

Louvain School of Management

A study of influencer marketing on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube:

The effects of parasocial interactions, openness, perceived interactivity, persuasion knowledge and correspondence bias

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Part I: Introduction

In the last few years, the development of Web 2.0 allowed to create different channels to share opinions, but it also gave word-of-mouth no limit in its audience (Carr & Hayes, 2014). When people started sharing more and more content over social media we saw the creation of influencers on the platforms, this allowed people to turn towards everyday people to get advice (Campbell, Pitt, Parent & Berthon, 2011). Today, the rise of influencers has become undisputable. Recently, we have seen that half the amount that was being spent in television advertising has moved to influencers, streamers and online advertising. In a report by Linqia from 2021, it is said that 71% of marketers were planning to up their budget for influencer marketing.

Influencer marketing is working so well due to multiple factors such as the emotional response it creates (WARC, 2020) or the homophily (Moon & Han, 2010). On top, there are psychological concepts explaining the success of influencer marketing and the campaigns. For instance, the credibility, which is how the consumers trust the influencers and find them more credible than traditional advertising (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), the parasocial interactions which is how consumers feel as if they have a real relationship with the influencers, this closeness was made possible by social medias (Lee & Watkins, 2016). There are two more important factors, the persuasion knowledge which is the extent to which the consumers realise the persuasion attempt and how it negatively affects a campaign and the correspondence bias which is when the consumers view the influencers as experts and honest.

Social media, as said before has become extremely important in today's society. Instagram and YouTube are the biggest social media platforms for influencer marketing (Statista, 2018; Mediakix, 2019). TikTok has seen a huge growth in the last year and we saw the rise of new influencers (Maduako, 2020).

In our thesis, we will focus on influencer marketing on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube.

We will first explain the rise of influencer marketing and how it came to be and have the success it has today. We will also explain the reasons behind this success. We will talk about the different types of campaigns possible, the challenges of this strategy and the influencer in particular. We will then go in depth about the three social medias: Instagram, TikTok and

YouTube. We'll talk about their history, the concept, their users and how to use it as a marketing tool.

In the next part of our thesis, we will analyse the effects of parasocial interactions and its derivatives, perceived interactivity and openness on the engagement on each platform, we will then look at if the effect is stronger on one of the social medias. Lastly, we will compare the strength of the persuasion knowledge and the correspondence bias on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube.

This thesis is made of two main parts: the literature review which concerns the data already available and allows us to know the context and describe the subject and the quantitative research which is where we make hypotheses and test them.

Part II: Literature review

The literature review is composed of 2 main parts. The chapter 1, “Influencer Marketing”, goes on to explain the main concept of this thesis. It approaches the way it works on the consumer but also how it works for brands. The chapter 2, “Social Networks” introduces the concept of social networks and presents the three we are looking at during this thesis: Instagram, TikTok and YouTube.

Chapter 1: Influencer Marketing

In this chapter we will talk about the psychological concepts behind influencer marketing, the origins of this marketing technique, how brands can use influencers for their campaign and why they should use it as well as some legislations in Europe and in the United States and challenges marketers using this type of campaign have to face.

Section 1: Introduction

In this section, we define some of the concepts used in our thesis as well as the origins of influencer marketing, when did it become so popular, how did it become digital and on which consumer attitude it is based on.

1. Definition of concepts

1.1.Web 2.0

The term Web 2.0 was first introduced in the beginning of the 2000’s (2004-2005). It was used in marketing to describe the new technological, sociological and structural era on the “World Wide Web” (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008). It is also called “*the wisdom Web, people-centric Web, participative Web, and read/write Web*” (Murugesan, 2007, p.34). The change made the web more collaborative, but it also allowed users to engage more through the new social applications which were appearing (Murugesan, 2007). Because of the new social applications, it was easier for people to broadcast information using word-of-mouth. It was the web 2.0 which made e-WOM possible (Murugesan, 2007).

1.2.Social Media

First, there is a difference to note between social media and social networks. The Cambridge Dictionary defines social media as “websites and computer programs that allow people to communicate and share information on the internet using a computer or mobile phone” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020.). Nair defines it as “online tools where content, opinions, perspectives, insights, and media can be shared ... (and) at its core social media is about relationships and connections between people and organizations” (in Parsons, 2013, p.27). The tools can be blogs, wikis but also vlogs, product reviews websites, forums, instant messaging, social media websites, etc. The term “Social Network” is more precise and does not englobe as much as “Social Media” does. Social networks are websites/apps where users can create a personal profile and share content as well as discussing with other users (Parsons, 2013).

Social networks have attracted a lot of users since their first launch. They also intrigue researchers because of how revolutionary they have been. There are thousands of social networks treating of various subjects and working in many different ways with many different purposes.

Each platform (website and computer programs also called apps) has its own specificities in the kind of content that is shared but also the way it is shared.

1.3.Word-of-Mouth

The word-of-mouth concept is one of the oldest concepts in communication marketing. It existed before the invention of the printing press and radio. It is defined as a face-to-face communication in relation to products between consumers (Gosh, Varshney & Venugopal; 2015). Research shows that it has been a strong tool for marketing purposes. The sources of WOM (word-of-mouth) can be strangers and acquaintances as well as friends and family.

Because of the technological changes in the recent years, WOM is becoming a buzzword again because of what researchers are calling electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). E-WOM is done through internet and online social networks. The difference between the two concepts is that WOM shows a direct link between the two consumers, whereas E-WOM is more indirect and open to public because of the nature of the communication.

1.4.Influencers

Influencers are considered as micro-celebrities. Senft defines micro-celebrities as “*a new style of online performance that involves people ‘amping up’ their popularity over the Web using technologies like video, blogs and social networking sites*” (Senft, 2008 in Abiding, 2015). Those micro-celebrities made a job for themselves through social media and that is who we call influencers today. Influencers are regular people who managed to get a following on social networks, at first it was said that it needed to be a relatively large following but as it is explained below, it has changed. Generally, they share content about their lives or interests, and it is important for influencers to engage with their communities, it is part of what makes them special to marketers (Abidin, 2015).

In the influencers, we are noticing the rise of what we call “micro-influencers”. Micro-influencers are difficult to define. The research which has been done on the subject do not define it in the same way. What they mostly agree on is that micro-influencers are people sharing content on social networks with a smaller number of followers. This number is the subject of the disagreements. Some say that it is between 1000 and 100 000 followers (Mediakix, n.d. in Rakoczy, Bouzeghoub, Lopes Gancarski, & Wegrzyn-Wolska, 2018), others say 5000 followers maximum (Muuga, n.d. in Rakoczy, Bouzeghoub, Lopes Gancarski, & Wegrzyn-Wolska, 2018) and some others decide it is 10 000 or 500 000 followers (Wissman, 2018 in Rakoczy, Bouzeghoub, Lopes Gancarski, & Wegrzyn-Wolska, 2018). We decided to follow the definition of the micro-influencer concept from Rakoczy, Bouzeghoub, Lopes Gancarski, & Wegrzyn-Wolska. They define the micro-influencers depending on the engagement and the audience. A micro-influencer has to have high engagement (reaction to their content) and a limited audience size. We chose to follow this definition without having set boundaries for the number of followers because those numbers should depend on the social network the influencer is on. It should depend on the total number of users, the average number of followers, etc. (Rakoczy, Bouzeghoub, Lopes Gancarski, & Wegrzyn-Wolska, 2018).

Micro-influencers dominate Instagram right now with almost 90% of the sponsored feed posts having approximately 1000 likes. This implies that the accounts have a small following. The advantages of such influencers are that even if they have a smaller reach and number of followers, the consumers engaging with their content are more willing to recommend the brand to other consumers. With micro-influencers, marketers can also use multiple influencers to reach different targets, because of the lower cost of a micro-influencer (Clapp, 2020).

1.5. Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing can be defined in multiple ways because of how recent the term is in the literature. Brown & Hayes defined influencer marketing in their book “Influencer Marketing, Who really influences your customers” as “*a third-party who significantly shapes the customer’s purchasing decision but may ever be accountable for it*” (Brown & Hayes, 2008). Another definition, given by the WOMMA (the Word-of-Mouth Marketing Association), describes it as “*identifying key communities and opinion leaders who are likely to talk about products and have the ability to influence the opinions of others*” (WOMMA, 2016)

Lastly, through the years, marketing companies have developed their own definitions to fit how the term is used in everyday life. Marketing Hub, a leading influencer marketing company, defines it as “*[influencer marketing] involves a brand collaborating with an online influencer to market one of its products or services. Some influencer marketing collaborations are less tangible than that – brands simply work with influencers to improve brand recognition*” (Marketing Hub, 2021). Finally, another leading marketing company, TapInfluence, defines it as “*a type of marketing that focuses on using key leaders to drive your brand’s message to the larger market. Rather than marketing directly to a large group of consumers, you instead inspire / hire / pay influencers to get out the word for you*” (Tapinfluence, 2015).

2. Origins of influencer marketing

As many concepts used by marketing, the influencer was not created by the sector. We can say it is one of the oldest concepts. People have always been influenced by other people and for who other’s opinions mattered. Because typically influencers (on and offline) are people whose opinions and judgements are trusted. Anyone could be an influencer, no need to be famous or rich (Hayes, 2018). From Jesus who still affects people’s lives today to our mothers and even the Queen of England.

The first influencer to exist, at least on record, is Aunt Jemima. Aunt Jemima is the face of the Davis Milling Company and was created so that customers would be more inclined to trust the brand. It was in the end of the 19th century, an era of newspaper ads, slogans and banners. The face is still on the packaging of the brand today (Hayes, 2018). We still see personas today used by brands to represent them such as Ronald McDonald for McDonald’s or Tony the Tiger for Kellogg’s (See Figure 1 in the annex).

In the 1940's, there were the first signs of influence of people on other people. Researchers of Columbia University looked at what shaped voters' opinions during a political campaign. For the first time, they saw that most people were not influenced by medias but by other people. Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet explain that most of the respondents said that they made their opinions through discussions with their relatives and friends rather than through medias (in Lee, 1949).

A bit later, Katz, Lazarsfeld and Roper (1960) talked about opinion leaders through their two-step flow communication theory in 1955. This theory says that information which goes from media to general public actually has a supplementary intermediary which are opinion leaders. Those opinion leaders are generally more exposed to the medias and they exercise some sort of influence over the information transmitted (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). They explain in *Personal Influence* how some people have the capacity and power to disseminate information they have gotten to some other people. This gives more meaning and value to the information reported. During the 20th century, we also saw the birth of celebrity endorsements. This is because brands realised that influencer marketing could reach consumers differently than traditional advertising. On top, celebrities were starting to have bigger followings because of the developments of television and radio. People want to look and be like them, which they linked to buying the "same" products as them, or at least the consumers believed so (Hayes, 2018).

Influencer marketing is not as new as it looks like. The approach is very close to the concept below. At the start of this century, the attention to word-of-mouth marketing made a comeback. Whereas brands spend millions in elaborate marketing campaigns, a study by Nielsen showed that 92% of consumers trusted more a recommendation from friends or family over any advertising campaign. As explained by McKinsey, WOM is a purchase driver behind 20% to 50% of purchasing decisions (Bughin, Doogan, & Vetvik, 2010). With word-of-mouth, we see the opinion leaders being more and more important in academic research (Vernette, 2006).

The term opinion leaders can be used, so can "influencer", which is not new, it was already rising in the early 2000's. Rosen and Gladwell were already talking about the importance of opinion leaders in marketing strategy.

Opinion leaders were already very effective at the start of the new technological era and development of internet, before social medias, because they were trusted. Opinion leaders are sought after by consumers because they appear as credible and impartial. Contrary to advertising, their advice seems genuine (Audigier, 2014).

3. Digital Influencer Marketing

Later, we saw the collaborative web, or Web 2.0 develop. This development of internet created many different channels to share an opinion but also gave WOM no limits in audience size. This gave opinion leaders/influencers more impact for brand marketers (Carr & Hayes, 2014).

Two evolutions are characterized by the collaborative web. The first one being the facilitation of interaction between consumers because of social medias being accessible. The second is the facilitation of the dissemination of information through eWOM via social medias (Aramendia-Muneta, 2017). As explained in *“Effects of relationship types on customers’ parasocial interactions: Promoting relationship marketing in social media”*, social media revolutionized the way customers communicate and connect (Lee & Lee, 2017). We can communicate with way more people than before, all over the world, it also became more direct and quicker, we do not have to wait for someone to pick up the phone for example. Brands and marketers don’t have the total control over the information shared online about their companies.

Alongside this phenomenon, consumers used social medias to share thoughts, pictures and videos, which created the influencers on the different platforms. People were turning towards everyday people because this is who they felt close to and they could identify to them. Internet and consumers have evolved from only being a source of information to a more active role. This is one of the characteristics of Web 2.0: consumers can now interact, collaborate, create, share and much more which modified who had the power in the relationship between consumers and brands (Campbell, Pitt, Parent & Berthon, 2011). The rise of influencers came organically alongside those evolutions and today 71% of marketers plan to increase their budget (Liquia, 2021).

It is even more effective today because of the rise of ad blockers and the loss of trust in traditional advertising. Ad blockers are tools used to avoid seeing advertisements on different type of content online. It is a problem for websites’ publishers because it harms the revenue they normally have from advertisement since there are less ad impressions (Redondo & Aznar 2018). When influencers came to the forefront in 2017, brands were looking for them to do any type of branded content, from shout-outs to partnerships or integration (Grimaldi & Chowdhary, 2018).

Influencers are also a good investment for brands, it allows them to target potential customers in a better way and to have smarter ad investments, because even though it might cost a lot, depending on the chosen influencer and strategy, the ROI is huge (Elsbury, 2019).

Section 2: The inner workings of Influencer Marketing

In this section we are talking more in depth about influencer marketing and what it is exactly. We also approach the psychological reasons behind the success of this technique and explaining why brands should be using it in today's society but also how they can have different types of campaigns using it. Finally, we also talk about the guidelines that are put in place to assure that influencers disclose the advertising, the challenges marketers have to face but also the new trends they have to keep their eyes on.

1. What is Influencer Marketing?

Influencer marketing plays an important role in disseminating thoughts and communicating marketing messages to consumers. This does not only happen online; it also happens offline. It is important to remember this when talking about influencer marketing. It happens already in parks between kids, at work or restaurant between friends and family, even though it is word-of-mouth, it is how influencer marketing starts. The vastness of the subject means that marketers are still trying to understand how to utilize it at its full capacity (WARC, 2020).

The influencer marketing concept is defined as *“operating on a market in a deceptive, covert, furtive, imperceptible and disguised manner to purposefully influence audiences without the audiences being aware of these activities”* (Mathew, 2019, p.3). Influencer marketing is in fact a type of consumer-to-consumer communication. This means that a brand does not directly talk to a consumer but instead uses a third person, which is considered influential, to speak to the consumers. Whereas before influencers, there were personas created by brands and then celebrities, it has now become anyone with a few followers on social media that were then used by brands. The last evolution of influencer marketing with “influencers” was not created by brands.

The most evolved form of influencer marketing is online. It is how brands market products and services by associating them to people which can influence a group of people on social media (called followers) (Klop, 2018).

Influencer marketing is seen by consumers as a help to make purchase decisions. As we will see in Section 2, point 2.2., through the parasocial interactions phenomena, they consider influencers as friends. Since Nielsen reported that 92% of consumers trust recommendations from friends and family over all forms of advertising and a study by Collective Bias reported

that 60% of purchases made in shops are influenced by social media and blogs, it confirms the statement.

Influencers allow consumers to feel that they are increasing their knowledge in an area of expertise. Plus, they feel they are having a genuine discussion about a brand.

The fact that some consumers are more likely to trust an influencer and what he says about the brand than what the brand itself says shows the power influencer marketing now has (Grimaldi & Chowdhary, 2018).

As for brands, they see influencer marketing as a way to grow their on- and off-line presence. It enables them to better target potential customers. It helps brands to tell their story to consumers. Through influencers, brands can disseminate information to target population which were extremely hard to reach before. For brands, it is a way to have an impact on target populations that are more specific and difficult to reach which will be more sensible to the voice of an influencer they chose to follow rather than to a banner ad (Klop, 2018). It allows brands to “*connect with communities with strong shared interests and target audiences who are likely to be interested in their offerings*” (Foresight factory, 2019).

Influencer marketing campaigns have three main goals generally. They either help to increase brand awareness, to increase the engagement or to generate leads and sales (Esseveld, 2017). The concept of engagement can be defined as “*a set of measurable actions that consumers take on social media in response to brand-related content: reacting to content (e.g., likes, hearts, +1’s, 1 to 5 star ratings), commenting on content (e.g., Facebook comments, Twitter replies), sharing content with others (e.g., Facebook shares, Twitter retweets), and posting user-generated content (e.g., product reviews, Facebook posts about brands)*” (Barger, Peltier & Schultz, 2016).

When we talk about brand awareness, we are talking about whether a consumer can remember the brand, recognize it or even knows about the brand (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012).

A brand choosing to increase engagement as a goal means that they want to have more people being active on the brand’s social platforms. Marketeers look at engagement through what they call the “engagement rate” which is one of the main ways to calculate how the population responds to the content. It “*measures the user interaction with the content posted*” (Peñaflor, 2018). The rate is usually calculated by using the number of interactions (comments, shares and likes) split by the number of followers. Facebook defines it as the percentage of people that not

only saw the content but also reacted to it, through liking, sharing, clicking and commenting (Peñaflor, 2018).

Finally, a brand might only want to be generating sales through their campaign, which is the last main goal a brand can have.

2. Why is Influencer Marketing working?

As explained above, influencer marketing and influencers are important because of how effective they can be. More so than TV ads. It was explained in a neuroscientific research that influencers bring a higher emotional response from consumers and also a better level of memory encoding than TV advertising (What we know (...), 2020). Influencers are everyday consumers, just like their audience, which have succeeded in building a loyal number of followers which explains their influence (Grimaldi & Chowdharry, 2018). Homophily is an important factor in the influence process. It was shown in a study in 1998 that social influence prompts people to mimic attitudes shown by people around them. This phenomenon has also been seen online as people tend to look for interactions with like-minded people (Moon & Han, 2010).

Influencer marketing has a pretty basic principle, the objective is to create relationships with influential people which can alter the consumers' decision purchases.

For a marketer to launch its influencer campaign, he must: identify the target, find the right influencers for the target, work with influencers to create a loyal representation of the brand's image and the influencer's and lastly, they have to remember that influencer marketing takes time and the actions have to be repeated. This is how the campaign will find its place in the consumer's brain (Klop, 2018).

Different factors can explain why influencers and the influencer marketing strategy has those effects on consumers. In the next few lines, we will discuss the perceived credibility, the parasocial interactions, the persuasion knowledge and the correspondence bias.

2.1. Credibility

Online celebrities, or influencers, are seen as more trustworthy and credible than traditional advertising. This brings us to the source credibility theory (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Source credibility can be defined as O’Keefe (1990) did: “*a judgment made by a perceiver concerning the believability of a communicator*” (in Xiao, Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2018). Consumers will believe more the content of a message if it is given by a more credible source (Xiao, Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2018).

The source credibility theory looks at what influences the perceived credibility of the communicator. The elements driving a communicator’s credibility are trustworthiness, expertise and physical attractiveness. We can explain each factor as such:

- Trustworthiness: the perceived sincerity, plausibility and integrity of the communicator. There is a positive effect between perceived trustworthiness and consumer attitudes towards brands and brand beliefs (Xiao, Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2018).
- Expertise: the communicator’s perceived knowledge in the specific area. It could be having experience, having a title or anything that proves the communicator has knowledge in the area. There is a positive effect between expertise and attitude towards the ads and purchase intentions (Xiao, Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2018).
- Physical attractiveness or likability: how much the receiver is attracted to the appearance of the communicator (Xiao, Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2018).

It is believed that influencers that have high credibility have the most impact on consumers (Breves, Liebers, Abt & Kunze, 2019).

2.2. Parasocial interactions

Another theory can explain the way the message is received by consumers when given through influencers: the parasocial interactions. The parasocial interaction, or PSI, can be defined as “*the pseudo-intimate relationship between the audience and media personalities*” (Lim & Kim, 2011 in Rasmussen, 2018).

Basically, it describes the bond between a celebrity, and in our case an influencer and their audience. To the consumers and audience, it feels as if they are having a real-life bonding time and relationship with the influencer. As if they are part of their everyday life.

PSI are usually characterized as one-sided and mediated. Parasocial interactions have been strengthened in the last few years with the development of social media and the possibility to “speak” and interact with the celebrity. This makes the interaction more realistic.

In simple words, social media users consider influencers as friends and are seeking advice from them as if they were friends and family. As this relationship between the consumers and media personality develops, the consumers will start to trust them as a source of information as they trust friends and family (explained with the WOM marketing strategy).

Finally, the result of this for brands, is that it increased feelings of connectedness which brings more brand loyalty and consumers are more willing to share information with the brands (Lee & Watkins, 2016).

2.3. Persuasion knowledge

The persuasion knowledge concept can also be a factor when using influencer marketing. Even before being exposed to some kind of ads, some consumers might have some predispositions that affects the way they will look at the ads and the way the ads affect their behaviour.

Persuasion knowledge is *“the knowledge that enables [...] [consumers] to recognize, analyze, interpret, evaluate and remember persuasion attempts and to select and execute coping tactics believed to be effective and appropriate”* (Friestad & Wright, 1994 in Evans, Phua, Lim & Jun, 2017, p.139). In other words, it is the extent to which consumers are prompt to spot an influential attempt and how they will respond to the persuasion attempt.

When a consumer recognizes the persuasion attempt there is a risk of it negatively affect the brand through resistance and scepticism (Evans et al, 2017).

Studies show that persuasive attempts through social media, meaning advertising through social media are far less detectable than traditional advertising. Consumers are far less frustrated to hear recommendations and advertising from friends, family, peers, someone they feel close to than traditional advertising. Meaning that because of the PSI (parasocial interactions) effect, the persuasive attempts through social media are shown to be more effective in those studies (Evans et al, 2017).

Finally, a way to avoid the persuasion knowledge effect still present on social media is to create a more natural and seamless experience. Here we are talking about what advertisers are calling native advertising. It is a paid advertising embedded in the editorial content of the influencer. Meaning that the type of media shared should be similar to what's usually shared on the platform. Finally, many studies show that the success of native advertising is linked to the fact that consumers are not aware that it is advertising. This is why there is, since 2015, Federal Trade Commission (FTC) guidelines put in place in the United States, and other guidelines and recommendations in Europe, as we will address in the point 6 (Evans et al, 2017).

2.4. Correspondence bias

Lastly, the attitude towards the message in influencer marketing might also be affected by the correspondence bias. The correspondence bias is *“the tendency to assume that a person’s behaviour is a true reflection of their beliefs or opinions, and thus, their underlying dispositions when in fact, their behaviour could be explained entirely by situational factors”* (Cronley, Kardes, Goddard & Houghton, 1999, p.627).

This means that despite the disclosure of sponsored content by the influencer, the consumer attitude towards the brand and the purchase intentions do not diminish because the influencer is still seen as an expert by the consumers/followers. Another element which explains this is that consumers/followers assume that an influencer promotes a brand because they actually like it or think high of it than because they were paid to do so (Colliander & Erlandsson, 2015).

But correspondence bias will likely not last forever. The constant product placement on social media might create a wear-out effect. The risk is that it will destroy the potential of a particular social medium as an effective marketing strategy (Colliander & Erlandsson, 2015).

3. Why should brands use Influencer Marketing?

More and more brands are starting to use influencer marketing. It is clearly working for them following a study from Mediakix: 80% of marketers find it effective and 71% of them said the quality of traffic from influencer campaigns is better than traditional campaigns (Mediakix, 2018)

Influencers are looked at a lot for their opinions, a study shows that micro-influencers have 22.2 times more “buying conversations” each week than an average consumer. On top, they are likely to be more direct in recommending products. This study also shows how much a consumer values an influencer recommendation: 82% of them are very likely to follow their recommendations (versus 73% for an average consumer) (Berger, 2018).

This study also shows the ways in which a brand can benefit from using influencers in their marketing strategy. Through influencers, brands have access to a base of consumers which already trust the communicator. They can also gain important insights about the consumers’ social media and purchase behaviour because of the trust they put into influencers (Mediakix, 2018)

Another study shows that even though consumers realize that cash is behind the advertisement made by the influencer, many of them still believe that it is also to bring engaging and helpful content but also for the influencer to be creative.

They are great at “driving trust for brands” (Grimaldi, 2018). As explained before, it is explained by how consumers see influencers, they see them as having expertise and being trustworthy. Plus because of the parasocial interactions theory, how they see them as friends. This is what brands can capitalize on: the strong connection between influencers and their fans (Grimaldi, 2018).

A few other reasons to use influencers outside of the trusted recommendations and the eWOM they create are the high engagement they bring, the links that affect search engine optimization positively and the conversion they create (Ehrlich, 2013).

Another study conducted by TapInfluence and Nielsen Catalina Solutions, which is the leading ad targeting and return on ad spend measurement company for the consumer-packaged goods industry, has shown that it generates 11 times more return on investment than traditional marketing. For each euro spent on influencers, companies earn, in average, 7,65 (Klop, 2018).

It is a way for companies to increase brand awareness and sales while being less expensive than traditional marketing and relatively easy to do (Grimaldi, 2018).

There can be different consequences for brands which is the advantage of influencer marketing. One unique influencer marketing campaign by a brand can bring lots of different positives for the company, while as said above, still being on the cheaper side and being more effective than some traditional advertising. An influencer marketing campaign can help a brand to boost sales, increase awareness, reach a larger pre-targeted audience, increase engagement, increase traffic to the company’s own webpage or social medias, increase the brand notoriety, etc. Influencer marketing combines, in a way, the best of two types of content: organic content and branded content (Klop, 2018).

Finally, the influencer creates its own content and promotes the product at the same time, meaning the brand won’t have to employ a designer. They also give brands access to new followers through their platforms.

Lastly, thanks to influencers, a brand can waste less money because of how this technique allows to avoid ad blockers. Ad blockers allow users to bypass online ads. Since ad blockers are increasingly being used, this might be the solution for brands (Gonzalo, 2018). In 2019, there were 763.5 million users of adblockers worldwide (Statista, 2021).

4. Types of Influencer Marketing campaigns

There are different types of campaigns that marketers can do with influencers: sharing content, specific hashtags, giveaways, streams, etc. (Klop, 2018)

Choosing the right influencer and creating the partnership is only a part of the entire process, a brand also has to choose the type of campaign they want to create. Here are a few of the different types of campaigns.

4.1. Giveaways, Contests, Event Activation & Sweepstakes

This kind of campaign is probably the easiest one to put in place. The most popular because of all the benefits it brings to both the brand and the influencer. In short, the brand gives a product or a service to the influencer with which they can then organize a giveaway, a contest, etc. to make their audience win it. It benefits to both the brand and the influencer because of how you participate to one of those contests. Generally, to take part in it, you either comment, share, follow, tag someone or do all of those. This means that a new audience potentially discovers the brand but also the influencer. On top, the brand might have new sales because people who did not win the contest still want the product or service (see figure 3 in the annex).

Although there are a lot of benefits, there are still risks as with every type of campaign. A lot of people might only follow the brand and the influencer for the contest and immediately unfollow once it has ended. Plus, bots and fake accounts, which we will address in the fraud part later on, are also a problem (Engaio, n.d.)

This type of marketing campaign boosts brand awareness and increases traffic on social networks, the number of followers and leads (Izea, 2019). Lead in marketing means someone who's a potential consumer.

4.2. Takeovers

This type of campaign is when an influencer (at least in this case, if we were not talking about influencer marketing precisely, it could also be a celebrity of any kind) takes control of the

brand's social networks by posting on them for a specified time-period. It's cross-promotion (Klop, 2018). Generally, it's only for a day or a few hours, but for special events, the brand might ask for a longer period of time.

What is necessary in this kind of campaign is a high level of trust because the brand has to give the private security information of the accounts to the influencer (Engaio, n.d.). But it also has its set of benefits such as the humanization of the brand, new audience, increase brand awareness, boost social networks' engagement rate, growing leads, etc.

4.3. Affiliate Marketing

Whenever a brand has a smaller budget but wants to work with loads of influencers, affiliate marketing might be the solution. The influencer promotes the product or service on his social networks and whenever the purchase is done through his link, he will get a commission (Engaio, n.d.).

It's easy to track the results of this type of campaign because of the personalized links. With this method, brands pay influencers based on sales and is then more cost-effective for brands. Generally, affiliate marketing means that the influencer has a discount or a deal for its audience (Izea, 2019).

The benefits are, again, increasing brand awareness, more traffic on the website, higher engagement rate and conversion rate (Izea, 2019).

4.4. Sponsored Content

Sponsored content, meaning sponsored posts and blogs, is the most popular campaign for brands working with influencers.

Brands work with influencers who create content which mentions the brand's product(s) and/or name. It has to be approved by the brand and it often shows off the influencer using the product, or at the very least they talk about it in a good way (Izea, 2019).

The brand has to provide guidelines, objectives, themes for the influencer to know what is expected of him. A good idea to add to sponsored content is to give the influencer a promotional code for its audience so that it boosts sales at the same time (see Figure 4 in the annex).

As with every type of influencer marketing campaign, it will increase brand awareness but also build trust with new audiences (the ones of the influencers). As always it can increase engagement rates, leads and conversion rates. It's also very cost-effective because the content can be repurposed for different channels, meaning different social medias (Izea, 2019).

4.5. Unboxing & Reviews

For this type of campaign, the brand must send the product to the influencer or allow the influencer to try its service. Once that done, the influencer might unbox it on camera or review it in a post (blog, insta, etc.) or in a video (YouTube for example). With this technique, influencers take their audience through the same journey as them. After hearing the influencer speak about the product or service, they might want to try it too.

4.6. Brand Ambassador

Brand ambassador campaigns generally mean long-term partnerships with influencers who regularly speak of the brand on their platforms. Brand ambassadors are considered as the face of the brand, they represent them, it works exactly like when a celebrity is a spokesperson for a brand in more traditional campaigns (Engaio, n.d.).

They are used by brands to make new products known, to increase awareness, to reach new audiences. Consumers trust more brand ambassador than traditional advertising because they view them as more human and closer to them as explained before (Izea, 2019).

When an influencer is brand ambassador, they must actively promote the brand during the specified period for which they represent it, meaning that the brand will be imprinted in their audience's minds (Engaio, n.d.). For example, L'Oréal has a squad of British influencer which became ambassadors for the brand in United Kingdom.

There are many other ways to work with influencers such as pre-release campaigns or events but those are the main ones and a brand should know how to work them because of their effectiveness, cost and easiness to be put in place. The possibilities are endless with a little bit of creativity. Influencers are such a big opportunity for brands, it makes it easier for them to reach and to be close to the consumers. Since consumers want something more natural and organic, influencers are, at least for now, the solution.

5. Influencer Marketing's return on investment

Because of influencer marketing is still a novelty, brands have a hard time measuring the return on investment from those campaigns. Marketers want to be able to predict how much they will make from such strategies but also how influencers perform compared to other digital strategies (WARC, 2020). A study by Linqia shows that it must be working since 39% of marketers they surveyed were planning to up their budget for influencers in 2019 (Linqia, 2019).

An influencer agency has shown how much a brand can expect in ROI. When a beauty brand spent 10k€ in an influencer marketing campaign, forty-eight hours later, they had generated 55k€ of turnover. Another proof that it works on YouTube, a company invested 30k€ in a campaign and it brought them 92k€ (Efluenz, 2019).

In this next part, we will look at how brands can measure the return on investment from influencer campaigns.

Linqia is talking about a few different measures to look at the success of the influencer programs, engagement being the number one metric marketers are looking at. Followed by impressions, brand awareness, clicks (or CTR) and conversions. We will quickly develop those most used metrics.

To start off, the engagement rate “*measures the user interaction with the content posted*” (Peñaflor, 2018). The rate is usually calculated by using the number of interactions (comments, shares and likes) split by the number of followers. The engagement, or customer engagement has been proved to have a positive effect on brand loyalty and can strengthened the relationship between a consumer and a brand (Beng & Ting, 2020).

Secondly, impressions can be explained as the number of users who have seen a post. This metric is preferred to the number of followers because it represents a much more accurate number of how many people have really seen the post. It’s important to remember that it is not because someone is following an influencer that they will see their post or interact with it. This explains why in the recent years, the people who considered the number of followers as the number metric to look at the ROI of a campaign have been vastly criticized.

Next, regarding brand awareness, it is how recognizable your brand is to consumers. This is a very complicated metric to calculate because it is difficult to quantify, and companies generally need help from specialized agencies.

Then we have the clicks, the measure which looks at this is the Click Through Rate, or CTR. The click through rate is a ratio to see how many people who have seen an ad, clicked on it. It is used to see how well an ad is doing and as such can be used to look at the ROI of an influencer campaign (Google, n.d.). A high CTR means that the ad is effective. The CTR can give you

other information such as if you targeted correctly and that they are finding it relevant. It varies depending on the industry and the type of ad used.

Finally, concerning the conversions, the conversion rate is the “*percentage of users who take a desired action*” (Nielsen, 2013). The metric is important because each campaign’s objective is to generate sales in the final stage.

There are different techniques a brand can use to facilitate the calculation of the ROI such as UTM, the creation of a specific hashtag for that campaign, promo codes which are personalized for each influencer (Klop, 2018). UTM means Urchin Tracking Module which is a way to follow where the traffic on the brand’s website is from.

To end this part, here a few facts important to know about the ROI of influencer campaigns. First the return on investment of micro influencers is better. This type of influencers charges lower fees and at the same time, as explained above, the micro-influencers are seen as more authentic by their followers. Lastly, brands should think about selecting some LinkedIn influencers from their own company. They are, as opposed to mega influencers, positively perceived in the B2B market (WARC, 2019).

6. Legislation

Legislation concerning influencers and the disclosure of paid posts or videos is still a very complicated subject to approach. It varies from country to country, some have acted and created guidelines that influencers, bloggers, etc. have to follow. Some other rely on already existing laws that seem to also apply to influencer marketing. Because of the nature of the influencer marketing, legislation and control is hard to put in place.

What has been interesting to see is that, in a research by Alice Audrezet and Karine Charry, there is very little difference in consumer’s attitude towards an influencer’s recommendation whether the partnership has been revealed or not. It did not affect purchase intentions either. Actually, there are some elements that even show that disclosure may have reinforced the importance of influencers in decisions. More than 80% of consumers (surveyed), believe that influencers are always paid whether or not they decide to disclose it, meaning that disclosure becomes positive because consumers see it as transparency and authenticity (Audrezet & Charry, 2019).

The United States have specific guidelines for the endorsement of products which apply to social media as well as television or magazines, for example. It's the FTC Act (Federal Trade Commission Act).

Those guidelines are supposed to help creators, bloggers and influencers to know how and when they have to disclose a paid partnership when talking about and recommending products. They have to disclose when they have a financial, family, personal or employment relationship with a brand, even if they feel as their evaluation of the product is unbiased (FTC, 2019). They should place the disclosure where it would be difficult to miss. The terms used to disclose have to be clear and simple, they have to try to not be confusing (such as sp, spon, etc.).

In resume, as long as the message is clear, can be easily seen and understood and that they disclose whether they get paid, got the product for free or any other sort of endorsement it should be fine. It needs to be disclosed as soon as it might affect the American consumer and its way of purchasing (FTC, 2019 & WARC, 2020). If an influencer is caught while not disclosing a partnership, the fine could go up to \$250 000 and losing the trust of the audience (Woods, 2016).

In conclusion, this Act prohibits deceptive practices, but it is the FTC that has the freedom to look how to adapt the guidelines in this ever-evolving sector.

In Europe and in Belgium, the situation is a little different and more complicated for influencers. This new "WOM" does create challenges for European and Belgian law. If existing legal framework might help tackle these challenges, because of the nature of influencer marketing it might not be enough.

In the United Kingdom, guidelines similar to what is put in place in the United States have come out. The ASA (Advertising Standard Authority) and the CMA (Competition and Markets Authority) have given best practices concerning influencer marketing in the UK.

As soon as an influencer gets payment, free product, loan, etc. it is subject to advertising laws. The same is for affiliate marketing. They specify clearly that every time this type of content is put out, it has to be very clear that it is an ad and that the influencer did not pay for the products/services or he is being paid to promote it.

There are multiple ways they can make it clearly identifiable as advertising, but they ask to do at least the minimum by including a label, very clearly seen by consumers, "AD". Influencers in the UK only have to remember that as soon as it has a form of payment, it has to be clearly disclosed (Tingle, 2020).

Concerning Europe, in 2018, the EASA (European Advertising Standards Alliance) also released best practice recommendations on influencer marketing. In those recommendations, they talk about the fact that influencer content should always be considered as advertising if there is editorial control and compensation. Followed by the need for this advertising to be recognizable by consumers as such and be clearly identified and disclosed (Greenbaum, 2018). Lastly, in Belgium, the Belgian Advertising Council also provided recommendations in 2018. Their recommendations start by explaining that it is based on a self-regulation principle, meaning that it is not yet legally binding rules.

Concerning the rules in itself, or rather, recommendations, it is stated that every advertising communication has to be clearly identified. They advise different type of disclosures such as the words “advertising”, “sponsored by”, “#ad”, etc. The words cannot be hidden, they have to be easily seen by the average consumer. Finally, there have been talks about a bill being drafted by the Belgian Federal government on advertising and online influencers but there is nothing that has come out yet (Van den Brande, 2018).

7. Challenges

First and foremost, the biggest challenge marketers still have to face is choosing the perfect fit influencer for their brand and specific campaign. Today there are thousands of influencers which are available, which have very diverse topic of interest, number of followers and advantages. This means that there is so much choice for brands that it becomes complicated to know where to look. Choosing the right influencer depends on the goals the brand wants to achieve. Nonetheless, it’s important to remind brands that the goal is not the only thing to look at since a mismatch between an influencer and the brand can be extremely detrimental for both the brand and the influencer (Breves, Liebers, Abt & Kunze, 2019).

A challenge that marketers will have to face is the generation alpha. It’s a generation that is born, and yet-to-be born between 2015 and 2025. It will be a complicated generation because they are used to having an always-on society. They are born with screens in their hands. They were probably able to use a tablet before they could walk.

What is going to be a challenge with this generation is that they influence their parents like no other has ever done before. A survey shows that 65% of parents of children of that specific generation are influenced by the habits and needs of them for their technology purchases. It does not only concern technology, it goes beyond that for every type of purchases, if we believe that survey. This generation is digital-only, and this might create a big challenge for marketers.

But the generation in itself is not the only challenge. Marketers have to remember that they have to pay attention to the needs and concerns of the parents while still paying attention to those of that generation. This can be done, as explained by Anne Field, by making a usually boring or unlikable moment more enjoyable for the kids and easier for the parents, for example. Oral B and Crest sponsored an Alexa podcast (Alexa being the voice controlled virtual assistant from Amazon) which tells jokes, songs and diverse fun content while the kids brush their teeth. It can also be done through having a different marketing campaign depending on the social media used and therefore the age of the target group on said social media (Field, 2019).

Finally concerning that generation, that last challenge being that marketers are trying to reach kids. There are potential privacy issues. There is an act that stated that “online providers” must get parental consent before they collect data from children and about children under 13 years old (Field, 2019).

Another challenge for brands working with influencer marketing is how their image is associated with the influencer’s. The influencer needs to keep the control because he knows how to talk to his audience, but this represents a challenge for brands since it means letting go of their control over their own image, which they’ve been working on for years. The advantage is that the influencer will seem more genuine. Another challenge here is to have a uniform communication between the brand and the influencer, they should not be too different in the way they communicate but also brands should not differ too much from the way they usually communicate (Breves, Liebers, Abt & Kunze, 2019; Mindshare, 2020).

7.1. Fraud

The fraud in the sector is becoming a huge challenge for brands. But what is exactly influencer fraud? It is the fact that some influencers buy followers and inflate their reach and engagement rates. There is, in 2020, a (more or less) \$100 million problem of fraudulent influencers (WARC, 2020).

The spotlight fell on fraudulent influencers when Unilever put a statement out saying it would no longer work with influencers who mislead brands by buying followers and likes. Unilever’s CMO was specifically targeting the two corporation Google, owner of YouTube and Facebook, owner of Instagram. He was asking them for more collaboration and transparency in that domain (Goldman, 2018). Brands need more standards and guidelines but also more third-party verification to be able to fully trust influencers in today’s society (WARC, 2020)

In a research by WARC, they gave tips to spot a fake influencer. Generally, a fake influencer, meaning one that buys followers and likes, do not create a lot of content but still have a lot of followers. We can also observe a peak in the follower increase (as seen in figure 5 in the annex) and an abnormally high follower-to-following ratio for an influencer (they generally follow 1% to 5% when they are genuine). On top, they generally reply with very short comments and generic, the followers' accounts look suspicious and the influencer's engagement rates do not change (WARC, 2019).

7.2. Cultivation Theory

The cultivation theory can be a challenge concerning Influencer Marketing, more so for the consumers than for the brands. It's an ethical question.

The cultivation paradigm is described by Gerbner et Gross (1976) as such: the more people are exposed to some representations of the society through television, the more people will think that it is the reality (in Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). Meaning that viewers tend to want to coordinate their attitudes and behaviours to the ones they have seen on TV. Future research extended the theory to the media in general, from video games to more recently social media. This theory can be applied on the consumers looking at influencers, their expensive lifestyles, their sometimes out-of-touch attitudes and their perfect lives. All of those are probably a game of pretend for influencers but they still show it to their audience who will end up thinking this is reality. This is how I have to be to be successful. It might result in jealousy or the audience might have unreachable expectations (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010).

8. Trends

In this last part specifically concerned by influencer marketing, we will approach the different trends in influencer marketing for 2020 and the future of influencer marketing.

Influencer marketing is still growing, it is set to be a 10bn\$ market in 2020 because of how much social media is used and also because brands are trying to find a solution to ad blockers. Brands are also trying to be more authentic, have more engagement but also younger audiences are difficult to reach (WARC, 2020).

Another study shows that micro influencers are dominating Instagram, especially for influencer marketing. Klear's study shows that almost 90% of the Instagram posts which are sponsored get up to 1000 likes when they have a smaller following (Clapp, 2020). Consequently, brands have to make the move and switch to micro celebrities because even though they have a smaller following, it feels more authentic (Clapp, 2020). Micro-influencers are incredibly powerful and will be on the rise, as explained by Marc Becker, CEO of Tangent, an American creative marketing agency. As said above, they are more cost effective and have niche audience, which means they can reach specific target consumers for brands (Forbes Expert Panel, 2020).

Another trend we've seen in the market is the virtual influencer. A virtual influencer is a computer-generated celebrity. The most well-known one right now is active on Instagram and is called Lil Miquela. She has worked with brands as UGG, Calvin Klein and Prada. This virtual influencer even had a photoshoot with real-life model Bella Hadid. She had 2.4 million followers in June 2020. A question that could be asked is: are "fake"/unreal influencers, or virtual ones as we call it, the future? (Foresight Factory, 2019)

Foresight Factory made a study to look at some data predictions. They expect that the proportion of consumers who follow an influencer will grow by 44% by 2025. They also expect that by 2022 66% of the consumer will post live videos to a social network. The reasons behind that growth (+46%) are the increase in frequency of social media usage, the increase of the live video capability, the social, ambitious and impulsive character traits.

New platforms for influencer marketing are on the rise. As explained by Mediakix, TikTok, a short-video platform which merged with Musical.ly in 2018 and is similar to Vine, is becoming the go-to social media for the youngest generation. If brands want to tap into younger consumers, 66% of TikTok users are under 30 (Mediakix, 2020). TikTok is popular because of different reasons, but the domination of video content and the short and easy format of the videos are certainly part of its success (Izea, 2020). The other platform on the rise is Twitch which is a live-streaming platform. They have the top gamers and streamers active on it. Twitch usage has increased by 79% compared to 2019. Even engagement with sponsored content has increased by 23% on the platform (Svendsen, 2020). As much as gaming brands already used it for their marketing strategy, we can see more and more non-gaming ones starting to use it (Mediakix, 2020). Twitch is not only a place for gamers, but also for other creators wanting to

live-stream on beauty, art, fitness, etc. Brands can work in a ton of different ways with streamers, such as product reviews, giveaways, product placements, etc. (Svendsen, 2020).

Talking about gaming, the influencers of that category are on the rise. As most people who are a little bit interested in YouTube know, one of the biggest YouTube influencers and the most subscribed to is a gamer called Pewdiepie. The gamers have a lot of power over millennials and genZ, which makes them interesting to brands since they are the hardest consumers to target (Mediakix, 2020).

As we talked above about generation alpha, a trend to which marketers have to pay attention to is the “kidfluencers” with YouTube being the most popular platform for them (Field, 2019). For example, Ryan’s world on YouTube is a little bit over 8 years old and has more than 22 million subscribers. He partners with brands and those videos can reach 7 million views (Colgate) or even 9 million views (LEGO) (Field, 2020).

At the start of the rise of influencer marketing, brands used to use influencers on a campaign-by-campaign basis. This is changing. They are pushing to create long-term relationships which would mean a greater level of trust between the brand, the influencer and their audience (Forbes Expert Panel, 2020.)

These are only a few examples of what is to come in the next few months and of what brands have to pay attention to. The sector is constantly changing and moving so new trends come and go very quickly. Brands have to stay on top of these if they want to have an influencer marketing strategy relevant to the time.

Section 3: Influencers

In this last section concerning influencer marketing in our literature review, we are tackling the selection process for brands, meaning we are looking at how brands can choose the perfect influencer for their campaign. On top, we are looking at how those influencers are making a job out of this by looking at how they are, in general, remunerated.

1. How to select an influencer?

Having to select the right influencers for the target consumers is a challenge for marketers. Most brands did 3-5 influencer marketing programs in 2018. In that research, brands admit that

those programs are very time-consuming, so it is difficult to include it in their busy schedule (Linqia, 2019).

The elements that make an influencer relevant for your brand and/or product are multiple such as being an expert in the corresponding industry, number of followers, engagement rate, type of consumers, already using the products/brand, etc.

Some companies suggest engagement metrics rather than the number of followers because it better measures how the influencer's audience react to the content, and in fine to the brand's. To select an influencer, a brand should look at the scale and reach, the consistency, the velocity (the trend performance or how fast something spreads online), number of followers and the average content performance (meaning how well the influencer's content usually does). On top, the brand should also pay attention to the fit of the influencer with the brand, which, as said before, is one of the important characteristics of a good influencer campaign because this means that the audience will trust the influencer, and in continuity the brand (WARC, 2020).

In conclusion, number of followers is not always the perfect measure to see if the influencer should be selected for a brand's campaign, there are multiple aspects that a brand can look at depending on their objectives.

2. How to remunerate an influencer?

While influencer marketing is becoming part of a lot of brand's strategies, many brands still struggle to understand how much and how to pay the influencers they use. As said, calculating the return-on-investment for influencer marketing strategies is a challenge, which brings this other set of problems: how to calculate the value of such a campaign to be able to decide how much is ok to spend on the strategy and on influencers?

The remuneration an influencer will get will depend on different aspects such as (Mediakix, 2019):

- His social reach (number of followers on the different social networks)
- The type of content needed (Instagram stories, YouTube video, Instagram feed-post, a tweet, blog post, TikTok video, etc. In 2020, the type of content a brand can ask for is endless, and the platforms are multiple)
- Length of the campaign (if it's only a one-off campaign or a long-term will make the price change).

Nevertheless, influencer negotiation is not easy. There are no rules or regular rates which exist to know how to handle the discussion between the different parties. The price negotiation requires both people to talk about every aspect of the campaign: from the number of posts, as said above to usage rights.

Brands and companies might think that they can remunerate and choose the rate the same way it was done with celebrities, but that's not correct. Whereas celebrities were not always using the products they were selling, as explained above influencers are trusted by consumers because of their credibility and must also be paid for the content they create (Lujani, 2018). In the end, brands are not only paying for the influencer to endorse the products but are also paying for the creation of the content, in link with their specific product.

To know how to remunerate an influencer, the brand should first look at what the influencer brings them but also at what they can offer to the influencer, because how this strategy works is if the brand can nurture a sense of partnership. It needs to be a win-win situation for both parties. Meaning that the partnership must bring something for the influencer, from value for their audience (promotional code, exclusive or early access to a product, etc.) to value for the influencer personally (networking events, access to new audiences through the brand's socials, etc.).

Another thing to look at is if the influencer is already a fan of the brand or not. Because if he is not, the risk is that it might cost more. If he already had affinity with the brand, he will be more willing to work with it and even on a longer-term contract, which is what brands have to look for in 2021 as explained.

Usually, brands will consider the different elements mentioned before and have a standard fee for influencers but there is a new debate in place about this. The question is if they should be paid depending on performance (such as reaching a certain number of likes, an engagement rate, clicks, etc.) as there is a problem with the performance-based method: fraud. As shown earlier, it's not that hard to fraud as an influencer and this will give the opportunity to influencer to play with the system: buying traffics, asking audience to comment on purpose, the risk is to lose the authenticity of influencers to have greater numbers (Lujani, 2018).

The remuneration method depends on the type of campaign. As explained in Chapter 1, Section 2, Point 4, there are multiple ways to work with influencers and the amount but also the way they are remunerated depends on it. We are looking at the three main methods (Payne, 2018).

2.1. Pay per Post

This pricing model pays the influencer depending on the number of posts that he creates for a brand. The rate varies depending on the number of followers the influencer has and the type of content he has to produce (YouTube video, Instagram post, tweet, etc.). A study shows that 84% of micro-influencers ask for less than \$250 by Instagram sponsored post (Payne, 2018).

2.2. Bundle Pricing

This method means that companies pay for a number of posts across platforms, all in one package. This pricing model has to be done with influencers which have multiple social media platforms which are useful to the brand (Payne, 2018).

2.3. Cost per Engagement

This last model is simply when brands are paying depending on the number of likes and comments on the content created by the influencers for the brand. This is the most cost-effective model for the brand because they pay for exactly what they get. What's more problematic with it is that influencers are not paid upfront. They are paid depending on the engagement the post got: a sale, number of likes and comments, sign-ups to emails, etc. (Payne, 2018).

Chapter 2: Social Networks

In this Chapter, we introduce more in-depth social networks, more precisely Instagram, YouTube and TikTok, their history, what they are, their users and how they can be used as a marketing tool.

Section 1: Introduction

Social networks are a very powerful tool for marketing. First, it can bring a lot of insights to companies. Because of social networks tools existing, it is possible for companies to listen to conversation trending in their target market on social media, allowing them to talk to their audience in a better way (Mithrush, 2018).

Through social networks, brands can reach more people for less. While reaching more people, they also have better conversations with them which are more effective (Mithrush, 2018). Usually, a social network campaign is also more targeted than traditional advertising, this is also because of how a social network works.

An important fact is that television advertising did not really disappear, it just moved on another medium. The numbers show that half of the amount which was being spent in 2018 at the peak of television advertising (\$72.4 billion) is being spent in streamers, influencers and online advertising. It was predicted by 2022, television advertising's market share would fall to a quarter of the advertising spending but with such trends and figures, it might come earlier than planned (Shieber, 2020). Something important to note is that in Belgium, on the contrary, television advertising is still very strong. The big problem there is, is that there is no clear view on the investments made in digital because Facebook and Google do not want to release those numbers and agencies still have not found a good methodology to estimate those investments (Mindshare, 2020).

A study by Statista showed that the top 3 social media sites used by influencers are Instagram, blogs and YouTube, as of 2018. Facebook being only in the fourth place. Facebook is slowing down because of the rising popularity of other social networks, plus the number of users on Facebook does not increase as much as before, since people are already using it and already have an account. We have to admit that each social media has its own target, even if the frontiers are becoming less and less clear.

Mediakix has data from 2019 showing that the two most important social medias for influencer marketing are Instagram and YouTube, followed by Facebook. This is why we chose to concentrate on those two social medias. On top, they are very interesting for different reasons and represent different aspects of the social media sector.

Additionally, we decided to include a third social media. During the year 2020, we've seen the rapid growth of TikTok and its impact on different generations, especially on gen Z, which is historically harder to reach. The app had 52.2 million more users in March 2020 globally (Su, Baker, Doyle & Yan, 2020). During 2020's first quarter, it reached 315 million downloads which is the most downloads any app has ever had in a quarter (Leskin, 2020). Before this growth that happened at the start of the pandemic, the social media was primarily used by GenZ but now that it became so mainstream, millennials and boomers are more and more active on it (Maduako, 2020). As we will explain more in depth later, each of the social media allows to engage with a different type of demographic, and as explained in "Navigating the New Era of Influencer Marketing: How to be Successful on Instagram, TikTok, & Co.", TikTok is the perfect platform to look at the younger generation since in the United States 40% of TikTok's users are between 10 and 19 years old (Haenlein, Anadol, Farnsworth, Hugo, Hunichen & Welte, 2020).

Instagram is clearly a key platform for influencer marketing. The number of Instagram posts containing #ad reached 3 million globally in 2019 (Clapp, 2020). As shown in a graphic (Figure 14 in the annex) by Block Party, more Instagram users look at their feed (97%) than at their stories (79%) (Block Party, 2018).

The younger generations are obsessed with video content. A Google-commissioned research shows that 40% of teen YouTube subscribers (which is how followers are called on YouTube) consider their favourite influencer on the platform gets them more accurately than any of their friends. The teens also relate more to YouTube stars than celebrities (70%) (Block Party, 2018).

In the section 2 and 3, we will talk about Instagram, YouTube and Tik-Tok more in depth, how the social networks work and their history. We will also approach what are the differences between the users of the platforms and show the demographics of each platform.

Section 2: Instagram

What is interesting about influencer marketing and Instagram is that it has exploded in the last few years and is definitely the number one social network for this marketing strategy. There are over 1 billion users on the social network and in 2019 over 500 million daily users (Mediakix, 2019). In 2019, influencer marketing on Instagram was a \$1.7 billion industry and it is expected to reach \$2.3 billion by the end of 2020. Even though Instagram has its challenges, such as the fake follower's debacle we talked about above, it has a bright future ahead.

1. Instagram's history

Instagram was launched in October 2010 on Apple's devices and by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. At the beginning, Systrom's idea was quite different, he wanted to create an app where people could check in their location, which was similar to others already on the market. He decided to bring a team to help him in the development and that's when, with Krieger, they decided to focus on a picture sharing app. That's when they decided to call it Instagram (from instant telegram), after stripping every feature down except picture sharing, commenting and liking. One week after its launch, it had been downloaded 100,000 times and by the end of the year, they had reach 1 million downloads. For 2 years, they won investors and had offers to buy the company, but they decided to stay small and keep the company.

In 2012, Instagram was finally released for Androids and had more than 27 million users. By making android users wait, it meant that on the release day, they had one million downloads on the first day and hit 5 million on only 6 days (Hum, 2020). It is that year also that Facebook made an offer to buy the company: \$1 billion which they accepted.

In January 2019, Instagram had more than 1 billion active monthly user accounts (We are social & Hootsuite, 2019). In 2019, in the United States only, Instagram generated more than \$9 billion in ad revenue (Guttman, 2020). When looking at the App Store from Apple, we can see that Instagram is the second most downloaded app ever, just after the YouTube app. Finally, as of June 2016, there was more than 95 million posts every day and 4.2 billion likes (Abutaleb, 2016).

2. Instagram's concept

Instagram is described on their website as such:

Instagram is a free photo and video sharing app available on Apple iOS, Android and Windows Phone. People can upload photos or videos to our service and share them with their followers or with a select group of friends. They can also view, comment and like posts shared by their friends on Instagram. Anyone 13 and older can create an account by registering an email address and selecting a username.

At first, as explained above, Instagram was created to allow people to share pictures and add filters to those with other people using the platform. People could only like and comment on the pictures. It was only useable on Apple's platform.

Today, even though the main objective has not changed, Instagram has known a lot of evolutions. It can now be used on a lot of different devices (even, with limited options on the computer) and on different operating systems. (Instagram, 2020, para. 1).

Practically speaking, the user posts a picture on the social network, usually accompanied by a caption, in link or not with the picture, and a set of hashtags so that the picture will appear in the feed of other users not following him. As Instagram is focused on aesthetics, you have the possibility to alter pictures by changing settings and adding filters.

Each user has a profile where all the pictures he posts will appear. Because of the continuous updates Instagram makes, the user has a large choice in the type of content he can publish:

- Pictures (only square format but this has changed since then)
- Videos (maximum 60 seconds)
- Stories, which is time-constricted content meaning that it can only be viewed for 24 hours and it is not posted on the feed. Stories have their own "feed"
- Carousel, which allows the users to share up to 10 pictures in the same post.

The posted pictures will also be in the feed of his followers, and vice versa for the people he follows. The pictures they post will be in his feed. This means that followers can comment and like each other's pictures. They can also identify other users and send DM which means direct messages. Direct messages are basically private messages between two or more users. Only the

users which are part of the conversation can see the messages. If users really think about it, it might make them think of Facebook, but a simplified version focused on pictures, visuals and aesthetics. Instagram also allows users to directly share on other social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr.

As mentioned before, on top of publishing content on Instagram, users can follow other users. It can be friends and family, as well as strangers and celebrities. Although there is the possibility to have a private profile, meaning that only the people you want can see your content.

The difficulty with Instagram is that users spend a lot of time creating their perfect self, the one they want people to believe they are. They create an ideal version of themselves which can blur the lines of authenticity and later on the trust we might have towards influencers (Jargalsaikhan & Korotina, 2016).

3. Instagram's users

Instagram is used by many, 1 billion active users per month as said above, meaning that there are a lot of different personalities on the social network. This said, the majority of Instagram's users, as of July 2021 (Figure 6 in the annex) are males between 25 and 34 (16.4%) closely followed by females of the same age (15.7%). On top of this, statistics also show that more than half of the total, worldwide Instagram users are under 34 years. In fall 2019, Instagram was ranked second by U.S. teens in their ranking of their preferred social network, behind Snapchat. Since then, those positions might have changed but those are the most recent numbers (Statista Research Department, 2021).

In Belgium, in 2020, there were more than 3 million Instagram users, which represents 44,1% of the entire Belgian population. Out of this, the majority were women, 47,7% of the entire female population are using Instagram and 40,3% men. Concerning the age groups, they are represented as such against the entire population:

- 79,4% of the 18 to 24 years old (Gen Z) use Instagram,
- 57% of the 25 to 39 years old (Millennials) use Instagram,
- 43,3% of the 40 to 54 years old (Gen X) use Instagram,
- 22,3% of the 55+ years old (Baby Boomers) use Instagram.

If we look at Instagram's users more precisely, 45,5% are men and 54,5% are women in Belgium. For the different generations it is as such:

- 20,3% are 18 to 24 years old,

- 34,4% are 25 to 39 years old,
- 28,5% are 40 to 54 years old,
- and, 16,7% are 55+ years old.

Those numbers come from a report by GroupM, a leading media investment & media strategy company in 2020.

On top, the research by Hootsuite and We Are Social shows that 42% of internet users report using Instagram.

4. Instagram as a marketing-tool

In a few years, Instagram has changed and became a great choice for companies. As said on Instagram's website, "60% of people say they discover new products on Instagram" (Instagram Business, n.d.). On top, it shows how important it is for a brand to first be present on the platform because 90% of accounts follow at least one business on it. As we can see, Instagram is developing the platform to be more accessible to brands and companies wanting to do marketing strategies with it. They offer multiple possibilities, from getting real-time metrics to adding information about their company (location, phone number, ...) and getting insights on how followers interact with their posts (Instagram Business, n.d.). They allow brands to do advertising once they've got a business account: it could be sponsored stories, pictures and videos and in multiple tabs of the platform (for example in the explore tab).

It's possible to personalize very precisely your target through Instagram from location to behaviours and interests.

Finally, in 2018, Instagram added the "Shopping" feature. They added it because "70% of shopping enthusiasts turn to Instagram for product discovery" and "87% of people say influencers have inspired them to make a purchase", which also shows the power of Instagram as a marketing tool, if it was not clear enough yet (Instagram Business, n.d.). What is this feature? As explained on Instagram Business' website, it allows people to shop elements (meaning products or services) from your photos directly from the app.

Finally, Instagram is becoming well-known to be the most popular platform for influencer marketing, worldwide. A study by Mediakix shows that 89% of people surveyed think it is the most strategically important social platform to run an influencer campaign. It has become this way because of different factors:

- Its audience: a lot of millennials but also Gen X and Gen Z
- Its features, as talked above

- Its growing number of users and popularity

A sponsored Instagram post is easy to consume for users. Instagram's influencer marketing strategy makes advertising look more genuine. Brands gain from it in popularity and in awareness (Mediakix, 2019).

Section 3: YouTube

YouTube has been changing our habits and TV for fifteen years. At first, the online video platform was only a place for short and funny 3-minute videos, but since then there is a bridge that has been created between TV and YouTube. Late night shows segments made more views on YouTube than they ever did on television ("The History of Rap" Jimmy Fallon & Justin Timberlake). But late-night TV was not the only type of TV that had to create the overlap with YouTube: movies, comedy shows, any media consumed in the world right now had to interact with YouTube. It can be for its marketing, its release or its sales strategy, or for the three. Only 2 years after its creation the platform was streaming the presidential debate, in 2008, they had an agreement to stream full length movies from MGM, CBS and Lionsgate.

YouTube is not the only responsible for these changes and the popularity of the platform, which is why we chose it. YouTube influencers or YouTubers played a big role in it. For people born after 1981, they are as much part of pop culture as the next big pop star or movie star, meaning that people, once they got a peak in interest for a specific YouTuber would watch almost anything that they do (Grey Ellis, 2018). Finally, in the last years, even though backlash happened through those YouTubers (Logan Paul & Pewdiepie for example), YouTube has been a platform to create a voice for some communities. A voice that was complicated to have in our society, such as for the LGBTQ+ community. The possibilities for people to consume culture is not limited to frontiers anymore, it has become global (Grey Ellis, 2018).

YouTube is a powerful tool for conversion, a study shows that YouTube ads have a 0.5% conversion rate versus YouTube influencers who have a 2.7% conversion rate, in 2018. It was announced in 2019 that YouTube had more than 2 billion logged-in users visiting the website every month. This shows the power and what YouTube can bring to a brand. On top, the YouTube's influencers drove 80 million product views and 2 million purchases on Amazon (Donawerth, n.d.).

1. YouTube's history

In late 2004, three Paypal employees had a dinner party. It was during it that the first idea for YouTube came to their minds. Those three men then became the founders of YouTube, Chad Hurley, Steve Chen & Jawed Karim. They realised how hard it was to find video footage of events happening in the world on the internet, more precisely, it was inspired by the infamous wardrobe malfunction of Janet Jackson at the Superbowl. A few months later, in May 2005, the beta version was launched (McFadden, 2020).

In September 2005, an investment firm put \$3.5 million into YouTube. By the end of the year, October, they had their first viral video which racked up one million views. It was an ad for Nike, which was one of the first companies to embrace the new possibilities YouTube gave them in term of advertising (McFadden, 2020). At the very end of 2005, YouTube leaves its beta version behind, at that point they had 8 million views a day.

By 2006, YouTube was one of the fastest growing websites, it had 100 million views a day. Google saw the opportunity because in October 2006, they bought the website for \$2.26 billion (Deutrom, 2018).

In 2007, YouTube launches the Partners Program, which still exists today. The principle is that users can get paid for their content, it was the start of YouTube influencer as a career. They also started to put ads before and in videos to start making money from the platform (McFadden, 2020).

The name of the platform comes from the user generated content on which the principle is based on for the "You" and "Tube" is for an older term used to call television.

The platform is now present in 75 countries and in 61 languages (McFadden, 2020). Because of this platform, endless new possibilities are presented, users can create, share and access content from all over the world within seconds.

2. YouTube's concept

YouTube's mission, as mentioned on their own website is to “*give everyone a voice and show them the world*”.

YouTube is considered as a social network and a platform for sharing videos. Users can like, comment and share those videos. They can also upload their owns. It has become the second largest search engine, following Google (Grey Ellis, 2018).

Users can watch videos posted by other users on the website, free of charge (for most services). The videos may be watched via YouTube but also through different websites if the video was embedded in it. There is a wide range of videos available on YouTube because anyone can post content on the platform. It can be music videos, bloopers, funny, vlogs, DIY, etc (Christensson, 2009).

The website now has a ton of features available: you can save a video to watch it later, subscribe to some users, interact with other users. They also created different services: YouTube Premium (ad-free viewing experience), YouTube Movies & Shows (similar to Netflix, it's a streaming platform), YouTube Music Premium (similar to Spotify premium, listen to music ad-free and offline), YouTube Gaming (live and on-demand video content) & YouTube live (broadcast yourself or watch others). Billions of videos have been uploaded on the platform since 2005, from movie trailers to amateur videos (Moreau, 2020).

3. YouTube's users

As explained above, YouTube has 2+ billion users logged in each month and there are 1+ billion hours of video watched every day. It is the second most popular social network platform (We are social & Hootsuite, 2019). 79% of internet users say they have an account on the platform. In the U.S., 81% of the 15 to 25 years old are using YouTube. On top, 73% of adults use YouTube, it places YouTube to be even more popular than Facebook (69%) (PEW Research Center, 2019).

In Belgium, 81% of internet users report using YouTube and the top search queries in 2018 were gaming oriented with Fortnite, followed by music and film (WeAreSocial & Hootsuite, 2019). YouTube is also the most downloaded app on the Apple Store, followed by Instagram,

as mentioned above. In Belgium, if we have to dress the profile of a typical YouTube user, it would be a man with a medium income who belongs to the millennials (Mindshare, 2020).

As seen in a study made by Kantar in 2020, 54,3% of YouTube's users are male and 51,7% are female, in Belgium. The age groups are represented as such:

- 15,3% are 18 to 24 years old (Gen Z),
- 32,5% are 25 to 39 years old (Millennials),
- 28,8% are 40 to 54 years old (Gen X),
- and, 23,3% are 55+ years old (Baby Boomers).

If we look at all those numbers against the entire population, the differences are more significant. Of the entire population in Belgium, 62,1% are male and use YouTube, versus 51,7% women. For the age groups it is as such:

- 77% of the 18 to 24 years old (Gen Z) use YouTube,
- 69,5% of the 25 to 39 years old (Millennials) use YouTube,
- 56,4% of the 40 to 54 years old (Gen X) use YouTube,
- 40,3% of the 55+ years old (Baby Boomers) use YouTube.

4. YouTube as a marketing tool

On average, 8 out of 10 marketers say it is the most effective video marketing platform (GO Globe, 2019). Today, in Belgium, we can compare the reach of YouTube to some of the top TV channels, it can also be used as an extension of television advertising.

While there are multiple ways to advertise on YouTube, the most obvious is through the ads before and during the video but there also display ads for example. While all of this works well, online influencers play a huge part on advertising on YouTube. The audience trust more YouTube creators, 60% of YouTube subscribers would follow the advice given by a YouTube influencer. On top, after seeing sponsored content, 40% of viewers visited the website and 28% made a purchase. YouTube keeps growing, there is more watch time, more likes and more subscribers (O'Neil-Hart & Blumenstein, 2016).

Brands should consider marketing on YouTube for these reasons because there is a strong link between the audience and the creator, they have a more engaged audience. The top YouTube stars had 3 times as many views as a traditional celebrity, twice as many actions and 12 times as many comments (O'Neil-Hart & Blumenstein, 2016).

While the beauty category is very popular on YouTube, it's not just there that it is working. Google looked at other categories such as auto, alcohol, toys, etc. Every time, there was an increase for the brand metrics and from familiarity to affinity to recommendation (Nazerali, 2018).

Section 4: TikTok

Although TikTok is young as a social platform, it is quickly gaining ground on its competitors such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. It has become particularly popular among GenZ (Leskin, 2020).

The platform has become popular around the world and has gained most of its popularity during the start of the pandemic reaching 2 billion downloads worldwide across IOS and Android (Leskin, 2020).

TikTok is centered around music and has allowed artists to launch their career outside the traditional path. The songs go viral and are used for multiple challenges before being skyrocketed to the top of the charts (Leskin, 2020).

On top of this, the social platform is the new platform creating influencers, turning regular users into successful and viral influencers. Charlie D'Amelio is the most followed user on the app, after only one year, with more than 110 million followers (Leskin, 2020).

1. Tik Tok's history

Tik-Tok did not start as Tik-Tok but as two different apps that were later merged.

In 2014, the app Musical.ly was created in Shanghai. On this app, users could share 15 seconds long videos of them lip singing to popular songs. There were 70 million downloads by 2016 (Gayton, 2020).

Meanwhile, in 2016, there was a similar app launched in China called Douyin. The app had 100 million users in China in the span of a year. They decided to expand outside of China under a new name: Tik-Tok. They rose to the top of the charts in different Asian markets quickly. The

company which owns Douyin and Tik-Tok decided to continue its expansion and bought Musical.ly for \$1 billion dollars. After that, Musical.ly became Tik-Tok in the United States and everywhere else, excepts from China where it still is a separate app (Tidy & Smith Galer, 2020).

TikTok's success was not made in a day, ByteDance, the parent app, has spent \$1 billion dollars on ads in 2018, and even if people started to download the app, people were not staying on it for more than 30 days (Gayton, 2020). It's only in April 2020, during the start of the pandemic that the success of the social platform really started. The app has surpassed the 2 billion downloads worldwide in April 2020, across Android and IOS platforms (Leskin, 2020).

In recent months, TikTok has been victim to controversy. Donald Trump menaced in July 2020 to ban the app in the United States since there was fear it was used by China to spy and mine data from the American population. On top, the app has been deleted in Hong Kong because of a new security law in the city. As explained by Gayton, if the countries regulations cannot soften, the app may know its collapse.

2. Tik Tok's concept

TikTok's mission as explained on their website is "*to inspire creativity and bring joy*".

TikTok is an app which allows users to create and share short videos (approximately from 15 seconds to a minute) on any subject.

At first Musical.ly, and then TikTok, since the latter absorbed the first, was known for lip syncs. Through its rising popularity, the social network became known for other types of videos. The most popular video types are dancing, cheerleading, comedy (comedy lip sync) or even short news shows aimed at the younger generation and made by big media companies such as NBC, BBC, etc. (Schwedel, 2018).

TikTok's interface has one similarity to the other social platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat. It uses vertical videos; you can use filters and to show your appreciation for a video you "heart". Contrary to other platforms, the type of content the user can share is limited, they can only share short videos.

Finally, on the app you can find the name or the sound used in the video you are watching, you can comment and so engage with different users, follow different profiles, search specific subject and so on (Schwedel, 2018).

3. Tik Tok's users

TikTok was the second most downloaded app in 2020, it counts 689 million monthly active users worldwide (Data Reportal, 2021), though this number does not take into account the Chinese market since the app is known under a different name in China. As said before, the app has passed the 2 billion downloads mid-2020.

Concerning its users more precisely, we sell that TikTok is a great way to reach the younger generation, and it is confirmed by this statistic: 62% of US users are aged between 10 and 29.

In Belgium, in 2020, a study by Kantar showed that the users looked as such: 14,9% of the entire male population use Tik Tok and 10,5% female. The age groups are divided like this:

- 33,2% of the 18 to 24 years old use TikTok,
- 20,2% of the 25 to 39 years old use TikTok,
- 9,8% of the 40 to 54 years old use TikTok,
- 2,1% of the 55 and plus years old use TikTok.

Since we mentioned multiple times that the younger people use this platform, we are going to look at the statistics for teens (13 to 17 years old): a study by LivePanel in 2019 shows that 39,6% are active on TikTok, 15,4% of the boys use TikTok and 24,2% of the girls use it.

Finally, the users of TikTok in Belgium (Kantar, 2020) are distributed as such: 58,5% are men and 41,5% are women. The distribution of age groups looks like this:

- 29,6% are 18 to 24 years old,
- 42,4% are 25 to 39 years old,
- 22,6% are 40 to 54 years old,
- 5,4% are 55 years old and more.

4. Tik Tok as a marketing tool

Different insights on TikTok show how important it can be as a marketing tool, especially to reach the younger generations, which, as said before, are more difficult to reach in terms of marketing, they also are more critical of the content, they are looking for authenticity more than

any generation. The social platform is particularly interesting for marketers because it attracts younger consumers, and those younger consumers are more receptive to a specific type of marketing communication: influencer marketing (Haenlein, Anadol, Farnsworth, Hugo, Hunichen & Welte, 2020). Concerning the authenticity, TikTok has been known for this, brands have to let the influencer the complete control over the content because TikTokers, as they are called, know their audience and know how to reach them in a way that stays in line with their typical content (Nicolaes & Stellar, 2020).

An important metric to note for marketers is that engagement on the platform has increased by 15% between 2017 and 2019 (Haenlein, Anadol, Farnsworth, Hugo, Hunichen & Welte, 2020). TikTok itself also shared an interesting metric in 2019: 90% of their users go on the app at least once a day, if not more. This is one of the major pros for companies to be active on TikTok because 25% of apps are only opened once after their download and after that are never used again (Statista, 2019). An average user spends 52 minutes per day on the app. Since research show that video marketing is not going away: 86% of people wish to see more videos created by brands (Alexandra, 2020). TikTok is a great way to reach more people through video content for brands.

Finally, an important thing to know is that, for now, TikTok influencers are charging less even though they have larger followings (Alexandra, 2020).

Chapter 3: Conclusion of the literature review

In this last part concerning the literature review, we are resuming everything we talked about. We saw that the evolution of Web 2.0 and the development of social networks really changed marketing for brands. Social networks changed the relationship of consumers and brands. Consumers now have a lot more power than they used to through the WOM which evolved into e-WOM. Meaning consumers can leave reviews on website but also give recommendations not only to friends and family in non-virtual life, but they can influence strangers over the internet. This phenomenon is what created the so called “influencers”. What makes influencers so valuable is their trustworthiness, their credibility, their audience and the relationship they have with it. There are multiple types of campaigns marketers can use to make the best out of the influencers depending on their objectives and budgets. This also means that influencers can be used by brands to fill different objectives, such as engagement, awareness and sales.

We also learn about the way influencers can be selected by brands and which criteria they should look at. They should look more at the engagement rather than the number of followers because it shows a better picture of the number of people who actually interact with the influencer’s content. They can still look at the number of followers, but it should not be the only metric they look at. On top of the scale and reach, the consistency is important and the velocity. Finally, they should keep in mind that one of the most important elements is the fit between the influencer and the brand. Also, brands have different ways to remunerate influencers, depending on the campaigns and the influencers.

Most of the literature concerns Asian and American population, this makes our research interesting for Belgium or Europe as legislations are not the same and our use of social networks either.

As shown in the literature review, the social medias have been studied on different levels, which target group is better for YouTube, Instagram or TikTok, the type of content that works on the platform, why influencer marketing is needed on each platform. After observing the literature, we can see that there exists a gap when looking at the concepts defined above: PSI, persuasion knowledge, correspondence bias, openness and perceived interactivity’s effects and how (and if) those concepts in influencer marketing have a real impact on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok and how it compares on each.

Part III: Quantitative Research

In the second part of this thesis, we are conducting a quantitative research. The aim is to have a numerical and statistical approach to consumers' feelings towards influencers and influencer marketing on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube.

Chapter 1: Methodology

For a few years, brands have been working with influencers to promote products or services, or even just the brand. As explained during our literature review (Chapter 1, Section 2, Point 2), they are considered to be truthful and to be able to change the consumer behaviour in a less intrusive way, at least as seen by the consumers.

Each influencer works on different platform, most are active on multiple ones and do not constrict themselves to only one social network. This means that they are able to do sponsored content on different platforms. The two biggest social networks for influencer marketing being Instagram and YouTube. The Instagram influencer marketing industry could reach \$2.3 billion in 2020. It is the number one most strategically and important platform today (Mediakix, 2019). On the other side, the number of viewers on YouTube (worldwide) is estimated to cross 1.86 billion in 2021 (up from 1.47 billion in 2017) (Clement, 2018). On top of this, as explained above TikTok has seen a ginormous expansion. As it is explained in Linqia's report "The state of influencer marketing 2021", in 2020 only 16% of marketers were planning to use TikTok whereas this year 68% of them were planning to use it (Linqia, 2021).

It's not hard to see through our literature review that influencer marketing still represents a challenge for brands. Because the sector is constantly changing, the trends evolve constantly and the social networks are also changing, we decided to look at how the different concepts affect the consumers on the different platforms.

More precisely, we tried to answer this question: "How much do personal interactions, openness, perceived interactivity, the correspondence bias and the persuasion knowledge affect the consumer on YouTube, TikTok & Instagram?".

Section 1: Construction of the survey

In this first section of chapter 1 of the second part of our thesis, we explain how we built and selected our hypotheses. Next, we are explaining the content of our questionnaire, the reasoning behind those questions and how each hypothesis is covered. After that we explain how we pre-tested our survey and finally, how we were going to reach our target audience.

1. Hypotheses

Hypotheses are “unproven statement or proposition about a factor or phenomenon of interest/a possible answer to a research question” (Steils, 2018). The hypotheses suggest what to include in the survey conducted on consumers.

To find those hypotheses, we started at the exploratory research phase. The exploratory phase allowed us to understand the nature of the phenomena and to get insights on it. We used secondary data through our literature review. The data gathered helped us develop an approach to the problem but also it helped us to define the hypotheses we had to test in our quantitative research (Steils, 2018).

1.1. Parasocial relationships

As explained in our literature review, the parasocial interactions or relationships is an important concept of influencer marketing. It is the feeling for consumers that they are friends with the influencers with whom they “communicate”. This relationship should generate more trust in the influencers. For brands, it is an important factor to consider because it means more brand loyalty and more willingness to share information (Lee & Watkins, 2016). Two important components that transfer to social media, because they do not only apply to social media, are the perceived interactivity and the openness in communication. Perceived interactivity is the feeling for a consumer that someone is listening and responding (Labrecque, 2014), whereas openness in communication is how an influencer reveals personal information to the viewer (Labrecque, 2014).

There exists research which studied the relationship link between PSI, openness and perceived interactivity towards brand-to-consumer communication (Labrecque, 2014). Some other research also affirm that it has a positive impact on the consumer’s purchase intentions.

Since influencer marketing keeps evolving, new platforms are coming to the market, new metrics are used such as the engagement rate instead of the likes only, etc. We decided to look at the effect of the parasocial relationships, the openness and the perceived interactivity on the engagement on the three different social media platform talked about above. Engagement being a number of actions that can be done on social media such as share, comment, save, likes, etc, depending on the platform.

Our first hypotheses suppose that there exists a positive relationship between the variables and the engagement, in line with the other research.

H₁ : Higher parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness on Instagram means higher engagement.

H₂ : Higher parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness on YouTube means higher engagement.

H₃ : Higher parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness on TikTok means higher engagement.

Based on those results and our research question, we are also adding another hypothesis to the mix. We want to look at the differences of effects between the social medias. Are those factors higher on TikTok, Instagram or YouTube? Our hypothesis is based on the fact that the engagement is higher on Tik-Tok. The engagement rates on the 3 platforms are as such:

- TikTok: 20,45% (for nano-influencers), 5,61% (for micro-influencers) and 7,71% (for macro-influencers)
- Instagram: 5,94% (for nano-influencers), 3,71% (for micro-influencers) and 3,94% (for macro-influencers)
- YouTube: 5,22% (for nano-influencers), 2,82% (for micro-influencers) and 1,99% (for macro-influencers)

It is based on those numbers (Pastezeur, 2020) that we constructed our fourth hypothesis, since we suppose the positive relationship between PSI, perceived interactivity and openness and engagement, as shown above:

H₄ : The PSI , perceived interactivity and openness is higher on TikTok than on the 2 others.

1.2. Persuasion knowledge

During our literature review, we looked at a concept called “persuasion knowledge”. Some users might have preconceived ideas which will alter how they see the ads and how it will influence their attitude afterwards.

As said before the persuasion knowledge is “*the knowledge that enables [...] [consumers] to recognize, analyze, interpret, evaluate and remember persuasion attempts and to select and execute coping tactics believed to be effective and appropriate*” (Friestad & Wright, 1994 in Evans, Phua, Lim & Jun, 2017, p.139).

Because of the PSI, it is said that persuasive attempts through social medias are more effective (Evans et al, 2017), this is because, generally, users notice less easily the ad through the social networks. Influencer marketing, as explained before is supposed to be a great way to avoid persuasion knowledge through a seamless experience meaning that influencers doing ads share similar content as they do when it is not an ad.

When looking at those studies we are still wondering if the persuasion knowledge effect is the same on each platform or if there is a platform where it is stronger than on the others. Most studies show how it works on social medias in general, not on one in particular.

As the engagement rate is lower on YouTube than on the two other platforms, we are linking this to the negative effect of a higher persuasion knowledge effect (Pastezeur, 2020).

Based on this, our fifth hypothesis is as such:

H₅ : The persuasion knowledge is higher on YouTube than on the 2 others platforms.

1.3. Correspondence bias

Lastly, there is a last concept that was looked at during our literature review: the correspondence bias. This bias is brought by how consumers see an influencer. They look at him/her as an expert in its domain but also, they trust them to promote a brand not because they are paid to do it but because they truly like the brand (Colliander & Erlandsson, 2015). This means that even though the influencers disclose that it is sponsored content, the consumer’s purchase intentions do not diminish.

This bias brings us our last hypothesis. Studies show the appearance of the correspondence bias in influencer marketing, but we are interested in seeing if there is a difference in the way it works on different social medias. We are going to look at if the bias is stronger on a social network versus the two other ones.

Based on the same number as the two previous hypotheses, because the engagement rate is higher on TikTok than on YouTube and Instagram, we think that this is due, partly, to a higher correspondence bias.

This brings us our last hypothesis:

H₆ : The correspondence bias is higher on TikTok than on the 2 others.

2. Questionnaire

From our literature review, we decided to compare influencer marketing on Instagram, YouTube and TikTok. We look at the parasocial interactions, the correspondence bias and the persuasion knowledge and the effect of those on the different platforms. Therefore, the objective of this study is to have an overview of the consumers' opinions, habits and attitudes concerning influencer marketing on each platform.

We chose to do an online survey because it allowed flexibility in the collection of data, a diversity in the questions, to collect a lot of data, no interviewer bias and perceived anonymity for the participant (Steils, 2018).

The questionnaire was realised on Qualtrics and can be found in the annex (Figure 17). There are 3 different versions of our questionnaire, this will be explained below.

To start the questionnaire, we have a brief explanation of the objectives of our survey. We explain to respondents the subject, which is the comparison of influencer marketing on three social networks: YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. We insisted on the anonymity of the answers and the respect of RGPD.

We used the funnel approach, we first asked more general questions about the subject, such as if they use the social networks etc. We then asked the more precise questions we had about each social network and their attitudes towards it. The first questions allow us to create a profile of user on each of those platforms (how often they use it, which one they use, etc.).

Following that, the questions we decided to ask during our online survey are based on the information needed to test our hypotheses. A few of the questions are used as a selection criterion for our survey. It allows us to make sure we have the right target population.

As said before, there were 3 versions of our questionnaire: one for YouTube, one for Instagram and one for TikTok. Each version is made of the same questions, except that they are asked about the different social medias. Each participant was redirected towards questions about one particular social network. This was done through question 6, respondents were asked which of the three social media they used the most, the one selected was the one towards which they were redirected. To ensure the representation of the three social medias, we decided to stop accepting answers about it whenever we collected at least 50 answers about said social media. This was done after observing that Instagram had much more success than the others. Finally, we ended the questionnaire with basic information such as gender & age (Steils, 2018).

We chose to use structured questions, meaning that there is a range of possible answers and response format. This choice was made because unstructured questions are difficult to code but also because structured questions have less investigator bias (Steils, 2018). In our surveys, we can find multiple choice questions and scales.

Regarding the types of scales used, we followed what was generally done in marketing for the type of information we needed. The questions concerning our hypotheses are made of interval scales, more precisely Likert, because they are used a lot to measure attitudes and opinions. Moreover, Likert scales are easy to construct, administer and understand. We chose to use an uneven number of statements (5) on the scales to allow respondents to give a precise answer. It also allows the respondent to stay neutral in the case where he does not know what to answer or he does not want to (Steils, 2018; Pleyers, 2019).

Table 1 summarizes the hypotheses, the questions which are linked to each, the variables each question tests and the sources which helped us to create the questions.

Hypotheses	Questions	Variables	Sources		
H1:H1; H2; H3 Higher parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness on Instagram/ TikTok/ YouTube means higher engagement.	Q7; 11; 15 You are now going to answer questions related to influencers on Instagram and Instagram ONLY. On a scale from completely disagree to completely agree, show how you feel about the following statements.	I like Instagram/ TikTok/ YouTube influencers' content	Engagement	France, C., Merrilees, B., & Miller, D. (2016) Carvalho, A., & Fernandes, T. (2018)	
		I share Instagram/ TikTok/ YouTube influencers' content	Engagement		
		I comment on Instagram/ TikTok/ YouTube influencers' content	Engagement		
		Q8; 12; 16 You are now going to answer questions related to influencers on Instagram and Instagram ONLY. On a scale from completely disagree to completely agree, show how you feel about the following statements.	The Instagram/ TikTok/ YouTube influencer is going to respond to my comment	Perceived interactivity	Labrecque, L. I. (2014) Shipp, B., & Phillips, B. (2013) France, C., Merrilees, B., & Miller, D. (2016)
			I can talk directly with the influencer	Perceived interactivity	
			The influencer is open in sharing information	Openness	
			The influencer does not hold back information	Openness	
	I have a lot in common with the Instagram/ TikTok/ YouTube influencers I follow		PSI	Labrecque, L. I. (2014) France, C., Merrilees, B., & Miller, D. (2016) Dreifaltdt, N., & Drennan, T. (2019) Karouw, D. E. Z., Worang, F. G., & Pandowo, M. H. C. (2019) Jiang, M. (2018)	
	I have the same tastes as the Instagram/ TikTok/ YouTube influencers I follow		PSI		
	I have the same hobbies as the Instagram/ TikTok/ YouTube influencers I follow		PSI		
	I relate to Instagram/ TikTok/ YouTube influencers I follow	PSI			
	Instagram/ TikTok/ YouTube influencers I follow are trustworthy	PSI			
	I know the kind of person Instagram/ TikTok/ YouTube influencers are	PSI			
	H4: The PSI, perceived interactivity and openness is higher on TikTok than on the 2 others.	Q7, 8, 11, 12, 15 & 16			

<p>H5: The persuasion knowledge is higher on YouTube than on the 2 other platforms.</p>	<p>Q9, 13 & 17:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instagram/YouTube/TikTok influencers have sincere intentions. - Instagram/YouTube/TikTok influencers convince me to buy products I don't really need - Instagram/YouTube/TikTok influencers are more interested in sharing trustworthy information than making a huge profit out of an unreliable information. - A product recommended by Instagram/YouTube/TikTok influencers will often be of better quality than one that is rarely recommended by them. - Instagram/YouTube/TikTok influencers try to manipulate me by not clearly stating that a post/video is an ad and sponsored. 	<p>Persuasion knowledge</p>	<p>Ewers, N. L. (2017) Rossiter (2011) in Boerman, S. C., van Reijmersdal, E. A., & Neijens, P. C. (2012) Boerman, S. C., van Reijmersdal, E. A., & Neijens, P. C. (2012)</p>
<p>H6: The correspondence bias is higher on TikTok than on the 2 others</p>	<p>Q10, 14 & 18:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instagram/YouTube/TikTok influencers use the products/services they share - Instagram/YouTube/TikTok influencers recommend products/services to communicate their trust in the brand - Instagram/YouTube/TikTok influencers view the brand they promote as a good brand - Instagram/YouTube/TikTok influencers talk about the brand from an actual personal experience and knowledge - Instagram/YouTube/TikTok influencers don't like the products/services they promote 	<p>Correspondence bias</p>	<p>Dreifaldt, N., & Drennan, T. (2019)</p>

Table 1 : Our hypotheses, the questions linked, the variable to which they apply and the sources of the scales

Figure 15 in the annex shows the type of question chosen for each variable and the number of items. The questions 2 to 4 allow us to only look at people who use at least one of those social networks. They are filter questions allowing us to only have people that use social medias (at least one) answering our questionnaire (Pleyers, 2019).

3. Pre-test

The pre-test is when we try the questionnaire on a small sample of people to see if there are eventual problems and to rectify them (Steils, 2018). Creating the perfect questionnaire on the first try is almost impossible. We asked 10 people to take our survey and give us feedback on clarity, syntax and vocabulary or anything that might bother them while taking it (Steils, 2018).

With the feedback of pre-testers, we were able to tweak various elements of our survey. We specified some of the terms used, they pointed out some ambiguous words in the scales, each

respondent had a different approach to the meaning of these words. We also changed the way 2 questions were worded, because it was not clear enough.

4. Reaching the audience

The final survey was done through the online platform Qualtrics and was then shared on different social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp and LinkedIn.

At the end of the questionnaire, but also in the posts created to share the survey, we asked people to share it after having participated themselves. This is what we call the snowball sampling technique. There are some downsides to this technique because we are uncertain of the representativeness, but it is still better than other non-probability techniques (Steils, 2018).

The advantage of this type of questionnaire, because it is online and we ask people to share it, is that it spreads quickly and reach a large population. There is no interviewer bias, it costs less, and we can use visual supports if needed (Steils, 2018). But there exists a pre-selection due to where we shared the survey since we chose some social medias specifically.

Section 2: Sample characteristics

First, we decided that our target population was people aged 18 or older. We decided to choose a large target population since, as explained before, the social medias and influencers reach different generations. It was interesting to include the opinions of each generation since it might differ. Because the target population is so large, we decided to choose a sampling technique. The way we decided to reach our audience is through an online survey shared on social networks. This means that we are using the snowball sampling technique which is when an initial group of participants is selected, at random and they, after being interviewed, identify others who could also take part in the survey. For example, when a questionnaire is posted on Facebook, we ask our friends to answer then they also share the questionnaire on their own feeds to their own friends, etc. (Steils, 2018).

Chapter 2: Analysis of the data

In this chapter we are explaining how we analysed the data we got through our survey. First, we will go through the steps we took to have a questionnaire which is readable and analysable through SPSS, our statistic software. The second section explains how we tested our hypotheses and the tests we realised.

Section 1: Data preparation

1. Questionnaire checking

First, we had to verify each individual answers to our questionnaire. During this step we deleted incomplete questionnaires (for example, people who started but never finished) but also people who did not meet the selection criteria for our study, it being that they use at least one of the three following social medias: TikTok, Instagram and YouTube. If someone did not use any of those social medias, the questionnaire ended.

After discarding those different answers, we had a sample of 180 valid answers.

2. Data coding

The next step in preparing the data was to code it. We had to change the variable names for them to be clear, and for them to not have a name which was too long.

After the names were comprehensible, we had to verify that when exporting the data from Qualtrics, it was correctly coded. Coding is when we assigned numbers to each possible response in a question (Steils, 2019). We had different types of questions such as “Gender” (1= a woman, 2= a man, 3=other), “Age” (1= 18 to 24 years old, 2= 25 to 39 years old, 3=40 to 54 years old, 4= 55 or older), “Yes/No” questions (1=yes, 2=no), Likert scales (1= Completely disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Completely agree), etc.

3. Data cleaning

In this part we will prepare our data for it to be readable and correct for our analysis.

3.1. Missing Responses

The first step in the data cleaning process is to look for missing responses. Since, respondents in our questionnaire were redirected towards a set of questions asking over one particular social media, and not all of them, there are some missing responses to treat.

For those, we assigned the value “-99” by first replacing the system-missing value by the number and then modifying the missing value of each of the variables. Those answers do not have to be considered since it is normal that the participants did not complete those parts.

4. Sample Description

As said before, we used the online tool Qualtrics to conduct our questionnaire, it was distributed between July 14th and July 30th. We collected 207 answers. Below, we are showing a few statistics about our sample. We used the software “IBM SPSS Statistics”, and the statistics are shown after cleaning our data, which was done as explained before, meaning that we have 180 valid answers.

In our questionnaire, 60% of respondents were women and 40% were men. Concerning the age groups of our sample it is divided as such:

- 56.7% of 18 to 24 years old,
- 36.7% of 25 to 39 years old,
- 5.6% of 40 to 54 years old &
- 1.1% of 55 or older.

Since people were redirected to answer questions about only one social media, the distribution between them is as such:

- 30.6% answered questions about YouTube,
- 38.9% answered questions about Instagram &
- 30.6% answered questions about TikTok.

More precisely, the repartition by gender and by which social media they were presented with is shown in table 2. As is seen below, there is an over-representation of women in our sample. As can also be observed below, the over-representation is particularly pronounced for Instagram where 50 women answered versus 20 men.

		Selection			Total	
		YouTube	Instagram	TikTok		
Gender	a woman	Count	28	50	30	108
		% within Gender	25.9%	46.3%	27.8%	100.0%
	a man	Count	27	20	25	72
		% within Gender	37.5%	27.8%	34.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	55	70	55	180
		% within Gender	30.6%	38.9%	30.6%	100.0%

Table 2 : Sample distribution by gender and social media

Finally, the last description of our sample is the distribution by age in each social media as it is shown in table 3 below. We can observe that the age categories 40 to 54 and 55 or older are under-represented in our sample.

Age		Selection			Total
		YouTube	Instagram	TikTok	
18 to 24 years old	Count	30	36	36	102
	% within Age	29.4%	35.3%	35.3%	100.0%
25 to 39 years old	Count	24	26	16	66
	% within Age	36.4%	39.4%	24.2%	100.0%
40 to 54 years old	Count	1	7	2	10
	% within Age	10.0%	70.0%	20.0%	100.0%
55 or older	Count	0	1	1	2
	% within Age	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	55	70	55	180
	% within Age	30.6%	38.9%	30.6%	100.0%

Table 3 : Sample distribution by age and social media

To conclude, as shown by those numbers, each of the category we had is not represented in the same quantity, especially for the age category. As explained above, two of our age categories are under-represented and women are over-represented in this sample. This is something we will address later, in the limits part of this thesis.

Section 2: Hypotheses Testing

1. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Before starting to test our hypotheses, we had to realize an exploratory factor analysis. This allows to study the possible relationships between some of the variables. The objective is to reduce the data by grouping some of the variables based on the cumulative percentage of the variances or the eigenvalue (Steils, 2018).

First to be able to conduct the factor analysis we had to transform our variables: instead of having different variables for each social media, we created one for each question. In the annex, Figure 16, we detailed the variables and the questions which are linked to them.

1.1.Variable 1: Engagement

We will first test the *engagement* variable. In Figure 16 (annex), we can see the questions linked to this variable.

After realising our exploratory factor analysis on SPSS, we obtained the results in Table 4 & 5.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.660
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	80.926
	df	3
	Sig.	.000

Table 4 : KMO & Bartlett's test for Engagement variables

First, we look at if the variables are factorizable through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index which measures the sampling adequacy and the Bartlett sphericity test which tests the null hypothesis that the variables are uncorrelated in the population (Steils, 2018). The variables are factorizable if the KMO index is above 0.5 and the Bartlett's sphericity test is below 0.05.

As we can see in Table 5, the KMO index is 0.66, which is above 0.5. The p-value of the Bartlett's test of sphericity is below 0.05 so we can reject the null hypothesis which means that our variables are not all uncorrelated.

Then we chose to use the principal components analysis method because it allows to determine “the minimum number of factors that will account for maximum variance” (Steils, 2018).

Total Variance Explained

Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
		% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.816	60.545	60.545	1.816	60.545	60.545
2	.631	21.050	81.595			
3	.552	18.405	100.000			

Table 5 : Total variance explained for Engagement variables

By looking at Table 6, we can see that the first component accounts for 60.545% of the variance and has an eigenvalue greater than 1. Which means that it is the only one we keep for analysis.

Next, we are looking at the reliability, which verifies that the scale steadily calculates the construct it is supposed to calculate. To do this we use Cronbach's alpha. The minimum acceptable value of this index is 0.7.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.667	3

Table 6 : Cronbach's alpha for Engagement variables

As we can see in Table 6, the alpha equals 0.667, which is not strong.

For the rest of the analysis, we will use the same steps every time, therefore we won't explain them every time.

1.2. Variable 2: PSI

In this next point, we will analyse each questions concerning the parasocial interactions for each social media. Respondents answered 6 questions concerning the parasocial interactions (Figure 16).

We will continue using the same process that was done in 1.1. for the *engagement* variables. The KMO index equals 0.784 which is above 0.5 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity is below 0.05, meaning that the factors are factorizable.

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.784
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	257.114
	df	15
	Sig.	.000

Table 7 : KMO and Bartlett's test for parasocial_interactivity variables

The first 2 factors account for 63.898% of the cumulative variance and have an eigenvalue above 1. This means that we only keep the first two factors.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.756	45.934	45.934	2.756	45.934	45.934	2.426	40.426	40.426
2	1.078	17.964	63.898	1.078	17.964	63.898	1.408	23.472	63.898
3	.721	12.009	75.907						
4	.581	9.687	85.594						
5	.435	7.254	92.848						
6	.429	7.152	100.000						

Table 8 : Total variance explained for parasocial_interactivity variables

Since two factors are kept, we look at the next table which is the rotated component matrix. We can see in table 10 which items match with which component. We can regroup the first 4 items (I have a lot in common with the TikTok/ Instagram/ YouTube influencers I follow, I have the same tastes as the TikTok/ Instagram/ YouTube influencers I follow, I have the same hobbies as the TikTok/ Instagram/ YouTube influencers I follow & I relate to TikTok/ Instagram/ YouTube influencers I follow) in component 1 and the last 2 in component 2.

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component	
	1	2
PSI_Tot1	.789	.119
PSI_Tot2	.709	.359
PSI_Tot3	.825	.019
PSI_Tot4	.731	.125
PSI_Tot5	.294	.736
PSI_Tot6	-.006	.841

Table 9 : Rotated component matrix for PSI

Lastly, we look at the Cronbach's alpha for both components. Table 10 shows the alpha for component 1 which is above 0.7 meaning that it is strong and that we keep it. In Table 11, we can look at the Cronbach's alpha for the second component. In this case, the alpha is weak, we won't keep those factors for our analysis.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.786	.788	4

Table 10 : Cronbach's alpha for component 1

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.478	.478	2

Table 11 : Cronbach's alpha for component 2

1.3. Variable 3: Perceived Interactivity

We are now going to investigate the third variable for each social media, which is the *perceived_interactivity*. In the questionnaire, two questions concerned the perceived interactivity (Figure 16).

As we can see, the KMO index is equal to 0.5 which meets the criteria above. The Bartlett's test of sphericity is below 0.05.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.500
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	44.764
	df	1
	Sig.	.000

Table 12 : KMO and Bartlett's test for perceived_interactivity variables

After our analysis, we can see that only the first factor can be kept because it is the only one with an eigenvalue above one and it accounts for 73.606% of the cumulative variance.

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
		% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.472	73.606	73.606	1.472	73.606	73.606
2	.528	26.394	100.000			

Table 13 : Total variance explained for perceived_interactivity variables

Third and last, the Cronbach's alpha of 0.637 is not strong, it is just under the minimum acceptable.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.637	2

Table 14 : Cronbach's alpha for perceived_interactivity variables

1.4. Variable 4: Openness

In this next part, we will be analysing the fourth variable for each of the social media. The fourth variable being the *openness*.

The fourth variable was analysed through two questions in our questionnaire (Figure 16).

The KMO index equals 0.5 and the p-value of the Bartlett's test of sphericity is below 0.05 (0.001).

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.500
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	10.376
	df	1
	Sig.	.001

Table 15 : KMO and Bertlett's test for Openness variables

As seen in the table below (table 16), only the first factor must be kept in this case because it accounts for 61.914% of the cumulative variance and has an eigenvalue above 1.

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
		% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.238	61.914	61.914	1.238	61.914	61.914
2	.762	38.086	100.000			

Table 16 : Total variance explained for Openness variables

The Cronbach's alpha (0.383) is considered to be of mediocre quality, meaning that we won't use this variable any further and take it out of our models that use it.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.383	2

Table 17 : Cronbach's alpha for Openness variables

1.5. Variable 5: Persuasion Knowledge

In this part, we will realise the exploratory factor analysis for the *persuasion_knowledge* variable for each social media.

There were 5 questions asked in the questionnaire concerning the persuasion knowledge (Figure 16).

The KMO index is good, because above the threshold of 0.5, and we can reject the null hypothesis which says that all our factors are uncorrelated since the Bartlett's test of sphericity show a p-value smaller than 0.05.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.654
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	88.432
	df	10
	Sig.	.000

Table 18 : KMO and Bartlett's test for persuasion_knowledge variables

We are keeping the first two factors since their eigenvalue is above 1 and they account for 58.712% of the cumulative variance.

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.900	37.995	37.995	1.900	37.995	37.995	1.499	29.977	29.977
2	1.036	20.717	58.712	1.036	20.717	58.712	1.437	28.735	58.712
3	.848	16.958	75.670						
4	.691	13.818	89.488						
5	.526	10.512	100.000						

Table 19 : Total variance explained for persuasion_knowledge variables

Because two factors can be kept, we are looking at the rotated component matrix (Table 20). As observed, 4 of our items can be reduced to one component (component 1), and 2 to another (component 2).

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component	
	1	2
PK_Tot1	.402	.677
PK_Tot2	.661	.022
PK_Tot3	.585	.503
PK_Tot4	.721	.019
PK_Tot5	-.193	.851

Table 20 : Rotated component matrix for *persuasion_knowledge*

Lastly, we are looking at the Cronbach's alpha. Table 21 shows the reliability of the new first factor and as observed it is weak, which means that we cannot use this factor due to poor reliability.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.450	.479	3

Table 21 : Cronbach's alpha for component 1

In Table 22, we look at the reliability of the second new factor. We can also observe that it is weak (0.430). We will not use this factor in our analysis either.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.430	.439	2

Table 22 : Cronbach's alpha for component 2

In conclusion, the *persuasion_knowledge* variable is not reliable enough to be used. We will not test the hypothesis 5 which is linked to it.

1.6. Variable 6: Correspondence Bias

In the last analysis of our variables, we are looking at the variables concerning the *correspondence_bias*. There were 5 questions in our questionnaire concerning this variable (Figure 16).

In Table 23, we can see that the KMO is above 0.5 and the p-value below 0.05. Our components are factorizable.

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.785
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	226.516
	df	10
	Sig.	.000

Table 23 : KMO and Bartlett's test for correspondence_bias variables

After looking at Table 24, we conclude that we will keep only the first factor because it accounts for 53.172% of the variance and has an eigenvalue above 1.

Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
		% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.659	53.172	53.172	2.659	53.172	53.172
2	.801	16.019	69.190			
3	.611	12.223	81.414			
4	.519	10.385	91.799			
5	.410	8.201	100.000			

Table 24 : Total variance explained for correspondence_bias variables

Finally, Cronbach's alpha is good for this variable (0.779).

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.779	5

Table 25 : Cronbach's alpha for correspondence_bias variables

2. Parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity, openness and engagement

In this next part, we will test each of our hypothesis and conduct statistical analysis through SPSS.

2.1. Instagram

As a reminder our first hypothesis is as such:

H₁: Higher parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness on Instagram means higher engagement.

For our first hypothesis, we will realise a multiple linear regression. We chose to realise this test because its purpose is to explain one quantitative dependent variable (Engagement on Instagram) from several exploratory variables (parasocial interactions & perceived interactivity) (Pleyers, 2019).

$$\text{Engagement on Instagram} = \alpha + \beta_1 * \text{parasocial_interactions} + \beta_2 * \text{perceived_interactivity} + \varepsilon$$

To do this we first need to check some conditions (Steils, 2018):

- Homoscedasticity
- Independence of the residuals
- The correlations between variables should not be too high

First, in the Scatterplot below, we can see that the blue points (which are the ones concerning Instagram) are not in the shape of a funnel (Pleyers, 2019).

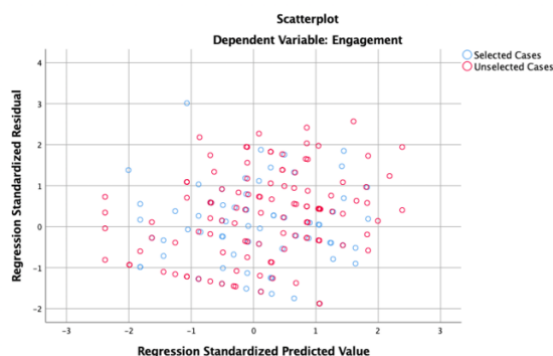


Table 26 : Scatterplot of Engagement for Instagram

The next table allows us to check the independence of the error terms. For the null hypothesis of autocorrelation, the number must be close to 2 (Steils, 2018), which is the case.

Model Summary ^{b,c}								
Model	Selection = Instagram (Selected)	R		R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson Statistic	
		Selection ~ Instagram (Unselected)					Selection = Instagram (Selected)	Selection ~ Instagram (Unselected)
1	.300 ^a	.516		.090	.063	.867	1.613	1.240

Table 27 : Model summary of the model "Engagement on Instagram"

Lastly for the conditions, we can see in the table below that the correlation between the factors is always between -0.9 and 0.9, which means we cannot talk about collinearity.

Correlations ^a				
		Engagement	PI	PSI
Pearson Correlation	Engagement	1.000	.253	.190
	PI	.253	1.000	.118
	PSI	.190	.118	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Engagement	.	.017	.057
	PI	.017	.	.164
	PSI	.057	.164	.
N	Engagement	70	70	70
	PI	70	70	70
	PSI	70	70	70

Table 28 : Correlations between engagement on Instagram, parasocial_interactions and perceived_interactivity

Since all the conditions are met, we can continue the analysis of our model. The first table will allow us to determine if our model with predictors is better than the one without them. As we can see, the p-value is significant ($0.042 < 0.05$) which means we can reject the null hypothesis which says that the higher perceived interactivity and higher PSI on Instagram do not mean a higher engagement.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.986	2	2.493	3.318	.042 ^c
	Residual	50.341	67	.751		
	Total	55.327	69			

Table 29 : Anova of engagement on Instagram, parasocial_interactions and perceived_interactivity

The last table in this part shows that the *parasocial_interactions* is not statistically significant at the confidence level of 95%. On the other hand, the *perceived_interactivity* variable is significant at the same confidence level and has a coefficient of 0.210

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.291	.479		2.694	.009		
	PI	.210	.105	.234	1.992	.050	.986	1.014
	PSI	.202	.146	.163	1.385	.171	.986	1.014

Table 30 : Coefficients of the multiple linear regression « Engagement on Instagram »

To continue our analysis, we are testing the model linking the *perceived_interactivity* to Instagram: Higher perceived interactivity creates higher engagement on Instagram. We realize a simple linear regression for which the conditions are still filled. We chose a simple linear regression because it intends to explain a dependent variable (*engagement* on Instagram) by one independent variable (*perceived_interactivity*) (Pleyers, 2019; Steils, 2018).

$$\text{Engagement on Instagram} = \alpha + \beta_1 * \text{perceived_interactivity} + \varepsilon$$

As observed, the *perceived_interactivity* variable is significant at the 95%-level confidence ($0.035 < 0.05$). The coefficient of *perceived_interactivity* is equal to 0.227, meaning that there is a positive relationship between the perceived interactivity on Instagram and the engagement on the same platform.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.862	.246		7.570	.000		
	PI	.227	.105	.253	2.157	.035	1.000	1.000

Table 31 : Coefficients of the simple linear regression “Engagement on Instagram”

2.2. YouTube

The hypothesis concerning YouTube was:

H₂: Higher parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness on YouTube means higher engagement.

As we saw in the factor analysis, we cannot take into account the openness variable because of its poor reliability.

We will conduct the same test as above: a multiple linear regression.

$$\text{Engagement on YouTube} = \alpha + \beta_1 * \text{parasocial_interactions} + \beta_2 * \text{perceived_interactivity} + \varepsilon$$

We will first check if the conditions are met, the figures for the conditions will be in the annex.

In figure 8, we can see that it does not form a funnel and so that the condition for homoscedasticity is met. In figure 9, we can see that the Durbin-Watson index is close to 2, which means that the condition is also met (1.653). Lastly, in figure 10, we can see that the correlations are between -0.9 and 0.9 so we cannot talk about multicollinearity.

This means that all the conditions are met and that we can keep going with our analysis.

In the table below, we can see that the F value is significant at the confidence level of 95% because the p-value is smaller than 0.05 ($0.002 < 0.05$).

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.020	2	4.510	7.264	.002 ^c
	Residual	32.285	52	.621		
	Total	41.305	54			

Table 32 : Anova of engagement on YouTube, parasocial_interactions and perceived_interactivity

Lastly, we can see in the next table that the *parasocial_interactions* variable is significant at the 95%-confidence level (0.047) and has a coefficient of 0.308. Whereas *perceived_interactivity* is not significant at that confidence level ($0.087 > 0.05$).

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.727	.417		1.743	.087		
	PSI	.308	.151	.290	2.037	.047	.743	1.345
	PI	.228	.130	.248	1.746	.087	.743	1.345

Table 33 : Coefficients of the multiple linear regression « Engagement on YouTube »

To test this model: a higher parasocial interactions mean a higher engagement on YouTube, we realised a linear regression, for which the conditions were met.

$$\text{Engagement on YouTube} = \alpha + \beta_1 * \text{parasocial_interactions} + \varepsilon$$

The p-value is significant since it is below 0.05.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.127	1	7.127	11.052	.002 ^c
	Residual	34.178	53	.645		
	Total	41.305	54			

Table 34 : Anova of Engagement on YouTube and parasocial interactions

In the last table, we can see that the *parasocial_interactions* variable is significant at the 95%-confidence level. The coefficient is equal to 0.442. This confirms the positive relationship between parasocial interactions and engagement on YouTube.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.813	.422		1.924	.060		
	PSI	.442	.133	.415	3.324	.002	1.000	1.000

Table 35 : Coefficients of the simple linear regression « Engagement on YouTube »

2.3.TikTok

The third hypothesis was:

H₃: Higher parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness on TikTok means higher engagement.

As said before, the *openness* variable is not reliable so we cannot test it. We are still testing the model using the other variables.

As done in point 2.4., we will do the same test again: multiple linear regression.

$$\text{Engagement on TikTok} = \alpha + \beta_1 * \text{parasocial_interactions} + \beta_2 * \text{perceived_interactivity} + \varepsilon$$

The figures to check the conditions will be in the annex.

All the conditions are met, there is no funnel shape so the condition for homoscedasticity is met (figure 10), the Durbin-Watson is close to 2 (1.938) (figure 11) and all the correlations are between -0.9 and 0.9 (figure 12).

Therefore, we can continue to test our hypothesis.

First, we can see that the F-value is significant at the 95%-confidence level ($0.000 < 0.05$).

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.478	2	10.739	19.100	.000 ^c
	Residual	29.237	52	.562		
	Total	50.715	54			

Table 36 : Anova of Engagement on TikTok, parasocial interactions and perceived interactivity

As observed in the next table, the two variables are statistically significant at the confidence level of 95%.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.467	.441		1.058	.295		
	PSI	.513	.117	.472	4.391	.000	.960	1.042
	PI	.447	.132	.364	3.385	.001	.960	1.042

Table 37 : Coefficients of the multiple linear regression « Engagement on TikTok »

The model tested looks as shown below:

$$\text{Engagement on TikTok} = 0.467 + 0.513 * \text{parasocial_interactions} + 0.447 * \text{perceived_interactivity}$$

This means that *perceived_interactivity* and *parasocial_interactions* have a positive impact on *engagement* on TikTok”. In conclusion, we can validate our hypothesis “Higher parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity (and openness) on TikTok means higher engagement.”

2.4. Comparison

Our fourth hypothesis is as such:

H4: The PSI, perceived interactivity and openness is higher on TikTok than on the 2 others.

Again, we are taking out the *openness* variable” from our model since it is not reliable.

In this case, we will realise a One-Way ANOVA on SPSS, which will be done in two phases: first, we will test the *parasocial_interactions* variable and then the *perceived_interactivity* variable.

a. Parasocial interactions

There are 2 conditions that need to be met to realise this type of test (Steils, 2018):

- Independence of the data
- Equality of the variances

This is what we will do first. The first condition is met because each respondent answered our questionnaire only once.

We then look at the equality of variances through Levene’s test. The p-value needs to be bigger than 0.05 to keep the null hypothesis saying that there is no difference between the variances of the groups. As we can see in the next table, the p-value of the Levene’s test is not significant ($0.849 > 0.05$) which meets the condition. This means we fill the conditions to perform an ANOVA and cannot reject the null hypothesis.

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
PSI	Based on Mean	.163	2	177	.849
	Based on Median	.086	2	177	.918
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.086	2	154.365	.918
	Based on trimmed mean	.142	2	177	.868

Table 38 : Levene’s test for PSI

We can now interpret the ANOVA. Since the p-value is bigger than 0.05 ($0.2 > 0.05$), we cannot reject H_0 and confirm that parasocial interactions can be higher based on the social media, with

an error risk of 5%. The analysis showed with a 95% confidence level that there is no significant difference between the parasocial interactions on each platform.

PSI	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.113	2	1.057	1.622	.200
Within Groups	115.274	177	.651		
Total	117.387	179			

Table 39 : ANOVA test for the variable « PSI »

b. Perceived interactivity

Before interpreting the results, we first need to verify that the conditions are met. The independence of the data condition is still filled since each respondent only answered the questionnaire once. In the next table, we can observe Levene's test which shows a p-value smaller than 0.05 ($0.011 < 0.05$), meaning that it is significant and that the assumption of equal variances is not respected.

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
PI	Based on Mean	4.647	2	177	.011
	Based on Median	3.045	2	177	.050
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	3.045	2	173.332	.050
	Based on trimmed mean	4.520	2	177	.012

Table 40 : Levene's test for « perceived interactivity »

Since the second condition is not met, we look at Welch's F test (Steels, 2018) in which we do not assume the equality of variances. It looks at if there are differences between some of the groups. As we can see in Table 41, the p-value is not statistically significant ($0.911 > 0.05$) meaning that there is no significant difference between the levels of the independent variable, with a 5% risk of error. We cannot reject H_0 which states that "Perceived interactivity is not higher on TikTok than on the two others" with a 95%-confidence level.

PI		Statistic ^a	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch		.093	2	115.983	.911

Table 41 : Welch's F test for « PI »

3. Persuasion Knowledge

Our fifth hypothesis is:

H₅: The persuasion knowledge is higher on YouTube than on the 2 other platforms.

We cannot test this hypothesis since the *persuasion_knowledge* variable is not reliable. The hypothesis is neither confirmed nor infirmed.

4. Correspondence Bias

Our final hypothesis is:

H₆: The correspondence bias is higher on TikTok than on the 2 others

To test our last hypothesis, we will realise a one-way ANOVA.

First, let's verify that all the conditions are met (Steils, 2018):

- Independence of the data
- Equality of variances

The independence of data is met since each respondent only answered once to our questionnaire. As we can observe in the Figure 13 in the annex, the p-value is above 0.05 ($0.545 > 0.05$), which means cannot reject the null hypothesis saying that there is no difference between the variances. The last condition is met.

We can start with the analysis of our model. The p-value being bigger than 0.05 (0.084) means that we cannot reject the null hypothesis and assert that there is a difference in the level of correspondence bias on the three social medias, with a confidence level of 95%.

ANOVA					
CB	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.966	2	.983	2.511	.084
Within Groups	69.264	177	.391		
Total	71.229	179			

Table 42 : Anova for "correspondence bias" and "selection"

Our analysis showed with a risk of error of 5% that there is no significant difference between the correspondence bias on each platform.

Section 3: Results

In this section, we will confirm or deny the hypotheses that were described earlier in this thesis, depending on the statistical tests that were realised.

1. H₁: Higher parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness on Instagram means higher engagement.

With this hypothesis, we were trying to find a link between parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness and engagement on Instagram. We first realised that our scale for *openness* was not reliable, so we had to take out that variable from our model.

We then realised a multiple linear regression which showed that *parasocial_interactions* was not statistically significant with a 5% risk of error. Meaning that parasocial interactions do not have an influence Instagram's engagement. On the other hand, *perceived_interactivity* is statistically different at the 95%-confidence level. After realising a simple linear regression, we found that the coefficient of this variable is 0.227. This implies that for each additional unit of perceived interactivity on Instagram, the engagement on the social media increases by 0.227.

2. H₂: Higher parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness on YouTube means higher engagement.

This hypothesis' objective was the same as the first one, except for YouTube. We used the same test as above: a multiple linear regression.

After looking at the results we were able to conclude that *perceived_interactivity* was not statistically significant at the 95%-confidence level. On the other hand, *parasocial_interactions* is statistically significant at the same level of confidence. We then realised a simple linear regression to test the effect of parasocial interactions on YouTube's engagement which confirmed the positive relationship between them. The coefficient of *parasocial_interactions* equals 0.442. Our second hypothesis is partially accepted. Where we cannot reject the null hypothesis for our initial proposition, we still discovered a positive relationship for one of our variables.

3. H₃: Higher parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness on TikTok means higher engagement.

Third, the objective of this hypothesis was the same as the two above, except it was about TikTok. We realised a multiple linear regression to test it. The results showed that both our variables were significant at the confidence level of 95%. Since the p-values were smaller than 0.05, we were able to reject the null hypothesis. The coefficient of *parasocial_interactions* is 0.513 meaning that for each additional unit of PSI, the engagement on TikTok increases by 0.513 unit. The same reasoning goes behind the *perceived_interactivity* variable which has a

coefficient of 0.447 and for each additional unit of the variable, TikTok's engagement increases by 0.447 unit. Our third hypothesis is validated.

4. H₄: The PSI, perceived interactivity and openness is higher on TikTok than on the 2 others.

The objective of this hypothesis was to find out if perceived interactivity and parasocial interactions were different between the three groups and if it was higher on TikTok than the other platforms studied.

To test it, we realised two One-Way ANOVAs. We first tested *parasocial_interactions* for which we analysed that there was no statistically significant difference between the social medias ($p\text{-value} = 0.2 > 0.05$). Then, we tested *perceived_interactivity*, which showed the same result. Because the equality of variances assumption was not accepted, we analysed the model via Welch's test. We observed that the $p\text{-value}$ (0.911) was bigger than 0.05. This means that there is no statistically significant difference between Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. We were not able to reject the null hypothesis which states that the PSI, perceived interactivity (and openness) is not higher on TikTok than on the two others.

5. H₅: The persuasion knowledge is higher on YouTube than on the 2 other platforms.

In this hypothesis, we were trying to know if persuasion knowledge was stronger on one platform versus the others. Since we saw through Cronbach's alpha that *persuasion_knowledge* was not reliable, we were not able to conduct an analysis. This hypothesis cannot be validated or invalidated.

6. H₆: The correspondence bias is higher on TikTok than on the 2 others

Lastly, we wanted to check if the correspondence bias were stronger on TikTok versus the other platforms. We realised a One-Way ANOVA. The test showed there was no statistically significant difference between the social medias ($p\text{-value} = 0.084 > 0.05$). In conclusion, we were not able to reject the null hypothesis which says that the correspondence bias is not higher on TikTok than on the other platforms.

Chapter 3: Conclusion of the quantitative research

As a reminder, our research question was “How much do personal interactions, openness, perceived interactivity, the correspondence bias and the persuasion knowledge affect the consumer on YouTube, TikTok & Instagram?”. To answer this question and based on the literature review, we had 6 hypotheses.

Hypotheses		Validity of hypotheses?
H1	Higher parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness on Instagram means higher engagement.	Partially Higher perceived interactivity on Instagram means higher engagement
H2	Higher parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness on YouTube means higher engagement.	Partially Higher parasocial interactions on YouTube mean higher engagement
H3	Higher parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness on TikTok means higher engagement.	Validated
H4	The PSI, perceived interactivity and openness is higher on TikTok than on the 2 others.	Unvalidated
H5	The persuasion knowledge is higher on YouTube than on the 2 other platforms.	Neither validated nor invalidated
H6	The correspondence bias is higher on TikTok than on the 2 others.	Unvalidated

Table 43 : Summary of the hypotheses and the results

Contrary to what the literature review told us, only one of hypotheses was fully validated:

- Higher parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness on TikTok means higher engagement,

and two of our hypotheses were partially accepted.

Our hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 4 treat the concepts of parasocial interactions, perceived interactivity and openness which are at the base of influencer marketing’s success (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Labrecque, 2014), the literature review shows how those concepts are supposed to affect the consumer’s attitude on social media. The previous research done on the concepts shows that

there is a positive relationship between the parasocial interactions and derivatives and the consumer's behaviour. Part of our research agrees with this as parasocial interactions have a positive effect on the engagement on YouTube and on TikTok and perceived interactivity has a positive effect on Instagram's and TikTok's engagement. The previous research we looked at did not study the existence of a difference in the representation of those concepts on different social medias. The research shows how important they are for influencer marketing and social medias; we do not know much about the strength of the concepts for each social media separately. We decided to go further to see the difference and we concluded that there was no statistically significant difference.

The literature also showed the importance of the correspondence bias. It is how the consumer perceives the influencer and assumes that their attitude is a reflection of their true beliefs and opinions (Cronley, Kardes, Goddard & Houghton, 1999, p.627). The research showed that the correspondence bias plays a role in the influencer marketing campaigns since despite the disclosure of sponsored content, the consumer's behaviour and purchase intentions towards the brand do not decrease. It is explained by how the influencer is seen as an expert and also how the consumers assume they promote it because they genuinely like the brand (Colliander & Erlandsson, 2015). The studies seemed to only study the social medias in general, which is why we went further and analysed the differences in correspondence bias between the three social medias to get a more precise information but the result showed a non-significant difference.

In conclusion, it appears that there are positive relationships between parasocial interactions and perceived interactivity and engagement on some social medias, as we shown through our literature study (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Labrecque, 2014). We also saw that the correspondence bias is pretty similar on the three social medias.

PART IV: Conclusion

In this last part, we will talk about the limits, make some recommendations and dress a general conclusion.

Chapter 1: General conclusion

This thesis' objective was to complete the literature concerning influencer marketing on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube and their relationship with parasocial interactions and its derivatives openness and perceived interactivity, persuasion knowledge and correspondence bias.

The Word-of-Mouth has become so important for companies, a study by Nielsen shows that 92% of consumers trust more the recommendations they get from their friends and family than any advertising campaign. Therefore, opinion leaders gain more and more their place in the literature (Verette, 2006). Opinion leaders became so important because they appear as credible and impartial, they seem genuine to the consumer (Audigier, 2014). With the rise of social medias, they continued to take even more space in society, everyone can share anything with anyone, meaning that everyday people can become opinion leaders, or influencers (Campbell, Pitt, Parent & Berthon, 2011). In a report from 2021, Linqia shows that 74% of marketers plan to increase their budget for influencer marketing.

Social medias became a very powerful tool for companies, it allows them to listen to trends and conversations in their target market but also to talk to their audience. It makes it possible for companies to reach more people for less, but also to have better conversations (Mitrush, 2018). Whereas the budget for television advertising used to be big, it started to shift with a part of the TV advertising budget going to influencers, streamers, and online advertising (Shieber, 2020). In a society where traditional advertising is not always welcome, it is important for brands to find the solutions which can be found, at least partly, in influencer marketing.

Our research showed that higher parasocial interactions, the feeling for consumers that they are friends with the influencers with whom they “communicate”, bring a higher engagement on YouTube and TikTok (Lee & Watkins). This follows the previous research which highlights parasocial interactions as a key component of influencer marketing success (Labrecque, 2014). It also showed how when there is a higher perceived interactivity, the feeling for a consumer

that someone is listening and responding (Labrecque, 2014), there is a higher engagement on Instagram and TikTok. Perceived interactivity is a derivative of parasocial interactions and studies showed that it was also a key component in the success of influencers and influencer marketing (Labrecque, 2014). Our study allowed to go further than what was done in previous works through the analysis of three specific social medias: TikTok, Instagram and YouTube. We also found that there is no real difference in perceived interactivity and parasocial interactions between the social medias.

Our study also showed that correspondence bias, the feeling that the influencer's behaviour is a true representation of their true beliefs and opinions (Cronley, et al., 1999), is not different depending on the social platform. The literature showed how correspondence bias has a positive effect on influencer marketing and is a key driver to its good performance. Our study supposed that since having more correspondence bias is a positive element, a social media with more engagement (and engagement is a key measure for influencers) should have, at least partly, a higher correspondence bias than on other platforms (Pastezeur, 2020). Our results did not go in the same direction as the literature this time, as we determined that there is no difference between the social medias. This difference might be explained by the fact that correspondence bias is not going to last forever as it is laid out in some literature. When influencers keep placing product and promoting them on social medias, a wear-out effect, the decline of effectiveness of ads, might appear. Meaning that there is a possibility of destroying what makes influencer marketing so powerful (Colliander & Erlandsson, 2015).

Chapter 2: Managerial Recommendations

In this chapter, we will make managerial recommendations which derive from the results obtained in our study.

First, we would like to remind managers that the fit between the influencers and the brand is important and plays an important role in the success of an influencer marketing campaign.

We advise influencers and managers to be aware of the role the perceived interactivity plays on engagement. On Instagram and TikTok, they should find they get a higher engagement whenever they interact and respond to the followers. Indeed, the perceived interactivity has shown its efficacy on bringing a higher engagement on Instagram and TikTok. A higher engagement is important for both the influencer and the manager. It means that the content is not being ignored by the consumers, people who engage are more likely to turn into paying customers, better brand loyalty and the potential reach is higher (Ben & Ting, 2020).

We also advise to pay attention to the parasocial interactions on YouTube and TikTok. It plays a role on the increase of engagement on those platforms. As studied, higher parasocial interactions mean a higher engagement on YouTube and Instagram. As explained above a higher engagement is essential to both the influencers and the brands because of what it means. Therefore, they should be aware that reinforcing the feeling of friendship between the consumers and the influencer is crucial. Consumers need to feel as if they know them and have things in common. Since perceived interactivity brings higher engagement but also a willingness to share information (Lee & Watkins, 2016), it is important to keep this in mind.

We do not advise to not take the other concepts into account and not use them anymore, as shown in previous literature, they are important in different cases than the ones studied here. Even if correspondence bias is not stronger on TikTok than the other, this does not mean that it has no effect on those social medias. It is still important for influencers and managers to pay attention to how the consumers feel about the influencer's behaviour. They should keep thinking they are truthful and honest, that they truly believe in what they promote. This still plays a role in the success of an influencer marketing campaign, until proven the opposite.

Chapter 3: Limits and future research

Our thesis has some limits which we will explain in this chapter.

First, because of the type of questionnaire and the way we chose to spread it there are some limits to our study. We chose to conduct an online questionnaire spread through social medias. The online questionnaire has some great advantages such as the anonymity, no biases, budget, etc. but it also has some disadvantages. The response rate is generally lower, because it is harder to get people to answer without an incentive, which is a challenge we met. It was complicated to collect enough answers to the questionnaire. We also have no control over how truthfully the participants answer the questionnaire, in other words we have no control over the reliability. Talking about reliability, it is important to note that some of our scales did not meet the criteria for Cronbach's alpha, meaning they are not very reliable, which is a limit of our thesis. There is also a pre-selection which is the result of the sampling technique chosen. We tried to diminish this bias by asking every respondent to share it, which allows a bigger reach (Pleyers, 2019).

The next limit is that our hypotheses and questionnaire are based on the literature review we did. This literature review might be incomplete due to different reasons. The subject is very large but also very current, meaning that the data is often updated and that the statistics for social medias keep changing.

Our last limit concerns the sample equivalence. Our sample was not well represented in all the categories, we had a majority of women and a majority of people between the age of 18 and 34. We think that it would be interesting to redo this study but with better equivalence between the groups and a bigger sample for the data to be more reliable.

We also think that there is a possibility that the type of influencer might also have an impact on the consumers' attitudes and feelings and on our concepts. We think it can be an interesting study to conduct in continuation of ours.

To end this thesis, the research brought two questions to go further: What are the other factors affecting the consumers' engagement on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube? Does the consumer's awareness of the persuasive attempts and the correspondence bias affect their attitudes towards Instagram, YouTube and TikTok?

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