queries and orders to respondents, ignore some and add new ones if necessary, make them appear as much as possible as a discussion and make the issues meaningful to the reality of each interviewee.

The interviewees ' channels were all kinds of video or e-mail. All of the interviews, in the video call format, were conducted in your mother language to improve the convenience of participants. Before the author begins, the interviewee would be informed that responses for a future and the correct translation would be registered. This approach also prevented the distractions or interruptions that it would have implied to record the reactions at the same time. The interview would begin after authorization. The interviews were efficient for 20 to 30 minutes. The questions were sent in English during the interviews, on the other side, via e-mail. The interviewee was nonetheless urged to reply in the language that makes it more convenient and natural for them, reminding them that they aimed to clarify them as much as possible and to provide information as if they talked to a friend. All interviewees knew the reason for the interview. The questions are set out in Appendix 2 - Interview. Table 2 demonstrates the correspondence between the issues of interviews and study issues to comprehend them better.

RESEARCH QUESTION	INTERVIEW GUIDELINE
Beauty bloggers as a information source of pre-purchasing	Do you have the habit of seeking advice? Who/to whom? (if bloggers) Why choose you those sources specifically?
	Which was your original motive and motivation to follow them further?
	Describe your beauty blogging interaction. How often do you check your accounts in social media? What social media are you most interested in? Are you looking for product reviews there? Are you just going to see what's new?
	Do you intend to continue to rely on suggestions from bloggers? In which circumstances would you avoid? Does anything "betray your confidence" or stop depending on it / consider it a source of data?
Beauty bloggers' as a trigger of purchase decisions:	Have the recommendation of bloggers affected your buy choices favourably or negatively? What kind of item? What type of product?
	Do you believe that after you began following the blogs your interest in beauty products has risen? If so, why do you believe it occurred?
	Do you believe you are more prepared to spend more cash on cosmetics? Are you interested in buying superior brands (both per product and in total) because they are advisable?
Changing old purchase practices for beauty bloggers	Which major changes have been made in your procurement process? Do you purchase different, different / same products / brands, more / less products, more / less costly in different / same locations? How has it been before and now?

Table 2: Research questions and interview questions. Source: Self-constructed.

After all the responses were collected, the digital papers were translated and constructed. The approach, therefore, took a lot more time than the online survey. It required access to schedules to transcribe the interviews and time for translating them. Some

convergences were already recognizable in the responses to specific issues and clear distinctions in others during this process. The highlights and consistencies made some findings.

3.5.2. *Limitations*

The qualitative methods are usually connected with tiny samples, as one of the primary limitations (Castelo Branco, 2014). It was right in this specific situation. Besides, the interviewer is highly dependent upon it. In this instance, the results also depend on their ability, during the interview, to decide which question to leave outside the subject and the sensitivity to understand the relevant ones, due to the semi-structured shape. Furthermore, specific criticisms of reliability may also be made because of the particular translation necessity.

IV – DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

The quantitative and qualitative method findings will be provided jointly. It was decided to provide more comprehensive responses to the issues of the studies in a structured manner, preventing them from moving forward. In fact, in Chapter 3 – Methodology, the structure that follows will be that described.

Showing the outcomes together makes it possible to compare and discuss responses on the same subject directly. Ultimately, instances with high complementarity of responses and appropriate patterns validate responses and enable generalizable findings to be formulated.

4.2 Survey Data

The goal was to investigate the outcomes carefully and to produce exciting findings in the case of the study. The approach in this respect was to carefully observe the information, to use filters and conditions to compare the definition of sections. The software used to analyse the collected Data was the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The platform where the questionnaire was made saved all the respondents' answers automatically and allowed the download of an Excel version with all the data. Therefore, there was no need for an inserting step for the majority of the variables. The answers were revised and checked for completion and consistency, and the data was then imported to SPSS.

4.2.1. Sample characterization

There were a total of 436 questionnaires launched, and 391 surveys were finished. This would result in an 8% drop-out rate. Concerning the remaining 34 incomplete answers, seven were replied until issue 16, which was deemed to be sufficient and helpful for individual calculations and thus retained. The other twenty were overlooked. Of the 391 full answers, four were disqualified because the respondent declared themselves to be males in his gender issue. In addition, the randomness was indicated by an assessment of the remaining responses of the same participants. Seven participants stated that they do not consider themselves interested in the news of the "Beauty World" ("I do not mind, and I do not like to hear about it" to question 3), these 7 replies have been removed. All

in all, the total of full responses considered was 387 (including seven incomplete but helpful data).

In terms of country of residence, homogeneity was primarily desirable so that the outcomes could be made more generalizable. It was anticipated that the age would be focused on just a few areas, because of the channel audience reached. In reality, 86% of those who said they were followers of beauty bloggers were between the ages of 19 and 29 and the vast majority of those (63%) were focused between 23 and 28 years old. Even with varying nationalities, the primary focus on demographics of respondents was their country of residence, 100% of the participants live in Portugal.

4.2.2. Descriptive characterization of Personality traits

Respondents state that the preferred free-time activities are spend time with friends and family (81% of the responses); watch TV, Series, Movies (72% of the total answers), Browse the internet (social media and news outlets) 42%, Physical Activities 32%; Read 26%, other activities 12%. Note that in this question 1365 answers were obtained as each respondent could select more than one activity.
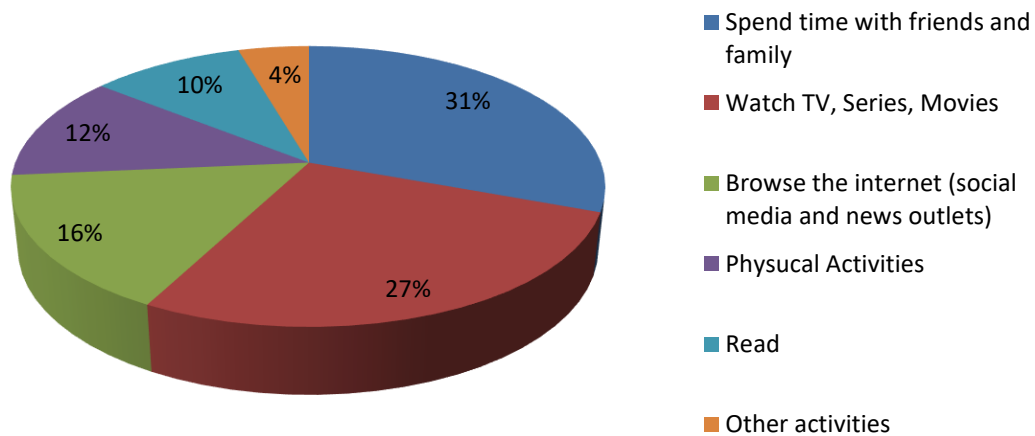

Graphic 1: Respondents' preferred free-time activities.

Related to the usual behaviour of the respondents, the Likert scale helped them to express their feelings properly.

	Total Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Total Agree
I have the habit of seeking advice before making a purchase decision.	105	74	208
I spend a lot of my time on social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, blogs.	104	47	236
I like to follow the latest trends when it is about treatments and beauty products.	146	79	162
I believe people are honest when they give me advice about products.	162	87	138
I always try to get new products that are trending.	171	86	130
The more choices, the better!	100	75	212
I like to buy quality products for my skin.	82	41	264
I always choose beauty products for quality, not for price.	105	56	226
I love shopping.	98	58	231
I do not believe that expensive beauty products are better than cheaper products.	130	68	189
I like to always have a variety of cosmetic products at home (specific products for different seasons and events).	174	72	141
I always trade and research a lot before buying beauty products.	141	66	180
I'd rather buy cheaper products; even if the quality is lower.	215	67	105

Table 3: Results related to the usual behaviour of the respondents.

Considering the sample of 387 cosmetics consumers – including the seven incomplete observations –, 54% of the respondents have the habit of seeking advice before making a purchase decision whereas the other 27% somehow or totally disagree with this affirmation; the other 19% of the respondents neither agree or disagree with this statement as shown on the Graphic 2 below. In addition to this, 84% of the respondents follow digital influencers who give product tips and beauty treatments, whereas the other 16% do not. The comparison of this classification with beauty bloggers' followers will help understand which of these conditions is more decisive.
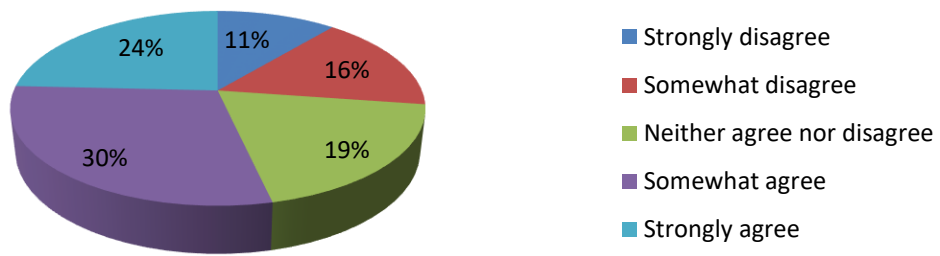
Graphic 2: I have the habit of seeking advice before making a purchase decision.

Regarding the statement *I'd rather cheaper products, even if the quality is lower*, 32% of respondents strongly disagree and 24% somewhat disagree with that statement, this result represents a concern with product quality. In statement *I like to buy quality products for my skin*, 46% strongly agree and 22% somewhat agree with this statement, representing that most respondents consider it important to be concerned about the quality of skin care products.
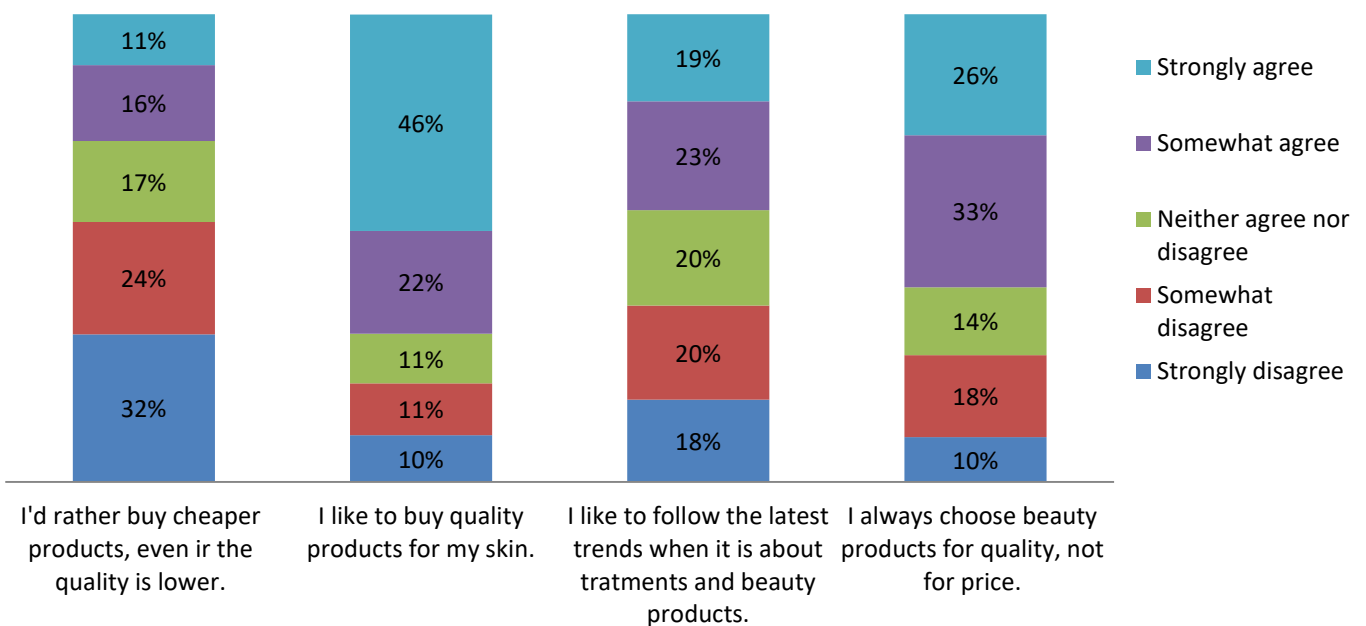
respondents regarding products quality and price.

Regarding the affirmation, *I love shopping*, 39% of the respondents strongly agree; 20% somewhat agree and 15% neither agree nor disagree, it demonstrates very active behaviour on the purchase habits.

As mentioned on Samples characterization, excluding seven participants stated that they do not consider themselves interested in the news of the "Beauty World", in the total sample of 387, 41% of the respondents consider themselves interested in the news of the

"Beauty World"; 59% affirms not so much, knowing something only when look into it as shown on Graphic 4. In addition to this, 61% of the respondents agree that spend a lot of time on social platforms (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Blogs). It result suggests the majority of respondents who affirm knowing something only when look into Beauty World, one of the main resource of research is Social Media.
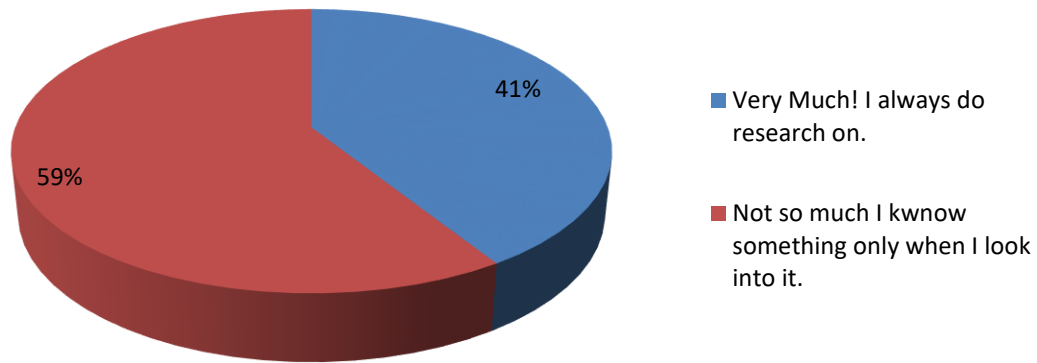
Graphic 4: How much the respondents consider themselves interested in the news of the "Beauty World".

4.2.3. Descriptive characterization of Usage/Ownership and purchase habits

Question 4 had the intention to analyse the purchase process and purchase habits in what concerns cosmetics, the amount and type of cosmetics respondents own and their make-up usage. Out of the total sample (n=387), 54% of the respondents reported wearing make-up every day. It is regarded as highly significant that more than half a sample of cosmetic buyers responds favourably to this declaration.
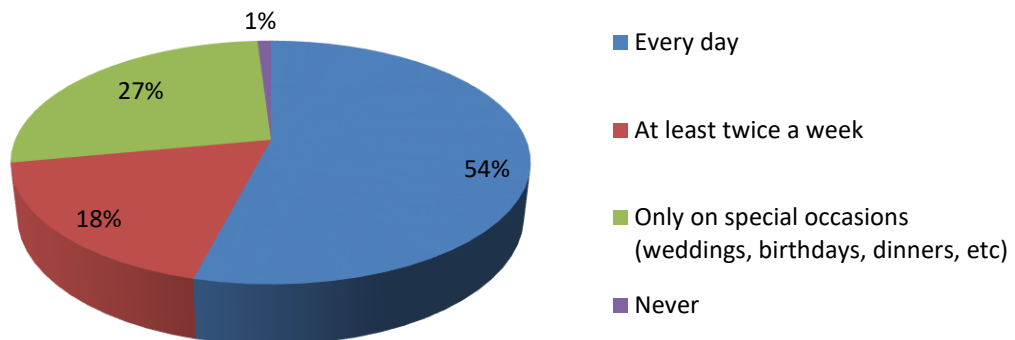
Graphic 5: % how many occasions the respondents wear makeup.

Regarding cosmetics purchase, most of the participants buy between 1 and 5 products per month (80%). However, the mean (3.08) is between the ranges 6-10 (4) and 11-20 (2). For those respondents who have the habit of seeking advice before making a purchase decision, it is 4.19, and for respondents somehow or totally disagrees with this affirmation 3.91. Per product, most of the respondents pay the price between $21 and $60 (42%). The preferred places to buy cosmetics are Specialty Beauty Stores/Beauty Salons: 51% of the respondents ranked this option first, and an overall of 88% included it in their rankings. For beauty bloggers' followers and cosmetics enthusiasts, the first position was mainly attributed to supermarkets/pharmacies.

When asked which recommendations influence the most the decision when buying beauty products of the respondents, the most influential showed to be family/friends (64% of the respondents, including this option in their rankings), and it was by far the preferred option, collecting 57% of the answers for the first place (mean = 1.72). Second, in rank were digital influencers (43%). Surprisingly for the author, the next in line for the total sample, as well as for any of the segments, were Colleagues and some acquaintances. The conclusion is that when taking all these decisions, respondents are persuaded by recommendations. In addition, as expected, 55% of respondents declared to have purchased make-up products (including accessories for applying make-up) through Digital Influencers' advice. On table 6, can be observed which brand segment is part of most of the beauty products of the respondents, 55,8% affirm is the Specialized brands the products owned belong.

Brand Segments	Some Examples	Quantity	Percentage
Luxury brands	Burberry, Channel, Dior	12	3,1%
Premium brands	Estée Lauder, Lancome, La mer	28	7,2%
Specialized brands	MAC, Urban Decay, Nars, La Roche-Posay, Vich	216	55,8%
Specialized brands with friendly quotes	Avon, L'oreal, Maybelline	131	33,8%
Total		**387**	**100%**

Table 4: Brand Segments

4.2.4. Descriptive characterization of Digital Influencers followers

This part included questions regarding if anytime bought beauty products after the recommendation of a digital influencer, and a list of characteristics of persuasive information sources (from the ones presented in the literature) to understand which beauty bloggers' attributes are the most valued by followers; 56% of the respondents reported already bought beauty products after the recommendation of a digital influencer. It is regarded as highly significant that more than half a sample of cosmetic buyers responds favourably to this declaration.

Regardless of the search results and the collection of information process, the Bloggers (in general) should be viewed as a source of success, with convincing strength, as embodying certain qualities: expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness (includes similarity, likeability and familiarity).

The respondents were asked to rank some given characteristics from the most to the less valuable features they consider in digital influencers. The options given were related to the three main categories to assess their relative importance in this market, as the stronger the overall perception the stronger the persuasive power over followers' decisions. The categories are presented below (see Table 5). The characteristics of a Digital Influencer which followers identified them were clearly "Knowledge and ability". With a mean of 2.54, 39% of the followers chose it as the most valuable quality of all and never being ranked below 7 (in a ranking with 11 positions).

CATEGORY		CHARACTERISTIC
Expertise		Knowledge and ability
		Skills
Trustworthiness		Reliability
		Sincerity/Honesty
		Ethics
Attractiveness	Likeability	Elegance
		Beauty
		Personality
	Similarity	Nationality
		Around the same age
	Familiarity	Fame

Table 5: Information source's categories and characteristics. Source: Self-constructed.

Table 6 presents the final classification of valuable characteristics and their corresponding mean position. It can be observed that knowledge and ability in the first place alternate and calculating the means per category, it is fair to affirm that the most important category is expertise, followed by attractiveness and trustworthiness. From the Attractiveness, the most valuable is similarity, then likeability and last familiarity.

Table 6 demonstrates the features instinctively listed by the interviewees in some of their statements as reasons for starting following bloggers, keeping track of, and considering them as excellent sources of data.

CHARACTERISTIC RANKING	MEAN POSITION	CATEGORY RANKING		AGGREGATED MEAN	
Knowledge and ability	2.54	Expertise		2,92	
Skills	3.29				
Nationality	3.20		Similarity		4,73
Around the same age	6.25				
Elegance	6.93	Attractiveness		6,10	
Beauty	6.25		Likeability		6,00
Personality	4.83				
Fame	9.14		Familiarity		9,14
Reliability	4.81				
Sincerity/Honesty	9.48	Trustworthiness		8,83	
Ethics	8.18				

Table 6 : Information source's characteristics rankings. Source: Self-constructed.

As far as the survey is concerned, a five point Likert scale appraised nine statements about digital influencers. These observations gave quantifiable answers to the three research questions. The results are derived from the statements in question 14 concerning changes following the follow-up of beauty bloggers and from a comparison between the purchase habits of followers and non-followers to check for differences attributable to bloggers. Next, we intend to validate the conceptual model proposed through an evaluation of the reliability and validity of the latent variables considered and the respective measurement scales used in the questionnaire through an "analysis of the items".

4.2.4.1. Usual Behaviour

We will then start by testing whether the sum of the components of each of the latent variables presents a measure of the latent variable with adequate internal reliability coefficient (alpha). The value of a measure of reliability has to be greater than 0.7 to be reasonable and above 0.8 to be good (Hill: 2005).

The results of the reliability analysis of the variable "statements according to usual behaviour" are shown in table 7, which includes an analysis of the items in the questionnaire.

Table 7: Output from "statements according to usual behaviour" Reliability Analysis

7.1. Item Statistics

Statements according to usual behavior	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
I trust in digital influencers that I follow.	2,12	,884	387
Through the influence of digital influences, I already bought brands that until then did not know.	2,68	1,146	387
After beginning to follow a digital influencer, I came to know more and better about beauty brands.	3,21	1,525	387
Digital influencers are more reliable to give beauty advice than the commercials of beauty brands themselves.	2,18	1,046	387
When I started following digital influencers, I began to spend more money and invest more in different products and beauty treatments.	2,63	1,142	387
I have already bought products that my favorite digital influencer indicated.	2,47	1,099	387
I buy beauty products after seeing indications of digital influencers.	2,32	,959	387
With the emergence of digital influencers, the choice for beauty products became more practical.	3,27	1,572	387
With the emergence of digital influencers, I see that there is greater variety and competitiveness in the beauty market.	2,92	1,279	387

7.2. Correlation with the 9 components "Inter-item Correlation Matrix"

Statements according to usual behavior	I trust in digital influencers that I follow.	Through the influence of digital influences, I already bought brands that until then did not know.	After beginning to follow a digital influencer, I came to know more and better about beauty brands.	Digital influencers are more reliable to give beauty advice than the commercials of beauty brands themselves.	When I started following digital influencers, I began to spend more money and invest more in different products and beauty treatments.	I have already bought products that my favorite digital influencer indicated.	I buy beauty products after seeing indications of digital influencers.	With the emergence of digital influencers, the choice for beauty products became more practical.	With the emergence of digital influencers, I see that there is greater variety and competitiveness in the beauty market.
I trust in digital influencers that I follow.	1,000								
Through the influence of digital influences, I already bought brands that until then did not know.	,380	1,000							
After beginning to follow a digital influencer, I came to know more and better about beauty brands.	,385	,887	1,000						
Digital influencers are more reliable to give beauty advice than the commercials of beauty brands themselves.	,598	,955	,872	1,000					
When I started following digital influencers, I began to spend more money and invest more in different products and beauty treatments.	,344	,042	,274	,153	1,000				
I have already bought products that my favorite digital influencer indicated.	,741	,181	,064	,027	,025	1,000			
I buy beauty products after seeing indications of digital influencers.	,394	,047	,209	,237	,994	,031	1,000		
With the emergence of digital influencers, the choice for beauty products became more practical.	,216	,954	,739	,847	-,072	,372	,023	1,000	
With the emergence of digital influencers, I see that there is greater variety and competitiveness in the beauty market.	,015	,783	,844	,739	,060	,350	,024	,666	1,000

Statements according to usual behaviour	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
Scale Statistics	23,81	27,766	7,269	9

Statements according to usual behaviour	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Sclae Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I trust in digital influencers that I follow.	15,80	23,143	,423	,321	,765
Through the influence of digital influences, I already bought brands that until then did not know.	14,50	20,456	,522	,287	,786
After beginning to follow a digital influencer, I came to know more and better about beauty brands.	15,10	20,312	,543	,444	,777
Digital influencers are more reliable to give beauty advice than the commercials of beauty brands themselves.	13,42	21,789	,386	,582	,720
When I started following digital influencers, I began to spend more money and invest more in different products and beauty treatments.	15,60	23,987	,367	,536	,713
I have already bought products that my favorite digital influencer indicated.	15,51	22,539	,615	,287	,729
I buy beauty products after seeing indications of digital influencers.	15,44	21,312	,657	,256	,745
With the emergence of digital influencers, the choice for beauty products became more practical.	15,24	23,987	,599	,346	,754
With the emergence of digital influencers, I see that there is greater variety and competitiveness in the beauty market.	12,80	20,092	,497	,276	,723

Cronbach's Alph	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Item	N of Items
,783	,789	9

The table 7.1 presents mean values to each one of the nine statements close to value of 3, close to the mode.

The table 7.2 presents the correlation with 9 components, all the correlations are positive and vary between 0.015 and 0.955. The fact that they are all positive among themselves is good because if they are components of the "Statements according to usual behaviour", they must have positive correlations between themselves and, having intermediate values is also good because it gives confidence that the components represent different aspects of the "Statements according to usual behaviour".

The table 7.3 shows which mean value (mean) of the new variable "Statements according to usual behaviour" is 23,81 (this value is the sum of the mean values of the nine statements).

On Table 7.4 all the correlations presented have intermediate and relatively homogeneous values. It is good because it means that the statements contribute more or less similarly. The column "Alpha if item delected" gives, to each statements (item), the coefficient value of internal reliability alpha, after deleting the item, in general, the values of the column are good, all have roughly the same weight in the composition of the variable. Through the outputs of the 7.5 table we can conclude that together, the 9 components define a "usual behaviour" measure with internal reliability alpha equal to 0.783. This value is reasonable and indicates that the measurement made by adding the 9 components has adequate internal reliability.

4.3. Interviews

The next step was to organize the replies in a manner that would assist their evaluation after all the interviews were traded and transcribed in Microsoft Word files. The first stage was to group responses to this issue by interview. The next step was to define possible responses and patterns with the seven responses to each issue together. All the options for building tables were emphasized and used to facilitate the process in presenting the findings and answering questions.

4.3.1. Sample characterization

While the number of interviews was restricted, and it is not considered representative, some variability in the sample was essential to ensure. The qualitative insights would enable a better knowledge of the factors behind every quantitative response and, since the views are more varied, the analytics will be enhanced.

The author has chosen followers of beauty bloggers from distinct nationalities and lives in various nations with a deliberate goal of guaranteeing different backgrounds. The women interviewed are in the private circle of colleagues of the writer. They were first recognized as "cosmetics' fans" and confirmed before the interview as followers of the beauty bloggers. Only seven interviews were conducted based on time constraints: two girls from Portugal, three from Brazil, one from México and one from Belgium. With one of the Brazilians interviewees residing in Portugal and the Belgium girl interviewee living in Brazil, all of the others live in their nation. The group averages 27 years.

At first, all the interviews were done in a video call mode. The author preferred this type since it entails interaction, a reading of non-verbal communication, and a more straightforward adaptation of issues to the course of the interviewed person. Nevertheless, three interviews were replied by e-mail due to time differences and incompatibility of the timetable. Table 8 provides the features of the participants, the channel of the interview, and the language used.

	NATIONALITY	AGE	CHANNEL	LANGUAGE
1	Portuguese	24	E-mail	Portuguese
2	Portuguese	25	E-mail	Portuguese
3	Brazilian	30	E-mail	Portuguese
4	Brazilian	29	FaceTime	Portuguese
5	Brazilian	29	FaceTime	Portuguese
6	Mexican	27	Zoom Meeting	Spanish
7	Belgian	27	FaceTime	English

Table 8: Interviewees information. Source: Self-constructed.

4.3. Discussion

1) Beauty Bloggers as the information source for pre-purchase

In past studies, a high percentage of customers who consult bloggers on product data was found, as was noted in the literature review. In addition, some specific features are related to the profile of convincing data sources. The findings for the particular situation of beauty bloggers are provided below.

Once all interviewed people recognized that they ask for advice before they purchase beauty products, the question regarding to whom or where arise. Many responses came up, but all the participants cited digital influencers. After them, 80% spoke of family and

friends. There were two distinct methods to discover data. It could be realized. One is looking for it specifically and the second by opportunity. As far as family and friends are concerned, they offer primarily advice and spontaneously:

"They talk about a product, they say it's good and I'm supposed to try it." (interview nº 7); *"They usually talk about products they've tested or used, or they've heard about someone who tested and enjoyed it."* (interview nº 5),
or asked for:

"If it's about creams, I just ask my mom … I trust in her experience" (interview nº 3).

As far as bloggers are concerned, it is more complex. Followers generally do not look purposely for bloggers in social media.
"I usually do not go to a specific profile to see whether an update exists." (interview nº 3); *"Generally, I don't visit their account in social media."* (interview nº 7).

It is limited moments that followers go on purpose to the social media accounts of bloggers, as interviewee 7 confirms *"…I go there for checking the news when I have time (blogs account)…"*. In the case of the search for specific information three interviewees react that they carefully monitor bloggers ' accounts for a specific information: *"I check what is new twice a week."* (interview no. 5); *"Other exception is when I look for a particular item(..) so I go to several blogger accounts to look for a review"* (interview No. 3);
"When I look for a specific product, I like to check if the beauty bloggers that I'm following are saying some review about that" (interview No. 6).

Followers go to social media and come across bloggers' publications by chance. To check many times a day, the preferred one is Instagram, as mentioned by interviewee nº 7 *"Instagram, (check it) everyday!"*. For followers, the contact is easy:
"Instagram… I usually just open the app and go scrolling down… Is where I follow most of the beauty bloggers." (interview nº 3); *"… I usually read their posts when they appear on my Instagram feed."* (interview nº 1),

Many times, as viewed posts arouse a curiosity from followers:

"If there is something in the blogger post about a product review for example in another social media, I usually go and see." (interview no 3)

"*...They post on Instagram stating something fresh is published in Youtube. I only click on the link that is on the post and watch the video.*" (interview nº 2)

"*I usually read the post and if there is something I particularly want, I watch the videos...*" (interview nº 7)

All of these affirmations mentioned by the interviewees reinforce the results obtained from the survey about turning to bloggers to collect information before purchasing. On question 14 on the survey, 51% of the respondents agree that Digital Influencers are more reliable to give beauty advice than the commercials of beauty brands themselves (somewhat agree, strongly agree).

The main conclusion that can which can be drawn from the information above is that bloggers are considered an essential spontaneous data source. This implies that beauty bloggers provide supporters with pre-buying data, but this does not usually result from those seeking reviews in particular. The bloggers use the method called push, if the followers are interested in that specific theme posted, they would pull information by reading the posts and following links for videos, etc. In other markets, this process can be different regarding bloggers and followers, as technology for example, which investments require more thought out, and generally, the frequency of purchase is lower.

Regardless of the search results and the collection of information process, the Bloggers (in general) should be viewed as a source of success, with convincing strength, as embodying certain qualities: expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness (includes similarity, likeability and familiarity).

The least valuable characteristic showed to be Sincerity/honesty (9.48) – which, by understandable reasons, was mentioned by an interviewee (nº 3): *"I know most of the products mentioned by the blogger can come from a publicity paid."* –, nonetheless, the one ranking last the most (58%) was personality (9.14).

As the mentioning was spontaneous, in general, it is impossible to predict the relative importance of those characteristics for all the interviewees. When it comes to open questions, many answers arise, and each interviewee has and shows particular reasons for their ranking. The interviewee 1, for example, mentioned the nationality of the bloggers as an essential feature, so they suggest products available in the living country.

CATEGORIES	STATEMENTS
Expertise: knowledge and ability, Skills	*"The tutorials, the step by step how to use the product..."* (int. nº 7) *"She teaches how to use the products doing tutorials."* (int. nº 5) *"...people who know a lot about make up..."* (int. nº 2)
Attractiveness: elegance, empathy, personality, attitude	*"I like to feel empathy about that person (...) I like her way of life, her personality."* (int. nº 7) *"...like a friend of mine giving me advices..."* (int nº 3) *"I prefer (...) Portuguese or Brazilian bloggers (...)."* (int nº 1) *"...if their way of being and live are close to mine, if their style is close to mine..."* (int. nº 2)
Trustworthiness: Reliability, Sincerity/Honesty, good recommendations	*"I think when she does a tutorial and says she likes a product, she really likes it and uses it."* (int. nº 7) *"I never regret to buy what she recommends... Every product has worked good on me."* (int. nº 1) *"I think she really cares about quality of the products."* (int. nº 6) *"She really use/try the beauty products (...) it is a more reliable source of information."* (int. nº 3)
Other: activity and content posting	*"...post continuously... Fastest way to consult the latest trends."* (int. nº 1) *"She always has news about new products. (...)I find them more innovative than others."* (int. nº 5) *"...to keep myself updated (...) at least acknowledge the trends."* (int. nº 6)

Table 9: Bloggers' characteristics from interviewees' statements.

When questioned what would prevent them from considering a blogger as an data source, people interviewed primarily referred to trustworthiness:

"... when they show their routine and it is evident that they are not using products that they indicated as something they use daily." (Interview nº 7);

"...If I feel that digital influencers indicated a product just for the money and not for something they believe or actually use." (Interview nº 1);

"... if I buy the product indicated and it is not as good as mentioned by the blogger(...) because she was being paid by the brand (...) if they stopped mentioning products because they actually think the product is good and started indicating only for money (...) as soon, then bloggers become the same as any beauty magazine." (Interview nº 3).

This confirms the importance of the trustworthiness category. Trust is needed for followers to keep turning to bloggers when information is needed and even to hold them as sources of information. Bloggers are more persuasive and influential when they are viewed as reliable. In the outcomes, the most apparent evidence is that bloggers are considered to be more trustworthy than celebrities or "brand-related" marketing.

The average of the responses is represented on "Somewhat agree" (3.12). Interviewee No 1 also stated this: "...In commercials and beauty magazines, the products are 'good'. Which is not always true. The beauty bloggers tell if a product is good or not." In addition, the second-highest outcome shows that followers trust beauty bloggers, as 58% chose the choice "Somewhat Agree" when they were questioned straight about it and a total average of 3.76.

To try to summarize and put all the above in a process logic manner, one can say: Beauty bloggers are actually regarded by their followers as a source of information primarily because of their expertise. They know it cannot count on sincerity/honesty on every post, but somehow people turn to them and keep them as sources of data because they rely on their advice. Thus, followers are expected to use the information they obtain from bloggers in their purchase process.

Regarding reliability of followers to the advice of beauty bloggers, the answers to statement 7 of question 14 *"I buy beauty products after seeing indications of digital influencers"*, 36% of the respondents chose "Somewhat agree" or "Strongly agree", which means that they do follow bloggers advice. To better understand the role and impact of the beauty bloggers behind the decision-making process, as well as providing information only, the results of the second research question will be analysed.

2) Beauty Bloggers' as a Trigger of Purchase Intentions/Influencer of Decisions

The results concerning blogger trustworthiness are positive but not extreme, indicating a gap between the information received and the effective final purchase decision. Below is an analysis of the actual influence of bloggers' on followers' purchase intention. From the previous analysis, it is recognized that bloggers are a significant source of information for the followers. In addition, respondents (followers and non-followers) have a strong regard for bloggers as one of its most essential sources, as stated above in the General results. The following analysis regards the results of beauty bloggers' followers.

Family/friends keep the highest frequency of answers in the first place (64% against 43% for bloggers). However, the distinction between family/friends and bloggers is less significant in this case than for the complete sample. Indeed, for followers, the average position of bloggers is closer to the first rank (2.07) than the one of any other source, and the lowest rank attributed to bloggers was the 4th position.2 This ranking was also useful to recognize how badly positioned Contracts from brands (models that are part of the production of the brand's catalog) are.

This option was only included by 38% of participants as influential, and 22% of them ranked it last. This information confirms the abovementioned more excellent reliability in bloggers than models or celebrities. One understands from this first analysis that beauty bloggers have an impact on their followers. The issue remains: Does the nature of this influence trigger to purchase intention, or does it determine the final decision? The answers to some statements in question 14 were analysed to clarify it. However, the results were not obvious or consistent.

The average that presented the biggest distance from the neutral answer regarded followers' knowledge on beauty brands after start following Digital Influencers (statement 3). The mean, equal to 3.21, was close to the option "Somewhat Agree", the same alternative that more than half of the respondents (52%) chose.

---

2 Appendix 3.1 provides a comparison of the three top sources of recommendations for followers.

Notwithstanding, when asked if, after beginning to follow a digital influencer, they are spending more money and investing more in different products and beauty treatments, the average answer was 2.48 (very close to "Neither Agree nor Disagree"). One would expect similar averages as it is logical to assume that bloggers considered reliable make changes about the purchase intention of the followers. In any case, the option that was mostly chosen (even though in a much lower percentage – 28%) was once again "Somewhat Agree." From these observations, it is partially possible to conclude if the impact of beauty bloggers' as information sources is translated into direct purchases or not. Regarding the statements related to content/knowledge of beauty products (statement 8 and 9), the averages showed a smaller gap between them (3.27 and 2.92 respectively) and were, in this case, clearly leaning towards the neutral alternative and it shows for the possibility of purchase after recommendations. The highest frequency of answers was for both in "Somewhat Agree" (48% and 53%). Thus, the effect of beauty bloggers' messages reflects a definite pattern regarding purchase intentions along with the survey sample. The results of the qualitative data were much smoother. All the interviewees but one answered positively when asked if bloggers have influenced their purchase decisions, this means, if they have bought a product after bloggers' recommendations.

"*...I have already done that.*" (Interview nº 7);

"*I do have a list (...) and sometimes I even advice my mom for a certain foundation or a certain colour, so it does have some influence.*" (Interview nº 2);

"*Yes. (...) I pay attention to their recommendations and follow their advice. For example, I will buy the eyeshadow they recommended because it makes your make-up last all day long, but I will avoid the one they said is too oily.*" (Interview nº 1);

"*I have already bought many products due to bloggers' suggestions.*" (Interview nº 3).

Interviewee 5 denies that it has happened to her, claiming that the product might not be appropriate, "Each one has specific needs... What they advise may not be the right one for us... But I assume I check when they say a product is good: I go to the store and ask to try it on my skin". This statement is a clear description of recommendation of bloggers recommendations as a driver of intent and not a decisive factor. Other respondents also

demonstrated this view of the impact of bloggers on their overall purchase procedure when asked to describe them. If the purchase is not unexpected, all seek more information before a purchase decision is reached. Among the sources, as is already known, bloggers are always present.

"I go to the internet, ask friends, social medias to check more or less what is recommended and what is not, what is more suitable for me. Then I choose two or three beauty brands, and then I go to the store to know the product" (interview nº 6);

"I previously search information about them online or I previously heard someone's advice about them. Therefore, I usually go with some idea about the product in mind." (interview nº 1);

"(...) I go to the store with something specific in mind (...) If I am looking for a product with a very specific goal, (...) I usually go to beauty blogs to look for reviews and see which products are the best before I actually purchase. (...) bloggers compare more than one product and appoint the best to each kind of skins (...) helps the decision-making process." (interview nº 3).

The situation found is: followers see recommendations or look for information from Digital Influencers, try to find what is adequate for them, save some ideas in their minds or cellular phone, and go to the stores (three of the interviewees besides going to the stores also does online purchases). These ideas are purchase intentions, as they consider buying the products recommended by their sources, in this case bloggers. The decision then happens at the store, and there several things may happen:

"As part of my shopping process, sometimes I ask for guidance from the employees available in the store. Of the 5 products I buy, I would say that 3 of them I had in mind. The other 2 products extra are products that I already know." (interview nº 1);

"(...) If I'm looking for something new at the store it is because I already saw it somewhere: a website, a blog, on social media, something like that. (...) When I see a recommendation that I like, I want to try them and I go to the store to buy them or to inform myself about how the products are." (interview nº 5);

61

"...when I am at stores, I ask for help. I explain about the views I gathered before and ask if it is good also to my skin as it is good to the Digital Influencer said. If the salesperson says 'no I don't recommend this because of this and that reason' and (...) it might happen that I change my mind in the store. Otherwise, If the salesperson says that product is useful and good to me, I don't think twice and buy." (interview nº 7).

Overall, the impact and influence in the buying process from Digital Influencers is stronger as a trigger to the purchase intention to their followers. Introducing a lot of information, advices, recommendations to followers, who is decisive for the purchase moment. This means: all followers go shopping with the intention of, at least, trying the products mentioned by bloggers, whether or not they buy it. Others have a simple idea of purchasing it, which can happen immediately or after attempting or can be altered by new information gathered in store (salespeople's advices or just for not liking the finishing when applying it, etc). The impact on the purchase decision in this sense is very weak.

3) Beauty Bloggers' Changing Old/Introducing New Purchase Habits
As already shown in this study, the existence of digital influencers' impact and influence on purchase intention is a reality, making followers consider buying every product that is recommended and they find useful and adequate for their characteristics. However, its effects are not completely clear. This impact is partly demonstrated by the reality that 4 out of 5 interviewees have affirmed that their interest in cosmetics is greater now that they are following bloggers. One of the interviews, for example, said the Digital Influencers are as *"A constant reminder of items you may need or may not need"* (interview nº 1). The new and huge amount of information made available for followers by bloggers creates on the first a increased curiosity about what else lies behind. The most important attraction is the very well-performing advertising role of introducing customers to their requirements which they did not understand – "Now I understand immediately what is trending. (...) I can access their social media and trought the tutorials I can instantly know which products are being released, and what is trending. (...) The tutorials and swatches made by the bloggers introduced me to a whole new universe of products that I thought was unnecessary." (interview nº 3). The interest in the products has grown as the discovery that they are the answer to needs that did not exist until then makes followers begin to feel those needs and the need to supply them – *"By getting the know*

new techniques, and their significance in the end-result, you become more interested to know more how to use these products...”

Besides that, when products are mentioned as problem solvers and correct these or other aspects of the cosmetics market, etc. There is a new aspiration: look like bloggers – *“They start saying all of us deserve to be beautiful as them using these good products and we start to want them.”* (interview nº 6); *"They always have new products to present and are always 'try it, try it, it is essential for the well-being of your skin.(...) your skin thanks so many benefits that this product brings.' So you try all you can to be your best version."* (interview nº 5).

In this sense, the interest naturally rises when cosmetics are being understood as a means to attain another degree of beauty. Interviewee number 4, on her side, denied partially the impact of bloggers as she claims she have always been really fascinated about beauty products so there was no way to increase her interest. Bloggers are therefore anticipated to have some more concrete impacts on the buy intentions and the growing interest of the followers in beauty products. It was decided to study possible changes in the purchase habits of followers resulting from following beauty bloggers. It is necessary to unveil the concrete repercussions of the so mentioned influence on purchase intentions.

Comparisons between cosmetics enthusiasts were also done to attempt to isolate the impact of the beauty bloggers. All factors relating to beauty products that can be a habit have been evaluated: The amount usually bought, the brands generally purchased, the average price and product type normally selected – among the cosmetics category, in this example.

The results show a significant distinction between followers and non-followers. As the gap continues, even if reduced, it can be ascribed to bloggers' impact when considering only cosmetics enthusiasts. In fact, the qualitative findings fully strengthen this impact. The interviewees' responses were as follows when questioned about past and present habits regarding the amount of products purchased:

"That's true and evident, I purchase more now." (interview nº 7);

“I think I am not affected much influenced by them (digital influencers), but I like to try and as their products look good, I have more curiosity to buy them. (...) if I try them and it looks good, I buy them. (...)Yes, I assume (I buy more products)” (interview nº 5);

"... It's like 'Oh a tutorial!' (...) it does influence, I do not have many options, but it does create the need for me to buy even more make-up than I already own."
(interview nº 2);

"Nowadays, I buy cosmetic products with more frequency. (...) I feel that all purchases were of higher quality and benefits to my skin." (interview nº 1);

"I comprehend more about cosmetics products by following these bloggers (...) and I'm prepared to purchase 3 distinct kinds of foundation because I know each one is best for different moments, for example, winter time, sunny day." (interview nº 3).

The fact that more products are purchased therefore represents a clear and tangible result for beauty bloggers. Related to expenditures, the average cost per product purchased, is between USD 21-60 and USD 61-100 with non-followings showing a mean of little less than that of their supporters (2.29 vs. 2.18). The gap is the same if only cosmetics enthusiastic are taken into account. There is no conclusion based on this difference. On the survey, the beauty bloggers followers, when asked if they already bought products from brands that until then did not know (before start following the recommendations of digital influencers), answered on average (3.32) "Strongly agree". Only cosmetics enthusiasts (3.49) have slightly greater mean. From this, it seems that in terms of prices, there is not a change on the average value due to bloggers.

Some interviewees were more radical in their answers regarding changes in expenses. For example, interviewee nº 5 said: "I know the price can be more expensive depending of the brand, but if I see benefits about these products, I will do the effort to buy it."

This declaration refers to a higher total expenditure, a direct result of the greater bought item quantity and not the average cost per item. However, when questioned if there was more willingness to spend more cash on cosmetics (both per item and overall) than before, the response was "yes." In the main, the other interviewees agree:

"(...) in face products, the majority of the time, the more expensive means better quality. (...) makes it possible to understand the true value of expensive products. (...) Yes, I'm buying more products and more expensive products after the recommendations."
(interview nº 1);

64

"(...)Yes, I am willing to spend more money..." (interview nº 7);

"Clearly I spend much more money, because I also have much more interest."
(interview nº 6);

*"If I believe this (...) it's going to be better for my skin and better quality overall. (...) I
will be prepared to invest a little more."* (interview nº 2);

"...following bloggers has increased my make-up spending." (interview nº 3).

Despite the perceived absolute certainty of the responses, the conclusion that can be obtained is simply that owing to the rise in sales, general spending has risen and there is a greater desire to purchase more costly products. Nothing can be concluded about an effective higher average price per product. When considering only the enthusiasts of cosmetics, the values are slightly higher. This suggests that bloggers not only raise consciousness, but also change brand practices, by introducing or replacing them. This conclusion is fully reinforced by the qualitative results:

*"... it changed a little bit in terms of brands because now I know brands that I didn't
know before."* (interview nº 7);

*"Benefit (...)It's a fresh brand I'm using now because they mentioned it, for example.
Yes, blogs have a lot of impact since I follow them (the brands I buy)."* (interview nº 5);

*"(I'm buying now) Various products from different brands. Now, as I'm Knowing about
more brands I'm allowing myself to try more brands, and I've noticed that it helps me to
achieve better make-up outcomes."* (interview nº 1);

*"...before I thought I needed buy the makeup kit of the same brand, because I thought the
result of one product would depend on the use of another of that brand. (...) Nowadays, I
am much more open to trying new brands."* (interview nº 3).

Indeed, after becoming followers, they expand the range of known and purchased brands. As the brands introduced to their new habits might both be higher or lower end, as known

65

in the interviews, in the "hierarchy" of brands, the movement is not a single direction: *"When a blogger says it's great, I would purchase cheaper products as well. I'm actually following also a few bloggers who only use makeup from the drugstore'...*" (interview nº 7).

One of the most evident and tangible effects observed on purchase intentions was the product type. The main beauty products and services purchased through Digital Influencers, 66% of the respondents answered makeup products, followed by accessories for applying makeup (43%). Indeed, one could conclude that recommendations regarding make up are mainly followed when the expenditure is considered an investment. As clearly mentioned by interviewee nº 1: *"I have always enjoyed wearing makeup and now with many new options that appear every day through the bloggers' recommendations makes my shopping easier"*. Customers are thus willing to spend more in order to guarantee more quality: *"If I like the product she recommends (blogger) and have to pay a little more for it, I buy and use it more on special occasions."* (Interview nº 5). Bloggers are clearly responsible of introducing products no one knew they needed (as mentioned above as a reason for increased interest). The interviewees ' statements were the following:

"I wouldn't even think that I needed an primer to prepare my face before wearing makeup. I didn't even know what it was. Now I have an entire (daily) ritual with those products (...) Nowadays, I usually wear makeup every day. (...) it didn't only influence purchase habits but also personal habits, routines." (Interview nº 7);

"Regarding product type: I used to believe it would be enough to have a straightforward basis, mascara and a simple lipstick. But now! The highlighter, the primer, the concealer..." (interview nº 5);

"Well yes, the range of products I need to follow a tutorial is huge compared to what I used to consider for any look." (interview nº 2);

"I always thought that primer and moisturizer before makeup were unnecessary and pointless, that it wouldn't make a difference in the final result. After watching tutorials and talking to make up artists, and actually using the products, I realized how important

they are, and what a tremendous difference they make on the final result.” (interview n°
3).

In conclusion, it can be said that the major changes brought by bloggers to the buying
habits of supporters are concerned with: more products bought and consequently greater
total expenditure, fresh brands being included and new products being included.
Concerning less tangible impacts, one could mention: higher willingness to buy high end
brands, especially when concerning main products (moisturizer, foundation). Besides for
the keener attitude towards luxury and premium brands, the conclusion is that a direct
impact of recommendations on purchases cannot be generalized.

4.4. Insights from respondents

Apart from the results answering to the research questions, it was really interesting to
realize how into bloggers’ women are. During the data collection process, there were
several remarks indicating real interest in responding to the study and loving the topic.
The theme is fashion, it is trendy, and it is a truth. Bloggers, in general, are ruling the
world and people have completely realized that by now. It was extremely gratifying for
the author to receive such positive feedback, including the seven comments left by
respondents in the survey. There were four particular ones that can be inserted in this
discussion.
One of them regarded the verification which brands do not use animals to tests or which
brands have vegan products. This consideration was not included in the survey and could
be an interesting suggestion for further research, not only because of ethical reasons and
controversy around it, but also regarding bloggers as they are sometimes victims of
accusations from animals’ protectors in their social media, vegan bloggers, etc. A second
one classified the study as eye opening and useful for a reflection about consumerism.
This respondent mainly regarded the part concerning reasons to follow bloggers – which
she realized, in her case, were not the most appropriate – and her conclusion about how
influenced by bloggers she is.
To conclude this theme, a very interesting note, which will also be submitted as an
alternative for future research: highlighting cases in which bloggers launch their own
collections or collaborations with existing brands and if followers are really stimulated to
buy the products after that.

4.5. Summary Table of Hypothesis Results

Study Hypothesis	Situation
H1: Brand's presence on Social Media and YouTube, through brand channels, influence the purchase intention process with that brand	**Validated**
H2: Digital influencers are viewed by their followers as a source of information for their purchase decision process	**Validated**
H3: Digital influencers through their advice and beauty tips from Social Media and digital communication channels influence consumer behaviour	**Validated**
H4: Digital Influencers' presence and advices on Social Media and YouTube, influence the purchase decision	**Validated**

Table 10: Hypothesis overview.

V – CONCLUSION

Currently, beauty bloggers form a group of particular interest. Despite the functional reasons to follow them, there are some Digital Influencers more "recreational" ones, as happens with Stories from Instagram, which ends up being like watching a reality show. As more intimate the contact, the closer followers feel like them and the more their power in the market increase. What matters is that beauty bloggers' are becoming more famous

than "common" celebrities, and brands are turning to them. This clearly indicates a relationship between what bloggers say or do and the sales of the brands mentioned. In this sense, the aim of this study was to understand the influence bloggers have on their followers and how the process develops until the final purchase decision is taken. The research problem was divided into three smaller study issues in an attempt to tackle the larger number of possible variables. The beauty blogger is one of the main sources of cosmetics information. From the analysis made to the interaction followers have with bloggers, it was possible to find out, that even when putting bloggers as the first source of advice, these recommendations are, most of the times, not seek by the followers.

Bloggers interact with followers through posts on their blogs and social media. Instagram and YouTube are the outstanding networks at the moment. The model is clearly visual, with less text, more photos and videos. Most people thought there was no time or patience to read messages on the blog. Some adherents claim that they're more extreme than ever looking for social media bloggers to see what's new, while others confess to checking out their recent blog post once a week. In any case, they all agreed that they would usually only enter their accounts and verify the news. If there's a blogger post, well, if it wasn't, you wouldn't go and see. Exceptions include the purchase of larger or more expensive products. In such cases, they would be able to deliberately check their product or product type opinions on the blogger's accounts. In short, the first conclusion that can be drawn from this is that bloggers interact as information sources and followers:

1) Beauty Bloggers as the information source for pre-purchase

This observation is very important, as followers just forget bloggers if the posts stop appearing in the feed, as a interviewee says. Their posts must be forwarded frequently, and interact spontaneously with the followers, causing followers to stop on their blogs, on the YouTube channel, or wherever they want to. Bloggers perform their function without being asked to post and send information to followers all the time.

Although experience as the most valuable category of information source-related features has been given the first place in rating building, trust is the category that should not fail. This means that the blogger should be qualified, an expert on the matter, etc., in order to gain loyalty, to have a more persuasive authority and to be recognized as a good source of information. A second conclusion for bloggers can be drawn from the following:

2) Beauty Bloggers' as a Trigger of Purchase Intentions/Influencer of Decisions

There has been some evidence that followers trust their bloggers. In that case, as stated during the discussion, if they receive a recommendation that they trust, they are creating expectations on it. This brings us to the end of the second research question.

In this part, what was clear from the perspective of the interviewees is that, as expected, whenever they see a blogger posting, reviewing, etc. and end up liking the product, it creates a buying intention immediately. All this information will be stored in their minds until the store visit.

There can happen anything. More risk-averse followers are always going to double check with salespeople and even ' demand' to try the product before trying it. Then they will decide whether to buy or not. Other followers may just go and buy the product they've been thinking about. Ultimately, what is certain is that with their posts/ recommendations/advices, looked up or not, bloggers trigger the buying intentions of the followers, position the product in the mind of the followers and at least make them enter the store and try it out. The conclusion might be:

3) Recommendations for beauty bloggers are guidelines that are not rules. They trigger the follower's purchase intention but do not determine their decision to buy.

It is, in fact, the intention to bring followers to the store. However, many additional factors may interfere with and reorganize the position already established by the blogger's message. Finally, the changes in buying habits were analyzed to assess the impact of bloggers in a more concrete way. The conclusions came out of a combination of quantitative and qualitative outcomes. The confirmed changes were therefore: higher number of products purchased per year, higher overall costs, consideration, purchase of new brands and new products or types of products (new references to the product that the followers did not purchase before, rather than to new products on the market).

Other, less powerful results, since they represent only a disposition but not an actual habit, considered buying products from a higher price range and being willing to spend more money on a product or, if recommended, buy a luxury/ upper premium brand. The interviewees confirmed them, but as mentioned, these results are a will rather than a habit. Nor was it possible to conclude whether or not the digital influencers actually introduced this willingness. The only way to do this is to make the followers willing to invest in luxury and premium branded cosmetics. This means that they would pay the premium price for those products they wear the most, which are all day in contact with their skin and which should preferably be of high quality. The two main ones are the moisturizer and the foundation. The interest of the followers in beauty products has also been

examined, which has increased considerably as a result of bloggers. This was attributed to the fault in the increasing number of products purchased. The debate led to the end of: 4) Beauty bloggers introduce a lot of information and variety to followers who, by learning about the different purposes of each product and realizing the existence of so many others, begin to feel the needs they have never felt before. They buy the products in order to supply those needs. Then the conclusion for the third question of research is: 5) Beauty bloggers are increasing their followers' knowledge of cosmetic products and introducing them to different brands and product types. In conclusion, given the five statements that emerged from the discussion, the overall answer to the research problem is missing. The interaction between bloggers and followers is brought together is led by the latter.

These, continuously send information that, when interiorized by followers as interesting or useful for them, create a purchase intention and remains in their minds. The effective purchase decision was not proved to be a result of this relationship. Nonetheless, if the intention goes to a positive end and followers adopt the new brand or product type they decided to test, then they are changing their habits due to bloggers recommendations. Furthermore, this process of information collection and purchase intentions development starts to create knowledge base that is not basic anymore and followers become more and more interested on cosmetics. This leads to an increase in their overall expenditures in these products and more purchases. These are constantly sending information that, when internalized as interesting or useful to them by followers, creates a buying intention and remains in their minds. This relationship did not prove that the purchase decision was effective. However, as a result of the digital influencers' recommendations, followers are changing their habits and adopting new brands or product types. Moreover, this method of the information collection and purchase intentions development begins to develop understanding, which is no longer fundamental, and the followers become increasingly interested in cosmetics. This leads to an increase in their overall expenditures in these products and more purchases.

5.1. Limitations

In addition to all the constraints of the methods listed above in Chapter 3 – Methodology, the primary restriction is that the tiny samples and the nearly focused geography make the findings difficult to generalize.

5.2. Future Research

The impact of bloggers ' suggestions directly on luxury branded goods was one goal that was left behind during the process due to the lack of evidence or, possibly, the lack of adequate collection of information. In view of the fact that they are forced to compete with top premium brands in this sector, it would be interesting to know whether there are variations. It is suggested that it should be the exclusive subject of studies to prevent what has happened in this study.

As far as the world of beauty bloggers is concerned, as has already been said, it is a hot topic, an issue that people like to talk about and talk about. This could also be seen as a throwback for bloggers, especially fresh bloggers. Today, everyone is aware of the monetization of bloggers and that they're a company. Whenever bloggers compare to celebrities, remember what they say is trustworthy and reliable because they don't do it for cash. The reality, however, is that they are. There are methods to manage it, but new ones will find it harder to gain the trust of the supporters. Of those already established with a well-known reputation, etc. In this sense, if the classification of features is modified as a result, it would be exciting to see in the future.

In view of the findings described above, it would clearly be a good idea to see more in-depth research on this subject, which could lead to broader and more diverse findings. Understanding how, when and where, for example, the purchase intention is defined and which variables eliminate the intention in a shop once and prevent a purchase is clearly of concern to marketers and marketing managers of products.

Research on the impact of a certain blogger or brand through a number of bloggers would also be a simpler method that would not allow for general outcomes, but would perhaps produce more accurate results. Another option could be to compare the ease of information flow of the fan blogger interaction with two products, or to compare two different bloggers ' methods of presenting the same product / brand.

To conclude this theme, as mentioned on Chaper 4, a very interesting note, which will also be submitted as an alternative for future research: highlighting cases in which bloggers launch their own collections or collaborations with existing brands and if followers are really stimulated to buy the products after that.

VI - REFERENCES

Aaker, D. A., V. Kummar, George S. Day, 2004. **Pesquisa de Marketing.** Second Edition, Editora Atlas.

Abdin, C. 2016. *Visibility labour: Engaging with influencers' fashion brands and #OOTD advertorial campaigns on Instagram.* Media International Australia, 161: 86-100.

Acar, A. and Polonsky, M. 2007. Online social networks and insights into marketing communications. *Journal of Internet Commerce.* 6(4): 55:72.

Aguiar Loureiro, F. (2014). *The Implications On Customer Brand Perceptions Of Merger & Acquisition Activity In The Luxury Industry.* Paris.

Bastien, V., & Kapferer, J.-N. (2013). More On Luxury Anti-Laws of Marketing. In K.-P. Wiedmann, & N. Hennigs, *Luxury Marketing: A Challenge For Theory And Practice* (pp. 19-34). Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler.

Batra, R. & Keller, K. 2016. *Communications: New Findings, New Lessons and New Ideas.* 80: 122–145.

Berthon, P.R., Pitt, L.F., Plangger,K., Shapiro, D.,2012, Marketing Meets Web 2.0, *Social Media and Creative Consumers: Implication for International Marketing Strategy, Business Horizons, Kelley School of Business*, Indiana University; Vol. 55:261-271.

Bishop, D. M., Beauty Vloggers Are Now Cosmetic Brands' Strongest Marketing Tactic. Retrieved from Mad Marketer: http://www.madmarketer.com/topics/branding/articles/418241-beauty-vloggers-now-cosmetic-brands-strongest-marketing-tactic.htm, March 2016, accessed 22 December 2018.

Black, D., Turn On, Lean In, Connect: YouTube Unites Consumers with Brands, https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/en-gb/blog/post/turn-on-lean-in-connect-youtube-unites-consumers-with-brands/, Oct 2015, accessed on 21 March 2019.

Bousquet, K. (2015, June). Everything We Know About Jaclyn Hill's Upcoming Beauty Collaborations. Retrieved from Style Caster: http://stylecaster.com/beauty/jaclyn-hill-collaborations/ , June 2015, accessed 3 March 2019.

Brien, C., 2010. The emergence of the social media empowered consumer. *Mercury Digital Publications*, 32-40.

Casalo, L., Flavian, C., & Guinliu, M. (2008). Promoting consumer's participation in virtual brand communities: A new paradigm in branding strategy. *Journal of Marketing Communications* . 14 : 19-36.

Castelo Branco, S. (2014). *O Impacto Económico Dos Blogues De Moda E Das "It-Girls" Na Indústria Da Moda: Realidade Portuguesa.* Porto.

Castronovo, C., Huag, L (2012). Social Media in an Alternative Marketing Model. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness.* 6 : 117-131.

Chatterjee, P. 2011. Drivers of new product recommending and referral behaviour on social network sites. *International Journal of Advertising,* 20: 77-101.

Chris Dede, 2008. "A seismic shift in epistemology," EDUCAUSE Review, volume 43, number 3, pp. 80–81, and at http://er.educause.edu/articles/2008/5/a-seismic-shift-in-epistemology, accessed 2 September 2018.

Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The Research Act (2nd ed.).* New York: McGraw-Hill.
Deo, M. (2015, October 16). Shift in Power: the Blogger and Vlogger Influence on the World of Fashion. Retrieved from Huffington Post: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/maz-deo/fashion-vloggers-bloggers_b_8302618.html, accessed 2 September 2018.

Dionísio, P. Rodrigues, J. Brochand, B. Baynast, A. 2010. *Publicitor - Comunicação 360º online - offline.* Dom Quixote.

Dionísio, P., *et. al*. 2009. *b-Mercator – Blended marketing*. Alfragide: Dom Quixote.

Donna, L. Hoffman, T. & Novak, P. (1997). A New Marketing Paradigm for Electronic Commerce. *The Information Society: An International Journal* . 13 : 43 – 54.

During, S. R. (2012). *The Effect Of Positivity Of The Blog On Brand Attitude And Purchase Intention: An Empirical Blog Study.* Thesis, Rotterdam.

Fashion Business Intelligence. (2016, February). Top 15 Best Beauty Bloggers To Watch: Makeup & Beauty Vloggers - Evolution, Strategies, Influence and Success Factors. Retrieved from Fashionbi: http://fashionbi.com/insights/marketing-research/top-15-best-beauty-bloggers-to-watch.

Fournier, S., & Lee, L. (2009). Getting brand communities. *Harvard Business Review.* Fourth Dimension Solution. 360º Virtual Tour. From the Fourth Dimension Website: www.fourthdimensionsolutions.com, Obtained in 3 of November of 2018.

Ghanem, K. (2016, February 10). Huda Kattan To Launch HudaBeauty Lip Contouring Pencils. Retrieved from Arabia Style: http://arabia.style.com/beauty/beauty-counter/huda-kattan-huda-beauty-lip-contouring-pencils/.

Goldenberg, J. *et al.* 2001. Talk of the network: a complex systems look at the underlying process of word-of-mouth. *Marketing Letters*, 12 (3): 211-223.

Heine, K. (2012). The Concept Of Luxury Brands. (B. Goldmann, & K. Vredenburgh, Editors) Retrieved from Upmarkit: http://upmarkit.com/sites/default/files/content/ 20130403_Heine_The_Concept_of_Luxury_Brands.pdf .

Hoffman, D., & Fodor, M. 2010. Can You Measure the ROI of Your Social Media Marketing? *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 52(1): 41–49.

Hoffman, K. and Turley, L. 2002. Atmospherics, service encounters and consumer decision making: An integrative Perspective. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice,* 10:33-47.

Jawahar, J.V. and Tamizhjyothi, K. (2013). Consumer attitude towards cosmetic products, *International Journal of Exclusive Management Research*, 3 (6), pp. 608-625.

Jick, T. D. (1979, December). Mixing Qualitative And Quantitative Methods: Triangulation In Action. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24(4), pp. 602-611.

Kapferer, J.-N., & Bastien, V. (2009). *The Luxury Strategy: Break The Rules Of Marketing To Build Luxury Brands.* London and Philadelphia: Kogan Page.

Katz, E. 1957. The Two-Step Flow of Communication: An Up-To-Date Report on an Hypothesis. *Political Opinion Quarterly*, 21: 61-78.

Keller, K. 2001. Mastering the marketing communications mix: Micro and macro perspectives on integrated marketing communication programs. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 17: 819-847.

Kelman, H. C. 1961. Process of opinion change. *The Public Opinon Quarterly*, 25: 59-78.

King, J. (2016, February 26). Beauty Bloggers More Impactful Than Experts for Industry's Continued Growth: Report. Retrieved from Luxury Daily: http://www.luxurydaily.com/beauty-bloggers-more-impactful-than-experts-for-industrys-continued-growth-report/.

Kumar, A.H., John, S.F. and Senith, S. (2014). A Study on factors influencing consumer buying behavior in cosmetic Products, *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 4 (9), pp. 1-6.

Laerd Statistics, Friedman Test in SPSS Statistics – How to run the procedure, understand the output using a relevant example, https://statistics.laerd.com/spss-tutorials/friedman-test-using-spss-statistics.php, accessed 3 September 2018.

Lane, K. (2010). Mastering the Marketing Communications Mix: Micro and Macro Perspectives on Integrated Marketing Communication Programs. *Journal of Marketing Management.* 17 : 819 – 847.

Langaro, D., Rita, P., & de Fátima Salgueiro, M. 2015. Do social networking sites contribute for building brands? Evaluating the impact of users' participation on brand awareness and brand attitude. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 7266: 1–23.

Ledbetter, C. (2015, April 16). This Breakdown Of How Much Beauty Bloggers Make Will Prompt You To Reevaluate Your Life. Retrieved from Huffpost Style: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/04/16/what-do-beauty-bloggers-make_n_7078546.html.

Leggat, H. (2016, March 1). Brands Should Embrace The Beauty of Bloggers. Retrieved from Biz Report: http://www.bizreport.com/2016/03/brands-should-embrace-the-beauty-of-bloggers.html.

Lopaciuk, A., & Loboda, M. (2013). Global Beauty Industry Trends In The 21st Century. Management, *Knowledge and Learning International Conference*, (pp. 1079-1087). Zadar.

Loudon, D., & Bitta, A. 1988. *Consumer behavior – Concepts and applications* (3rd ed.). Singapore: McGraw-Hill Book Co.

Lovelock, C. & Wirtz, J. 2007. *Services marketing: People, technology, strategy.* Canada: Pearson Education.

Mangold,W.G; ; Faulds, D.J; 2009, Social Media: The New Hybrid Element of the Promotion Mix, Business Horizons, *Kelley School of Business*, Indiana University; Vol. 52:357-365.

Marken, G. A. 2007. The new communications tools... listening, helping. *Public Relations Quartely*, 52: 21-23.

Maroco, J. 2010. *Análise estatística com utilização do SPSS* (3rd ed.). Edições Sílabo. Lisboa.

Montes, S. (2015, March 18). The Top 5 Beauty Vloggers And How Much Money They Really Make. Retrieved from The Zoe Report: http://thezoereport.com/beauty/how-much-vloggers-make/#slide-2.

Mowen, J., & Minor, M. 1998. *Consumer behavior* (5th ed.). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Mulhern,F. (2009). Integrated marketing communications: From media channels to digital connectivity. *Journal of Marketing Communications.* 15 : 85 – 101.

Nelson, P. 1974. Advertising as information. *Journal of Political Economy*, 83 (4):729-754.

Oxford University Press. (2019). Oxford Dictionaries. Retrieved from Oxford Dictionaries: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/, accessed 9 September 2019.

Preston, C.C. and Colman, A.M. 2000, "Optimal number of response categories in rating scales: reliability, validity, discriminating power, and respondent preferences", **Acta Psychologica,** 104: 1-15.

Rai, N. (2013). Impact of advertising on consumer behavior and attitude with reference to consumer durables, *International journal of management research and business strategy*, 2 (2), pp, 75-87.

Rebecca Blood, 2004. "Hammer, nail: How blogging software reshaped the online community," at http://www.rebeccablood.net/essays/blog_software.html, accessed 27 July 2019.

Research Methodology. (2019). Inductive Approach. Retrieved from Research Methodology: http://research-methodology.net/research-methodology/research-approach/inductive-approach-2/.

Rutz, O., & Bucklin, R. (2011). From Generic to branded: A model of spillover in paid search advertising. *Journal of Marketing Research.* 48 : 87 – 102.

Schivinski, B., & Dabrowski, D. 2015. The impact of brand communication on brand equity through Facebook. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 9(1): 31–53.

Schultz, D. (2001). Marketing Communication Planning in a Converging Marketplace. *Journal of Integrated Communication.* 24 – 28.

Sheth, J. *et al.* 1999. *Customer behavior – Consumer behavior and beyond*. Orlando: The Dryden Press.

Sirma, E. 2009. *Word-of-Mouth Marketing from a global perspective*, Master thesis in International Management, ISCTE-IUL, Lisboa.

Skeat, W. W. (1888). *An Etymological Dictionary Of The English Language*. Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press.

Solomon, M., & Stuart, E. 2000. *Marketing – Real people, real choices* (*2nd ed.*). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Solomon, M., Bamossy, G., Askegaard, S. and Hogg, M. 2006. *Consumer Behaviour. A European Perspective*. Third edition, England: Pearson Education.

Tyrimou, N. (2015, September 23). YouTube Bloggers and Celebrities in Beauty: Powerful Advertising Tool or Competition? Retrieved from Euromonitor International: http://blog.euromonitor.com/2015/09/youtube-bloggers-and-celebrities-in-beauty-powerful-advertising-tool-or-competition.html.

Uzunoglu, E. and Kip, S. M. 2014. Brand communication through digital influencers: Leveraging blogger engagement. *International Journal of Information Management.*34: 592-602.

Vinerean, S., Cetina, I., Dumitrescu, L., & Tichindelean, M. 2013. The effects of social media marketing on online consumer behavior. *International Journal of Business and Management,* 8(14): 66-79.

Vineyard, C. L. (2014). *The Relationship Between Fashion Blogs And Intention To Purchase And Word Of Mouth Behavior.* Thesis, University of Nebraska, Deparment of Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design, Lincoln.

Wang, H.-Y. (2011). Exploring The Factors Of Gastronomy Blogs Influencing Readers' Intention To Taste. *International Journal of Hospitality Management,* 30, pp. 503-514.

Wisdom, J., & Creswell, J. W. (2013). Mixed Methods: Integrating Quantitative And Qualitative Data Collection And Analysis While Studying Patient-Centered Medical Home Models. *Rockville: Agency of Healthcare Research and Quality.*

Xu Yang, S.J. (2012). Ideal Types of Strategic Innovation: An Exploratory Study of Chinese Cosmetic Industry, *International Journal of Business and Management,* 7 (17), pp. 78-87.

Zhang, C., & Hsin, Y. 2015. Exploring interactive communication using social media. *The Service Industries Journal,* 35: 670–693.

VII – APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: ONLINE SURVEY

Introductory Note

> Dear participants,
>
> This questionnaire was developed with the purpose of composing my master's thesis, in which the theme is to study the behaviour of cosmetic purchases and how the beauty market has changed with the emergence of Digital Influencers. The research is focused on women.
>
> My name is Lorena Batista. I am a Master of Management student at ISCTE Business School in Lisbon. The thesis is the final requirement to complete the program and the answers to this survey are essential to obtain the results.
>
> I appreciate your help, and I ask you to respond with the utmost precision and honesty, it's very important for the quality of the research. The answers will be kept anonymous. Thank you for your time and participation.

PART I – Personality Traits

Q1

Question 1: What kind of activities do you practice in your free time? (possible to select more than one activity)

- [ ] Watch TV, Series, Movies
- [ ] Browse the Internet (social media and news outlets)
- [ ] Spend time with friends and family
- [ ] Physical Activities
- [ ] Read (books, magazines, news...)
- [ ] Outra opção...

Q2

Question 2: Choose your level of agreement on the following statements according to your usual behavior

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I have the habit of seeking advice before making a purchase decision.	○	○	○	○	○
I spend a lot of my time on social media platforms (instagram, Facebook, youtube, blogs).	○	○	○	○	○
I like to follow the latest trends when it is about treatments and beauty products.	○	○	○	○	○
I believe people are honest when they give me advice about products.	○	○	○	○	○
I always try to get new products that are trending.	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The more choices, the better!	○	○	○	○	○
I like to buy quality products for my skin.	○	○	○	○	○
I always choose beauty products for quality, not for price.	○	○	○	○	○
I love shopping.	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I do not believe that expensive beauty products are better than cheaper products.	○	○	○	○	○
I like to always have a variety of cosmetic products at home (specific products for different seasons and events).	○	○	○	○	○
I always trade and research a lot before buying beauty products.	○	○	○	○	○
I'd rather buy cheaper products, even if the quality is lower.	○	○	○	○	○

Q3

Question 3: How much do you consider yourself interested in the news of the "Beauty World"?

○ Very much! I always do research on.

○ Not so much! I know something only when I look into it.

○ I do not mind and I do not like to hear about it.

PART II – Usage/Ownership and purchase habits

Q4

Question 4: On what occasions do you wear makeup?

○ Every day

○ At least twice a week

○ Only on special occasions (weddings, birthdays, dinners, etc.)

○ Never

Q5

Question 5: On average, how many cosmetic products do you buy per month? (includes materials for applying makeup, etc.)

○ None

○ 1 to 5

○ 6 to 10

○ 11 to 20

○ 21 or more

Q6

Question 6: How much, on average, do you spend for each product purchased? (Values will be presented below in dollars, as this is a global survey)

○ Less than or equal to $ 20

○ $21 to $60

○ $61 to $100

○ $101 to $200

○ Above $200

Q7

Question 7: Where do you buy most products?

- ○ Online

- ○ Supermarkets/pharmacies

- ○ Specialty Beauty Stores / Beauty Salons

- ○ Representatives (ex: avon)

Q8

Question 8: In terms of brands, which of the following is part of most of your beauty products?

- ○ Luxury brands - Burberry, Channel, Dior, etc

- ○ Premium brands - Estée, Lauder, Lancome, La mer, etc.

- ○ Specialized brands - MAC, Urban Decay, Nars, La Roche-Posay, Vich, etc.

- ○ Specialized brands with friendly quotes - Avon, The Apothecary, L'oreal, Maybelline, etc.

Q9

Question 9: What was the value of the most expensive product you have ever purchased?

Texto de resposta curta

Q10

Question 10: Which recommendations influence the most your decision when buying beauty products?

- ☐ Family/Friends

- ☐ Colleagues and some acquaintances

- ☐ Digital Influencers

- ☐ Revistas de moda e beleza

- ☐ Contracts from brands (models that are part of the production of the brand's catalog)

Consider that the term "digital influencers" refers to any influencer (blogger, vlogger, youtuber, celebrities, subcelebrities) who share content related to products or beauty treatments on their digital platform (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.).

PART III – Digital Influencers

Digital Influencers' meaning in the survey

Q11

Question 11: Do you follow digital influencers who give product tips and beauty treatments? If so, how many?

Texto de resposta curta

Q12

Question 12: Have you ever bought beauty products after the recommendation of a digital influencer?

○ Yes

○ No

Q13

Question 13: Select the characteristics of a Digital Influencer that most appeals to you (you can choose more than 1 characteristic):

- [ ] Knowledge and ability

- [ ] Personality

- [ ] Reliability

- [ ] Sincerity/Honesty

- [ ] Elegance

- [ ] Around the same age

- [ ] Nationality

- [ ] Skills

- [ ] Ethics

- [ ] Beauty

- [ ] Fame

Q14

Question 14: Choose your level of agreement on the following statements according to your usual behavior

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I trust in digital influencers that I follow.	○	○	○	○	○
Through the influence of digital influences, I already bought brands that until then did not know.	○	○	○	○	○
After beginning to follow a digital influencer, I came to know more and better about beauty brands.	○	○	○	○	○
Digital influencers are more reliable to give beauty advice than the commercials of beauty brands themselves.	○	○	○	○	○
When I started following digital influencers, I began to spend more money and invest more in different products and beauty treatments.	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I have already bought products that my favorite digital influencer indicated.	○	○	○	○	○
I buy beauty products after seeing indications of digital influencers.	○	○	○	○	○
With the emergence of digital influencers, the choice for beauty products became more practical.	○	○	○	○	○
With the emergence of digital influencers, I see that there is greater variety and competitiveness in the beauty market.	○	○	○	○	○

Q15

Question 15: Answer the question below only if you have already purchased services or beauty products through Digital Influencers: (you can check more than one option):

☐ Accessories for applying makeup (Brushes, cases, etc.)

☐ Makeup Products

☐ Skin treatments with a qualified professional

☐ Skin Rejuvenation Products

☐ Skin Care Products

☐ Produtos para cabelo e/ou corpo

☐ Others

PART IV – Demographics

Q16

In which country do you live?

Texto de resposta curta

Q17

What is your nationality?

Texto de resposta curta

Q18

Gender:

◯ Male

◯ Female

◯ Rather not say

Q19

How old are you?

Texto de resposta curta

APPENDIX 2: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS' SCRIPT

PART I – Interviewee Profile

Age:	
Nationality:	
Country of residence:	

PART II – Purchase Behaviour

Q1 How much do you like and wear make-up/cosmetics?

Q2 Describe your regular cosmetics' purchase process. Where do you usually buy, do you buy what you see at the store, do you go with something in mind, do you search for information before, is it more spontaneous or more structured, depends? Etc.

Q3 Do you ask for advice/look for information or recommendations? To whom/where?

Q4 Why do you specifically choose those sources?

PART IV – Bloggers' Influence

Q1 Do you follow any beauty blog? (Consider any blogger, youtuber, even only snapchater or instagrammer as long as he/she gives advices regarding cosmetics) What was your initial motivation to follow them and what is your motivation to keep following them (there are many other bloggers, what is the reason that made you choose and "keep" the ones you are following now)?

Q2 Describe your interaction with beauty bloggers. How many times you visit their social media accounts, which social media do you check the most, do you go there searching for specific products reviews, do you go there just to see what is new, etc…?

Q3 Have your purchase decisions been positively or negatively influenced by bloggers' recommendations? (Have you purchased a product due to a bloggers' recommendation, or stop considering it because of a negative review?) What type of product?

Q4 Do you think your interest for beauty products increased after you started following the blogs? If yes, why do you think that happened?

Q5 What have been the main changes in your purchasing process/habits? Do you buy different/the same products, different/the same brands, in different/the same places, more/less products, more/less expensive? How was it before and how is it now? Or is it all the same?

Q6 Do you think that you are more willing to spend more money on cosmetics in general? (Both per product and in total) Are you keener to buy higher end brands because they are recommended?

Q7 Do you intent to keep relying on bloggers recommendations? In which situation would you stop doing that? Is there anything that would "betray your trust" or make you stop relying on them / considering them a source of information?