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Is Traditional Media Losing Effect Compared to Influencer Marketing? A Review for the Cosmetic Industry

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Abstract

Influencers, who disclose their lifestyles to the masses on social media on topics ranging from giving personal skin care to themselves at their homes to matching different outfits and creating combinations for date nights, to preparing diet and healthy meals for having a fit body shape, try to change the lifestyle habits and the talk topics in the lives of many young people by presenting themselves as opinion leaders, view affecters or digital penetrators. Influencers, who are discovered by many popular brands due to their high number of followers and who has a change to try the first sample products of these cosmetic brands for this reason, advertise the products on their channels with excitement in order to create behavior change in the shopping habits of young generations. However, influencers carry responsibilities while encouraging people to pay larger amounts for expensive cosmetic products thus authenticity is a key for the continuation of their vlogs by getting likes. Brands see influencers as people who have a high potential in selling products by creating new unthought-of content on social media and who have a change to touch the lives of considerable amount of people by interacting with them. This research aims to look at the concept of influencer marketing by also mentioning from how Influencer marketing has achieved to go one step further in the cosmetic industry rather than traditional advertisements nowadays by providing a literature review on the issue.

Keywords: Influencers • Marketing • Social media • Cosmetics

Introduction

Being an influencer has turned out to be the most popular job which brings recognition to young people in the 21st century. It not only brings fame, but it also brings a growing income for the influencers related with the number of their YouTube subscriptions. Influencers who are categorized as either content creators or life casters, help masses to gain new shopping and lifestyle habits by creating digital stories, and showing their life as fun, hip, and full of activities. Influencers pursue a lifestyle consisting of stylish restaurants to delightful trips in beautiful destinations, and in order to create this glitzy and showy world; they work on their channels by creating creative content that isn't thought before [1]. Also, before each activity that they are going to display on their channels and these can be categorized as going to shopping at malls and trying different outfits, purchasing cosmetics from drugstores, or meeting with a group of friends or with a boyfriend at a restaurant, or getting a cup of coffee from a coffee shop, influencers always show their make-up routine before and they shape the cosmetic industry with their perspectives. While the content creators create different vlogs about shopping, and writing blogs about cosmetics or sharing Instagram posts with products, life casters pursue a luxurious lifestyle on platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. These people share time for being an influencer as either a full-time job, or a part-time job in addition to their corporate titles [2].

Literature Review

The purpose and method of the research

This research aims to look at how influencer marketing on social media has recently gained power over traditional media and how traditional media has been losing effect in advertising cosmetic products nowadays. With this aim, the researcher provides a literature review by making her arguments. The strengths and weakness of the issue are taken into consideration with the method

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of literature review and the purpose is clarified with the up-to-date literature concerning the issue. The literature review creates a connection with what is said before by criticizing and evaluating them, and by integrating them with the researchers own thoughts [3].

What is influencer marketing

Influencer marketing has recently become the latest trend in marketing new cosmetic products. Being an influencer means having a word to say about a particular product on an online communication channel thanks to previous experience and having the power to change the perspectives of others by winning them over. Influencer marketing is about motivating people in the act of purchase decision by presenting real life experience, and since influencer marketing is cheaper than giving advertisements on television, and as the life of influencers are recently watched more than TV advertisements, it has been preferred by brands as a tool of marketing. Influencers persuade a significant group of people with their words, and they can change their purchase decisions, shopping behaviors and point of views towards specific cosmetic brands substantially [4]. The COVID-19 has also created a major change in the shopping behaviors of many people in the world. According to expert, instead of going shopping to malls, people have been inclined to online shopping with the COVID-19 pandemic and they have needed the reviews of influencers more and more, and in the beginning of the pandemic 70% of people did their cosmetic purchases online after listening to the evaluations of an influencer. Influencers, who pursue a hip and stylish lifestyle, and who have a social media presence on various platforms such as Instagram, blogs and YouTube, make certain agreements with cosmetic brands by becoming brand ambassadors, and they introduce the new products released to the market to their followers. The brands indeed make agreements with these influencers based on a few elements such as the [5] social media platform that they are presently using, the qualities of the influencer such as the number of reachability, and the harmony between the influencer and the brand's characteristics [6]. The influencer with whom the brand is going to collaborate with should be simply noticeable by others, and the influencer should be productive in creating first-rate content in which the content is original and trustworthy, and the content should reflect the objectives of the brand. On the other hand, the reasons why influencers collaborate with brands is simple, they not only want to receive monetary rewards (27%), but also they want to gain new experiences (10%) and disclose their experience (20%) to the masses so that they can increase their fames [7].

However, a macro-influencer sometimes prefer to work with multiple brands and this has indeed some drawbacks for the influencer that she might not realize because while a macro-influencer shares a content with cosmetic brand X one day and draws attention, the next time she shares another content with cosmetic brand Y and this positions the influencer as untrustworthy by the consumers. If the influencer says "this is the best product that I've ever used in my life" one day for brand X, and the next say she says "I just can't think myself without living without this product" the other day for brand Y, she creates confusion within the minds of the consumers. This is because the job of the influencer is to persuade other people and in order to gain trust she needs to choose the brand that she is going to collaborate with in the long term wisely. She needs to work with brands whose corporate identity she is going to match with [8].

How long does it take to be recognized as an influencer

Furthermore, some influencers aren't sponsored at all, and these are micro-celebrities and they buy various cosmetic products from their own budget and try to advertise them on YouTube by creating viral videos by adding communication design effects, which in return managing to draw attention. According to expert, it usually takes a period between 5 to 10 years for a micro-influencer to be well-recognized and start to gain the interest of brands; however, once be the micro-influencer arrive to that exact point, then other problems emerge such as quitting because the influencer has gotten tired, she can't find no more resourceful content or can't spare enough time, and most importantly she can't find the dedication in herself anymore, and it becomes harder for her to preserve her crowd. Influencers, sponsored or not, always do make-up in front of the camera by trying diverse cosmetic products, and they use the technique of digital storytelling in order to make their make-up routine exciting and interesting for other people watching. They give relationship advice, they talk about celebrities, they chat about TV shows, and they try to keep the conversation interesting for many people watching. They also create enjoyable digital stories about how such products make their skin look shinier and smoother, and help them to get rid of their pores and to gain a fresh and younger look [9].

Also, social media followers follow the beauty influencers based on a few elements related with the gratifications theory. According to expert while people who are between 20-25 years old follow beauty influencers mainly for the aim of information seeking compared to the younger generations such as teenagers, young women mainly follow influencers for entertainment purposes such as getting rid of boredom and having a good time. Thus, many young women not only want to receive information related with new cosmetic products and to increase their knowledge, but they also want to enjoy the time they spend for watching the videos [10].

The sample products cherish the day of the influencers

Influencers, who are sponsored by the cosmetic brands, have a chance to try new sample products, and display them as a part of their lifestyle on YouTube while making money out of it, and they also give a compliment to the cosmetic brand by saying that the brand [11] "cherish their days" entirely expert. These sponsored influencers also value the networking opportunities that they have created with cosmetic brands because this way they can assure that they will have new opportunities in the future [12].

On the other hand, micro-celebrities, who buy cosmetic products from their own budget, often talk about how that make-up that they've achieved with specific products complete their look with their fashionable outfit, or how it completely changed their appearance by making them more attractive. If these influencers manage to draw attention of a considerable amount of people with subscriptions, then they start to get revenues from the advertisements taking place on their YouTube channels, in return. In order to grow their channels, these micro-influencers should be able to display their passion for

whatever they are advertising, they should show how the products have combined with their lifestyle, and they should instead give more importance to authenticity rather than trying to be seen perfect by others [13].

The connection is parasocial interaction

The difference of influencers from the models that frequently perform in the traditional media is their authenticity because models often don't talk to express their own opinions, and they only display their flawless physical look to the gazes, and thus social media followers more value the parasocial interaction that they build with the beauty influencers and this parasocial interaction is created because of a few reasons which are the similarities between the influencer and the followers, and because of being attached to the influencer due to these similarities [14].

Even though, followers don't know the influencer in-person, parasocial interaction enables them to create a close connection with the influencer however this psychological bond appears in an imaginary world and followers form this relationship based on the demand for, and reputation and skills of the influencer [15].

However, research results interestingly show that many followers are conscious that influencers' reviews are subjective and they mainly bring the positive attributes of the products to the front, and thus their behaviors about the products don't affect the purchase intentions of their followers, and social media followers don't find the beauty influencers reliable in that sense and they say that they can visit the social media pages of make-up artists from the fashion industry instead and they say that they find these [16] pages more dependable.

All of the social media influencers motivate their followers for one aim and that is hedonic shopping which underlines the entertaining aspect of shopping which is associated with a couple of elements such as taking delight out of the activity of shopping [17], being curious about what is new in the market, getting excited or thrilled for trying and purchasing new products, escaping from the daily problems in life, and taking pleasure and satisfaction in the end.

Discussion

The make-up routine of influencers

Nearly all of the influencers on YouTube regardless of their reachability, they show their faces without make-up and with their flaws first, and later on they continue creating their vlog about how their skin transformed into a better one by using some incredible products during their transformation journey. On camera, they turn into a better look thanks to their daily make-up routine, as well. In return, they manage to draw the masses towards [18] their YouTube channels thanks to their entertaining videos full of gossip. On their channels, influencers often say that don't go shopping before watching my videos. Influencers compare two products with [19] each other, they talk about the ingredients that each product has inside, they gave ratios and they make a price comparison. Moreover, they say how long a product should be used and how much a person should put the product on her face or body. Also, they always say leave a comment if you try it so that I can give you feedback [20].

They first start this make-up routine by applying face cleaning and nourishing products in their bathrooms, and then they apply a bunch of cosmetic products ranging from foundations to mascaras, and from eye shadows to lipsticks on their faces by giving particular brand names and by displaying the products on camera one by one. During the span of the vlog, doing make-up takes the most of the time rather than the other activities such as an event celebration and talking about the qualities of the branded products are the most important thing [21].

The aesthetics and beauty routine of influencers

Furthermore, these influencers share their appointments at skin care centres; they share the moments in which they get guidance from skin experts and how [22] the skin experts apply different tools on their skin. They regularly show their blow-dry appointments which elevate their out-look, or they do their hair on their homes thanks to the branded hair straighteners. They show how they can style their hair in different forms according to the daily activity that they are going to participate. Moreover, they share how they decide to get plastic surgery and how their looks have been completely changed afterwards. They show their appointments with their doctors and they talk about how they are convinced to take a step and why they need this surgery so much. They show their natural look before surgery and then they show their transformation. In other words, before the surgery, they show their flaws in front of camera to the masses and after the surgery, they tell people about how they have amended their out-looks. They regularly make doctors apply their faces small touches such as Botox, as well.

Influencers convey the message to their followers that by consuming particular goods and by getting plastic surgery, they can also achieve more acceptances by their peers, and they can convey having characteristics such as stylish and fashionable to other people in the meantime. Influencers not only benefit from the symbolic image consumption of brands, but they also apply this brand image to their lifestyle habits. In other words, influencers show how using certain branded products are associated with certain consumption habits and are associated with a hip and trendy lifestyle [23].

Why influencers have recently gained power

In the past, the trust towards a particular cosmetic product was mainly disseminated through word of mouth. When women used to see their girlfriends, the first thing that they talk about was often their appearances such as how they looked today, how they managed to lose weight, where they bought their stylish clothes from, or where they went to make their hair, etc. Still, women also like to talk about cosmetics when they gather for a cup of coffee in a café and advise their girlfriends about the products that they have recently used. This way, most of the cosmetic products are introduced with word of mouth. However, after the COVID-19 since people can't too much they socialize, the influences of girlfriends are diminished compared to social media influencers. Nowadays, women are mostly under the influence of macro or micro-celebrities rather than their girlfriends.

Also, it used to be up to the dynamics of this female small group whether that specific cosmetic product would be accepted or not because how fashion trends disseminate usually depends on the acceptance or rejection of a product within the group and how the

group reacts towards to it such as an admiration. Word of mouth has an important effect on influencing people because when people make purchase decisions statistics showed that it affects individuals' decisions of purchase ranging from 20% to 50%. Nevertheless, today, the influence of macro or micro-celebrities has risen and social media influencers either recommend a certain product to their followers, or they completely reject it on their vlogs instead by making their arguments. Therefore, it's the influencers who try to persuade others to purchase particular branded products. Thus, in a way, word of mouth has remarkably turned into electronic word-of-mouth today.

Are traditional advertisements losing effect

Moreover, traditional advertisements have started to lose its effect compared to influencer marketing nowadays because people have become more curious about the lifestyle of influencers. The influencers reveal their lifestyle in front of the masses and they continually inform their followers about the updates by releasing new vlogs. Nevertheless, it can't be denied that women are still affected by cosmetic advertisements taking place in women's magazines. In contemporary women's magazines, it is the role of editors to decide what is fashionable for that season and which cosmetic trends will last longer and to do that they pick some products with their own tastes and disseminate them *via* the magazines as desirable and worthy for the purchase. Also, living in the urban or rural parts of a country has an effect on which media tool women will be influenced most from cosmetic advertisements, as well. For instance, in Southern China, while women living in a highly-developed city, which is Hong Kong, are influenced by women's magazines the most, women living in a more moderate city which is Shenzhen are influenced by the TV ads. Therefore, it is the urban and white-collar women who are mostly under the influence of women's magazines and who try to apply the beauty advises to their own lives.

However, the target audience of macro and micro-celebrities isn't the white-collar women living in urban cities just like the women's magazines at all. Instead, influencers mainly reach to younger people consisting of the generation Y and Z and they try to change their consumption habits. According to expert the consumption habits of millennia's are quite different because they mainly do online shopping by impulse, and they don't bother to go to the malls; instead, they are excited to get their deliveries and they send the cosmetic products, which they don't like back.

The beauty criteria of traditional media

Another important point is that cosmetic advertisements on women's magazines typically show the 'impossible images' of slim and stunningly young female fashion models and they create stress on average women by putting them under pressure. Cosmetic advertisements generally use the faces of fashion models that are absolutely beautiful and whose bodies are very slender that can be described as ultra-thin, and the aforementioned representation is usually unrealistic because it is harder for average women to reach these beauty ideals. Moreover, there is a correlation between race and size in terms of being slim, and women who are born with the genes that lean on to slim are much luckier than those who don't, and these women who don't have these genes have a hard time achieving the white [illegible] however, it is nearly impossible to actualize all the standards of the desired woman image and what is expected from women in the advertisements is a cause of stress and it negatively influences the self-esteem of women because the standards shown in the advertisements are very hard to be met [24].

Social media influencers mostly aren't perfect in body size and they cannot be defined as supermodels. These influencers often have flaws on their faces such as blemishes, pores or small acnes, and while they try branded products, they display their flaws in front of the camera. Therefore, the ideal beauty idea has started to be abandoned because influencers who display their flawy face towards the camera and how they make it perfect by using various products have started to overcome this idea by showing that no one can be perfect. But, the lifestyle that the ideal beauty brings along such as hedonic shopping is still embraced and influencers try different forms of activities in order to actualize that. However, it is possible to say that the trends in cosmetic advertising have been changing and today social media influencers who release YouTube videos about how to do make-up with diverse cosmetic products mostly influence young women rather than traditional cosmetic advertisements. Lastly, this can be pointed out as a major change showing why traditional media is losing effect compared to social media today [25]

Conclusion

Influencer marketing seems to surpass the traditional ways of advertising in terms of the attention that it grabs nowadays. Influencers who have a presence on diverse social media platforms mostly shape the views of younger generations compared to traditional media tools, and they try to effect these people's purchase of decisions by making agreements with cosmetic brands and they encourage younger generations to hedonic shopping by tempting them to try new released products in the market. Influencers are more down to earth compared to the flawless models demonstrated in the cosmetic advertisements on women's magazines and they can create a bond with young consumers by releasing continual vlogs in which they tell their own stories and their own experiences from life. Influencers advise certain products to their followers by showing how they apply them to their faces and bodies, and they have a high influence compared to girlfriends thanks to the parasocial interaction that they build with their vlogs. This way, they help to disseminate electronic word of mouth information quickly about cosmetic products to a larger amount of people and substantially help the brand awareness of cosmetic products. Nevertheless, one thing, which has the most significance, is that they should create authentic content about cosmetic products because otherwise people have trust issues towards influencers, and they can't change the intent of purchase of consumers then. Influencers should decide which particular brand they are going to collaborate with for a long time reasonably because switching brands just to get more monetary rewards create a biased image for the influencers in the long term.

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