What is the impact of Instagram influencers on women's brand consumption in Belgium?

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What is the Impact of Instagram Influencers on Women's Brand Consumption in Belgium?

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1. Introduction

1.1. Context

Over the last couple of years, the social media Instagram has revolutionized the world and pushed aside well-known social platforms such as Facebook or Snapchat. Instagram is a platform that enables users to share updates instantaneously through pictures or videos but also supplement their description with hashtags. The number of users has exponentially grown since its inauguration in October 2010 (Hu, Manikonda and Kampbhampati, 2014). In Pew Research Center's article, it is said that photos and videos have become the fundamental online social currency, which contributed to the inflow of more than 500 million daily active users (Omnicore, 2020).

An engaging platform is where people spend time on, and Instagram is a network on which people connect daily. Out of ten users, six will open the application at least once a day, browsing during an average time of 53 minutes. Engaged users are evidently involved in brands' content. This relationship built between brands and customers is developed in section 1.5. Brand attractiveness and identification. It affects the desire of brands to get active in e-commerce marketing (Chen, 2020). An important notion to keep in mind is that relationships are a fundamental property to maintain users' interaction (Veissi, 2017).

Social media and Instagram in particular have become the ideal platform on which competitive advantages of communications and promotion of brands' products can take place. Instagram is a social media powerhouse ranked first as the most important and impactful means of communication (Bailis, 2020). By thoroughly examining the social network Instagram, it is possible to decode social, cultural and environmental concerns through people's posts, which allows brands and social influencers to target properly what they should expose more or in a different way in their content (Hu, Manikonda and Kampbhampati, 2014).

To gain a new audience, it is crucial for brands to develop their communication on Instagram and therefore to give importance to social influencers. Influencers have become the key to promoting a product in a much more efficient way than television or radio commercials. Influencer marketing has, for the last five years, evolved from a simple additional market to a 5-10 billion dollar industry. It is an effective marketing technique as its impact is easily measurable and marketers are satisfied with the goals they reach with it. This year, around 17%

of businesses have spent more than half of their entire marketing budget on social influencers (Bailis, 2020). The rise in social media's popularity caused product placement, ads, and sponsorship to be a key part of Instagram.

For a partnership between brands and influencers to occur, the brands first require one or several opinion leaders. They play an essential part in the diffusion of a new product and have to fulfil at least one of these criteria: be regarded as a professional of a specific product or service, be fully involved and contribute to an online community; or be considered by its followers as being of good advice regarding the purchase of goods (Casaló, Flavián and Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2020). Social influencers establish for the brands a credibility but also increase sales through the commitment of followers with a business in the online environment.

1.2. Problem statement

The main research question of this dissertation is:

What is the impact
of Instagram influencers on women's brand consumption in Belgium?

The primary aim of this dissertation is to frame an understanding of the social influencers' impact from a successful promotion of brands and the engagement effect that is built between their female followers and the brands they work with.

In order to have a more structured plan of the work and a clear description of the concept being examined, the main research question is divided in sub-research questions:

1. What is the general impression women followers have of influencers in Belgium?
2. How important is the engagement between a digital influencer and purchasers?
3. What do consumers think of the brands promoted by social media influencers?
4. How do followers perceive the authenticity and trustworthiness of influencers' brand placement?
5. Do social influencers have more impact on women's consumption than traditional advertising advertisements?

6. How does the photo/video composition posted by the influencer affect, positively or not, the follower's attitude towards the brand?

1.3. Research motivations

From an academic point of view, it is in the best interest of scholars to expand their knowledge on the subject considering the daily expansion of social media influencers across the globe and their positive sale repercussions for companies practicing online commerce. Getting a more profound insight into women's brand consumption in Belgium influenced by social media marketing can only be beneficial for future studies in other countries with similar demographic situations.

This study will not only provide information on influencer marketing but it will also further comment on Instagram users' attitude towards their favorite online celebrities and e-commerce perception.

From a managerial perspective, the findings of this dissertation will be valuable to develop the inclusion of influencers in e-commerce in order to promote brands' products and services on Instagram. It is relevant for the influencer marketing field to acknowledge the significance of influencer / follower relationship and to fill in the data gap with this additional research. In particular this past decade, partnership between businesses and influencers has become a real and successful marketing technique, it is crucial to understand Instagram users' attitude online.

Through the quantitative interviews, influencers themselves can take advantage of the results to grasp a better understanding of the consumers' behavior on Instagram and to upgrade the quality of content they offer their followers. Qualitative research brings complementary information to brands on how influencer marketing works and how a specific service or product can be promoted to be appreciated by customers/followers.

1.4. Contributions

This dissertation will shed light on an important marketing field that has not been fully explored yet. The research will not only offer insights into influencers' work and brands marketing techniques, but also provide useful information for marketing practitioners willing to launch or improve influencer marketing.

Moreover, this study will brings additional theoretical information on the field of study but also on the latest statistics related to Instagram, influencer marketing and users of the social media platform.

At last, the results of this dissertation will bring awareness on female consumers' behavior and provide useful knowledge for social media development of businesses in Belgium. The research could benefit, by all means, other European countries' companies whose female consumers have a parallel attitude on Instagram.

1.5. Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is divided into six chapters designed to answer the aforementioned sub-research questions.

The introduction offers an overview of the dissertation and its main research question with a short analysis of the actual context. The author also mentions the managerial and academic motivations as well as the contributions the dissertation can provide.

The second chapter will be dedicated to the literary review. Composed of three parts, it aims to build a better understanding of what is already known about the research question, *What is the Impact of Instagram Influencers on Women's Brand Consumption in Belgium?*. The first part is about Instagram and social influencers; it gives a theoretical insight into what social media is and focuses on social influencer marketing. This part also contains an overview of Belgium's legislation. In the second part of the literary review is described the consumers purchase behavior as well as the five-stage decision model, a method used by marketers to identify the process of the customer choices from the first to the final stage. Finally, the last part consists of a general conclusion of the literary review.

The third chapter explains the research objectives and the necessity of conducting both qualitative and quantitative interviews.

The fourth chapter describes the quantitative research, which investigates the impact of Instagram influencers on women's brand consumption in Belgium. It includes the various steps, which consist of the methodology, the analysis, the results and the conclusion.

The fifth chapter develops the qualitative research which provides the same stages as the quantitative one but this time includes the interviews of Belgian or foreign influencers and brands that work with the tool of influencer marketing.

Finally, the sixth chapter summarizes the research dissertation, draws a general conclusion on the qualitative and quantitative interview results and outlines the limits and further research areas that could be explored in the future.

2. Literary review

I. Instagram and social influencers

1.1. Social media

In the 1980s, scientists have been mentioning a link between the nature of sociality and what was called, at the time, "computed mediated communication". At that time, online interplay was only a replacement for real life communication (Hinton and Hjorth, 2019). However, in the past decade, social media usage has grown considerably. One of the main reasons for the flourishing of social media is that it has become a journalistic instrument and subsequently brought undeniable advantages not only for the users craving for news but also for the traditional media who can raise their number of viewers online (Opgenhaffen and d'Haenens, 2015).

This development has impacted the political and economic sphere all across the world. Private life has also been marked by its appearance as people can now share and get informed about anything, the second it crosses their mind. In fact, in 2015, Pew Research Center found out that 65% of American adults use social networking sites. Moreover, this study has shown that women and men surf equally on social media but that age interacts greatly with its usage. 90% of adults between 18 and 29 years old are active users of networking sites (Perrin, 2015).

In the beginning of the 21st century, blogging websites started to appear and people did not need much technological knowledge to navigate them. Facebook and MySpace, followed by Twitter in 2008, were the pioneers which encouraged people to publish and share their thoughts. The phenomenon rapidly captured the attention of companies of all kinds and also what is called, today, digital influencers. By 2010, the social web became popular with an average of a billion tweets per hour on twitter (Gunelius, 2011). Nowadays, the power of social media keeps expanding daily as more and more people join online communities. Its success not only comes from the fact that people join the movement but is also mainly due to the contribution they provide on it (Tuten, 2017).

1.2. Evolution of marketing on social media

The 21st century has revolutionized the communication world on social networks and has given the most substantial marketing opportunity since the appearance of television advertising. Gunelius (2011) affirms that the survival of businesses is based on a solid and strategic social media marketing plan. Social media marketing created a close relationship between the customer and the company, which is truly beneficial for both parties.

What does social media marketing stand for? According to Gunelius,

> Social media marketing is any form of direct or indirect marketing that is used to build awareness, recognition, recall, and action for a brand, business, product, person, or other entity and is carried out using the tools of the social Web, such as blogging, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, and content sharing (2011).

As defined in the previous paragraph, the evolution of marketing communications includes new tactics such as creating interesting posts for Instagram, launching a campaign video on YouTube or even dedicating time to communicate with people on LinkedIn. This expansion of the communicating world focuses on the word "social" that is participating actively in the conversation on social media platforms, and which is fundamental for its success (Gunelius, 2011). Brands also needed to change their plans towards a more social network oriented marketing since consumers are now able to move forward online commercials or even set up ad-blocking software on their computers (De Veirman, Cauberghe and Hudders, 2017).

Traditional marketing strategies follow the four Ps rules: Product, Price, Promotion and Place. In her book, Tracy Tuten (2017) stresses the importance of adding a fifth P, which represents participation, in social media marketing plan. Indeed, participation includes many factors businesses need to take into consideration for their marketing strategy to function. Those factors are to maintain the customer care online, inform customers of updates and benefits and other new social media options. Tuten mentions Peter Drucker, a master in marketing, who defined the purpose of a business as the creation of a customer. With the fifth P for participation, this phrase can be broadened to "the purpose of a business is to create customers who create other customers".

1.3. Instagram as a marketing tool

According to Instagram's own website, 60% of users declare discovering new products on the application and more than 200 million people explore a professional profile every day (Instagram, 2020).

It is well known that people tend to get advice or opinion from acquaintances rather than directly pay for something seen in an advertisement or any formal marketing source. Research on marketing and consumer behavior has shown that consumers are more likely to purchase a product or service when they obtain information about it through informal or social sources (De Veirman, Cauberghe and Hudders, 2017). This leads to the emergence of influencer marketing and in this particular field, Instagram influencers. Instagram has only grown more and more popular since its launch and has now almost defeated the other famous social platforms, especially regarding lifestyle brands.

A Finnish study showed that younger Instagram users, aged between 15 and 24, use Instagram regularly and that they are the most likely to be influenced by Instagram posts and influencers' recommendations. Young adults tend to pay more attention to what Instagram influencers purchase and therefore to the business partnerships they promote (Somppi, 2017).

Moreover, what makes Instagram a valuable tool are the posts or stories, which are easy to produce and publish, and thus require much less cost compared to long-form content such as videos on YouTube. The application posts enable social influencers to place a product in a memorable visual way and can add a narrative description or discount code beneath it.

Another important advantage is that statistics are directly available on the network so that it is simple for marketers to get feedback on the result of their campaign. Bailis mentions that 78% of marketers believe Instagram posts are the most efficient for influencer marketing. Instagram is the first choice of marketers out of all well-known social media platforms today (Bailis, 2020).

1.4. Influencer marketing

Social influencers now play a key role in marketing. They can be defined as common people who gained enough social media popularity and have, in consequence, the power of influencing others in purchases' decisions. To convince their followers, influencers involve them into their

private life and give them an insight into their experiences and opinions. This gives followers the impression of knowing the person, connecting with them and building a trust relationship towards the "celebrity". Digital opinion leaders are not comparable to Hollywood stars, as they seem to be more accessible for the social media users who have the possibility to relate to them more closely.

Furthermore, since influencers' posts can be distributed in a click, a buzz can be generated as rapidly. This viral effect has the advantage of touching not only the influencer's followers but also the contacts of these followers and, therefore, of spreading the message even more broadly on the application. Brands working with influencers benefit from word-of-mouth assets and advertise their merchandise indirectly (De Veirman, Cauberghe and Hudders, 2017).

Instagram was by far the most popular influencer marketing channel in 2019 (Bailis, 2020). In the graph below, it is shown that Instagram is without doubt the most strategic social media to work with for marketers. The significance of the application is not surprising since as a massive growth occurred in 2018, when Instagram reached 1 billion total users (Mediakix, 2019).
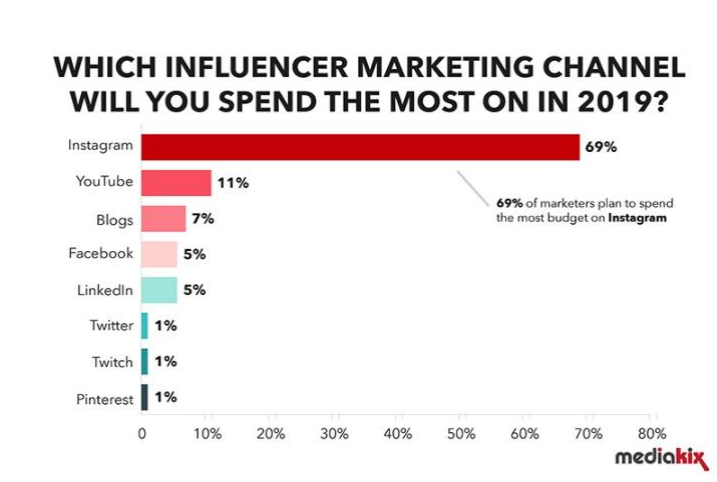
Figure 1. Influencer Marketing Channel Statistics (Mediakix, 2019)

1.5. Brand attractiveness and identification

The tactical worth of supervising brand identity was antecedently recognized by brand management literature (So and al., 2017). In 2001, Kim and al. already proved the effective relationship of attractiveness, distinctiveness and self-expressive value of brand personality towards consumers' brand identification. They also introduced that brand identification is decisive for word-of-mouth accounts and that it plays an indirect role on brand loyalty.

One of the main marketing goals for most companies is to construct a long lasting relationship with consumers. This consumer-brand labeling is greatly influenced by brand attractiveness in which the profound relationship can be defined as brand loyalty and resilience to unfavorable information (Elbedweihy and al., 2016).
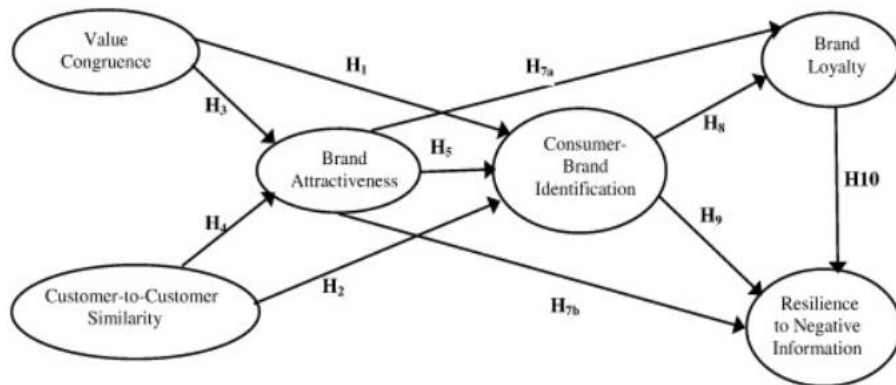
Figure 2. The conceptual model (Elbedweihy and al., 2016)

According to Elbedweihy and al. (2016), the operators of brand identification are considerably contrasting. The customer-to-customer similarity shows why purchasers are drawn towards certain brands and not others. Brands tend to have an appealing identity when there is congruence between the company's and the customers' values. The other driver to consumer-brand identification is value congruence; determined consumers show a tendency to influence one another when sharing similarities. This leads researchers to believe that when individuals notice great affinities to other customers of a brand, they are more likely to develop affection to that brand. Research highlights the value for marketers to recognize the pertinent elements that strengthen identification and develop best harmonization among the desirabilities of the aimed market and brand.
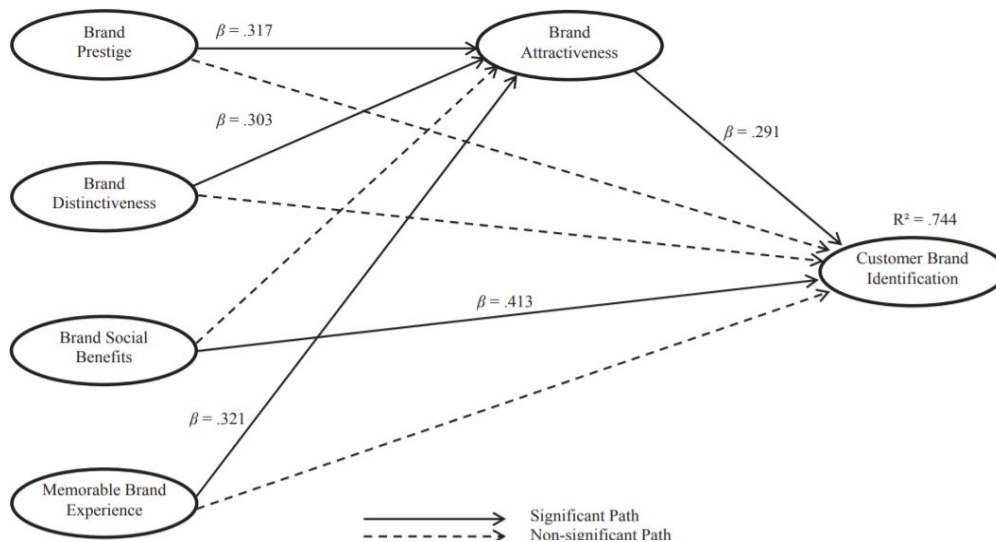
Figure 3. Result for the final structural model (So and al., 2017)

Through their structural model, So and al. (2017) demonstrate that brand prestige and distinctiveness, as well as memorable brand experiences have an impactful but indirect effect on customer brand identification through the medium of brand attractiveness, whereas brand social benefits directly influence customer brand identification. The findings point out the relevance of displaying an attractive brand identity to aim at purchaser to reach customer brand identification.

1.6. Collaboration between influencers and companies

Business between brands and opinion leaderships has become very popular over the last few years. In order to reach a quality-driven approach for marketing collaboration, the conditions and benefits behind the influencer marketing partnerships are more significant (Brauer and Schmidt, 2018). Marketing intellectuals dedicate attention to influencers who are viewed as a decisive element of word-of-mouth communication and whose power of persuasion is favorable to the market (Atik and Ertekin, 2012).

1.6.1. The ripple effect

Online advertising efficiency can be explained with the "ripple effect" in which word-of-mouth (WOM) plays a key part. WOM, in the sphere of customer interplay, has an effect on consumer

reaction to a product or service and its publicity. Hogan and al. (2004) add that this technique was proven successful in the distribution of recent merchandise.
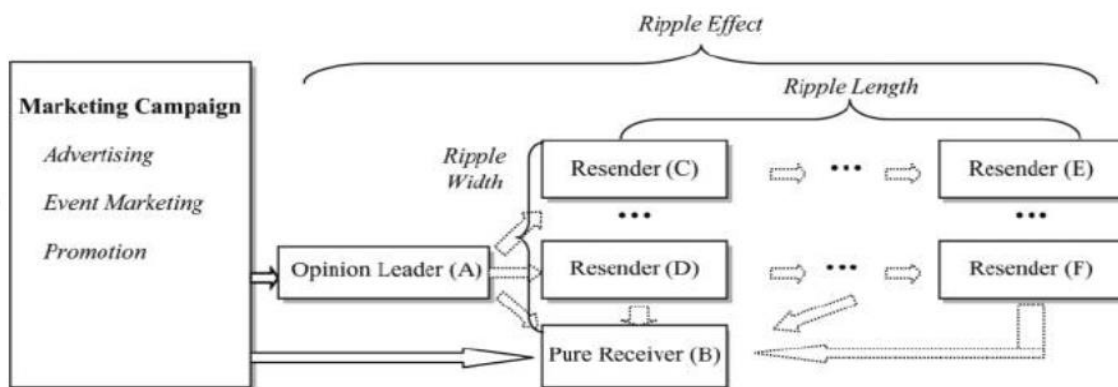
General flow model of WOM information

Figure 4. The ripple effect (Huang and al., 2011)

Every agent present in the figure plays a role in the ripple effect. Firstly, there are two types of receivers, i.e., the ones who resend the information (e.g. C, D, E and F) and the pure receivers (e.g. B). In marketing, resenders are especially important to boost and lengthen the scope of the ripple effect.

In this diagram, Huang and al. (2011), point out the importance of information. It is one of the most relevant characteristics that influences consumers' WOM attitude. It is also explained that the ripple effect is not the same in an online or offline environment. In real life, opinion leaders and resenders usually know each other and use oral communication. On social media, the written format is usually the most applied to diffuse information about a product, but as opposed to an offline environment, people do not know each other. This is the reason why receivers have to pay more attention to WOM information when they judge a post (Huang and al., 2011).

1.6.2. Influencer selection

The brand's influencer choice is decisive for the outcome of a campaign as well as for the images that the brand wants to convey. The brand marketing plan has to be precise on the message that needs to be diffused but also on the segment that should be aimed (Biaudet, 2017). The choice of influencers has to focus on quality and has to bring a strategic fit for the company

to guarantee thorough agreement from beginning to end of the collaboration (Brauer and Schmidt, 2018).

The popularity of the influencer is the first major criterion because it can leverage the potential of WOM. The more people will see the content, the more potential customers the brand will gain. De Veirman and al. (2017)'s research demonstrated that to reach greater recognition of popularity, a large number of followers is required. Nevertheless, an opinion leader is not always notorious even if its visibility contacts the targeted segment (Biaudet, 2017).

Moreover, a positively evaluated influencer is not the only benchmark. It is important for a business to pick a representative who has some common points with the brand or at least a plausible approach for advertising it (De Veirman and al., 2017). A research on opinion leadership also reveals that communication skills are crucial to promote a product or service. A brand is therefore encouraged to collaborate with influencers who have or can acquire knowledge and proficiency on the product but also have a genuine interest in it (Atik and Ertekin, 2012).

Furthermore, the extent of social leaders' influence is determined by their believeableness and reliability. In their study, Atik and Ertekin (2012) found out that the trustworthiness of an influencer is one of the most appreciated characteristics by its followers. A self-confident opinion leader shapes oneself a favorable credibility image. Other qualities should appear in an influencer, such as being an expert in his/her sphere of influence, being able to create appropriate content available on social media, such as Instagram posts and stories, but also being capable of dealing with marketing and commercial partnerships (Biaudet, 2017).

In the book *Influence Marketing* by Brown and Fiorella (2013), it is stated that the customer should be at the center of the marketing strategy as he/she is the one making purchase decisions.
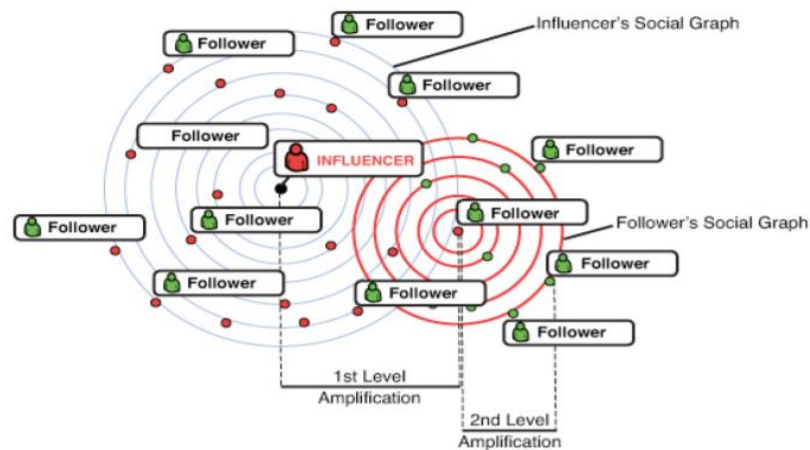
Figure 5. Fisherman's Influence Marketing Model (Brown and Fiorella, 2013)

According to figure 3, with influencers placed in the middle of the influence marketing strategy, marketers have to determine which opinion leader is followed by people interested in a particular activity or keyword. As mentioned before, it is important to understand the function of the influencer in his/her community for the brand to be able to merge into their relationship. This model is called the Fisherman's Influence Marketing Model and consists in finding the fish you should catch within the right ocean and then throw the largest net hoping for a fishing success. This technique can be used to spot potential influencers and their public (Brown and Fiorella, 2013).

A company can also decide to use the second theory put forward by Brown and Fiorella, which is the Customer-centric model. In this model, the customer takes the place of the influencer in the center of the map. In this scenario, people, media, influencers or technologies circle the customer and affect his/her purchase decisions. Like in the Fisherman's Influence Marketing Model, the goal is to determine the statistics of the aimed audience and the social group they interact with the most. Nevertheless, in figure 4, people with a far-reaching scope can be designated as future macro-influencers. The marketing team can therefore educate and stimulate the chosen brand ambassadors to advocate for the brand on their social media platforms (Brown and Fiorella, 2013).
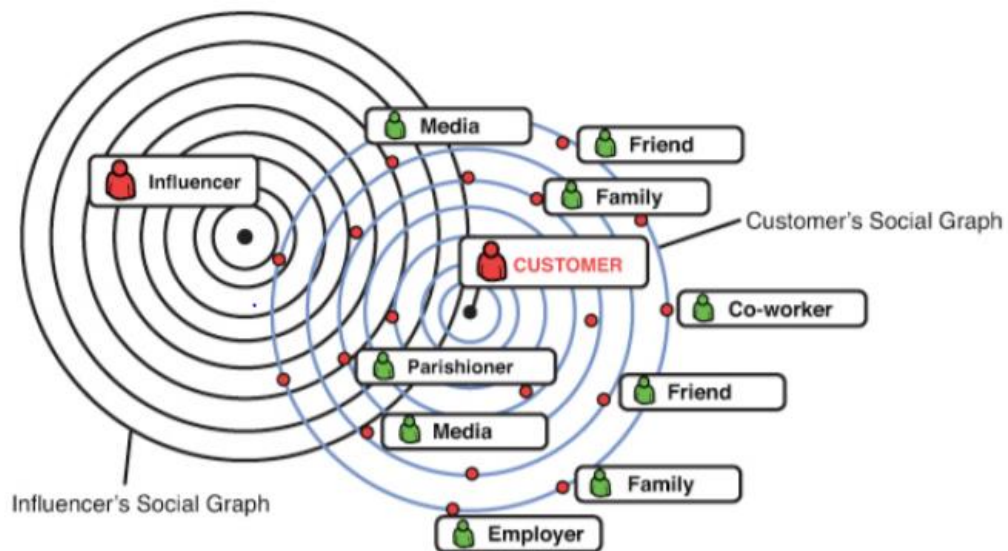
Figure 6. Customer-Centric Influence Marketing Model (Brown and Fiorella, 2013)

1.6.3. Advantages and disadvantages

Instagram details on its web page how it is possible for companies to take advantage of the application's options. First off, the application allows people to create business accounts on which it is possible to find statistics about the stories, posts and followers you have. Furthermore, accounts can obtain real time performance indicators of the content published and know, in detail, when and how followers interact with it. Another marketing benefit is that a business page can have public information put forward such as the location, phone number or opening hours of the store (Instagram, 2020).

In Brauer and Schmidt's thesis (2018), it is explained that the advantage of collaboration between companies and influencers focuses on bettering brand awareness and loyalty through the growth of brand relevance and the deepening of engagement for its customers. To do so, the co-creation has to give the possibility of self-identification by selecting a relatable opinion leader and therefore creating an emotional connection. The companies' perception and image must be coordinated to provide authenticity.

The results of an American survey shows that 89% of 170 marketers believe that the most profitable marketing approach is to create genuine content about a brand. Driving the engagement around the product or service of the company is, in their opinion, the second main marketing characteristic. Another advantage comes from the fact that influencers bring a considerable influx on the promoted brand's website (Delrue, 2018).

However, the partnership between the two stakeholders can also involve risks and challenges. Firstly, companies are recently being affected by a loss of control of their brand reputation since social media communication empowers anyone to support or defame their image publicly. Influencers can be a resourceful communication tool, but they can also openly show their discontent about a product and lead the brand's reputation towards the opposite of the desired outcome. Moreover, by integrating social influencers into their marketing plan, brands add work to their campaign with the new actors that need to be managed and coordinated (Brauer and Schmidt, 2018).

1.6.4. Remuneration

Renowned influencers are usually remunerated for their collaboration with brands but contracts usually imply norms and restrictions. The price range remains confidential from both parties but its significance varies depending on various criteria. The popularity of the social leader is taken into consideration along with the followers' engagement with the content published. On the company's side, the type of marketing campaign as well as the product or service promoted will influence the invested money (Delrue, 2018). Marketers and influencers experience progressively the benefits of influencer marketing. Influencers know the impact and power they have over brands, which explains how they can live off their social media and why they increasingly expect a substantial budget from the brands (Talkwaker, 2018). Even though it can be expensive for brands to collaborate with influencers, the costs are viewed as cheaper than traditional marketing means (Grafström and al, 2018). Some of the influencer rate cards are available on the website Influence.co..

In addition, influencers can also earn money with commissions. This type of payment, called "Cost per Acquisition", usually works with a promotional code advertised by the influencer and often includes their Instagram account name or any nickname by which they are recognized on their social media platform. It is also an interesting way to measure the influencer's engagement rate through the number of followers who use the code on the company's website (Delrue, 2018).

1.7. Target audience

Brands use influencer marketing in order to reach targeted individuals through an opinion leader, followed by a key community for the company (Grafström and al, 2018). Even if an influencer has skillful content, it is essential to certify that the influencer's audience profile lines up with the demographics the campaign is targeting. Influencers usually have a definite type of community, which follows them for specific reasons, such as their lifestyle or the type of content they create. Moreover, the social media allows the owner of the account to get a detailed representation of their community, highlighting for instance, their age, nationality or gender. Therefore, Instagram, compared to other traditional media, allows brands to target more precisely and directly the right segment for a product (Chelini, 2019).

Millennials are the most influential audience due to their high online presence on the Internet and social media. An article by Janicke and al. (2018) mentions how social media has become the mass media of the generation Y. Numbers prove it as "90% of all 18-29-year-olds in the U.S. use at least one form of social media and spend up to 6.19 hours per week on it" (Janicke and al., 2018). The high average time millennials spend every day on social media makes them an attractive target for influencer marketing online (Grafström and al, 2018).

Moreover, brands and influencers need to stay interested in what their target customers are doing online and what engages them in order to be able to offer them the right content. In her book, Gunelius (2011) gives tips concerning target audience management. Firstly, when promoting a service or product, it is important to keep using the same language and tone to keep the relationship with the targeted audience genuine. In addition, the content published by influencers needs to be regular. The audience will tend to disappear if the influencer ceases to appear on their screen. It is also essential that the key audience should not be confused by long speeches and jargon language. Furthermore, the followers should view the influencer and the publications as clear, honest, credible and reliable. Finally, companies should test different tools available on social media and discover which ones work best and enable them to interact with the followers.

1.8. Product placement

Marketers' expansion of influencers' investment to promote their services and products is known as product placement on social media. Also called embedded marketing, product

placement "refers to the inclusion or reference of a product or a brand in a program. It is also defined as the paid inclusion of branded products or brand identifiers, through audio and /or visual means, within mass media programming" (Liu and al., 2015). According to Liu and al. (2015), this marketing strategy on social media can be designed as one of the most beneficial plans of action, in view of the prominence given of requiring influencers to campaign for a company's message and attain a key target audience.

In Delrue's thesis (2018), it is mentioned that securing an increase in visibility, attention, brand awareness, brand remembrance and recognition, constitutes a portion of the numerous purposes attributed to product placement. Every outcome brings out a particular strength but the results always focus on stimulating consumers to purchase a brand's product or service instead of purchasing from rivals.

The notable advantage of product placement is that it is capable of connecting with consumers' minds and intensifying positive feelings toward the brand without the immediate authority of the marketers but through the creativity of opinion leaders. This way, embedded marketing smoothly raises the consumers' appreciation and curiosity for the product or service, which later influences purchase behavior (Abdul Adis and al, 2015).

Furthermore, product placement initiates the possibility of exchanging opinions and personal experiences between consumers of the same targeted segment but also between consumers and marketers. In comparison with product placement on traditional media, consumers can explore, through social media, information about the product and therefore have a more trustworthy relation with the brand. Product placement appears to be a credible source that can be discussed online with other consumers and create a positive purchase behavior (Abdul Adis and al, 2015).

1.9. Legislation

Social media advertising is often disguised to conceal its commercial purpose. It is not uncommon to encounter sponsored social media posts appearing like authentic content. Influencers promoting products or services are seen as real and sincere and are therefore particularly convincing compared to brand marketing (De Veriman and Hudders, 2020).

This type of context proves the necessity of laws and procedures to regulate influencer marketing and help consumers deal critically with inducement. As reported by Delrue (2018),

the right for consumers to know when they are subjected to marketing content is part of the FTC guidelines (FTC 2015) and European legislation (IAB 2006).

1.9.1. Legislation in the United States

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in America has drawn guidelines for monitoring paid influencer social media promotions as they enforce federal laws on all types of advertising. In view of the rising popularity of smartphones and social media, new difficulties have emerged and demand constant revision of the FTC guidelines. The FTC requires a truthful and not misleading advertisement as the main principle rule for influencer marketing. Misleading consists of the promotion of a brand campaign by a social media influencer in which it is not apparent for the followers that the opinion leader is remunerated. The consumers may be tricked into believing the content is genuine. The FTC also instructs influencers working with brands to clearly and distinctly make public their partnership every time they advertise the product or service (Beanstalk Internet Managing, 2020).

In 2019, the FTC released a brochure for marketers and influencers. This guideline is centered around the importance of making an adequate disclosure of the relationship/material connection to the brand. "A material connection to the brand includes a personal, family, or employment relationship or a financial relationship – such as the brand paying you or giving you free or discounted products or services" (Federal Trade Commission, 2019).

Concerning the disclosure requirements, the FTC recommends Instagram influencers to use hashtags under their posts such as #ad or #sponsored, or to accompany a written promotion with the brand's name (Beanstalk Internet Managing, 2020). Furthermore, it is forbidden for opinion leaders to promote a product or service they have not tried. They cannot advertise positively if the experience of it was not satisfying or invent properties to a product without proof from the brand. The FTC guideline informs influencers that if they post from abroad, U.S. law applies as long as it is rationally predictable that the post will influence American consumers. It is also reminded that foreign laws might also apply (Federal Trade Commission, 2019).

1.9.2. Legislation in Belgium

To date, Belgium does not have definite legal rules for consumers' protection against misleading brand-influencers collaborations. However, the Belgian Advertising Council has created similar guidelines to the FTC's in the U.S. after getting advice from stakeholders in the advertising sector.

In 2008, the European laws for advertising self-regulation were extended to all forms of marketing communication. The infrastructure of all Ad Standards Codes is established by the following rules; advertising is legal, sincere and respectable and should be adapted to the principles of impartial competition. Ads need to be developed with a proper sense of social responsibility and should not harm public confidence in advertising (European Advertising Standards Alliance, 2018).

The influencer guideline set by the Belgian Advertising Council is based on the principle of self-regulation but several rules are to be respected. Firstly, every communication aimed towards a marketing goal has to be fair and should be evidently discernible as such. To respect this, the posts should be associated with a statement declaring the commercial partnership. Another way of showing the collaboration is to expose the brand or logo in the commercial communication. The Belgian Advertising Council wants to avoid the misleading of the target community with an imprecise post including false information. Following the same rules as the FTC, influencers should reveal their brand partnerships explicitly and add written communication like hashtags to mention it. Those signals should correspond to the language of the desired target. For instance, French audience should see #pub while Dutch or English population will observe #adv (Van Den Brande, 2018).

As would happen to any advertisement campaign when the guidelines or laws are not being respected, the Jury for Ethical Practices in Advertising (JEP) has the right to demand cancellation of a campaign to the brand or influencer violating the law. Yet, it is possible for marketers and influencers to get advice and consultations from the JEP when questioning the validity of their campaign. Even though the Belgian Federal government Bill has not been released yet, it is expected to be more severe than the Belgian Advertising Council's sector code (Van den Brande, 2018).

1.10. Ethics

As was uncovered in the section "Brand attractiveness and identification" consumers' perceived value and moral judgment are the key determinants that affect their online purchase behavior (Wange and al., 2013). In her book, Gunelius (2011) paraphrases influencer marketing ethics as the *unwritten rules of the social Web*. Those tacit rules are established on common sense, that is to say, acting politely and inoffensively as we were taught to behave in society, school or family. In his thesis, Chelini (2019) indicates how ethics has become a fundamental component in business resolutions. The business ethic concept is completely integrated in every multinational or micro enterprise project. Ethics in marketing and communication aspire to influence customer's approach and consciousness to valuable and honest activities, in the interest of protecting and strengthening brand representation and notoriety. Consumers have a positive perception of companies that promote and carry out projects via ethical policies.

Ethics should be deemed an ambitious leverage and convenience to increase business performance. Nonetheless, some influencers are unwilling to disclose brand partnerships in transparent and ethical promoting conditions because those revelations adversely influence brand postures as much as social influencer assessments (De Veirman and Hudders, 2020). Potential ethical issues and their affected stakeholders are discussed in Brauer and Schmidt research (2018). The stakeholders can be either influencers, marketers or companies currently engaged in a sponsored partnership. The matter of contentions can be the lack of informed consent, the invasion of privacy, the confidentiality of sensitive information and anonymity.

Ethics in the domain of social media marketing includes various features related to brands and influencers. Those actors have to respect their duty of protecting the social media users, considering the important role influencer marketing plays in the world today.

1.10.1. Credibility and authenticity

Credibility and authenticity are meaningful as they are two of the main characteristics that define an efficient social influencer. It is mentioned in Sophie Noirhomme's dissertation, *Instagram: Communication Patterns and Typology of Influencers* (2019), that the credibility of an influencer can be weakened when they unveil their sponsored content to their community. Nevertheless, influencers' authenticity helps create a connection with people and make them seen as models that share interesting information online. Credibility also favors the influencer

to get in touch with different social groups inside a brand's focus group (Delrue, 2018). When an influencer has forged a bond with their community, the latter eventually becomes a purchaser seeking guidance from the messenger on a product, service or brand. This outcome justifies the increasing presence of brands and companies on Instagram.

A genuine collaboration between a brand and an influencer guarantees an authentic staging of the content posted, makes the influencer feel like a *source of inspiration and not necessarily opinion leaders* and resonates with their audience (Brauer and Schmidt, 2018). Authenticity can be noticed in Instagram stories. Consumers feel like influencers' content in stories is less staged, impromptu and clear to handle (Bailis, 2020).

An authentic and close relation between influencers and their community is usually obtained when the opinion leader as well as the brand cautiously acknowledge what product to promote and how they associate with followers. This factor is ethically related since authenticity is crucial in defining and leading influencer marketing. Ethics in social media advertising demands mutual integrity between the advertiser and the purchaser (Chelini, 2019).

1.10.2. Fraud

Marketers applying online marketing should be conscious of the existence of frauders on Instagram. Influencer fraud is a major issue that not only affects the influencer marketing industry but also adversely affects real opinion leaders and brands (Kim and Han, 2020). Fake followers, bot traffic or Ad-Tech fraud can trick companies or social media users. Those imposture profiles pay for fictitious clicks and content because the more popular a profile is, the more remuneration it gets for advertising (Delrue, 2018).

According to Schröder's thesis (2019), marketing professionals can also cross the path of influencer fraud. Marketers can be targeted by either micro or macro-influencers through three different types of fraud. The first fraud occurs when the influencer betrays his/her followers by orchestrating remunerated sponsorships. The second type of fraud happens when both a brand and an influencer misinform consumers by not revealing their partnership. Finally, the last type of fraud mentioned by Schröder takes place when an influencer gives companies the wrong idea by forging references.

The first type are wannabe influencers who steal sponsored content from influencers and repost it on their own account. This scam can put brands' reputation at risk when this kind of trickery happens while promoting their business. The second example is similar to what has been discussed in the "Ethics" section. Without the endorsement exposure of a product by an influencer, it is difficult for followers to recognize the monetary essence of promotions posted on Instagram. It is hard to discern commercial content from entertainment on social media. The last type of fraud discussed by Schröder concerns the influencer lying about their credentials to mislead brands. The number of accounts following an influencer does not necessarily make the latter an opinion leader. User-friendly applications are available online to buy followers for social media accounts that automatically generate likes and comments. It is a common technique that allows anyone to make their account seem popular and boost their engagement rates. The followers gained via this method are usually bots and do not have the same engagement repercussion than real followers. Artificially accelerating engagement rate is now a serious issue for exercising influencer marketing. Concisely, the three influencer fraud types explained above aim for divergent goals.

1.11. Belgium and Instagram

According to the website Statista (2020), it has been evaluated in 2019 that, out of 11 million people in Belgium, 76% of the population is active on social media. More than four million of these users have an Instagram account and women are more likely to use the social platform than men. The internet statistics page NapoleanCat mentions that 54.1 % of Belgian Instagram users are women and that the gender gap is slightly more significant for people aged between 35 and 44 years old, in which women surpass by 90,000.
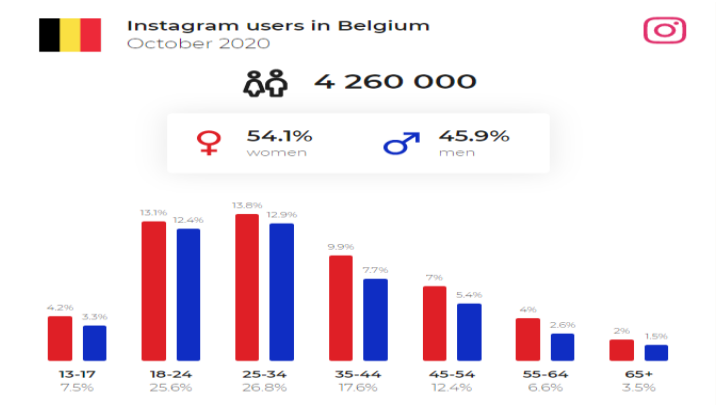
Figure 7. Instagram users in Belgium (NapoleanCat, 2020)

Despite the social network app popularity, Belgium is not part of the leading countries for its use. When compared to its neighbors, such as Luxemburg, the Netherlands or the United Kingdom, Instagram in Belgium is not as popular as in the rest of Europe. The age group using the most social media applications is esteemed between 18 to 24 years old. A Flemish survey held in 2018 was compared to a similar one conducted in 2016 and showed a colossal increase of all social media applications like Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat (Statista Research Department, 2020).

II. Purchasing process

2.1. The five-stage decision model

Having honest information available has a repercussion on the decision making of customers. Noureddine and ZeinEddine (2018) point out the importance of analyzing the interferences that can restrain someone to purchase. The buying process is divided into five theoretical steps, not all of them are always automatic nor necessary.

Figure 8. The Five-Stage Decision Making Model

2.1.1. Problem recognition

The first stage consists in defining what the consumer needs or desires, even though not all products or services can be a solution for some consumers (Gómez-Díaz, 2016). Usually, the

recognition of the issue is revealed via stimulus based on a biological or psychogenic need. Noureddine and ZeinEddine (2018) mention other influencing factors, as for instance, reference groups or socio-cultural and environmental sources. Some people sometimes do not have any need or issue but influencer marketing offers a lot of advice and news, which expands consumption opportunities (Gómez-Díaz, 2016).

2.1.2. Information search

When the problem is spotted, consumers have to find information on the product through either personal sources/word-of-mouth (friends or family), commercial sources (advertisement, websites, etc.), public sources (media, articles, etc.) or through personal experiences. In her thesis, Delrue (2018) states two sub-states experienced by the consumer. In the first place, consumers go through "heightened attention" in which they are more receptive and engaged to the information searched about a product or service. After that stage, the consumers take part in an "active information search", where they will gather information from internal or external sources. Today, the rise of online activities has turned the internet into an essential tool for the collection of information and this explains the popularity rise of social networking sites. Although, information found online is not always assessed positively compared to internal advice (Noureddine and ZeinEddine 2018).

2.1.3. Alternative evaluation

In this step, consumers analyze the different choices they have the possibility to make. They compare and evaluate the various product features and see which one will satisfy the most their personal needs (Noureddine and ZeinEddine 2018). Beliefs and attitudes can influence their evaluation of alternatives. Moreover, Marketer Generated Content and User generated Content have an impact on the assessment of possible choices. WOM is central in this phase since consumers' ideas are affected by other consumers' on social media and are seen as fair sources (Delrue, 2018). Gómez-Díaz (2016) mentions a strategy for the evaluation, which consists in pushing aside some options when a feature or desired characteristic is not obtained. This is known as the compensatory and non-compensatory system. The first model is the compensatory one which judges the global performance of the product and identifies the one that meets the

customer's expectations best. The second model is the conjunctive by attitude method. In this case, the consumer defines the minimum level for each attribute and chooses the first product which surpasses the limit. The last strategy is the non-compensatory lexicographic model and resides in the consumers' product decision based on the attribute judged as the most valuable. This system is called non-compensatory because "a bad attribute cannot compensate for the good ones, and the alternative is no more considered in a decision task" (Gómez-Díaz, 2016).

2.1.4. Purchase decision

Subsequently, the purchase decision executes a purchase intention. However, the attitude of the customers' acquaintances and unexpected decision situational factors can alter the intention of the customer to buy. There is a gap between wanting to buy a product and deciding to purchase it (Noureddine and ZeinEddine 2018). Brands cannot always diminish the perceived risks such as functional, physical, financial, social or psychological factors (Delrue, 2018). Gómez-Díaz (2016) adds that the time-linked risks can also modify online decision making. Some consumers consider time as not being problematic when they shop online but for others it can be a limitation. It is advised to offer payment transaction customization in the interest of minoring time consciousness but also to reduce and avoid regrets.

2.1.5. Post purchase decision

Finally, after purchasing the product comes the development of an opinion and behavior of the customer towards it. In this final step, the consumer assesses the judgment he/she made when choosing one of the alternatives and evaluates the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Noureddine and ZeinEddine 2018). The post-purchase reaction will define the consumer's opinion of the product and will determine how he/she talks about it to others (WOM), build a (un)favorable attachment to the company or if he/she will buy it again. In her thesis, Laura Delrue (2018) talks about the notion of "cognitive dissonance" which is significant in this context. Cognitive dissonance happens when the consumer feels regret or doubt about his/her purchase from a particular brand. It can be interesting for companies to use post-purchase communication in order to emotionally affect their customers and influence future purchases. The same goes with social media influencers who have the power to reduce customers' doubts

of having made the right decision by reassuring users through pictures and brand recommendation.

2.2. Consumers' purchase attitude

Consumers' purchase attitude is important to lead a favorable marketing business. Lim and al. (2017) posit that a positive attitude for a product or service is a primary forecaster that can drive a customer's purchase decision. The same result happens when the favorable attitude happens through the medium of a social influencer. Customers' impulse to buy a business's product or service is determined by people's attitude and the efficacy of social media influencers in advertising brands. Advertising effectiveness can either come from source credibility and attractiveness, product match-up or meaning transfer.
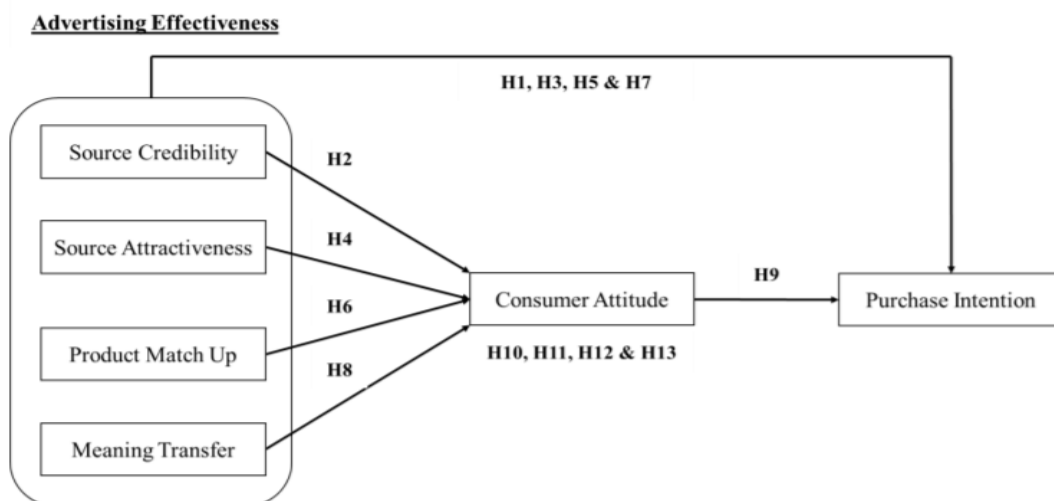
Figure 9. Advertising effectiveness (Lim and al., 2017)

Source credibility (see section 1.10.1.) is based on trustworthiness and influencers' expertise of the promoted brand. It is believed that the relationship between source credibility and consumers' purchase attitude and behavior is beneficial (H2). Source attractiveness has the same effect since attractive influencers create a higher tolerance rate to advertising (H4). Concerning product match-up, the harmony between the endorser and the product or service advertised is crucial to have a positive consumer's attitude (H6). The transmission of meaning happens when the influencer integrates his/her personal or professional life to the endorsed product. Meaning transfer process favors the consumer's creation of their self-representation

via consumption, which therefore affects their consumer attitude (H8). These characteristics make a successful influencer build a positive consumer attitude and lead to higher chances of consumers' purchase intention (H9).

2.3. Purchase behavior

The content produced by marketers and social media users is presumed to have an effect on economic goal variables. One of these variables is used to assess consumers' purchase behavior (Scholz and al., 2018). The research on consumers' purchase behavior held by Ahmad and Barhemmati (2015) holds two different hypotheses. The first one supposes that the customer engagement rate is influenced by a greater usage of social network's marketing (H1). Social network marketing creates a more profound impact on customer than when using traditional means via mass media. The second hypothesis suggests that customer engagement and purchase behavior have a beneficial connection (H2).
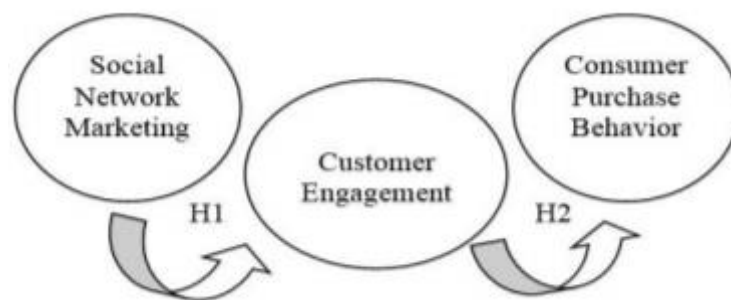
Figure 10. Theoretical Framework (Ahmad and Barhemmati, 2015)

Furthermore, the study displays that customer engagement is established on an emotional relation in order to improve consumers' purchase behavior. With regard to the subject treated in this dissertation, it is interesting to notice that women tend to be deeply connected to a brand or product after being implicated in social network marketing actions. Results of Ahmad and Barhemmati's study demonstrate that no matter the social media user's income level, they all are persuaded equivalently regarding consumer purchase intensity. In addition, consumers are more influenced by other users' buying behavior than by a traditional and direct advertisement, in other words, word-of-mouth commercially works better (Ahmad and Barhemmati, 2015). In their research, Goh and al. (2013) illustrate how engagement in social media brand communities

can drive towards an effective boost in purchases. The user and marketer generated content also displays confirmation that social media contents alter consumers' purchase behavior by implemented information and coercion (Goh and al., 2013).

In her article, "The impact of digital technology on consumer purchase behavior", Sue Yasav (2015) discusses the high effectiveness of free shipping to encourage positive purchase behavior. Yasav's survey, indicates that 75% of people usually opt for buying from a brand which offers free shipping. This convenience has significantly increased online purchase behavior and gave brands a more honest and credible image. Loyalty coupons also influence customers' online behavior, as they feel valued when getting a personalized and unique offer.

2.4. Purchase behavior from a gender perception

Gender meaning in the E-commerce sector has not been studied much until this day but it is a relevant form of segmentation adopted by marketers and advertisers. Generally, genders differ in information processes and decision making for online shopping.

Richard and al. (2010) assessed the role of gender in online customer behavior and the results show that men interconnect less in exploratory behavior. Women also develop more website involvement than men. Nonetheless, for both men and women, the characteristics elucidated in *Consumers purchase attitude*, such as effectiveness of information content, are the main elements leading to positive attitude towards websites. Males are more inclined to be persuaded to buy a product through its online presentation. According to Lin and al. (2019), more males have their attitude influenced by interactivity and perceived risk. Nevertheless, women are more resolute to purchase online when a site is approved by a friend, which leads to the decline of perceived risk (Garbarino and Strahilevitz, 2004). In that matter, female consumers are more receptive and active to a combination of positive and negative evaluations and tend, therefore, to purchase online more than men (Zhang and al., 2014). Concerning the development of a brand online, it is essential for marketers to be aware of the gender being targeted (Lin and al., 2019).

III. Conclusion of the literary review

From a general point of view, it is noticeable that social media has, this past decade, experienced an extensive popularity growth that turned social network platforms into marketing tools and therefore brought influencer marketing to life. Brands started recognizing the necessity to be attractive in order for customers to identify with them and, in addition, to partner up with social influencers genuinely promoting products and services. Many factors should be taken into account to successfully settle the collaboration. For instance, marketers should pay attention to influencer selection, to the advantages or disadvantages the partnership can have or to the target audience, which is usually focused on the millennials being the most influential audience.

The second part of the review focuses on the purchase itinerary and the consumer's attitude and behavior towards a brand. The purchasing process developed throughout its five stages will be useful to conduct the quantitative research and analyze respondents' feedback. Considering the dissertation's gender focus, it is useful to know that regarding purchase behavior, female consumers show a higher tendency to buy online compared to men.

Moreover, the literary review demonstrates how information about influencer marketing in Belgium is lacking. The scientific knowledge developed throughout this section is obtained mostly from American and Asian sources. We can also notice that from the limited theoretical information gathered about Belgium, numerous divergences exist between Europe and the United States, such as the legislation or the popularity of Instagram. Nevertheless, this review offers a useful basis for the Belgian centered research coming ahead.

3. Research Design and Objectives

This research dissertation is conducted via two types of methodology, one consists of a quantitative research and the other includes two different qualitative studies. Both methods were created in the perspective of answering the dissertation's question and hypotheses but also to add new information to the data gap of the literary review. These questionnaires will not only allow to have an insight into Instagram users / consumers' point of view, but it will also provide a better understanding of influencers' and brands' approach to influencer marketing.

Concerning the first method, the purpose of the study was to analyze quantitatively the experience of women active on Instagram and in contact with influencer marketing in Belgium. This method enables to touch a broader sample, which involves a large number of participants and offers the possibility to make a generalization of the collected information. The target audience of the survey includes any Belgian woman or female Belgian resident having an Instagram account.

In the second part of the research, two different questionnaires were established. One of them is destined for influencers and the other is meant for brands that work with influencer marketing. Due to the sanitary crisis, it was not possible to conduct any face-to-face interviews. This explains why I left the option to the interviewees to choose if they would rather answer the questions in a written form or if they preferred to answer orally via visioconference or phone call.

4. Quantitative research

Quantitative research is beneficial for this study because it offers the possibility of collecting statistically analyzed and detailed data. Moreover, the results of this type of research are more likely to be accurate, as the results obtained tend to be objective, without involving personal bias.

In this chapter, I will start by explaining the methodology of the survey's construction, as well as a description and explanation of the research method. This part also includes a detailed analysis of the data collected in connection with the hypotheses elaborated in the dissertation's introduction. In the end, in possession of all the information, I drew a clear conclusion including new interesting elements for this field of research.

I.   *Methodology*

To test the hypotheses, I conducted a survey research intended for any Belgian or Belgian resident women using the social media platform Instagram. The objective of this survey is to quantify the impact of influencer marketing on brand perception and consumption. To do so, I designed 23 questions, mostly closed-ended. In general, the respondents had the possibility of choosing one or multiple answers. For some questions, the consumer had the opportunity of writing down a more detailed and personal answer.

1.1. Research method

I created the survey on the experience management platform Qualtrics. It could be completed online with a computer, smartphone or tablet. Qualtrics is a secure platform, on which women can answer anonymously without any personal information required. The survey was available in two languages, French and Dutch, in order to collect as much data as possible across Belgium. The platform is also beneficial because the data is easy to gather and it is possible to export it. Moreover, Qualtrics is interesting for this research dissertation because it provides descriptive and comparative analysis, but also reporting such as graphs. I shared the survey on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, hoping to reach a vast amount of people.

1.2. Objectives

While constructing the survey, it was important to keep the objectives in mind. To do so, I created a table in which every question, except for the demographic ones, are paired up with a hypothesis. I made sure the questions had their place in the questionnaire but also, that each hypothesis would be covered.

Hypotheses	Questions
Hypothesis 1	Questions 7 & 9
Hypothesis 2	Questions 12, 17 & 23
Hypothesis 3	Questions 8, 14, 15 & 16
Hypothesis 4	Questions 13, 17 & 20
Hypothesis 5	Questions 10, 11, 18, 22 & 23
Hypothesis 6	Questions 8 & 23

Table 1. Hypotheses and Questions

The construction of the survey is not an easy task as it needs to be appropriate and has to answer my research dissertation's question. However, it also needs to be operative and intelligible for the respondents. It was important to be certain that the respondents could understand the questions and that they would be willing and able to answer them. Therefore, I decided to do a pre-test with a few women of different ages. The result of this test showed that the online questionnaire is easy to navigate and that the questions are clear. Moreover, it is quickly completed with an average time of 3 minutes. The experimental feedback contributed minor changes meant to improve the coherence of the questions' flow.

The first part of the questionnaire contains the demographic questions. It allowed me to filter the group of people that was relevant to answer the survey but also to redirect towards the exit people not corresponding to my target respondent. If a person answers that he is a man / that she/he is not Belgian or living in Belgium / or if she/he does not use the social media Instagram, he/she was automatically redirected to the end of the survey.

The beginning of the questionnaire also includes the age specification and the professional status of the participant. That information offers a more specific insight into the different

categories of women participating in the survey. Later in the analysis, it might also show how the age or the professional situation of someone can influence their perception on influencers and/or brands. Through the questionnaire, we will also know how often women usually connect on the social media and if they tend to follow influencers and/or famous people on their account.

The second part of the survey focuses on the perception women have of influencers and brands. They give their opinion on them and mention what they prefer and/or dislike most when viewing their profiles. Advertisement and promotion is also a focal point in the survey. This part gives an idea of how Belgian women view social media advertisement and allows us to compare it to traditional publicity on the television or the radio.

The method used in the dissertation is beneficial for both brand managers and influencers. The answers collected cannot be generalized thoroughly, but only to a certain extent. There can be variations because the sample is small and is not equal to the proportion of women owning an Instagram account. However, the quantitative questionnaire gives objective answers and the sample of women that answered represents the most popular age group active on Instagram. Brand social media and communication managers can use this method and its results to understand the consumers' way of using the social media Instagram. They can also see how they perceive product placement through influencers' profiles. Focusing on what consumers are looking for can help improve influencer marketing techniques before launching a campaign. Moreover, influencers can also take advantage of this method to improve the content they offer on their social media and to create a closer relationship with their followers, taking into account their preferences.

1.3. Sample's features

The size of the final sample amounts to 409. Nineteen people of this total number were men but their answers to the questionnaire were not taken into account and they were removed from the final results. Figure 11, shows that the great majority of respondents are aged between 18 and 24 years old and that 17% are situated in the older decade. The most common professional situation of these women can be deduced from their age, as 79% are students. This age category is over-represented and therefore it is important to note that, even though the results are

generalized for all women living in Belgium, the vast majority of respondents were young adults. Those statistics correlates with the scientific data collected in the literary review and exposed in section 1.11. Belgium and Instagram.
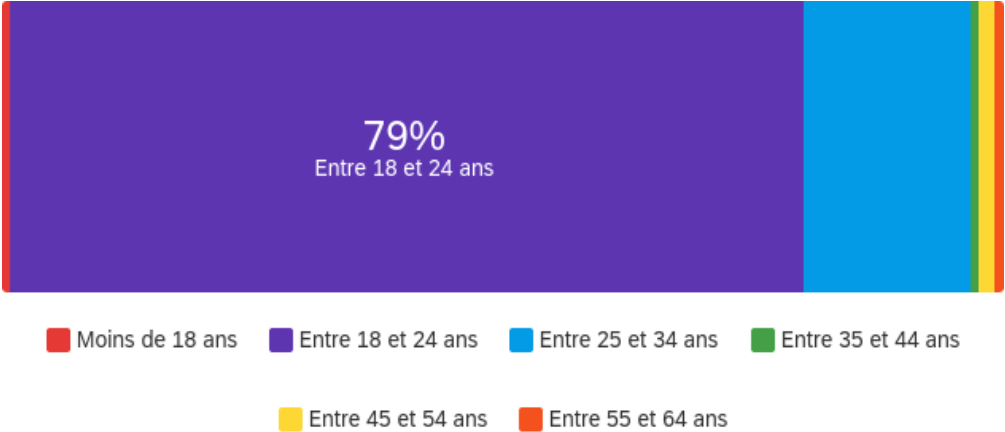
Figure 11. Age distribution bar Q.3

Finally, it is important to note the connection frequency on the social media platform. In the circular diagram below, we notice that almost three quarters of women connect more than once per day on Instagram. Only less than 5% navigates on the social media once a week. The results also confirm what was developed in the literary review, which is that it is possible to define Instagram as an engaging platform by the way people connect daily on it (Chen, 2020).
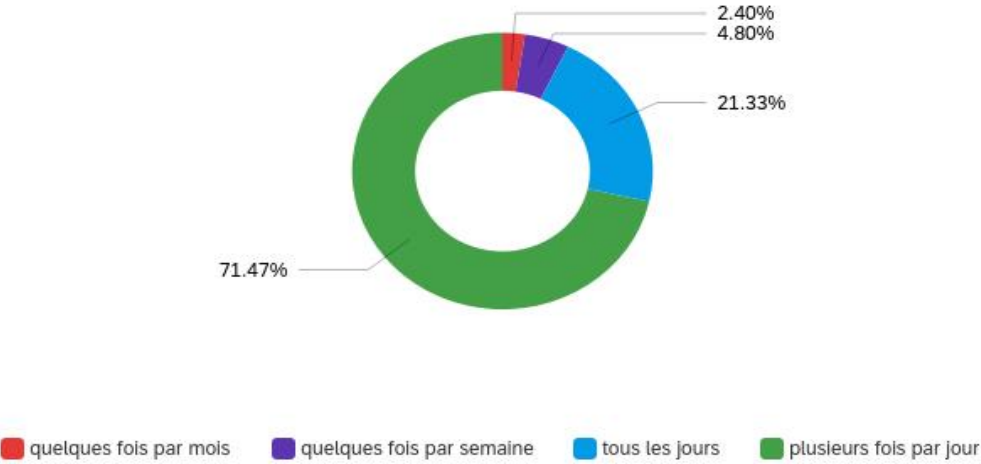
Figure 12. Circular diagram of connection frequency Q.6

II. Analysis

The collected quantitative data is analyzed based on methods such as cross-tabulation or the SWOT analysis. To find evidential and valuable data for my research, I decided to interpret my hypotheses by taking into account the results of the questions that were related to them (see section 4.3.). Conclusions were drawn based on the results of the analysis of each hypothesis.

2.1. Hypothesis 1

What is the general impression women have of influencers in Belgium?

To analyze Questions 7 and 9 of the questionnaire, I used the cross-tabulation method. Cross-tabulation is a commonly used method to analyze quantitative data. It is useful to draw interferences between different data sets, via a simple tabular form. The advantage of this type of research is that it enables a detailed statistical analysis of different data that have connection with each other.

	QID6: 7. Êtes-vous abonné à des comptes d'influenceurs, ou à des personnalités connues?		
	Total	Oui	Non
Nombre total (tout)	368,0	334,0	34,0
Extrêmement positif	0,3%	0,3%	0,0%
Plutôt positif	25,5%	28,1%	0,0%
Ni positif, ni négatif	53,0%	53,3%	50,0%
Plutôt négatif	18,8%	17,1%	35,3%
Extrêmement négatif	2,4%	1,2%	14,7%

Table 2. Cross-tabulation Q.7 & Q.9

As shown in the table above, out of 368 women, only 34 do not follow influencers or celebrities on Instagram. Nevertheless, all women were allowed to give their opinion on them because it is important to know how they feel about influencers even without being in direct contact with them. As we can see, in both groups, more than half of them do not have an opinion about them. The interesting part of this analysis is that people who do not follow influencers have, mostly, a bad opinion of them compared to those who do follow them. Nevertheless, the sample of people who answered "no" to Question 7 is very small, therefore the margin of error is high.

Indeed, the 34 respondents do not represent the entire community of women that do not follow influencers. We can still note that there is a tendency for people that do not follow influencers, to have negative opinions on them. In the table 2, the percentage of negative judgement is much higher for them than for people who answered "yes" to Question 7.

The conclusion that can be made concerning this hypothesis is that, firstly, 91% of women using Instagram do follow celebrities and/or influencers. Half of those women do not have any bad or good feelings about famous people on Instagram. Those results are interesting for the research concerning balanced point of views. Indeed 28% of women who answered yes have a good opinion on influencers while 50% of women who answered "no" have a bad or extremely bad assessment of the celebrities. However, it is essential to keep in mind that this qualitative research only collects a small portion of the Belgian women population and that the sample of women who do not follow influencers is not representative of the reality, due to the inconsequential extent.

2.2. Hypothesis 2

How important is the engagement between a digital influencer and purchasers?

The first question analyzed is linked to the one that precedes it, i.e. Question 11. The results of that question reveals that more than half of women ignore influencers' posts in which they promote a brand. Therefore, the answers to Question 12 only represent 46% of the totality of women.

In Question 12, women who pay attention to brands' collaborations with influencers explained the reason for their interest. In the diagram below, their responses show that 35% of them like to watch brand promotion because the influencer really uses the product or service he/she is promoting. This percentage already reveals the importance women put in the realness of a product or service usage by the celebrity, but it also proves the importance of attractive content. Only 12% of women pay attention to collaborations because they feel close to the influencer. All the answers collected from this question reveal the importance of the existence of engagement between influencers and their followers, in order to get the latter interested in brand promotion. The 6% left include additional personal answers. Recurrent opinions are that they wish to discover new brands via the influencer, and want to get more information on a product or service which already interested them.

6%

18%

29%

12%

35%

- 🟥 l'influenceur parait sincère   🟪 l'influenceur est proche de sa communauté
- 🟦 l'influenceur utilise réellement le produit/service dont il fait la publicité
- 🟩 l'influenceur crée des vidéos/photos attrayantes   🟨 autre
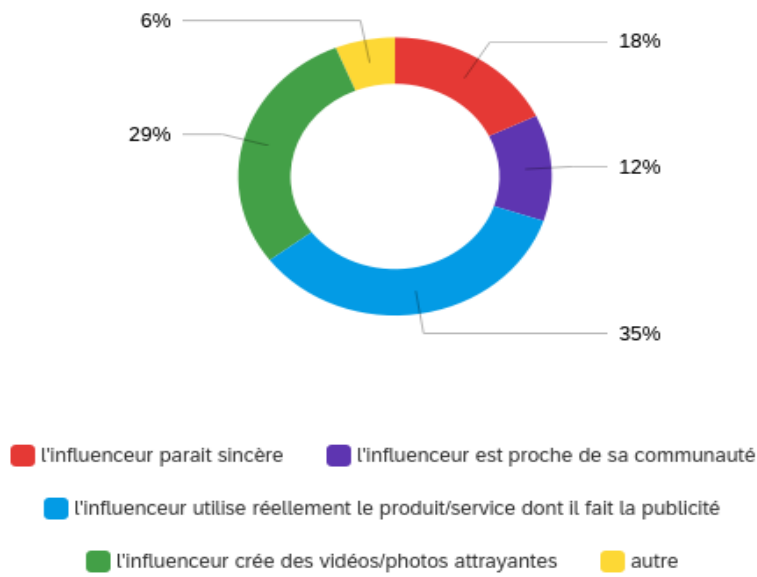
Figure 13. Circular diagram Q.12

To define the importance of engagement between the two parties, it is interesting to understand how women feel about it. 33% do not really care whether the influencer reveals his/her partnership with a brand or not. However, almost half of them prefer to buy a product or service when the influencer mentions the collaboration. In this question, we can see that the information the influencer provides to his/her followers can positively affect the future purchase of a product or service.

24%
Tout à fait d'accord

22%
Plutôt d'accord

33%
Ni d'accord, ni en désaccord

- 🟥 Tout à fait d'accord   🟪 Plutôt d'accord   🟦 Ni d'accord, ni en désaccord
- 🟩 Plutôt en désaccord   🟨 Pas du tout d'accord
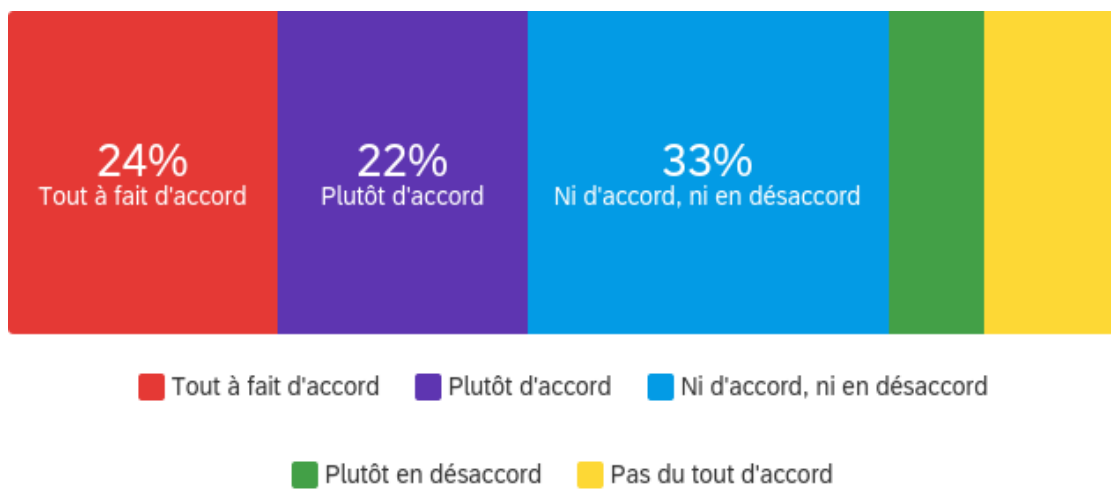
Figure 14. Distribution bar Q.17

Question 22 reveals that 61% of women think that products and services promoted via influencers' accounts are more attractive than other forms of advertisement such as television or radio. The topic of advertisement on other platforms compared to the one via influencers will be later investigated in the chapter concerning the fifth hypothesis.

To discuss the second hypothesis, it is interesting to know what stands out of the answers to the following question. Question 23 explains the reasons why the majority of women think that way. Once again, it is clear that engagement is important because it has a direct effect on how women see the publicity of a brand and the greater possibility for them to consider it for purchase. The two most prominent answers are:

- the influencer uses the product/service in front of his/her followers
- the influencer gives idea on how to use or wear the product/service

These answers reflect the need for engagement between the influencer and his/her community in order to create a positive interest in what he/she promotes. However, only 8% say they identify with the influencer and 4% that they trust him/her. This means that even though engagement helps to promote successfully a product/service, it does not necessarily make the influencer a trustworthy person for the follower, nor a person with whom they want to connect deeply.

2.3. Hypothesis 3

What do consumers think of the brands promoted by social media influencers?

Women living in Belgium follow influencers for various reasons. In Question 8, they explain that for the most part, they follow them simply because they like the content that is offered on their accounts. Nevertheless, 42% of them answer that their interest for influencers is linked to the brands they promote. Indeed, they search for inspiration for new products and/or services (17%) or they want to get opinions on certain brands (13%), they also wish to discover new brands (12%). These numbers important an important need for women to get information on brands via influencers.

Moreover, in the gauge chart below we can see that, on average, 3.4/5 is the level of satisfaction women have experienced when purchasing a product or service recommended by an influencer. Only 17% of them have rated their satisfaction 2 stars or less out of 5. The level of fulfilment

is mostly good and answers positively to the hypothesis, confirming that, after the purchase, women tend to be happy with what the influencer offers as advertising content.
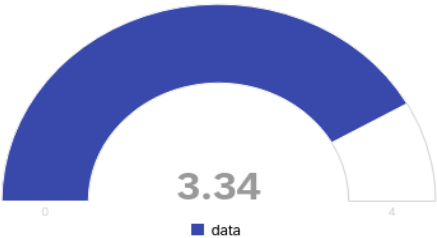
Figure 15. Gauge chart Q.14

However, this level of satisfaction after buying the product does not really correspond to what women feel at first sight about the brands advertised by influencers. As shown in the distribution bar below, 34% of voters do not have an opinion on whether they are generally interested in the brands promoted by influencers or not. Nevertheless, the intriguing data regarding the hypothesis is that 43% are not interested, to a certain level, in the brands advertised on influencers' profiles. This means that before buying a product or service, most followers seem at first uninterested by the influencers' collaboration content. Yet, when they do purchase a product or service, their level of content is positive.
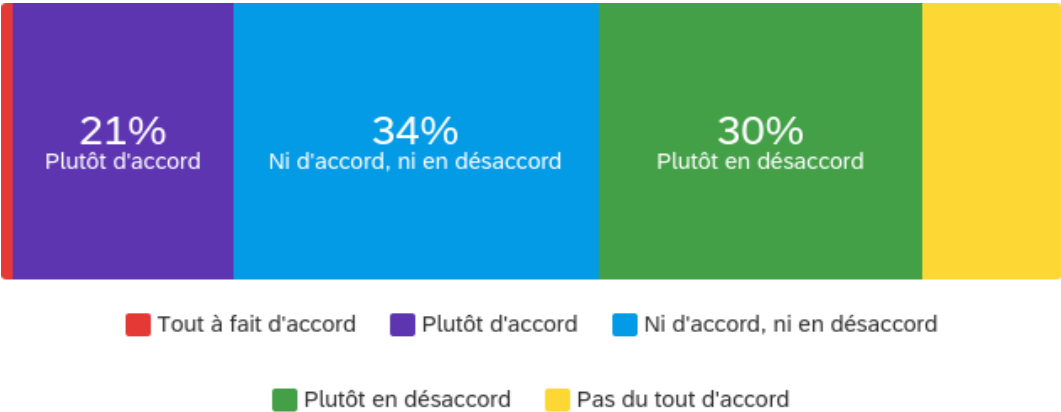
Figure 16. Distribution bar Q.15

In the bar chart of Question 16, we have an insight into what is more likely to interest women when seeing brand advertisement on influencers' profiles. Fashion is definitely what stands out the most, followed by beauty products as well as decoration and travel on the same level. In "other", voters had the opportunity to write down additional answers. In those came out the most; literature, products and services related to ecology. These answers are valuable in order

to get to know what Instagram female users want to see on their favorite influencers accounts and therefore, it can help to understand better and improve digital influencing in order to increase brand consumption.
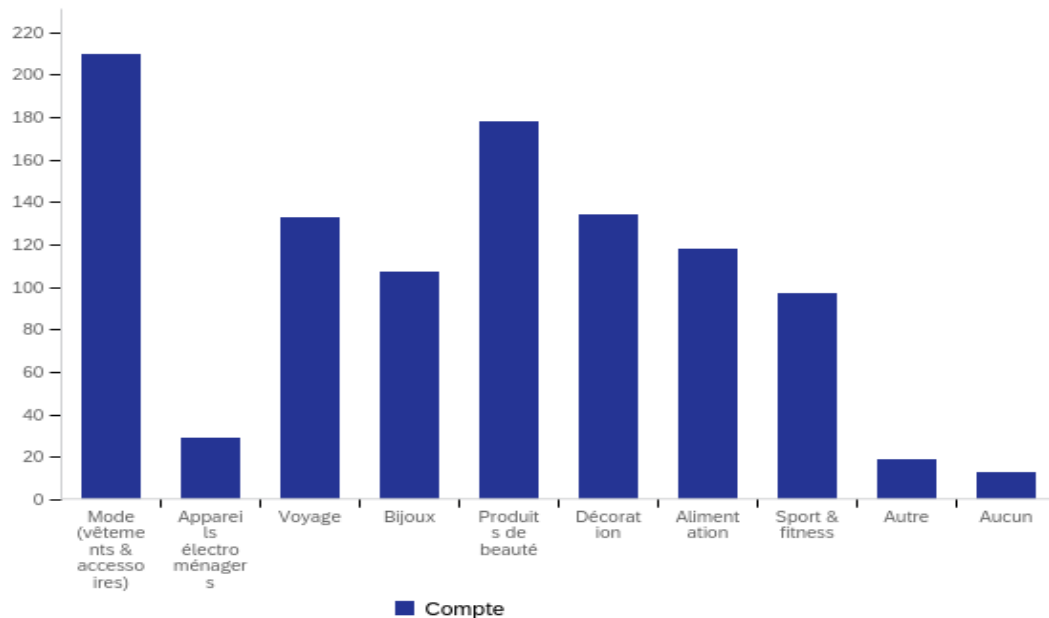
Figure 17. Bar chart Q.16

2.4. Hypothesis 4

How do followers perceive the authenticity and trustworthiness of influencers' brand placement?

In Question 11, women were asked if they paid attention to brand promotions and collaboration on influencers' accounts. 54% of them said that they did not pick up on those kinds of posts. The reason for the lack of interest is explained in Question 13 and the main reason is the lucrative goal of the influencer. In second position comes the fact that the influencer does not really use the product or service he/she is advertising. Many women also feel manipulated and therefore do not trust the authenticity of the celebrity. Finally, many also answered that they preferred to get opinion and advice from their surroundings such as family or friends.

The distribution bar shows that 46% of women prefer to be notified by the influencer when the latter collaborates with a brand. These results testify how important it is for influencers to reveal their partnership. If the influencer wants to keep an engaged and trustful relationship with his/her community, it is best to be honest even when doing brand advertisement. Moreover,

apart from consumers' desire, and as was developed in the literary review (see section 1.9.), it is a right for followers to know when they are exposed to marketing content.
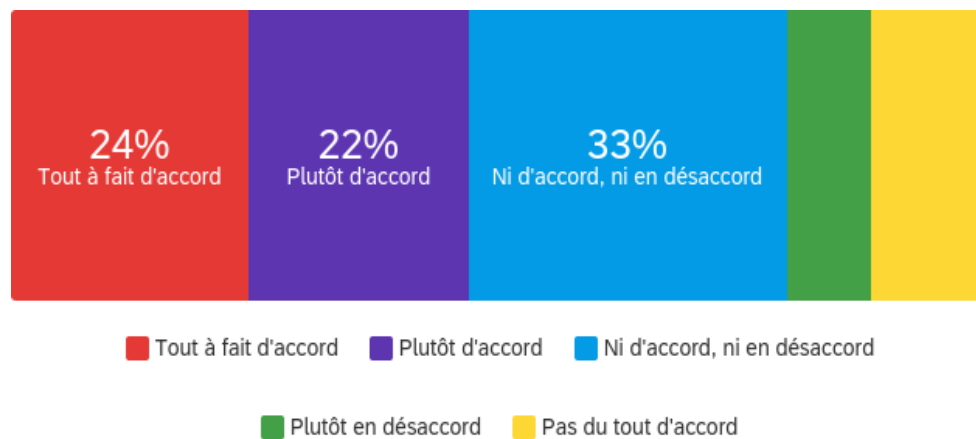
Figure 18. Distribution bar Q.17

To conclude the analysis of the fourth Hypothesis, the figures pertaining to the question "Have you ever felt manipulated by an influencer?" reveals that 72% of voters answered that they do not feel manipulated by them. The minority of women who answered positively gave an explanation to their opinion.

According to a respondent, "Each collaboration is beneficial for both parties. It can provide financial benefits or expend the parties' fame. This constitutes a sort of manipulation. Using a social media platform to sell products to young and impressionable teenagers is immoral." Many respondents mentioned how detrimental it is on the part of influencers to manipulate children and young adults who trust them.

Other reasons were that the influencer does not really use what he/she promotes and sometimes do staging, which results in looking fake and lacking sincerity. Some women also made the experience of buying after being influenced and were disappointed either by the quality of the product or because of delivery issues. Others were also scammed and lost money because of influencers. Reality shows' celebrities, who also work as influencers on Instagram, tend to have a bad reputation as several of them were caught lying and promoting low-quality products.

Another issue that was notified is that the financial interest is too obvious. For example, during some periods of time, a same brand is promoted on different influencers' accounts. The authenticity of the influencer is then questioned because followers understand that the goal is

to make money for both the brand and the one promoting it, and therefore do not trust any of them.

Finally, a few women mentioned the term drop shipping when explaining why they felt manipulated by influencers. Drop shipping allows businesses to work with a third-party supplier, which keeps products in stock and ships them to customers whenever they purchase them to the initial business. Some girls mentioned that they order from brands that were recommended by influencers and then receive products, which are, for example, found on AliExpress. This type of website directly connects Chinese resellers with brands. Drop shipping can be deceitful, as the product does not really come from the business it was initially ordered from.

In addition, the figures relating to Question 12 show how authenticity and trustworthiness are important for followers when being reached by brand placement. 35% of the women who pay attention to product and service promotions say they do because the influencer really uses what he/she is promoting. 18% declare they watch influencers' advertisements because the influencers seem to be honest. Once again, brand placement only brings future consumers when the collaboration looks sincere. However, as described above, a minority of women do not believe in the authenticity of brands and influencers' partnerships.

2.5. Hypothesis 5

Do social influencers have more impact on women's consumption than traditional advertising?

Without taking into consideration the second part of the Hypothesis, Question 10 evaluates how women feel influenced by influencers' posts. Half of them assert they are influenced by them and 86 women voted that they do not have an opinion on the matter. These first results already show a high tendency for women to have their attitude towards a brand partly controlled by influencers' content.
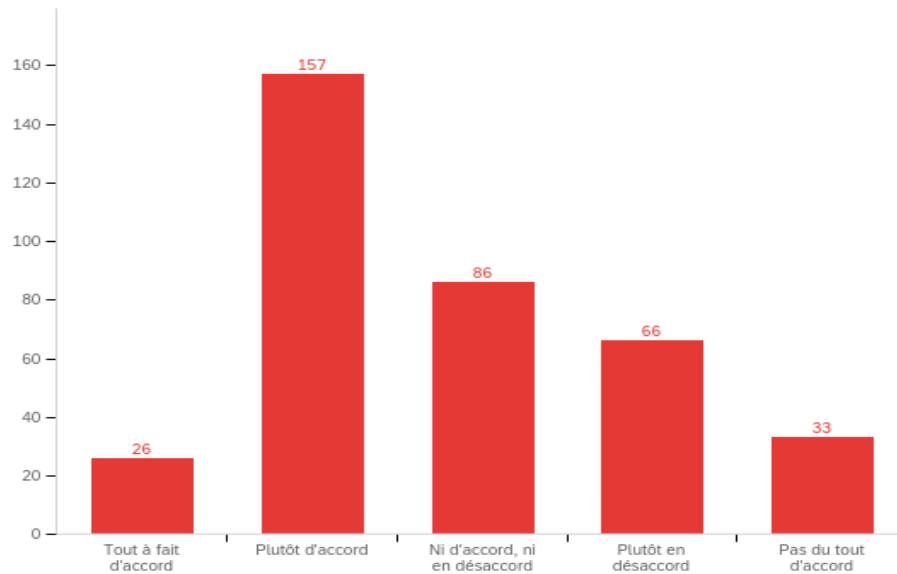
Figure 19. Bar chart Q.10

Moreover, it is important to notice that a majority of women ignore influencers' posts related to a brand promotion or collaboration. Only 3% of them essentially use Instagram to see advertisements and 43% pay attention to it because they come across it by chance (see Q.11). We can therefore observe that women are not especially interested in this type of content when using the social media platform. Question 18 also shows how Hypothesis 5 divides the voters. When asked if they have ever used a promo code received through an influencer, the answers are divided almost equally since 53% of them answered positively. These results demonstrate how influencers' advertisement works since more than half of the respondents have been influenced by brands' promotion seen on Instagram.

Finally, Question 22 is completely centered on Hypothesis 5 and therefore gives a clear answer that will later be added and analyzed to what is said above on the same subject. The results show that less than 40% of women do not believe that products and services promoted by Instagram influencers are more attractive than traditional advertisements such as on the television, radio or advertising posters in the street. This means that a vast majority of women are convinced that they are more influenced by brand advertisement seen on the social media platform.

2.6. Hypothesis 6

How does the photo/video composition posted by the influencer affect, positively or not, the follower's attitude towards the brand?

41% of voters follow influencers for the simple reason they like the content the latter offer on their social media account. Women like to see artistic pictures and find inspiration with them. As seen in the previous hypothesis, a majority of women believe that advertisement on Instagram has more effect on them than traditional advertising. To explain this opinion, 134 women said that the pictures and videos posted by the influencer are attractive and therefore have more impact on them than publicity on television for example. From those statistics it is possible to say that aesthetic content matters to female Instagram users and that it even has an impact on how they evaluate brand advertisement.

2.7. SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis is a method which consists in indicating the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a service or product. In this case, it focuses on influencer marketing, with regard to the quantitative data collected in the survey. The data which comes out of this analysis will bring precise information on the positive as well as negative aspects that can be found in influencer marketing directed towards women's brand consumption in Belgium. The SWOT analysis can help improve future business strategies for influencers and brand managers. The SWOT analysis is also a good way to sum up the results in a conclusion.

2.7.1. Strengths

It is important to write down the strengths of influencer marketing in order to evaluate its current level of success and the positive features of influencer marketing.

One of the main assets of this marketing technique is that most women active on Instagram follow influencers. Half of these women do not judge poorly influencers even though their judgement is not mostly good either. A majority of women have already used a promo code received via an influencer. Moreover, the level of satisfaction experienced by women after

purchasing a product or service through influencer brand placement is considerably high. This means that women tend to be happy when experiencing the whole influencer marketing process.

In addition, 72% of women do not feel manipulated by influencers, which therefore means that trust is a key component, which has been reached in influencer marketing. Half of them definitely feel influenced by these Instagram accounts and they affirm that their attitude towards the promoted brand is partly controlled by what they see on the influencers' accounts. These results are positive because they confirm that influencer marketing works. It convinces women and it is able to influence them in their opinion and future brand purchase.

2.7.2. Weaknesses

This section will reveal the weaknesses that have been pointed out in the questionnaires' analysis. Those aspects are relevant to take into consideration because it will allow influencers and brands to know what they should improve to their influencer marketing approach.

A first weakness is that more than half of the women interviewed say that they ignore influencers' posts in which they do promotion. The best way to erase this weakness would be to understand why they are not interested in this type of content and try to improve it. To do so, it is relevant to focus on the results of Hypothesis 3, which investigates what consumers think of the brands promoted on Instagram by digital influencers.

One of the main reasons that can explain this disinterest is that the lucrative goal of the influencer, and therefore of the brand, is made too obvious in the content offered on the social media platform. However, 46% of women prefer to get notified by the influencer when the latter collaborates with a brand. It is important to take into consideration the desires of the future consumers and even more when it is a legal request (see section 1.9.). This perception of financial desire has an impact on how women perceive the authenticity and trustworthiness of influencers' brand placement. Even though the amount of women that believe in a lack of authenticity is very small, it is still considered as a weakness that should be handled.

Other reasons that explain the disinterest of women towards brand placement content is the disappointment they have experienced after purchasing poor quality products and/or delivery issues. Influencers and brands' fraud fails influencer marketing's reputation. Another obstacle towards a deeper interest into brand placement on Instagram is drop shipping. Women feel

betrayed when receiving an order that does not come directly from the brand they ordered from, but instead, from another brand they do not know about or have a bad opinion on.

2.7.3. Opportunities

This section allows marketers and influencers to notice some elements that could be improved and generate better results to their objectives.

The popularity of influencers on Instagram is of course the most essential opportunity to work on. Statistics from the questionnaire prove it since the great majority of women have an Instagram account and follow multiple influencers on it. Moreover, the opinion they have of them is mostly good or with no particular opinion. These positive results always offer the possibility of being ameliorated.

Almost half of the voters admit they pay attention to influencers' advertisements because they come across them by chance. Those numbers could be improved by trying to understand what the reasons are for them and how influencers and brands could attract more women to influencer marketing. To do so, we noticed in the results that 35% of them like to watch brand promotion because the influencer really uses the product or service he/she is promoting. This is the first objective that should be reinforced in influencer marketing. Women say they like to get ideas from the influencer on how to wear or use a service or product. 42% of them explain that their interest in influencers is linked to the brands they promote. This interest towards brands could be improved by insisting on sharing inspiration or informing women on brands they would like to discover. Therefore, it is essential to keep in mind what their brands' preferences are. The results of the survey showed that fashion and beauty products stand out the most when women were asked what products/services they are most likely to enjoy seeing on an influencer's account. Decoration and travel also interest them a lot.

41% of voters follow influencers for the simple reason that they like the content they offer on their social media account. Women like to see artistic pictures and get inspired from them. Another opportunity to take advantage of is the aesthetic content offered by influencers. It matters a lot for women and affects the way they feel about an influencer and the brand he/she is promoting.

Moreover, almost half of the women voters prefer to buy a product or service when the influencer mentions the collaboration. In that question, we can see that the information the influencer provides to his/her followers can positively affect the future purchase of a product or service and it should not be neglected. Engagement between a brand, an influencer and the followers is very important and should be promoted in order to improve the success of influencer marketing.

2.7.4. Threats

Threats are important to take into account as they can jeopardize the success of an influencer marketing campaign. First, it should not be neglected that people who do not follow influencers have a bad opinion on them and it is therefore a threat for their reputation even though the percentage of women not following influencers on Instagram is very low.

Another warning should be given regarding the fact that 54% of women said that they did not pick up on brand promotions and collaboration on influencers' accounts. There is an important disinterest in influencer marketing and it can threaten the future of influencer marketing on Instagram.

Finally, influencers making fools out of their followers can also be very dangerous for influencer marketing. Even though most influencers (see Chapter I. Study 1 – Influencers) try to do their best in being authentic on the social platform, and avoiding misleading advertising, negative experiences can still have a contradictory impact for the future of influencer marketing.

III. Conclusion

This conclusion develops the most relevant results of each hypothesis, which were unfolded in the previous chapter, and associates those with the scientific facts of the literary review.

Firstly, it is important to evaluate how women perceive Instagram influencers in Belgium. Almost every woman having an Instagram account follows influencers or celebrities working as influencers. As underlined in the literary review, there are more than 500 million active daily users on Instagram, a number that emphasizes the meaning of this dissertation's research. In this majority of women, most have either a good opinion on influencers or no particular opinion.

Nevertheless, what stands out of these results, is that women who do not follow influencers on the social media platform have a mostly negative opinion of them. We can conclude that negative points of view mostly come from voters who are not interested in the subject or at least not involved with it. Influencers are definitely very popular on Instagram and receive positive criticism from those who follow them.

The next hypothesis made it possible to measure the degree of engagement between digital influencers and women/future consumers. What comes out of the questionnaire proves the importance of influencers being close to their communities and creating a good relationship, which can later make followers become consumers of what they see on the influencer's profile. The more information influencers provide to their communities, the more women might be interested in the brands promoted on their profile. Huang and al. (2011), indicate the importance of information as it is one of the most significant components that influence consumers' word-of-mouth attitude. The relationship that is built between Instagram accounts has a direct effect on how women perceive the brand. However, engagement does not mean trust.

Trust and authenticity are tightly linked to engagement but they are two different aspects that should be important for the influencer in order to stay popular and have good collaboration with brands. To be reliable for his/her followers and in compliance with the law (see section 1.9.), an influencer should always reveal his/her partnership with brands. Today, women do not usually feel manipulated by influencers, mostly because of the trustworthy relation that is built between the two parties. Many voters declared that they liked the fact of seeing the influencer really using the product or service, which brings trust towards the celebrity. Atik and Ertekin's survey (2012) also attests that trustworthiness is one of the most appreciated characteristics by Instagram followers. From the written answers of the survey, we notice that women are conscious of the business going on for influencers and brands, but if they feel respected by them, they also realize that it can be an advantage for them to be offered brand content from influencers that they enjoy following. Disappointment with purchasers does exist, as women sometimes notice too much the financial interest behind collaborations on Instagram or the promotion of poor quality brands. Ethics is a fundamental component in businesses' marketing concepts, which has the power of positively influencing consumers (Chelini, 2019).

The brands that are promoted by influencers also play a key part in understanding the impact Instagram influencers have on women brands' consumption in Belgium. Almost half of the voters like discovering brands on influencers' profiles. Instagram itself asserts that over 60%

of users discover new products via the social media platform (2020). Women like to get new inspiration or opinion of brands but also discover new concepts and brands' names. Moreover, women who already purchased from a brand via an influencer's advertisement tend to be satisfied with their purchase. However, the first opinion they have of brands they see advertised on Instagram tend to be negative but the most important is that their opinion changes positively after purchasing the product or service. The questionnaire offers an insight into what women want to see influencers talk about the most on the social network. These answers, such as fashion or beauty products, give an idea to influencers and brands on what kind of product or service would possibly work best when doing collaboration on Instagram.

The results concerning the fifth hypothesis display the difference between traditional brand advertisement such as the one seen on television or on posters in the street to the one seen on influencers' profiles. Half of the voters answered that they feel influenced by what they see on influencers' accounts. These results do not really correlate with the comparison that is tried to be done with traditional advertisement but it already proves that women's opinion on a brand is partly controlled by what they see on the social media platform. However, the attention they pay to influencers' partnerships with brands is not especially something that they are looking for when visiting their profiles. Almost half of the women interviewed say they watch this type of content because they come across it when navigating on the social media. Moreover, a majority of women spending time watching this content, have, at some point, used a promo code or purchased the product or service advertised. These results show that women tend to have a positive attitude towards the advertising content they view on influencers' accounts and those results correlate with the fact that 60% of them believe that products and services promoted by Instagram influencers are more attractive than traditional advertisements. Ahmad and Barhemmati's research (2015) confirms that consumers are more influenced by online word-of-mouth than by traditional advertisement.

The results concerning the last hypothesis illustrate how the content offered on influencers' accounts positively affects brands' future consumers. Many women follow influencers simply because they like to see the content they publish on a regular basis. Aesthetics and originality are key elements to keep followers' attention on influencers' accounts and it therefore makes them see positively the brand that is promoted in the post.

The SWOT analysis shows positive results about the impact of Instagram influencers on women's brand consumption in Belgium. Women today are very active on social media and

most of them assert they are being influenced by what they see on Instagram. For example, a majority of them used a promo code received via an influencer's account. The level of satisfaction is high and proves that women keep a positive attitude towards the brand and the influencer. The strengths depicted prove that digital marketing works and pushes women to purchase brands via influencers' profiles. However, many women also tend to avoid posts in which they are confronted with brand advertisements on influencers' profiles. This weakness can be improved by concealing the lucrative goal of the influencer and/or the brand. However, this would also result in giving a negative image of influencers' trustworthiness. Another solution would be to emphasize the influencers' willingness to be authentic and completely trustworthy with their followers. A distinct weakness which should be worked on is to diminish the disappointment of women after purchasing a product or service promoted by an influencer, which is later revealed a fraud, or of bad quality.

Many opportunities should be taken into consideration in order to develop this digital marketing technique. Of course, it is fundamental to take advantage of the ongoing popularity of the social network and of influencers. Women like the content they see on their favorite influencers' accounts, they want to get inspiration from it but also ideas on how to use or wear a product/service. The engagement between the influencer and his/her followers is also an opportunity because women admit that they consider those before purchasing something from a brand placement. Another opportunity for the market is the fact that women pay attention to influencers' advertisements by chance. This means it would be relevant to increase the impression of those kinds of posts on the social platform and to get women interested in the influencer and the brand placement. The interest in the publicity is even greater when the influencer explains how to use or wear the product/service but also when he/she seems honest and authentic while doing so. In order to increase the success of influencer marketing in Belgium, it is relevant to focus on promotions related to fashion, beauty products, decoration and travelling.

Finally, to make sure not to send influencer marketing in a wall, several things came out of the threats analysis and should be taken into consideration. Firstly, influencers have a bad reputation for outsiders. Indeed, women who do not follow any influencer on Instagram regularly show negative ideas towards them. These opinions can lead to a bad notoriety and the failure of this emerging marketing technique in the future. To avoid this result, remarks on influencers and brand placement should be as positive as possible, making women avoid frauds, drop shipping, or simply bad experiences linked to influencer marketing (see section 1.10.2.).

Moreover, there is an important disinterest on the part of women towards this type of content, and it should therefore be worked on to interest more women by applying various techniques described above.

5. Qualitative research

The qualitative research chapter explores the methodology used to conduct the two studies, as well as how the questions were created concerning their target respondents. The chapter includes the testimony of the people interviewed and an interpretation of their opinions. The analysis of the answers from influencers and brand managers offers valuable data, which can be interesting to combine with the quantitative study done with the direct consumers of influencer marketing. As in the quantitative research, it is important to note that the questionnaire was created with view to arguing the hypothesis of the dissertation.

I. Study 1 – Influencers

1.1. Methodology

In order to complete the literary review with further information, I thought it would be interesting to have influencers' point of view. Influencers work daily with the women who answered the quantitative survey and therefore, they can bring insight into the world of influencer marketing and maybe disclose unexplored facts about the impact they have on their followers and on brand consumption.

1.2. Objectives

The construction of the interview aimed to bring further knowledge to the hypotheses, focusing on women consumers. Furthermore, the objective of getting in contact with influencers is firstly to try to understand which type of audience follows them. Who do they influence the most (gender & age) and where do these people come from? Through the discussion, we learn how influencers describe the relationship they have with their followers but also how the bond between them was created. To be able to discern the different categories of influencers present on Instagram, I also asked them in which field they have the most influence. The information provided gives details on what women like most to see on Instagram, such as lifestyle, travelling, beauty, fashion, sport, food, etc. To end the discussion, I focused on their social media success by asking them some advice and/or techniques to be good at influencer marketing. Original content creation as well as mistakes that should be avoided represent a focal

point in bettering digital marketing and improving the influence a brand has on online consumers.

1.3. Selecting influencers

Making contact with influencers is supposed to be easy since their job is mainly to create a relationship with people; nevertheless, being an influencer is also a full-time job. Contacting influencers and getting them to accept answering my questions was not an easy task. In order to be sure I would have enough people to interview, I extended my influencer research to other countries having a common border with Belgium. In this way, influencers would be from the same European area and the data collected would still be valuable for this research.

As this dissertation focuses on women, it made more sense to interview exclusively female influencers. The number of followers the influencer has on his/her account also influenced my choice. Indeed, to collect helpful data, it was better to interview famous influencers, who have experience and whose Instagram account represents their full-time job. Nevertheless, I also interviewed micro-influencers, having around 5,000 followers, to get perspectives from different levels of social media fame.

1.4. Interview method

To interview the influencers, I decided to conduct individual interviews via their e-mail, which were accessible on their Instagram account. It was hard to get in touch with influencers so when they accepted to answer my questions I let them choose the way of doing the interview. Moreover, emailing was an easier format for most influencers but also for collecting data afterwards. Via email, the influencer can decide when they complete the questionnaire and they can take the time necessary to answer the questions.

II. Results

2.1. Influencers' community

As was previously mentioned in the literary review, there is a higher percentage of women active on Instagram in Belgium than of men (NapoleanCat, 2020) and women tend to purchase online more than the opposite-gender (Zhang and al., 2014). Therefore, it is not surprising to see that influencers that were interviewed mostly have a community of followers composed of young women. The influencers were either French or Belgian. Their location, as well as the language they speak on the social media, influence a lot the category of people that follows them. Therefore, most of their followers were women from France or Belgium. In the data table below is an overview of the key information that represents the influencers' profile and community.

Influencer	Age	Gender	Nationality	Number of followers
Fidji Ruiz @fidji_ruiz	18-34	76% of women	French	1.9 million
Claire Marnette @milkywaysblueyes	18-34	predominantly women	Belgian	215,000
Joyce Donatz @joycethecabincrew	25-34	/	Belgian	5,764
Emilie Mauléon @emymauleone	18-24	66% of women	Belgian	5,205

Table 3. Influencers' audience

As we can see in the table above, the communities that follow the influencers interviewed are mostly from the same age group. It is therefore important to note that the results and conclusions that are drawn in this chapter are based on a limited target audience and therefore cannot be generalized to all Belgian and French influencers.

2.2. Influence on followers

In order to get a different point of view concerning Hypothesis 1, influencers answered questions regarding the influence they have on their followers as well as the sphere of influence they work most on.

Joyce Donatz tries mostly to inform her followers on the lifestyle of a flight attendant because many people do not know much about this work field. The interest she gets from her community is therefore linked to her job and the life she leads because of it. As a flight attendant, she also proposes a lot of content related to travelling and seldom talks about fashion.

Fidji Ruiz is a very famous influencer and reality show celebrity. She describes her influence towards her followers as caring because she pays attention to her followers' desires. She promotes, with respect to her community, mostly products related to fashion and her lifestyle.

Claire Marnette, a Belgian macro influencer, also shows a lot of respect towards her community. Her sphere of influence is very large because, as a blogger, she tests various products and services related to fashion, travelling, sport, beauty and food. Claire characterizes her influence on her followers as significant. As a blogger, she has more experience with a product or service because she really tried them before sharing an opinion. Moreover, she can compare products better because she has more experience in this area. Since the influencer is considered as an expert, Claire is certain that she has more impact on her followers' purchase decision than a friend would (Marnette, 2020).

Finally, Emilie Mauléon sees things differently. She does not like using the term "influence" because she does not believe that it is her goal when talking about a product or service. She communicates with her community as if she was a friend who would explain what she is doing or what she received from a brand. What she shares most on her Instagram profile is either fashion or beauty products.

The table below summarizes the field of influence that is most discussed on these Instagram profiles. We can see that influencers talk mostly about things that interest more women today on Instagram. The quantitative data from the survey showed that women were most interested in fashion. The four influencers interviewed mentioned it as their main source for brand placement. The products or services that women are more likely to like are also beauty, travelling and design. Apart from design, which was not mentioned by any of the four

influencers, all of women's preferences can be found in the table. However, brand collaboration for design is visible on Fidji Ruiz and Claire Marnette's accounts.

Field of influence	Influencers
Fashion	Fidji Ruiz; Claire Marnette; Joyce Donatz; Emilie Mauléon
Travelling	Claire Marnette; Joyce Donatz
Sport	Claire Marnette
Beauty	Claire Marnette; Emilie Mauléon
Food	Claire Marnette
Lifestyle	Fidji Ruiz

Table 4. Field of influence

2.3. Engagement between the influencer and her followers

To create engagement with her community, Fidji considers that staying spontaneous and natural is imperative. Moreover, she insists on being caring towards them by showing kindness and appreciation. Emilie thinks in the same way as Fidji, because for her, being natural is essential. Most people on social media are what we could call "fake" or at least not fully themselves when sharing their life online. Emilie does not calculate everything she does on Instagram, such as posting pictures and videos, in order to get likes. She believes that it is the reason why people like her and follow her. "I am myself in a certain way and this authenticity is felt on the networks."

However, Joyce's opinion is quite different as she says that engagement with her community is mainly due to her image and the content she shares on her profile, which is essentially about flight attendants and travelling.

Finally, Claire Marnette shares that working with influencer marketing is a job that is very private. It is tightly linked with the private life and therefore creates a deeper feeling of connection with the followers. Moreover, long-term collaborations with brands are important for her. Some women do not see what she posts every day and therefore it is possible for her to talk about a same product several times and have a chance of reaching those followers. Another important notion to keep in mind in Claire's opinion is that repetition of an advertisement will

get more deeply in the thoughts of her followers and they will get more interested in the brand that way. Long-term brand collaborations create a trust and honest relationship between the influencer, the brand and the consumers (Marnette, 2020).

2.4. Choice of brands for collaboration

As we can see in the table below, most influencers share the same criteria when it comes to collaborating with brands.

Brand selection criteria	Influencers
Like the brand or the product/service	Fidji Ruiz, Joyce Donatz, Claire Marnette
Feel comfortable talking about it	Fidji Ruiz
Share values	Émilie Mauléon, Claire Marnette
Like the product/service after testing it	Émilie Mauléon, Claire Marnette
The brand offers freedom of expression (content, creativity, etc.)	Claire Marnette

Table 5. Brand selection criteria

Joyce and Fidji only choose brands they really believe in or they have heard good things about. Nevertheless, Fidji adds that she only accepts to collaborate with brands that she feels comfortable presenting, such as clothes. Emilie explains that usually, brands contact influencers directly via their email address. However, even without a collaboration, if she purchases a product that she likes, she will share it with her community. Thanks to loyalty, sometimes the brand will take contact with her and it leads to a partnership. If a brand contacts her, it is essential for her to share values with the brand. She also always tells the brand beforehand that she will test the product before talking about it online.

When receiving brands' offers, Claire Marnette always asks herself "Do I, as an influencer, wish to try this product/service?". Even before searching about the brand or signing a contract with them, she goes through this reflection process. Moreover, she wants the project to be original or at least wants to be able to take pleasure in creating content for the brand and her community. It is also crucial for her to get freedom from the brand such as having the opportunity of being creative or suggesting ideas, implementing them in a campaign, and have

a good relationship with the brand from the start. The brands contact her via email, then she decides whether she accepts or not, but she can also propose another idea of a project or campaign if she does not like their offer. It is important for the influencer to decide how they will work with the brand and communicate about the product or service because he/she knows him/herself and knows what to do to be good in his/her work. Claire also admits that she can only accept 5 to 10% of what she is asked to collaborate with. She has too much work to accept everything, and if she does not like the brand, its image or its identity, she directly refuses the collaboration (Marnette, 2020).

2.5. Revealing influencer & brand partnership

Almost every influencer interviewed acknowledges the fact that it is important to reveal their partnership with a brand when promoting it on their social media.

The laws in Belgium and France are unclear. Fidji presses this statement by saying that she is not aware of whether it is important or not to inform followers when the influencer shares content in collaboration with a brand. Claire Marnette adds that no real laws exist for social media, but the laws that apply to social media today are currently assimilated to the ones for advertisement. The main law is that the consumers should always know that what he/she sees is something sponsored or a brand placement. However, many influencers do not announce it or add the hashtag sponsored or advertisement to be clear about it. Claire wants her followers to know so that they can act towards the products the way they want and be aware of the brand placement. Everyone that uses Instagram knows that influencers earn money with their job on social media, so Claire does not see the point of hiding it. She would like a legal framework to be set up in Belgium for influencers on social media. She mentions it already exists in some countries, such as in Germany, but sometimes the rules are too strict (Marnette, 2020).

The subject matter is very controversial; Joyce Donatz affirms that it is required by law to let Instagram consumers know when they are exposed to brand placement content. In her opinion, even if it was not a requirement, she would still do it, because she believes it is important to be authentic and honest with her community. Emilie adds that when she navigates on other bloggers or influencers' accounts, she prefers to know when they collaborate with a brand. However, Emilie does not really mention when she does a collaboration because she thinks that

she has an honest relationship with her community and that they know she would only share content from a brand she truly likes.

Finally, Claire says that having multiple sponsored content on her account is not a problem and does not affect her credibility. She works the same for a sponsored post or not, but it seems normal for her to be paid for her work. Some people wonder why she spends time testing out different products before presenting them on her Instagram account. In her opinion, it is right-minded to try them out before doing advertisement because she does not want to lie to her community. She adds that, like in every job, some influencers are unreliable or do their job poorly (see section 1.10.), but usually she thinks it is possible to discern honest influencers (Marnette, 2020).

2.6. Influencer marketing VS traditional advertising

Claire Marnette explains how influencer marketing has known a huge boom. Influencer marketing is a recent technique, which has grown with the popularity of social media platforms, therefore, in the beginning, the success was immense but now it has stabilized. Claire Marnette thinks that it will exist forever because, like magazines for example, they are important for brands and people that follow them. Its success will not explode as it did in the past because it is not new anymore but it will keep existing just as magazines still exist, even though they have fewer readers today. In her video (Marnette, 2020), Claire does not make a clear distinction between influencer marketing and traditional advertisement but she explains how influencer marketing works very well for her and for the brands. Even though it does not work with every type of followers and every product she works with, what she says and shows on Instagram influence the purchase decision of her followers. However, her job is really like traditional publicity, as she has to sell products and make her followers purchase them.

Fidji believes that influencer marketing has a more positive impact on consumers than traditional marketing techniques. Nevertheless, other influencers interviewed do not share this opinion. Joyce has mixed opinions on the subject. She thinks that social networks are trendier today. However, it depends a lot on the age group that is targeted and it is important to choose your means intelligently. She thinks that for an older target, less associated with social networks, it is important to continue to use the more traditional means. Emily does not believe either that social media marketing has more impact because they are two different things. As

Joyce says, it depends which public is targeted and the product or service that is promoted. In the past, everything was on television, but today, Emilie notices that some brands prefer television or radio for certain types of products while social media and influencers are best for others.

2.7. Keys to influencer marketing success

Every influencer interviewed shared the same opinion concerning the major key to success. This is transparency and simplicity. In Fidji's opinion, it is also important to take pleasure in what you do because your community can feel it. Joyce adds that it is essential to stay creative and original and to avoid copying other influencers because people will notice it and it is not natural. For Emilie, honesty is key to influencer marketing, as well as knowing what your followers like to see the most on your account. Being conscious of that can make you become the center of interest and people will have the impression that they really know the influencer personally even though it is not really the case.

Claire Marnette adds that a successful influencer can be found on any platform, not only on Instagram. It depends where the blogger started and built his/her principal community. She recommends publishing lively content such as stories or videos because they have more impact on followers. When you watch someone moving and speaking behind a screen, people tend to feel closer to that person and therefore it creates more engagement than simple pictures posted in the feed. @Milkywaysblueyes adds that nowadays, micro, nano and macro-influencers are all valuable for brands. This changed a lot because in the past, only famous influencers were contacted by brands to collaborate, and it is therefore an opportunity to cease (Marnette, 2020).

2.8. Mistakes in influencer marketing

The mistake that has been mentioned the most is that it is not efficient to prefer quantity to quality. It is not interesting to post too much information at the same time or to ask for attention and likes, says Joyce. An influencer that only tries to get more popular will disappoint his/her community. Emilie adds that influencers that try to copy others or lack of creativity when promoting a brand are unentertaining. They should try to explain with their own words rather

than reading what the brand sends them. It can lack in authenticity and as was analyzed in the quantitative study, it is something that should be avoided.

III. Conclusion

The four influencers whom I was able to interview were either French or Belgian. Their audience on Instagram varies from 5,000 to 1.9 million followers. The sample of influencers is interesting because they all have an extremely different level of popularity. Their communities are mostly composed of women, reinforcing the literary theory on the subject. Moreover, all of their followers are aged between 18 and 34 years old, which confirms the results obtained in the quantitative study (see section 4.4.). The characteristics of the influencers' community are essential to take into account as they can certify the efficiency of brands' campaign target (Chelini, 2019).

The fields of influence the interviewees noted down were very similar to the ones respondents voted for in the quantitative questionnaire. Indeed fashion, travelling and beauty is what three of four influencers interviewed work with the most. Joyce and Fidji influence their community mostly regarding their lifestyle and personal job. The four influencers show a lot of respect towards their followers, as they all try to be as authentic as possible. Claire is not shy to talk about how she is very influent on the consumer purchase decisions of her followers. The ripple effect developed in the beginning of this dissertation explains how word-of-mouth plays a key part in online advertising efficiency. Emily compares herself to a friend when she communicates with the women that follow her, she stays natural and advises them on products and services she is truly fond of. De Veirman, Cauberghe and Hudder's research (2017) stresses the fact that it is most probable for consumers to purchase a product or service via informal or social sources' recommendations.

As we noted in the literary review, engagement between the influencer, the followers and the brand is essential for influencer marketing to be a success. All four women interviewed insist on being natural and authentic in order to build a trustworthy relationship with their followers. Fake influencers are easily detected on Instagram and as was analyzed in the SWOT analysis, it can be a threat for the future of influencer marketing. Claire insists on how, as an influencer, your private life is exposed to all the followers and the latter can sometimes be intrusive. In

some way, the engagement between influencers and their community cannot be deeper because followers have the possibility of feeling connected privately to the celebrity they follow. Engagement can also be improved with the repetition of the same advertisement on influencers' accounts. Claire explains how a long-term collaboration with a brand can create a profound engagement between the three parties as they connect often on the social media platform.

In the quantitative study was analyzed which brands followers like to see promoted on Instagram. Influencers explain how they decide to work with certain brands and why they refuse to work with others. Several criteria are important for more than one influencer, such as liking the brand or product/service they offer, sharing the same values or also having a good opinion of the brand after testing it. Communication skills are indispensable to promote a product or service. Atik and Ertekin (2012) assert that influencers need to have knowledge and proficiency on what they promote. Hundreds of brands contact influencers by email every week. Claire explains she has to make a choice because it would be too much work promoting every single brand that contacts her. Moreover, like Emilie, she pays special attention to the image of the brand and the values it spreads. They do not want their personal image to be associated with a non-ethical brand for example. Joyce and Fidji accept working with a brand when they like it and when they heard good reviews about it beforehand.

Transparency is important for online consumers. Influencers revealing collaboration can have an impact on how their followers will judge their authenticity and honesty when doing a brand placement. Even though the laws are not the same around the world, the four influencers interviewed acknowledge the fact that, it is better to disclose their partnership with brands. In Belgium, advertisement cannot be released in a way that it could fool the public on its lucrative goal (Van Den Brande, 2018). Claire also says that it is not useful in any way to hide a collaboration with a brand because everyone knows that influencer marketing exists and that influencers have their job based on this new technique and therefore need to be paid for it. It is also indicated in the literary review that being an influencer is a full time job that requires to work on many assets, such as being an expert in the sphere of influence or creating appropriate content (Biaudet, 2017). Emilie suggests that, when the partnership is released, the follower can make his/her own opinion on it, knowing that there is a commercial goal behind the content published. Edoardo Chelini (2019) argues that ethics in Instagram brand placement requires mutual integrity between the influencer and the consumer.

Concerning the respective consumption impacts created by traditional advertisement and influencer marketing, there is controversy for the influencers interviewed. Claire explains that influencer marketing has known a huge boom because it is a new marketing technique. However, it is just another way of selling products, like traditional advertisement. Fidji believes influencer marketing works better but Joyce and Emilie explain that, in their opinion, these are two completely different techniques. They vary because they target contrasting audiences. As was seen in section 2.1., the audience of the interviewed influencers is very young. This means that influencer marketing works best on millennials and the generation Z but it does not imply that traditional advertisement is not performant anymore. Further arguments about traditional advertisement can be found in the following qualitative interview of brands.

A successful social media marketing campaign is, for all interviewed influencers, transparent, natural and authentic. The content published should be, in Claire's opinion, energetic in order to create engagement with the followers. Today, any kind of influencer, popular or not, can be valuable for a brand. Nevertheless, mistakes such as copying or fraud should be avoided, as was discussed in the results of the quantitative data and in the SWOT analysis.

IV. Study 2 – Brands

4.1. Methodology

As much as an influencer's point of view is significant in this research, it is also important to get the perspective of brands, which are affected by consumers' perception of influencer marketing. More and more brands today change their marketing approach and focus on digital marketing. They employ influencers or collaborate with them to improve their brand image and promote what they sell. I designed a questionnaire to get an idea of what it is like to work with influencer marketing, what the benefits of it are and the level of impact it has on women's consumption in Belgium.

4.2. Objective

The main objective of interviewing brand managers is to add useful information to the data collected from consumers and influencers. By consulting companies' marketing managers, we

can get a more precise idea of the effect influencer marketing has on the business of a company. Firstly, I asked them their point of view on influencer marketing and on their past collaborations with social media influencers. It is relevant to know if Instagram is, in their opinion, the best social media to work with, and what benefits they want to obtain when doing partnerships with celebrities on the social platform. Furthermore, I also aimed my attention on the hypothesis concerning traditional publicity and asked them what kind of advertisement has the best effect on their sales. In the interview, I also asked about their choice of influencers, which are best to work with, and mistakes that are important to highlight when working with this marketing technique.

4.3. Criteria of selection

Keeping the attention aimed at the question research, I tried to get into contact with companies targeting the Belgian market. I contacted many establishments only to get answers from a few of them. To make sure I would have at least four brand marketing managers' positive response, I did not limit my research to Belgian brands but extended it to foreign companies having Belgian consumers. My contact list was very vast as it included huge multinationals as well as smaller local corporations.

4.4. Interview method

To interview the companies, I decided to follow the same method as the one used with influencers. I believed it would be easier and more comfortable for a brand manager to answer my questions through email but I always offered the possibility to interview them via video conference or phone call.

V. Results

5.1. Brands' identity

As for influencers, I was able to interview four different brands' communication managers, originating from Belgium and France. The two most famous brands I interviewed, Foodspring

and QNT Sport, are both sports nutrition companies selling fitness food. Cap ou pas Cap is an online website for baby products and children's clothing. Finally, Garden Gourmet is a Nestle brand of plant-based nutrition. I interviewed the communication managers of the Belgian based company. The table below includes the nationality of the brand as well as the amount of people following them on Instagram.

Brand	Nationality	Number of followers
Cap ou pas Cap	Belgian	1,672
Foodspring	Belgian - French	260,000
QNT Sport	Belgian	316,000
Garden Gourmet Belgium	Belgian	5,197

Table 6. Brands' community

5.2. Goals for influencer marketing

Goals	Brands
Increase brand awareness	Foodspring, Garden Gourmet, QNT Sport, Cap ou pas Cap
Improve brand image	QNT Sport, Foodspring, Garden Gourmet
Generate sales	QNT Sport, Foodspring, Cap ou pas Cap

Table 7. Brands' influencer marketing goals

Increasing brands' fame and visibility is the main goal that has been mentioned by the four brands interviewed. QNT sport says that it is important to have spokespersons of the brand active online. It helps cultivating the brand image, have quality content and do brand placement. This can also lead to achieving bigger sales, which was referred to as a goal by all the brands except Garden Gourmet. Foodspring makes a distinction between two types of collaboration, image and performance, as well as their specific goals. The goals linked to performance are to be able to measure the key performance indicators (KPI) such as the income, the average

amount of the customer basket, the percentage of acquisition of new customers or the visibility of the brand with, for example, the traffic generated on the website. Other goals associated with the image are to send messages to the audience by saying that their Instagram influencers are a reflection of Foodspring's consumers and that they share lifestyle and values in common.

5.3. Instagram, the best target

Section 1.3. justifies how Instagram has become a valuable marketing tool today. The brands' arguments approve and justify the literary review. Garden Gourmet believes that today, Instagram owns the largest coverage in terms of fame. Even if mainly young women use the social platform, as it was proved in the literary review and in the quantitative and qualitative studies carried out in this dissertation, Cap ou pas Cap's owner comments on how many young parents follow influencers and become consumers, guided by what they see. She believes, just like the company QNT Sport, that Facebook has become old-fashioned. However, companies keep using it, sometimes because, QNT explains, a minority of influencers still work on Mark Zuckerberg's iconic network.

"A picture is worth a thousand words," says Alycia Billois, marketing manager of Foodspring. Instagram is currently, and by far, the social media platform of reference thanks to its tools (inclusion of swipe up links, hashtags, etc.) but especially because this social network is built around the image.

These testimonies confirm how Instagram has defeated other social media platforms in terms of influencer marketing. However, as Garden Gourmet add, other platforms like TikTok or Twitch, can be interesting to use for marketing, depending on the target audience. QNT Sport also works with YouTube, but it costs a lot more money to create content for this type of channel. They also confess trying marketing on TikTok, a network that allows them to create original and quality content, but the results were not very convincing. TikTok's community is younger than the one on Instagram. QNT Sport's main target lies between 21 and 35 years old, making Instagram, once again, the most appropriate choice for influencer marketing.

5.4. Level of satisfaction

Post-collaboration satisfaction is controversial for the brands interviewed. Some have very positive experiences while others are disappointed by their partnerships. However, as Alycia Billois affirms, "influencer marketing depends a lot on people". Before starting a collaboration, Foodspring prospects the profile from top to bottom, taking into account their image, how they are perceived online, their statistics on Instagram, etc. The first contact with the influencer often gives an idea of the success and impact the collaboration will have. This feeling is also acquired with time and experience. Despite the occasional lack of return in terms of performance, Foodspring is generally satisfied with their collaborations because the first impression they have of the influencer is rarely wrong.

For Garden Gourmet, a good briefing with the influencer is essential to be satisfied with the campaign. Justine Poncelet, the young creator of Cap ou pas Cap, suffered the consequences of lacking preparation of her partnerships. She explains how her very first experience was disastrous. She sent the equivalent of 500 euros of products to an influencer who, in return, only showed half of her articles on her account. Moreover, the results of this collaboration were not satisfying, as she did not make as many sales as she would have hoped for. Following this brand placement, a few influencers canvassed Justine. She chose the ones she liked most and who had at least 100,000 followers. Her collaborations with micro-influencers did not work, probably because she did not target their audience well enough.

Each brand has their own technique in order to have a successful collaboration with influencers. QNT Sport is very often disappointed when working with influencer marketing; however, they have learned to prepare themselves as best as they could to be content with the results. QNT Sport works with many influencers capable of representing the brand well. However, it is fundamental to go through a test period. It is important to know if the influencers like how the brand works, if they like the products and the brand itself. If the brand and the influencers are able to connect on these points, they can decide to work in a longer-term context. Nevertheless, the nutrition company reveals that they are disappointed for more than 50% of collaborations they do, simply because influencers do not play the game as expected or do not respect their commitments. Moreover, it is important for influencers to create quality content and generate sales, otherwise, it is not beneficial.

5.5. Budget and compensation

Young brands, like Cap ou pas Cap for example, usually do not have money to invest in advertisement and therefore exchange the products they sell in return for publication of stories on influencers' account. However, bigger companies usually tend to pay influencers with whom they collaborate. Garden Gourmet considers influencers as a media in its own right, which deserves to be paid according to what they are asked to do. QNT Sport explains how different levels of compensation exist. The first level is called "gifting", which consists of offering products in exchange for publications or content. Then, the second level is money, which means that they pay the influencer. They tend to avoid YouTube because they notice that generally, influencers want money and ask more than what is asked on Instagram.

Concerning the brand Foodspring, the budget dedicated to influencer marketing is often much larger than for other channels of advertisement. This marketing technique requires a larger initial investment. The budget granted to a profile will depend on the service provided in return (number of publications, types of content, etc.) but also on the duration. The longer the duration of the contract, the lower the compensation. Foodspring also mentions the type of influencer they work with because the remuneration will vary depending on the influencer's community, engagement, quality of content, and a multitude of other factors. Most of the profiles they work with are paid with a fixed monthly fee negotiated in a contract and/or a variable fee, depending on the overall revenue for the month or number of sales.

5.6. Impact on sales and measuring the results

For Garden Gourmet, the impact on sales is not immediate nor significant. They rarely do an isolated influencer campaign, it is often coupled with television and digital advertisement. They want to increase brand awareness and Belgian people's desire to buy, but in their opinion, smaller structures will benefit a greater sales impact when using influencer marketing. Cap ou pas Cap can be considered as a small company since Justine launched it a year ago. In her opinion, the impact on sales depends greatly on the way the products are presented by the influencer. It is important to show the item on a child or publish content where the child is playing with it. As Claire Marnette says in her YouTube video (2020), producing lively content is much more efficient than, for example, just showing a picture with the promo code. Justine

also notices that positive results depend on the item itself and the promotion proposed. QNT Sport, at the end of each month, analyzes with a tracker the sales of each influencer. This allows them to see which influencers stand out and generate many sales and/or bring new customers. However, a more accurate way to calculate this is via the promo codes. It is possible to see at the end of the month that this influencer's promo code has generated a precise number of sales. Those results prove whether the strategy is working or not.

5.7. Advantages of influencer marketing

When asked the advantages of working with influencer marketing, the four brands gave very different answers. In Garden Gourmet's opinion, there are three great benefits in working with influencers. The first one is that it offers an additional touchpoint; it gives the possibility of reaching people, who were unattainable with traditional media advertisement. Secondly, word-of-mouth is created when an influencer talks about their product/service on social media. The last advantage for Garden Gourmet is that this marketing technique is authentic because the followers know the influencer and there is a trust relationship between them. From Foodspring's point of view, influencer marketing is a very "human" technique to reach and sell products to a community. For them, the main advantage is to be able to work with a profile that is already trusted by its community.

QNT Sport shares that when using macro influencers, it is possible to aim directly the population that is targeted. Depending on the community of the influencer, they promote products that are closer to his/her community. They have 300 products, which are suitable for everyone, but it is an advantage to be able to target a specific audience for which it is best suited.

Finally, Cap ou pas Cap, finds advantageous that there is no need for employing a graphic designer or any other employee with special skills in order to make an efficient campaign. Influencer marketing allows small brands to advertise their products/services with very little preparation, time and investments. Moreover, as an independent, Justine can deduce the gifts (means of payment to the influencers) from her professional expenses.

5.8. Favored influencers

Depending on their degree of fame but also on their target audience, each brand favors different types of influencers to work with. Garden Gourmet says that depending on the campaign, it is sometimes more interesting with a macro, micro or nano-influencer. Furthermore, they pay attention to the level of engagement and the percentage of interaction on the influencers' account. The type of content and the geographical location of the followers also need to be paid attention to when choosing an influencer for a collaboration. Since Justine sells baby items and children clothing, she prefers to work with young mothers working as influencers on Instagram because they can show the products being worn or utilized by the children.

Influencers to focus on at Foodspring are either fitness coach or personal trainer profiles with an extremely engaged community. Foodspring also checks if the community has given their trust in these profiles in order for the product placement to be efficient. The other nutrition company, QNT Sport, sees things a bit differently. They aim at micro-influencers, which have a smaller, more targeted, and more genuine community. Micro-influencers' followers are usually more authentic because they truly appreciate the content influencers offer and they do not follow them for their social media fame. These profiles will succeed in convincing more, while macro-influencers, regardless of their popularity, will convert fewer people but spread the image of the brand. QNT Sport works with both types of influencers to reach different goals.

5.9. Traditional advertising VS influencer marketing

In order to provide complementary information to the question of Hypothesis 5, which treats the matter of the difference of impact on women's consumption between traditional advertising and influencer marketing, I asked the brands their opinion on the subject.

Cap ou pas Cap preferred not to give an answer because the entrepreneur never tried traditional advertisement. Garden Gourmet has a more categorical opinion, they believe both types of advertisements are necessary to develop the image and the finance of a brand. Foodspring does not comment on traditional advertising but says that their marketing is mainly established on their website. Influencer marketing is a key tool and the marketing channel that generates the most revenue. Finally, QNT Sport adds that they work on a small scale with radio and television

but it is difficult to quantify and have exact figures. They mostly do ads on Facebook and Instagram. It is possible to see that the conversion is definitely higher on Facebook. What works best first for QNT are the ads on Google, then on Facebook and then on Instagram. In terms of numbers the ads work very well too but the influencers are more advantageous for the brand image. Moreover, they create content, whereas QNT has to develop themselves the content for the traditional and digital ads. Often, when they make an ad on the networks, they usually include an influencer. This helps the ad to be successful as well. It is important to combine strategies to increase sales. We can conclude that both types of advertising should not be neglected but Instagram can bring bigger positive repercussions, both on the brand image and the sales.

5.10. Dos and Don'ts about influencer marketing

The table below summarizes the keys to success to an influencer marketing campaign as well as the mistakes that should be avoided by the brands.

DOS	DON'TS
Select the right influencer	Work with an agency (expensive)
Give the influencer freedom (creativity, ideas, etc.)	Pay a photograph
Make the influencer sign a contract	Give a bad briefing, lack information
Spot scammer agencies and unreliable influencers	Lack in originality and creativity
Make comments when the influencer is not doing things right	Work with extremely famous influencers
Plan the marketing plan/campaigns in advance	Only focus on an influencer marketing campaign
Promote the campaign in advance on websites and social media	Have an all too serious and formal relationship with the influencer

Table 8. Dos and Don'ts in influencer marketing

For Cap ou pas Cap and Garden Gourmet, it is essential to select the right influencer for the job. Influencers should be followed by a community that corresponds to the brand's target

audience but it is also very important to check if the influencer works properly. QNT Spot adds that it is important to make comments to the influencer and make him/her adapt his/her work if it does not correspond to the brand's desire. Indeed, Justine from Cap ou pas Cap is new in the business and she regrets that some influencers do not give enough time for her brand and do not show her products enough or in the way she would like them to be advertised.

Foodspring mentions how important it is to work with partners who like and know the brand and whose lifestyle corresponds to the one promoted by the brand. Sometimes they recommend avoiding influencers that are too popular because, even though they have great visibility, their community lack engagement and real interest in the profile.

QNT Sports reminds us that the ideal goal in marketing is to spend as little money as possible. For this reason, at QNT, they try to avoid working with influencers that accept contracts via influencer agencies. These agencies are extremely expensive. However, when a brand wants to work with a well-known influencer, it is often hard not to sign a contract via an agency. The nutrition company also adds it is more advantageous to try to do everything without employing other parties. They prepare everything in advance, with a calendar of the year in which they plan every campaign. As soon as they launch a campaign, they say it is fundamental to warn their audience first via their newsletter and on their website. QNT Sport also do their shootings themselves. Moreover, they build a close relationship with the influencer. It is interesting to get to know the influencer but also to be able to boost him/her as much as possible. A brand should not force an influencer to present specific products, but let them have freedom on their choice and in their work. However, it is a necessity to make a contract because there is an exchange of products and services.

All brands interviewed find it important to rely on originality and creativity. Both the brand and the influencer can take part in this process but a good briefing to make sure everyone is on the same page is essential. Finally, Garden Gourmet recommends not only focusing on influencer marketing. In their opinion, working with an influencer on Instagram should be part of a larger campaign, on a traditional advertisement channel for example.

5.11. Future of influencer marketing

This dissertation tries to understand the effect of Instagram influencer marketing on women consumers in Belgium. In order to broaden the reflection, it is interesting to think about the future of this marketing technique. The opinion of brands, working actively every day of the year with marketing, is also important to take into account. Some brands were very positive about it and some more pessimistic.

Cap ou pas Cap only believes influencer marketing will last for a while, as everything usually does. QNT Sport also thinks that, at some point, Instagram will be saturated, even though right now is the good time to work with it. They believe it will tend to disappear because Instagram is all over the place, influencers work with many brands and there is not much authenticity anymore. Other platforms like TikTok do not work very well with influencer marketing because the audience is too young and the content published on it is decreasing in quality. However, as Garden Gourmet says, it is difficult to know what will happen. Micro-influencers are becoming more and more popular while some of the macro-influencers lose their authenticity. For example, they try to gain followers by proposing contests on their accounts. Moreover, in the brand's opinion, more rules are pushing them to communicate on the sponsored aspect of their content, which again takes away their authenticity. However, word-of-mouth from opinion leaders on social media will always be a resourceful tool in marketing.

VI. Conclusion

The four brands I have interviewed were either French or Belgian. Their audience on Instagram varies from 1,600 to 316,000 followers. The sample of brands is interesting because they all have an extremely different level of popularity and they have been on the business market for different periods of time.

The goals wished to reach in influencer marketing are very varied for each brand. Improving brand awareness is the main objective for the companies when working with influencers on Instagram, as confirmed by Jenn Chen (2020) in the literary review. Influencers are the online spokespersons of the brand. They help improve brand image and identity, which is essential for

businesses. Of course, generating bigger sales is the ultimate goal of brands and it is what social media marketing is based on.

Instagram has become the best social media choice for brands using influencer marketing today. Rochelle Bailis (2020) confirms this as the platform was evaluated first as the most important and impactful means of communication today. Different types of social groups use Instagram but young women are the ones that tend more to follow influencers and be guided towards brands. The brands interviewed mention other social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok or YouTube, but none of them equals the coverage Instagram has. Pictures and videos have the power of transmitting messages and identities. This characteristic has been exploited by brands trying to sell products and/or services. Moreover, the audience on Instagram is unreachable on other platforms like Facebook or via traditional advertising on television or the radio for example.

Post-collaboration satisfaction has been measured by the four brands interviewed. Disappointment is part of the game in influencer marketing. Some influencers do not do the job they were asked to or not in the way it was imagined by the brand. Brands admit that a bad briefing can lead to the failure of a campaign. Moreover, brands sometimes employ the wrong influencer, whose community is not the right target for them or because he/she does not truly share the same values. By inexhaustively analyzing Instagram and decoding the users' profile, targeting cannot be done properly and can lead to the dissatisfaction of both parties (Hu, Manikonda and Kampbhampati, 2014). Fisherman's Influence Marketing Model explained in the beginning of the dissertation, is also a marketing technique that can be used to target the right community. Each brand works differently and their success on social media is sometimes very different. Nevertheless, as was discussed in the literary review paying attention to the conditions and the benefits is significant for a marketing collaboration of quality (Brauer and Schmidt, 2018). They all measure the importance of searching and choosing the right influencer for the right campaign.

The budget invested in an Instagram campaign also varies a lot from brand to brand. Grafström and al. (2018) assert it can be expensive for brands to collaborate with influencers, however, the costs are viewed as cheaper than traditional marketing means. Usually, young brands like Cap ou pas Cap do not have much money to invest in advertisement, and well-known companies often try to spend as little as possible. However, being an influencer is a real job and it is

therefore understandable that they need to be paid fairly for their work. Brands have two ways of compensating influencers. The first way is called "gifting", which means that the brand gifts products or services in exchange of advertisement on the influencers' profiles. The other way is simply to pay the influencer for his/her work. In both cases, it is important for both parties to sign a contract and therefore avoid any misunderstanding or fraud.

As was mentioned in the goals, it is important to obtain positive results and evaluate the outcome when advertising products or services on Instagram. A brand mentioned how important it is not only to focus on influencer marketing because this technique should be part of a larger campaign. Therefore, the results should measure all the means that were used for the campaign. However, when focusing on Instagram, brands' marketing managers say that the impact on sales depends greatly on how the brand was presented on the influencer's account. There are different ways of evaluating the success of an influencer campaign depending on the brand's preferences. As mentioned by Laura Delrue (2018) in the literary review, some brands like to evaluate how many people used the promo code of influencers, which is the most accurate way of evaluating the success of a campaign. They can also use specific trackers for sales.

Influencer marketing is almost unavoidable today because it provides advantages that cannot be acquired via other means of communication. Firstly, Instagram influencers give a new and actual channel for brand advertisement. Moreover, the advertisement is more authentic as the influencer is close and honest with his/her community. On the Internet, word-of-mouth is also present. De Veirman, Cauberghe and Hudders (2017) argue that positive content can be shared easily to thousands of people and therefore promotes brands indirectly. Another interesting fact on influencer marketing is that it is possible to target very precisely a similar type of consumer or age group. It is also very beneficial financially for brands because there is no need for employing different people to build and publish the campaign. Moreover, they have the possibility of paying influencers with their own products or services. Everything can be done between the brand and the influencer, which costs less in photographs, designers, site rentals, etc.

Three types of influencers exist on Instagram, macro, micro and nano-influencers. Each one is valuable and can be chosen for a brand campaign for different reasons. When choosing the right influencer for a job, brands recommend paying attention to the location of the influencers'

followers as well as the engagement level. The latter is fundamental to keep an interaction between the consumer and the brand (Veissi, 2017). The influencer that is usually employed is a reflection of the brand, of its image and identity. He/she shares the same values and has a lifestyle that matches the brand. Customers identify themselves to influencers, therefore, as So and al. (2017) mention in the literary review, an attractive brand identity is essential to reach customer brand identification.

Traditional advertising is, in most brands' opinion, still very important to use in their marketing plan and is an integral component of a campaign. However, influencer marketing, for certain brands, is the channel that generates the most income. It is harder to quantify the results of advertisements on traditional media such as television or promotional boards in the streets than on social media, where analysis of data is possible. It is essential to combine marketing strategies and use all the resources available today.

Influencer marketing is a new technique, therefore, many brands still make mistakes when using it for their campaigns. Some things are important to focus on, such as selecting the right influencer that shares the same values and identity as the brand. The five-stage decision model, seen in Chapter II: Purchasing process, is interesting for brands to reflect on as it details the decision making process customers go through online. It is also important to be conscious of the mistakes that can be avoided. Many of those elements have been cited above but brands added other components. For example, it is important to spot scammer agencies and/or influencers, prepare and promote a campaign in advance or also, build a favorable relationship between the influencer and the brand. Meanwhile, brands recommended not lacking creativity or only working with macro influencers. Social media marketing is only a piece of a whole campaign but there are many factors that need to be checked twice in order for it to be a success.

Finally, brands discussed how they imagine the future of what is currently taking a huge time in their job. What is the destiny of online marketing? Undoubtedly, it is impossible for them to know what awaits them in the future. They know it is a tendency that must be surfed on right now and that it will last a while. However, some brands think that at some point, this technique will saturate, people on social media will get tired of seeing influencers doing advertisements and it might therefore disappear as it came. Word-of-mouth will always be very useful for online marketing, and, as So and al. (2017) assert, play an incidental role on brand loyalty.

However, the authenticity that people appreciate right now might fade away with time. Some brands are also worried that the legal system might develop and tolerate less freedom online.

6. General Conclusion

The purpose of this work was to investigate the relationship that connects women's brand consumption to Instagram influencers and brands via influencer marketing in Belgium. The results of the analysis aims to give a clearer perspective of the impact they have on one another but as well on how to use more efficiently influencer marketing in Belgium, in the interest of both brand managers and influencers. This research was restricted to the comparison of opinions from 390 women living in Belgium, four brands and four influencers.

As reported in the introduction, social media has revolutionized the planet and Instagram has become the ideal platform for companies to advertise and sell their products/services in a more modern and targeted way. Today, businesses only prosper when they have a strong social media marketing plan. This new marketing strategy, following the five Ps rules, allows companies to acquire new customers, which themselves generate other customers (Tuten, 2017). This leads to the emergence of influencer marketing, for which Instagram has become a resourceful marketing tool. The scientific knowledge on the subject states that brand identification is decisive for word-of-mouth accounts and that consumers are also greatly influenced by brand attractiveness (Elbedweihy and al., 2016).

In order to draw a general conclusion to this research dissertation, it is important to note that the results of both studies have to be taken into account to a certain extent. Indeed, regarding the quantitative study, the majority of respondents were aged between 18-24 years old. Even though this age group is the one that is most present on the social media platform, it does not represent thoroughly the opinion of all women living in Belgium. Moreover, the influencers interviewed were all young women; accordingly, the conclusions that were drawn from their experiences do not represent the experience of all influencers and their relationship with all women on Instagram. Therefore, the results of this dissertation should be interpreted cautiously.

Consequently, as a main conclusion for this dissertation, in regards to the research question stating: *What is the impact of Instagram influencers on women's brand consumption in Belgium?*, it can be outlined that Instagram influencers definitely have an important impact on how women perceive brands and later consume because of them. The ripple effect plays an important role in that influence, as information is passed through different agents (e.g. the opinion leader, the receiver and the resender) to finally influence some operators that were part

of the distribution (Huang and al., 2011). Today, in Belgium, millions of women have an Instagram account on which they follow various influencers. As was confirmed in the quantitative study research and in the literary data, the age group using the most social media applications is esteemed between 18 to 24 years old. 71% of the questionnaire's respondents connect several times per day on Instagram and 91% follow digital influencers' accounts. This means that opinion leaders reach a considerable number of young girls and the influence they have on these women is even more powerful as they have generally a good reputation according to those who follow them. Moreover, there exist many ways to improve the influence they have on each other. It is for example possible to build strong connections online by being authentic and trustworthy, or by creating content that corresponds best to the desires of the audience. More data, which confirms the conclusion of this dissertation, says that 60% of women following influencers believe that brands promoted on Instagram are more attractive than traditional advertisements.

The SWOT analysis also brings up to light the many opportunities and strengths there are of taking advantage of influencer marketing. Women today spend a lot of time on Instagram and their way of consuming is definitely affected by word-of-mouth on the social media platform. The many positive results prove that digital marketing is performant and that there are ways to make this success last and work even better. Nevertheless, some weaknesses and threats also exist and can cause, if not taken into account, negative results on the impact Instagram influencers have on women's brand consumption in Belgium. For example, women tend to dislike when seeing a post that exposes the lucrative goal of both brands and influencers. An important number of voters also mentioned that they did not have a positive representation of influencers because they are perceived as scammers. The SWOT analysis illustrates both positive and negative aspects of influencer marketing and allows marketers to modify or improve digital marketing on Instagram and make its success last in time.

An additional and essential outcome of the study is that the dissertation is not limited by the quantitative study as there was, in addition, interviews of both brands and influencers. Their own private experiences gave the opportunity of comparing and linking the theoretical findings of the literary review, as well as of the quantitative results, to the collected data. Their interviews show that influencer marketing has become a real market, and many decisions have to be taken on a daily basis, for both companies and digital influencers. Brands are very careful when picking influencers they want to work with and vice-versa. When signing contracts, they need

to be sure it will be beneficial for everyone, as well as for women on Instagram, since their goal is to convince them and turn them into consumers.

In regard with the hypotheses of this work, it could be interesting to develop them to a greater extent. Firstly, we could ask ourselves, how could we transform the general opinion women have of social influencers to touch and increase the success of influencer marketing? It is also essential for the market to have a better legal system and maybe have international rules that would apply for Instagram. When specific laws for marketing will apply, it could be interesting to see how it affects brand consumption on the social media platform. I also believe that searching deeper in what convinces consumers, such as creative content, authenticity or engagement, could enhance this online business.

The results are mostly useful for any marketer, brand manager or influencer in Belgium. As mentioned above, the dissertation is meant to give an overview of the current situation of influencer marketing and the impact it has on consumers in Belgium. However, I believe this research can be expanded locally as well as globally. Firstly because Instagram and social networks today have become platforms which connect millions of people in the entire world. This means that, even though the research only focuses on Belgium and, sometimes, French brands and influencers, its conclusions can be linked to influencer marketing in the whole world. As a result of the analyses carried out in this dissertation, we can admit that the continuation of this work could be taken even further, by expanding the research to other countries and therefore to a larger sample of respondents. Moreover, this work is limited in terms of differentiation between Wallonia and Flanders, which could become another starting point to the expansion of this research dissertation. The questionnaire was created and accessible in both French and Dutch, but I was unfortunately limited by the data available on Qualtrics[1] and could not dig deeper and uncover differences of opinions or ways of consuming of Flemish and Walloon women. Language differences can broaden the research and bring a deeper insight to how influencer marketing is viewed in Belgium.

Another limit of this dissertation is the number of respondents to both the quantitative and qualitative studies. As said above, a greater number of respondents to the questionnaire, as well as more varied demographics would bring additional and more precise data to rely on. Young

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[1] Qualtrics is an experience management software on which the quantitative questionnaire was created for this research. It provides descriptive and comparative analysis, but also reporting such as graphs.

women predominantly answered the questionnaire and, in consequence, they were for the most part students. Getting women in different professional situation to answer a similar questionnaire could be interesting to analyze how the influence of social influencers on brand consumption varies due to the social statuses of women. The selection of interviewees could also be broadened with a larger sample of influencers and brands, with different levels of fame.

Furthermore, the continuation of this work could be to expand the research to men, in order to compare their approach to digital marketing with women and explore their purchase behavior online. Integrating all gender to this new way of consuming could be beneficial to every actor of the marketing process.

Finally, it has become a necessity to study the evolution of traditional advertisement. At the present time, traditional and online advertisement coexist and, in a way, complement each other. However, this research demonstrates that, for some brands and consumers, traditional advertisement tends to have less and less value over time. In this view, could it be possible that the field of communication and marketing slowly transforms itself towards a thoroughly online activity?

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8. Appendices

Appendix I: Quantitative questionnaire

1. Vous êtes...

○ Un homme

○ Une femme

○ Autre

Condition : **Un homme est sélectionné**. Passer à : **Fin de l'enquête.**

2. Êtes-vous d'origine belge et/ou résidez-vous en Belgique?

○ Oui

○ Non

Condition : **Non est sélectionné**. Passer à : **Fin de l'enquête.**

3. Quel âge avez-vous ?

○ Moins de 18ans

○ Entre 18 et 24ans

○ Entre 25 et 34ans

○ Entre 35 et 44ans

○ Entre 45 et 54ans

○ Entre 55 et 64ans

○ Entre 65 et 74ans

○ Entre 75 et 84ans

○ 85 ans ou plus

4. Quelle est votre situation professionnelle?

○ étudiante

○ à la recherche d'un emploi

○ employée

○ indépendante

○ retraitée

○ autre

5. Utilisez-vous le réseau social Instagram?

○ Oui

○ Non

-- Saut de pag

6. Quelle est votre fréquence de connexion sur votre compte Instagram?

○ quelques fois par mois

○ quelques fois par semaine

○ tous les jours

○ plusieurs fois par jour

-- Saut de pag

7. Êtes-vous abonné à des comptes d'influenceurs, ou à des personnalités connues?

○ Oui

○ Non

8. Si oui, pourquoi suivez-vous des profils d'influenceurs? *(plusieurs réponses possibles)*

☐ j'aime le contenu qu'ils proposent

☐ pour avoir de l'inspiration sur de nouveaux produits ou services

☐ pour avoir des avis sur des marques

☐ pour découvrir de nouvelles marques

☐ l'influenceur est proche de sa communauté

☐ autre

-- Saut de page ---

9. Quel est votre avis général sur les influenceurs Instagram?

○ Extrêmement positif

○ Plutôt positif

○ Ni positif, ni négatif

○ Plutôt négatif

○ Extrêmement négatif

10. Vous sentez-vous influencée par leurs posts? (décoration, mode, voyages, produits de beauté, alimentation, style de vie, etc.)

○ Tout à fait d'accord

○ Plutôt d'accord

○ Ni d'accord, ni en désaccord

○ Plutôt en désaccord

○ Pas du tout d'accord

-- Saut de page --

11. Prêtez-vous attention aux publicités, promotions et partenariats que ces influenceurs font sur leurs comptes (histoires et/ou post)?

○ Oui, j'utilise principalement le réseau social pour cela

○ Oui, car je tombe dessus par hasard

○ Non, j'ignore ce genre de post

12. Si oui, pourquoi? *(plusieurs réponses possibles)*

☐ l'influenceur parait sincère

☐ l'influenceur est proche de sa communauté

☐ l'influenceur utilise réellement le produit/service dont il fait la publicité

☐ l'influenceur crée des vidéos/photos attrayantes

☐ autre

13. Si non, pourquoi? *(plusieurs réponses possibles)*

☐ je préfère avoir l'opinion de mon entourage (famille, amis, etc.)

☐ je n'ai pas confiance en l'influenceur

☐ l'influenceur n'utilise pas réellement les produits/services dont il fait la publicité

☐ le but lucratif de l'influenceur

☐ je me sens manipulée

☐ autre

-- Saut de page --

14. Si vous avez déjà été influencée, mesurez votre niveau de satisfaction générale du/des produit(s)/service(s) acheté(s) par le bais d'un influenceur

☆☆☆☆☆

15. En général, êtes-vous intéressée par les marques dont les influenceurs font la promotion?

○ Tout à fait d'accord

○ Plutôt d'accord

○ Ni d'accord, ni en désaccord

○ Plutôt en désaccord

○ Pas du tout d'accord

-- Saut de page ------------

16. Quels sont les produits/services susceptibles de vous plaire le plus? *(plusieurs réponses possibles)*

☐ Mode (vêtements & accessoires)

☐ Appareils électroménagers

☐ Voyage

☐ Bijoux

☐ Produits de beauté

☐ Décoration

☐ Alimentation

☐ Sport & fitness

☐ Autre

☐ Aucun

17. Préférez-vous acheter un produit/service quand l'influenceur révèle son partenariat avec la marque?

○ Tout à fait d'accord

○ Plutôt d'accord

○ Ni d'accord, ni en désaccord

○ Plutôt en désaccord

○ Pas du tout d'accord

-- Saut de page ------------

18. Avez-vous déjà utilisé un code promo reçu par le biais d'un influenceur?

○ oui

○ non

-- Saut de page ------------

19. Avez-vous déjà découvert une marque grâce à un influenceur?

○ Oui

○ Non

20. Vous êtes-vous déjà sentie manipulée par un influenceur?

○ oui

○ non

---

21. Si oui, expliquez:

[   ]

---

22. Pensez- vous que les produits et services promus par des influenceurs instagram sont plus attrayants que les publicités traditionnelles (tv, radio, affiches...) ?

○ oui

○ non

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23. Si oui, pourquoi? *(plusieurs réponses possibles)*

☐ l'influenceur test le produit publiquement

☐ j'ai confiance en l'influenceur

☐ je m'identifie à l'influenceur

☐ les publicités télévisuelles sont plus souvent mensongères

☐ l'influenceur me donne des idées de comment utiliser/porter le produit

☐ l'influenceur utilise le produit/service dans la vie de tous les jours

☐ l'influenceur crée des vidéos/photos attrayantes

☐ autre
[   ]

Appendix II: Quantitative questionnaire's answers

Q1. Vous êtes…

#	Champ	Nombre de choix	
1	Un homme	4.65%	19
2	Une femme	95.11%	389
3	Autre	0.24%	1
			409

Q2. Êtes-vous d'origine belge et/ou résidez-vous en Belgique ?

#	Champ	Nombre de choix	
1	Oui	98.19%	379
2	Non	1.81%	7
			386

Q3. Quel âge avez-vous ?

#	Champ	Nombre de choix	
1	Moins de 18 ans	0.79%	3
2	Entre 18 et 24 ans	79.16%	300
3	Entre 25 et 34 ans	16.62%	63
4	Entre 35 et 44 ans	0.79%	3
5	Entre 45 et 54 ans	1.58%	6
6	Entre 55 et 64 ans	1.06%	4
7	Entre 65 et 74 ans	0.00%	0
8	Entre 75 et 84 ans	0.00%	0
9	85 ans ou plus	0.00%	0
			379

Q4. Quelle est votre situation professionnelle

#	Champ		Nombre de choix
1	étudiante	78.10%	296
2	à la recherche d'un emploi	2.11%	8
3	employée	17.68%	67
4	indépendante	0.79%	3
5	retraitée	0.26%	1
6	autre	1.06%	4
			379

autre
Invalidité de travail
En alternance

Q5. Utilisez-vous le réseau social Instagram?

#	Champ		Nombre de choix
1	Oui	99.21%	376
2	Non	0.79%	3
			379

Q6. Quelle est votre fréquence de connexion sur votre compte Instagram?

#	Champ		Nombre de choix
1	quelques fois par mois	2.40%	9
2	quelques fois par semaine	4.80%	18
3	tous les jours	21.33%	80
4	plusieurs fois par jour	71.47%	268
			375

Q7. Êtes-vous abonné à des comptes d'influenceurs, ou à des personnalités connues?

#	Champ		Nombre de choix
1	Oui	90.79%	335
2	Non	9.21%	34
			369

Q8. Si oui, pourquoi suivez-vous des profils d'influenceurs? (Plusieurs réponses possibles)

#	Champ		Nombre de choix
1	j'aime le contenu qu'ils proposent	41.12%	287
2	pour avoir de l'inspiration sur de nouveaux produits ou services	17.34%	121
3	pour avoir des avis sur des marques	12.89%	90
4	pour découvrir de nouvelles marques	12.18%	85
5	l'influenceur est proche de sa communauté	10.89%	76
6	autre	5.59%	39
			698

Q9. Quel est votre avis général sur les influenceurs Instagram?

#	Champ		Nombre de choix
1	Extrêmement positif	0.27%	1
2	Plutôt positif	25.47%	94
3	Ni positif, ni négatif	53.12%	196
4	Plutôt négatif	18.70%	69
5	Extrêmement négatif	2.44%	9
			369

Q10. Vous sentez-vous influencée par leurs posts? (Décoration, mode, voyages, produits de beauté, alimentation, style de vie, etc.)

#	Champ	Nombre de choix	
1	Tout à fait d'accord	7.07%	26
2	Plutôt d'accord	42.66%	157
3	Ni d'accord, ni en désaccord	23.37%	86
4	Plutôt en désaccord	17.93%	66
5	Pas du tout d'accord	8.97%	33
			368

Q11. Prêtez-vous attention aux publicités, promotions et partenariats que ces influenceurs font sur leurs comptes (histoires et/ou post)?

#	Champ	Nombre de choix	
1	Oui, j'utilise principalement le réseau social pour cela	2.75%	10
2	Oui, car je tombe dessus par hasard	43.25%	157
3	Non, j'ignore ce genre de post	53.99%	196
			363

Q12. Si oui, pourquoi? (Plusieurs réponses possibles)

#	Champ	Nombre de choix	
1	l'influenceur parait sincère	17.82%	49
2	l'influenceur est proche de sa communauté	12.36%	34
3	l'influenceur utilise réellement le produit/service dont il fait la publicité	34.55%	95
4	l'influenceur crée des vidéos/photos attrayantes	29.09%	80
5	autre	6.18%	17
			275

Je n'y fais pas attention

Je regarde sans vouloir acheter

J'analyse leurs manières de faire

C est un moyen de rester au courant des nouvelles choses, par contre je sais tres bien que les influenceurs ne sont pas fiables (car ils sont remuneres par les marques)

Produit fiable selon plusieurs sources

Car parfois ça vaut le coup. Même si l'influenceur reste payé pour promouvoir toute sorte de produit.

Cela permet de découvrir de nouvelles choses

Il propose des codes promo

par curiosité sur la technique de vente

Je n'y prête attention que si c'est un produit qui m'intéressait déjà avant de voir la publication

Le produit m'intéresse, j'en ai besoin, il pourrait remplacer quelque chose que j'utilise ou me faire plaisir tout simplement

Le produit m'intéresse

Le produit m'intrigue et donc je vais sur le site pour avoir plus de détails

Pour les sextoys

Quand j'aime une marque, les codes promos ou explications supplémentaires sur l'utilisation est toujours intéressant

Q13. Si non, pourquoi? (Plusieurs réponses possibles)

#	Champ	Nombre de choix	
3	l'influenceur n'utilise pas réellement les produits/services dont il fait la publicité	19.40%	97
4	le but lucratif de l'influenceur	24.60%	123
1	je préfère avoir l'opinion de mon entourage (famille, amis, etc.)	15.00%	75
2	je n'ai pas confiance en l'influenceur	15.60%	78
5	je me sens manipulée	17.80%	89
6	autre	7.60%	38
			500

autre

Ça ne m'intéresse pas

Je préfère faire des choix moi même sur base de prix et une recherche sur internet plus avancée

Je n'ai pas l'utilité de ces objets proposés

appréhension par rapport à la marque ou au produit

Ça ne m'intéresse pas

C'est de la pub tout simplement

Je ne les suit pas dans ce but

Ça ne m'intéresse pas

Uniquement pour l'argent, dropshipping, mauvaise qualité,...

En règle general ce sont des produits qui ne m'intéresse pas

Je ne ressens pas le besoin d'avoir tous ces produits

Je ne suis pas spécialement intéressée et si c'est le cas (très rare), je me forge ma propre opinion

Ça ne m'intéresse pas

Je m'en fiche

Je suis principalement indifférente et ces produits sont souvent hors de prix

Je préfère me faire ma propre opinion, même si il est vrai que si je vois souvent le produit passé j'aurai tendance à vouloir y jeter un oeil

Pas intéressant

Ça ne m'intéresse pas

Les partenariats qu'ils proposent ne sont pas toujours en lien avec leur contenu et tournent souvent autour des cosmétiques, alors c'est non merci

Souvent, on peut retrouver les produits sur Aliexpress ou des sites moins chères. De plus, tous les influenceurs font la promotion des mêmes produits, ce qui laisse penser qu'ils font ca sans réellement s'intéresser au produit. D'ailleurs souvent ils font des erreurs dans leurs posts et on y retrouve leurs consignes, des mauvais codes promos,...

Je ne suis pas l'influencer pour ses placements de produits

Cela ne m'intéresse pas

Exemple : scandale de Vlad et Emmacakecup. Les gens sont de plus en plus faux et prêt à tout pour vendre n'importe quoi pour se faire de la thune. Le nombre de personne qui filment un test ou une présentation de produit sans connaître la marque ou son utilisation c'est infernale. Aujourd'hui, la plupart des influenceurs ont minimum 1 partenariat . Il reste encore des gens comme Gaëlle Garcia Diaz qui ne conseille les marques que si elles sont bien. Elle test les produits etc avant de faire une vidéo de présentation

Ce n'est pas mon but lorsque je suis un influenceur/une influenceuse. De temps en temps, un article ou deux peuvent m'intriguer mais en général je ne passe jamais par l'achat.

Pas intéressée

Produit rarement accessible ici (je suis particulièrement des influenceurs US et UK)

Escroquerie car produit bad gamme à des prix très élevé. On veut nous vendre de la merde

J'aime me faire mon propre avis

Ça ne m'intéresse pas forcément

La plupart du temps, les produits ne m'intéresse pas

Q14. Si vous avez déjà été influencée, mesurez votre niveau de satisfaction générale du/des produit(s)/service(s) acheté(s) par le bais d'un influenceur.

#	Champ	Nombre de choix	
0	0	2%	8
1	1	3%	11
2	2	3%	13
3	3	14%	58
4	4	17%	69
5	5	7%	27
null	null	55%	223
			409

Q15. En général, êtes-vous intéressée par les marques dont les influenceurs font la promotion?

#	Champ	Nombre de choix	
1	Tout à fait d'accord	1.11%	4
2	Plutôt d'accord	20.78%	75
3	Ni d'accord, ni en désaccord	34.35%	124
4	Plutôt en désaccord	30.47%	110
5	Pas du tout d'accord	13.30%	48
			361

Q16. Quels sont les produits/services susceptibles de vous plaire le plus? (Plusieurs réponses possibles)

#	Champ	Nombre de choix	
1	Mode (vêtements & accessoires)	20.23%	210
2	Appareils électroménagers	2.79%	29
3	Voyage	12.81%	133
4	Bijoux	10.31%	107
5	Produits de beauté	17.15%	178
6	Décoration	12.91%	134
7	Alimentation	11.37%	118
8	Sport & fitness	9.34%	97
9	Autre	1.83%	19
10	Aucun	1.25%	13
			1038

Autre

produits "sustainable"

Technologies

Surtout la photographie dans son art même, le côté artistique de la photographie m'attire

Style de vie, écologie

Soins de visage, cheveux. Psychologie. Sexualité. Gynécologue.. produits feminins

Produits écologiques/durables et éthiques

Produits durables

Produit eco responsable

Plantes et jardinage

Musique

Mindfulness

Livres, films et autres produits culturels

Livres

Livres

Livres

Littérature, beaucoup "d'influenceurs.euses" réalisent des critiques de bouquins susceptibles de nous plaire, donc en lien avec leur contenu. Et sinon les sex toys également!

Jeux enfants

Divertissement

Q17. Préférez-vous acheter un produit/service quand l'influenceur révèle son partenariat avec la marque?

#	Champ		Nombre de choix
1	Tout à fait d'accord	24.16%	86
2	Plutôt d'accord	22.47%	80
3	Ni d'accord, ni en désaccord	32.58%	116
4	Plutôt en désaccord	8.71%	31
5	Pas du tout d'accord	12.08%	43
			356

Q18. Avez-vous déjà utilisé un code promo reçu par le biais d'un influenceur?

#	Champ		Nombre de choix
1	oui	53.11%	188
2	non	46.89%	166
			354

Q19. Avez-vous déjà découvert une marque grâce à un influenceur?

#	Champ		Nombre de choix
1	Oui	82.20%	291
2	Non	17.80%	63
			354

Q20. Vous êtes-vous déjà sentie manipulée par un influenceur?

#	Champ		Nombre de choix
1	oui	27.76%	98
2	non	72.24%	255
			353

Q21. Si oui, expliquez:

Ça ne paraît pas sincère

les influenceurs provenant de la télé-réalité m'inspire moins confiance que le d'influenceurs que je suis depuis youtube

je n'ai pas acheté les produits mais je pouvais voir que le but du partenariat était lucratif et qu'ils n'utilisaie pas réellement le produit/ne s'ehaient pas renseigné pour savoir si c'ehait un produit de qualité

Une influenceuse faisait la publicité pour une marque de cosmétique soi-disant éthique et son discours sonnait extrêmement faux quant à ses motivations à devenir plus responsable dans ses achats.

Une influenceuse a fait l'éloge d'un site, j'ai pu renvoyer tous les articles pour mauvaise qualité et tailles hors normes

Quand un.e influenceur/se manque de transparence et n'admets pas d'être payé.e par les marques

Quand l'influenceur fait trop de pubs pour trop de choses d'un coup... C'est trop donc ce n'est pas attirant.

Quand l'influenceur fait du Green Washing (comme la marque) et que ça ajoute encore plus de confusion

Quand il y a plusieurs partenariats l'un a la suite de lautre

Quand il s'agit de dropshipping.

Prétend qu'une marque est végan mais tous les produits de la marque ne le sont pas

Pour moi, tout partenariat a un intérêt pour les deux partis. Monétaire ou autre. Et cela constitue une forme de manipulation. Utiliser sa platefrome pour vendre des produits a de jeunes personnes influencables est immoral.

Plusieurs influenceurs disaient beaucoup de bien d'un produit alimentaire en disant et répétant à quel point c'était incroyable et délicieux. J'ai fini par craquer sur le produit, l'acheter et c'est la pure chose que j'ai mangé de ma vie. Je l'ai fait goûter à tous mes proches, tous unanimement d'accord avec moi. J'ai donc eu beaucoup de mal à croire que les influenceurs qui faisaient la promotion de ce produit disaient la vérité. Même si j'ai conscience que tous les goûts sont dans la nature. Là, c'était tellement infecte que je n'ai pas compris. J'ai alors arrêté totalement de suivre ces influenceurs. La confiance était brisée

Pcq ils font tous la promotion des mêmes produits

Pas moi à proprement parlé mais j'ai déjà vu des polémiques ou ils expliquaient qu'ils n'ont jamais reçu les produits commandés... et promus par des influenceurs.

Q22. Pensez- vous que les produits et services promus par des influenceurs Instagram sont plus attrayants que les publicités traditionnelles (tv, radio, affiches…) ?

#	Champ	Nombre de choix	
1	oui	60.98%	211
2	non	39.02%	135
			346

Q23. Si oui, pourquoi? (Plusieurs réponses possibles)

#	Champ		Nombre de choix
1	l'influenceur test le produit publiquement	21%	138
2	j'ai confiance en l'influenceur	4%	23
3	je m'identifie à l'influenceur	8%	51
4	les publicités télévisuelles sont plus souvent mensongères	7%	48
5	l'influenceur me donne des idées de comment utiliser/porter le produit	22%	144
6	l'influenceur utilise le produit/service dans la vie de tous les jours	15%	94
7	l'influenceur crée des vidéos/photos attrayantes	21%	134
8	autre	2%	16
			648

plus proche, plus visée. Les publicités classiques sont moins attrayantes car elles paraissent être destinées à des personnes plus âgées

les publicités traditionnelles sont souvent peu originales et barbantes

c'est plus direct

Videos plus attrayante que les pub à répétition

Plus attrayant car c'est le « nouveau » mode de communication. Attention biais dans le questionnaire: je pense que c'est plus attrayant mais ce n'est pas pour autant que je suis attrayee par

Les pubs à la télévision sont longues et souvent répétitives du coup elles me saoulent plus vite et me donnent moins envie d'utiliser les produits

Le fait que ce soit d'un être humain à un autre permet de se reconnaître, s'imaginer plus facilement

La publicité traditionnelle m'est imposée alors que je peux choisir de voir les posts d'un influenceur ou non. Si je choisis de les regarder c'est que ça me plaît un minimum.

Je suis les personnes avec les mêmes centres d'intérêts que moi

Je n'utilise pas ces produits, car je garde toujours un esprit critique, mais je vois que beaucoup de personnes achètent, car elles ont l'impression de connaître la personne

Je me sens moins concernée par les pubs à la tv et je les trouve souvent complètement dépassées

J y prête simplement plus attention

Explique tous les détails et montre tout du produit, ce n'est pas le cas dans les reclames.

En fonction de son domaine de prédilection l'influenceur est parfois un professionnel du milieu dont le produit est issu et peut donc donner un avis de qualité

Car je ne regarde plus la télé

1. Quels sont vos objectifs quand vous utilisez le marketing d'influence?

2. Instagram est-il selon vous un réseau social à cibler pour le marketing d'influence? Pourquoi?

3. Êtes-vous satisfait des collaborations que vous avez pu faire avec des influenceurs?

4. Le budget marketing est-il différent quand on utilise le marketing d'influence? Comment rémunérez-vous généralement une collaboration?

5. Quel a été l'impact de votre collaboration sur la vente de votre produit/service?

6. Comment mesurez-vous le ROI d'une campagne de marketing d'influence?

7. Selon vous, quels sont les principaux avantages du marketing d'influence ?

8. Pensez-vous que la promotion de vos produits/services fonctionne mieux à travers des influenceurs qu'avec des publicités traditionnelles?

9. Quels sont les influenceurs à privilégier pour votre marque? Pour quels objectifs/raisons ?

10. Quelles sont selon votre entreprise les clés du succès pour mener une campagne de marketing d'influence efficace?

11. Quelle est l'erreur la plus fréquente que vous remarquez en marketing d'influence ?

12. Quel est selon vous, l'avenir du marketing d'influence ?

- **Cap ou pas Cap - @cap_ou_pas_cap_belgique**

1. Mes objectifs sont doubles: augmenter ma visibilité et mes ventes.

2. Oui, je pense que beaucoup de jeunes parents regardent les influenceurs et se laissent guider par ce qu'ils voient. Facebook est à mon goût plus dépassé, bien que cela reste un de mes canaux principaux.

3. Je suis dans une période où j'essaie car mon site n'est ouvert que depuis 1 an. Ma 1ère expérience a été désastreuse: j'ai envoyé pour 500€ (prix d'achat donc comptez le double en prix public) à une influenceuse qui n'a montré que la moitié de mes articles. J'ai réalisé quelques ventes, mais rien d'extraordinaire non plus. J'ai, suite à cette collaboration, été démarchée par l'une ou l'autre influenceuse. Je choisissais celles qui me plaisaient et qui avaient au moins 100.000 followers. J'ai tenté avec des micro-influenceurs mais ça n'a pas pris. Je n'ai sans doute pas assez bien ciblé le public de ceux-ci.

4. Pour ma part, j'offre les articles en échange de story. Je n'ai pas les moyens de plus pour le moment.

5. Cela dépend surtout de la manière dont s'est présenté par l'influenceur (montrer l'article sur l'enfant ou lorsque celui-ci joue avec est beaucoup plus vendeur que de simplement montrer une photo avec le code promo par ex. J'ai aussi remarqué que cela dépend de l'article en lui-même et de la promotion proposée.

6. Je ne le mesure pas. J'essaie de ne pas offrir de cadeaux trop coûteux, en espérant que cela me rapporte le plus de ventes possibles.

7. Pas besoin d'un infographiste ou de compétences particulières pour faire un marketing efficace, ça me demande peu de temps de préparation et d'investissements (je peux en plus déduire les cadeaux de mes frais professionnels).

8. Je ne sais pas car je n'ai jamais expérimenté la publicité traditionnelle.

9. Je privilégie des jeunes mamans qui peuvent montrer mes articles "en action".

10. Il faut bien cibler l'influenceur auquel on fait appel et qu'elle fasse bien son travail.

11. Elles ne les montrent pas assez portés par leurs enfants.

- **Foodspring** - **@foodspring_fr & @foodspring_be**

1. En 3 mots: Image Performance 'Brand awereness' ou visibilité Il faut tout d'abord distinguer 2 types de collaborations: le partenariat d'image et le partenariat de performance. Dans le cadre de mon activité chez Foodspring, les objectifs principaux seront la performance (mesurée par des KPI, key performance indicators tels que le revenu, le montant moyen du panier client, le pourcentage d'acquisition de nouveaux clients et autres...) ainsi que la visibilité (trafic généré sur le site notamment). En ce qu'il concerne le collaborations d'image, notre objectif est simple et unique, envoyer un message à notre audience, 'ce profile reflète l'homme ou la femme Foodspring', c'est-à-dire, mène un style de vie dirigé par les mêmes valeurs que notre marque.

2. Une image vaut mieux qu'un long discours' Il l'est, en tout cas en ce moment. Instagram est de loin la plateforme de référence grâce à ses outils (inclusion liens swipe up, hashtags etc..) mais surtout car ce réseau social s'est bâti sur l'image.

3. L'influencer marketing dépend beaucoup de l'humain. Avant de débuter une collaboration, je prospecte le profil de long en large et en travers en tenant compte de son image, la façon dont il est perçu, ses statistiques sur Instagram etc. Un premier contact avec l'influenceur permet souvent d'avoir une idée du succès et des retombées de la collaboration. C'est un peu comme un 'feeling' que tu acquières avec le temps. Malgré des absences occasionnelles de retour en termes de performance, je suis en général satisfaite de mes collaborations et le feeling que je mentionnais au départ n'est que rarement trompé. Aussi, cela vient avec le temps.

4. Le budget dédié au marketing d'influence est très souvent bien plus important que sur les autres canaux. Ce canal demande un plus gros investissement de départ. Le budget accordé à un profil dépendra du service effectué en contrepartie (nombres de publications, types de contenu) mais aussi de la durée (plus la durée est longue plus la compensation sera négociée à la baisse). Mais également du type du profil (communauté, engagement, qualité du contenu, et une multitude d'autres facteurs). Nos profils sont pour la plupart rémunérés avec un fixe mensuel négocié dans un contrat et/ou un variable (en fonction du revenu global sur le mois ou nombre de ventes).

5. L'impact se traduit et se mesure en KPI (key performance indicators) notamment une hausse de revenu, un panier moyen haut, une hausse du trafic sur le site etc…

6. Comme dans ma réponse précédente, le ROI d'une campagne se mesure à travers des KPI mais cette fois-ci, ils seront centrés sur un ou plusieurs produits ou gamme de produits dont la campagne faisait l'objet.

7. L'humain. Le principal avantage est de pouvoir travailler avec un profil qui détient déjà la confiance de sa communauté.

8. Dans la mesure ou Foodspring s'est principalement établi sur son site internet, le marketing d'influence est un outil capital et la canal marketing qui génère le plus de revenu.

9. Les influenceurs à privilégier chez Foodspring sont notamment les profils fitness/coach/ personal trainer qui possèdent une communauté extrêmement engagée et qui ont donné leur confiance en ces profils en mesure de délivrer une expertise.

10. Travailler avec des partenaires qui aiment et connaissent la marque et dont le mode de vie correspond à celui pensé par la marque.

11. L'erreur la plus fréquente est de travailler avec un profil connu, qui possède une grande visibilité mais dont la communauté manque d'engagement et d'intérêt réel pour le profil.

12. L'avenir du marketing d'influence se traduira par la fin des gros profils d'influenceurs purs et durs pour laisser la place et la parole aux micro profils.

- **QNT Sport** - **@qntsportnutrition**

1. Plusieurs types d'objectifs, tout d'abord c'est d'avoir des portes paroles de la marque, pour travailler l'image de marque, pour avoir du contenu de qualité, faire du placement de produit et bien sur l'objectif principal c'est d'engendrer des ventes.

2. On est principalement sur Instagram car je pense que c'est la plateforme qui est le plus dans l'air du temps et donc la majeure partie de nos influenceurs travaillent dessus, mais une toute petite partie des influenceurs utilisent aussi Facebook. Donc pour ceux qui travaillent sur les deux plateformes, on comprend aussi Facebook comme réseau social avec lequel on travaille.

YouTube c'est une plateforme qu'on utilise aussi beaucoup, mais le seul problème c'est le budget, sur YouTube c'est beaucoup plus cher. Donc pour moi, les principaux c'est Instagram et YouTube. On a essayé récemment d'aller sur TikTok mais ça n'a pas marché, la communauté sur Tik Tok est assez jeune. Vu qu'on essaye de surtout cibler entre 21 et 35 ans, ce n'est pas trop le public. Après sur TikTok ce qui n'est pas mal aussi c'est qu'on peut faire du contenu fun et de qualité, qu'on peut partager après sur les réseaux.

3. Non en général pas du tout. On travaille avec énormément d'influenceurs qui représentent bien la marque mais on passe toujours par une période test. On veut savoir s'ils aiment comment on travaille, s'ils aiment bien les produits et la marque et vice versa. Après on voit qui on peut travailler dans un contexte plus long terme. Il y a des influenceurs qui ne se prêtent pas au jeu ou qui ne respectent pas leurs engagements, des influenceurs qui font du contenu qui n'est pas qualitatif pour nous ou qui ne vendent pas. Il y a quand même beaucoup de déception, je dirais plus de 50%.

4. Le budget sur YouTube est plus cher. On essaye de viser différents types de paliers dépendant de l'influenceur. Le premier palier on appelle ça du "gifting", donc des produits en échange de publications ou de contenu. Et alors le deuxième palier c'est de l'argent, on paye l'influenceur. Sur YouTube on remarque que généralement que les influenceurs veulent de l'argent donc la plupart du temps on ne travaille pas avec eux.

5. À la fin de chaque mois on a un tracker qui nous permet de voir les ventes de chaque influenceur, et comme cela on peut voir les influenceurs qui sortent du lot et qui génèrent beaucoup de ventes et/ou qui nous amènent de nouveaux clients ce qui nous prouve que la stratégie fonctionne.

6. On a un outil qui nous permet de traquer les ventes par des liens, ça s'appelle une "affiliation". Néanmoins une manière plus précise de calculer c'est via les codes promo. On peut voir à la fin du mois que le code promo de cette personne là à générer X ventes.

7. En utilisant des macro influenceurs, c'est-à-dire très connus, on peut directement cibler la population qu'on vise. Dépendant de la communauté de l'influenceur on va lui faire promouvoir des produits qui se rapprochent le plus de sa communauté. On a quand même 300 produits, des produits qui conviennent un peu à tout le monde mais certains correspondent plus à certaines personnes.

8. On travaille à petite échelle avec la radio et la télévision mais c'est difficilement quantifiable, ce n'est pas possible d'avoir des chiffres exacts. On fait majoritairement des publicités sur Facebook et Instagram et on voit que la conversion est nettement plus grande sur Facebook. Ce qui fonctionne le mieux en premier ce sont les pubs sur Google, puis sur Facebook et ensuite sur Instagram. En termes de chiffres les publicités fonctionnent très bien aussi mais les influenceurs impactent beaucoup l'image de marque et ils créent du contenu, alors que nous devons créer le contenu pour les pubs nous-mêmes. Souvent quand on fait une publicité sur les réseaux, on y inclut souvent un influenceur, donc la pub elle réussit aussi bien. C'est important de combiner les stratégies pour augmenter son chiffre d'affaires.

9. Les micro influenceurs ont une plus petite communauté, plus ciblée et plus vraie donc ils vont réussir à convaincre plus tandis que les macros influenceurs, les plus connus ils vont convertir moins de personnes mais répandre l'image de la marque. Nous ce qu'on fait c'est qu'on a beaucoup de micro donc qui ont entre 5000 à 50000 abonnés puis on a quelques gros influenceurs.

10. On prévoit tout à l'avance, on a un calendrier de l'année avec toutes les campagnes prévues, dès qu'on lance une campagne on prévient d'abord via la newsletter, on explique aussi sur notre site internet. On fait aussi des shootings nous-mêmes avec les influenceurs. On mise aussi beaucoup sur l'originalité. On note aussi que c'est une entreprise familiale, on a envie de conserver certaines valeurs donc on est très proche des influenceurs avec lesquels on travaille. On les invite à manger, on fait des activités avec eux, pour créer une bonne ambiance. On essaye de booster au mieux les influenceurs, on augmente leur code promo au mieux ils travaillent avec nous, donc leurs actions ambassadeurs augmentent quand ils sont effectifs. De plus, nous laissons toujours le libre choix aux influenceurs de partager ou non nos produits, il doit aimer le produit pour en parler ou sinon il risque de nous laisser tomber si nous lui mettons trop de barrières. Cependant il est important de faire un contrat car il y a un échange de produits et services.

11. Avant de travailler pour QNT, j'ai travaillé dans une agence d'influenceurs pendant deux ans à Londres donc j'ai vraiment les deux points de vue. D'une part j'ai été la personne qui essaye de placer des influenceurs avec des marques et d'autre part je travaille avec QNT et je demande des influenceurs a des agences de marketing. Mon but idéalement c'est de payer le moins cher possible et j'ai comme expérience que je sais passer par de bonnes agences marketing mais ce sont quasiment tous des escrocs. Moi quand je travaille avec un influenceur

je fais tout en interne, ce n'est pas très compliqué si on s'y connait un petit peu, c'est facile de reconnaître si ce sont des fakes ou pas en contrôlant leurs photos. Quand on travaille avec une agence, plus de 70% de l'argent qu'on leur donne va dans la poche des agents et non des influenceurs. Donc moi à mon échelle, je déconseille de passer par des agences, c'est beaucoup trop cher. Après si on veut vraiment travailler avec un gros influenceur on est obligé de passer par des agences. Il faut savoir à l'avance s'il fait du bon contenu, mais on n'est pas des dictateurs, on les laisse faire le travail. Par contre si on doit leur faire une remarque il ne faut pas hésiter non plus.

12. Je viens de ce monde là et je suis persuadé qu'à l'heure actuelle il est nécessaire de travailler avec. Pour ce qui est de l'avenir je n'en sais rien parce que je trouve que ça devient un peu saturé sur Instagram, c'est du vu et revu, les influenceurs travaillent avec pas mal de marques, il n'y a plus trop d'authenticité. Quelque part j'ai l'impression que les gens sont un peu saoulés. Sur Tik Tok c'est un peu jeune et la plateforme a de plus en plus un caractère pornographique, et ça évolue mal. Donc je ne sais pas vraiment ce qu'il en sera de l'avenir mais j'ai l'impression que quelque chose va exploser parce que les gens en ont un peu marre et puis aussi les agences sont plus concentrées sur le but lucratif.

- **Garden Gourmet Belgium** - **@gardengourmet_be**

1. Augmenter la notoriété. Augmenter le niveau de considération. Améliorer la perception d'authenticité de la marque

2. C'est le réseau qui a la plus grande couverture. D'autres réseaux sociaux sont intéressants en fonction de la cible (Tik Tok, FB, Twitch, etc.).

3. Oui mais le briefing est la clé de la réussite. Un mauvais briefing donne une mauvaise campagne

4. Nous considérons les influenceurs comme un média à part entière. Nous les rémunérons financièrement en fonction de ce qui leur est demandé.

5. Nous augmentons la notoriété de la marque et la considération (désir d'acheter) des belges pour la marque. Pas d'impact immédiat significatif sur les ventes. Pour des plus petites structures l'impact sera sans doute plus important.

6. Impact sur la notoriété. Impact sur le niveau de considération. Impact sur le CA. En sachant que nous faisons rarement une campagne influenceurs isolée, elle est souvent couplée à de la télé, du digital, etc.

7. Touchpoint supplémentaire (Personnes que nous n'aurions pas pu toucher avec des média traditionnels). Authenticité (l'influenceur est connu de ses followers). Bouche-à-oreille (l'influenceur conseille le produit)

8. Non, c'est un tout

9. Nous regardons en fonction de la campagne:

- Le reach (Macro influ, Micro infu ou Nano influ

- Le niveau d'engagement (% d'interraction)

- Le type de contenu

- La provenance géographique des followers

10. Qu'elle fasse partie d'une campagne plus large. Qu'elle remplisse les critères correspondant à l'identité de la marque. La sélection des influenceurs soit bien faite. Que le contenu créatif du briefing soit bon

11. Le mauvais briefing. L'absence d'idée créative

12. Compliqué à dire, il évolue. Les micro influenceurs ont de plus en plus la cote. Certains grands perdent en authenticité et gonflent leur nombre de followers à coups de concours. De plus en plus de règles les poussent à devoir communiquer sur l'aspect sponsorisé de leur contenu ce qui à nouveau enlève de leur authenticité. Le bouche à oreille de leaders d'opinion vers les consommateurs finaux restera toujours quelque chose d'intéressant.

1. Quelle est votre audience sur Instagram ? (Genre / âge / nationalité)

2. Comment qualifieriez-vous votre influence sur vos abonnés ?

3. Quels sont les éléments clés qui vous ont permis de créer une communauté qui vous suit et vous écoute ?

4. Dans quel domaine avez-vous le plus d'influence sur vos abonnés ? (Mode, voyages, décoration, sport, alimentation, style de vie, etc.)

5. Comment choisissez-vous les marques avec lesquelles vous collaborez sur Instagram?

6. Est-il selon vous important de laisser savoir à vos abonnés quand vous partagez du contenu en collaboration avec une marque?

7. Pensez-vous que le marketing d'influence sur Instagram a plus d'impact sur les consommateurs que les publicités traditionnelles (télévision, radio, etc.) ?

8. Quelles sont selon vous les clés du succès du marketing d'influence ?

9. Quels seraient vos conseils pour la création de contenus de marketing d'influence ?

10 Quelle est l'erreur la plus fréquente que vous remarquez en marketing d'influence ?

- **Fidji Ruiz - @fidji_ruiz**

1. 76% de femmes pour 23% d'hommes, moyenne d'âge 18-34 ans et majoritairement Français.

2. Bienveillante.

3. Rester simple, spontanée, naturelle.

4. Mode et style de vie.

5. Je choisis ce qui me plait et surtout ceux dont je suis le plus à l'aise à présenter (vêtement par exemple)

6. Je ne sais pas si c'est important en tout cas on note bien la différence (car code promo) entre un placement en collaboration et les autres.

7. Oui

8. La transparence et la simplicité. Être soi-même.

9. Aimer et prendre du plaisir dans ce que vous faite.

10. Privilégier la quantité à la qualité.

- **Claire Marnette - @Milkywaysblueyes**

Traduction de la video YouTube:
> Marnette, Claire. 2020. *Réponses Aux Questions de Mémoire / TFE Sur Le Métier d'influenceur*. Youtube. https://milkywaysblueyes.com/fr/reponses-questions-memoire-tfe-metier-influenceur/.

My opinion has more effect on someone than if he/she is recommended by a friend because as a blogger I have more experience with a product or service that I have really tested. Can compare better products because I have more experience in a field. However, since the influencer is considered as an expert, I definitely think he/she has more impact on his followers than a friend.

Do posts affect consumption of your followers? Yes thankfully because otherwise I would not have a job and the brand with who I partner with would have no interest to work with me. What I say influences the purchase decision, even though it does not work with every type of followers and every product I show, etc. Clearly, my job is to sell products and make my followers purchase products. Nowadays micro, nano and macro influencers are all valuable for brands, it changed a lot because in the past, only famous influencers were contacted by brands to collaborate

Do you think influencer marketing will end? It is a job that is very private, it is deeply linked with your private life so I have already thought of changing my career. Influencer marketing has known a huge boom because before it did not exist but now it has stabilized. I think it will exist forever because like magazines for example, it is important for brands and people that follow them. Its success will not explode like it did in the past because it is not new anymore but it will keep existing like magazines still exist even though they have less readers. Most visibility and engagement can be earned on many different platforms, it depends where the blogger started or made his principal community.

Which content has more impact? Lively content as stories or videos have more impact on the followers because when you see someone moving and speaking people tend to feel closer to that person and therefore creates more engagement than simple pictures posted on Instagram.

How to decide which brand to work with? Firstly, I ask myself one question, "do I as an influencer, would like to try this product/service", even before searching about the brand or signing a contract that is what I do. I want the project to be original or at least that I like and that I will like to create content with it. I also want the brand to give me freedom, and I want a good relationship with them. The brand contacts me via my email and I accept or not, I can also propose another idea of a project or campaign if I do not like theirs. It is important for the influencer to decide how they will work with the brand and communicate the product or service because he/she knows him.her/self and knows what to do to be good. But it has to be of course accepted by the brand.

Do you believe in multiplication of sponsored content? It does not impact my credibility, I work the same of a sponsored post or not, but it seems normal to me that I get paid for my work. Some people ask me why I spend my time testing different products before presenting them on my Instagram, but it seems normal to me that I test them out before talking about them, I do not

want to lie to my community. But like in every job, some influencers are unreliable or do their job poorly, but usually you can discern honest influencers.

What about legislation? No real laws exist for social media but the laws that apply to social media are actually assimilated to the ones for advertisement. The main law is that the consumer know that what he/she sees is something sponsored/ a brand placement. However many influencers do not tell it or add the hashtag sponsored or advertisement. I want my followers to know it so that they can act towards the products the way they want and we aware of the brand placement. Everyone on Instagram know that influencers earn money with their job on social media. So, why hide it? However, I would like a legal framework to be set up in Belgium for influencers on social media. In some countries, it already exists such as in Germany.

Do you refuse partnerships? I accept only 5 to 10% of what I am proposed to collaborate with, if I do not like it, their image/identity etc. I refuse, or sometimes I really do not have the time so I have to refuse

Do you tend to work with the same brands? Yes, I prefer long-term collaborations. It is important for me, because some people do not check my profile every day so that way, I can touch more people. Sometimes, some of them did not see the content before or also because repetition and people seeing the same advertisement several times well it gets into their head and they get more interested in it. Moreover, it also creates a trust and honest relationship

- **Emilie Mauléon - @emymauleone**

1. Au niveau du genre: 66% femmes 34% hommes. Âgés principalement 18/24 (18/24 à 54% chez les femmes et 25/34 à 40% chez les hommes). Le pays c'est principalement la Belgique avec ensuite la France a 30%. Pour les villes c'est Namur, Bruxelles, Paris (en ordre)

2. J'ai du mal avec le mot « influence » non pas qu'il est péjoratif mais plutôt que je n'ai pas l'impression que c'est mon but. Personnellement je communique à mes « abonnés » comme si c'était des amis à qui j'explique ce que je fais ou ce que j'ai reçu (sans pour autant étaler mon privé)

3. Sans vouloir me vanter, je pense que c'est le fait que je suis « naturelle » je le mets entre guillemets car il y a très peu de gens qui sont 100% eux même sur les réseaux mais je ne calcule

pas mes publications, les story, je ne fais pas tout ce que je peux pour avoir des like si ou là, et je pense que ça plait. Je suis moi-même d'une certaine façon et l'authenticité ça se ressent sur les réseaux.

4. Alors pour le moment là où je suis le plus « influente » je pense que c'est dans le secteur de la beauté et de la mode. C'est ce que je partage le plus. Après je ne me suis jamais essayée aux recettes et mon appartement n'est pas encore fini donc je pourrai peut-être pencher vers de la déco aussi

5. Généralement ce sont les marques qui me contactent. Personnellement, si j'aime une marque je l'achète et je la partage. Si c'est un partenariat, c'est qu'on est venu me demander. Je regarde si nous avons les mêmes valeurs, et je préviens toujours que je teste le produit avant de le partager. S'il ne me plait pas, en aucun cas je ne ferai de publicité ou autre. Dans une autre vision des choses, il m'est déjà arrivé de « décrocher » un partenariat car j'étais fidèle à une enseigne et en général, c'est ce que je préfère.

6. Quand je regarde les comptes de bloggeuses ou autre bizarrement je préfère savoir que c'est une collaboration. Cela rassure en se disant ce n'est pas elle a 100% qui le conseille, il y a quelque chose derrière et on se sent moins « obligé » d'acheter que si elle nous prouvait par a+b qu'ELLES en était satisfaite à 100% sans aucune rémunération derrière. Mais d'un autre côté, sur mon compte, je le précise mais je ne suis pas sûre que les gens font une distinction car la plupart savent que, comme dit précédemment, si je partage c'est que je suis réellement satisfaite, collaboration ou non.

7. Je ne pense pas que cela ait plus d'impact. C'est différent. Déjà c'est un autre public. Et ensuite, ce ne sera jamais pour les mêmes produits. Avant tout était à la télé. Maintenant il y a les produits plus intéressants à partager à la télé, d'autres en publications sponsorisées sur les réseaux.

8. L'honnêteté.

9. Savoir ce qui plaît aux gens qui s'abonnent à vous, devenir un « centre d'intérêt » une habitude quotidienne qu'on aime voir. Les gens doivent avoir l'impression de vous connaître sans pour autant que ça soit le cas.

10. Les influenceurs qui essayent de ressembler à d'autre et ceux qui lisent exactement le petit bout de papier ou le manuel qui est mis dans leur colis, quand ils n'expliquent pas quelque chose avec leurs mots.

- **Joyce Donatz - @joycethecabincrew**

1. L'audience est bien variée entre hommes et femmes dont 52% entre 25 et 34 ans. Vu que j'ai habité à Dubaï j'ai une grande audience qui provient de là-bas et sinon c'est une audience Belge.

2. J'essaie en grande partie d'informer mes abonnés sur la vie d'une hôtesse de l'air car ce monde reste quand même inconnu pour beaucoup de personnes. À part cela, c'est plutôt autour des voyages.

3. Mon job en tant qu'hôtesse de l'air surtout (tout ce qui tourne autour)

4. Voyages et de temps en temps la mode

5. Je choisis uniquement des marques dans lesquelles je crois vraiment ou dont j'ai déjà entendu parlé en bien.

6. Ceci n'est même plus un choix, ceci est obligé par la loi maintenant. Et même si j'avais le choix, oui. Je mentionnerai surtout ce que j'ai répondu à la question 5 le pourquoi je collabore avec cette marque.

7. Oui et non. Je pense que les réseaux sociaux sont plus 'à la mode' actuellement. Mais dépendant de la catégorie d'âge que vous visez il est important de choisir ses moyens. Je pense que pour une catégorie d'âge un peu plus sénior qui est moins associé avec les réseaux sociaux il est important de continuer à utiliser les moyens plus classiques.

8. Être présent pour ça communauté et rester vrai à soi-même

9. Rester créative et original. N'essayer pas de copier d'autres personnes/comptes ça se verra d'une façon ou d'une autre

10. Trop de posts/infos en même temps ou 'demander' plus d'attention ou de likes de la part d'une communauté. Si vous aimez ce que vous faites et que vous continuez à le faire parce que

vous aimez le faire et non pour 'les likes' les gens le verrons et seront plus attiré par votre compte.