

**Czech University of Life Sciences Prague**

**Faculty of Economics and Management**

**Department of Management**



**Bachelor Thesis**

**The role of Instagram Influencers in the Consumer  
Decision Making Process in the French Fashion Industry**

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## BACHELOR THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Leila Baizakova

Economics Policy and Administration  
Business Administration

Thesis title

**The Role of Instagram Influencer in the Consumer Decision Making Process in the France Fashion Industry**

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### Objectives of thesis

The objective of the thesis is to identify the main consumer behaviour characteristics of the Instagram Influencer followers in the chosen market segment and propose an implementation of these findings in the marketing communication on the selected market segment.

### Methodology

The thesis will consist of two parts. The first part should deal with the elementary theoretical overview. It should deal with the theory of consumer behaviour and decision-making, including principles, models, and evaluation regarding the influencer role. The theoretical part of the thesis will be based on the critical review of information gained from the study and a comparison of relevant resources. The fundamental, empirical part will be focused on specific Instagram Influencers' profiles from a selected market segment, fashion brands. Data for the empirical part will be gained using appropriate data collection techniques. Based on the research, the relevant conclusions of the thesis must be drawn.

Recommended structure of the thesis:

1. Introduction – an explanation of the topic importance.
2. Thesis objectives and methodology – the main objective of the thesis will be divided into partial objectives based on the knowledge gained from the study of the consumer behaviour theory. Appropriate methods of data collection and processing will be explained in detail in the methodology of the thesis.
3. Literature review – a critical review of current knowledge in the field of consumer behaviour and decision-making process, its models and tools. The role of an influencer in the individual stages of consumer behaviour and the decision-making process will be studied.
4. Specification of the selected industry – profile of the given market segment.
5. Practical part – analysis of data gained from own research according to the methodology.

6. Results and recommendation – formulation of own proposal of improvements.
7. Conclusion – review of main results and evaluation of the contribution of the theses.
8. References
9. Appendices



## The proposed extent of the thesis

30-40 pages

## Keywords

YouTube, consumer decision making, consumer behaviour.

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## Recommended information sources

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### **Declaration**

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled "The role of Instagram Influencer in the Consumer Decision Making Process in the France Fashion Industry" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 15.03.2022

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I would like to thank Lenka Platilová Vorlíčková, my friends, and my family for their advice and support during my work on this thesis.

# **The role of Instagram Influencer in the Consumer Decision Making Process in the France Fashion Industry**

## **Abstract**

The main goal of this thesis is to understand the impact of fashion influencers through social media platform such as Instagram. The theoretical part describes the consumer decision-making process and other related theories that can affect the consumer's purchase intentions. It also provides information about social media marketing, types of influencers, and a brief introduction to fashion bloggers. In the practical part, French brands and their influencers were analysed in order to see how they affect consumers' decision-making process. This study helps to acknowledge the importance of communication and engagement both the influencer and follower. The sample size of 10 French fashion brands and their influencers were analysed in order to give valuable information for brands on how influencers affect the consumer's behaviour.

**Keywords:** social media, blogger, the decision-making process, fashion influencers, online marketing, Instagram, fashion industry, micro-influencers, market niche



# **Role instagramového influencera v procesu rozhodování spotřebitelů ve francouzském módním průmyslu**

## **Abstrakt**

Hlavním cílem této práce je porozumět vlivu módních influencerů prostřednictvím platformy sociálních médií, jako je Instagram. Teoretická část popisuje proces rozhodování spotřebitele a další související teorie, které mohou ovlivnit nákupní záměry spotřebitele. Poskytuje také informace o marketingu na sociálních sítích, typech influencerů a stručný úvod k módním bloggerům. V praktické části byly analyzovány vybrané francouzské značky a jejich influenceři, aby bylo možné určit, jak ovlivňují rozhodovací proces spotřebitelů. Tato studie pomáhá v pochopení důležitosti komunikace a zapojení jak influencerů, tak followerů. Na vzorku 10 francouzských módních značek a jejich influencerů byla provedena analýza s cílem poskytnout značkám cenné informace o tom, jak influenceři ovlivňují chování spotřebitelů.

**Klíčová slova:** sociální média, blogger, rozhodovací proces, módní influenceři, online marketing, Instagram, módní průmysl, mikroinfluenceři, mezera na trhu

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## **List of abbreviations**

WOM- Word of Mouth  
 Bln- billion  
 PSI- Parasocial Interaction  
 TSL- Theory of Social Learning

## 1. Introduction

The world is extremely changing. Just ten years ago, no one could imagine that the internet will be an ordinary thing. Now people cannot imagine their life without it. In fact, the transition to a networked society, supported by new facts on a daily basis, points to a stronger blurring of the line between real and virtual. No denying that social media as the king of communication is booming worldwide. Social networks are internet platforms, which let users communicate and place information. Social media is an irrefutable strength in today's world. Endless possibilities to create, rate, and share each other's content made an important tool for companies to promote their products. Following the trend, companies adopted the use of social platforms on their businesses by creating multiple accounts without a strategic plan and a specific purpose (Ogbuji, Papazafeiropoulou, 2016). Quick-growing popularity of YouTube and other media helps especially young people not to just find hobbies but make them famous and influence other people. An author and TEDx speaker, Jackie Huba, believes, "Today people don't trust companies. One of the things marketers want to do is to humanize their brand. What better way to do it than put a live person in front of them?" This time a new job "social media influencer" became the dream job for people around the world. Nowadays, people have more opportunities to become successful and famous at an early age. PR and marketing professionals prefer influencers to traditional celebrities. Forbes noted, moreover, in 2018 78% of marketer decision-maker invested in influencers and 43% of them want to invest more than before in the future (Thompson, 2021). To succeed in any business and especially nowadays' dynamic and rapidly progressing marketplace, marketers need to understand — what consumers want, what they aims to, what will satisfy them, etc., Further they need to understand factors that impact and affect consumer decisions and how these decisions are made. In addition, in this age of ever-widening media choices they need not only to identify their target audiences, but they also need to know where and how to reach them.

## **2. Objectives and Methodology**

### **2.1.1 Objectives**

The social media choice for this study is Instagram. This research focuses on understanding how social media influencers affect their followers' decision-making process (buying process) and if Instagram has an impact on the consumer decision-making process in a fashion segment. The objective of this thesis is to identify opportunities businesses facing for fashion brands through social media influencers.

Research Questions:

1. How do consumers determine, process, and analyze the information before a purchasing decision?
2. How does social media marketing work through social media and influencers?
3. How influencers change the consumer's decision-making process?
4. Can a big number of an influencer's followers guarantee a big number of customers for brands and marketers?
5. How influencers affect people's perception of the brand?

### **2.1.2 Methodology**

The first part of this thesis is a literature review. In the literature review, scientific journals, and articles, as well as electronic sources based on keywords (consumer's decision-making process, social media influencers, Instagram, fashion bloggers, fashion industry, apparel market) and content of abstracts are used. Several thematic blogs and internet sources, which deal with problem used as well. It starts with fundamental knowledge about the Five Steps Consumer's Decision-making Process, where it explains how consumers determine and evaluate the purchase decision. Then it covers with psychological factors of the Information Processing Theory and Four Views of Decision Making, which describe other factors that influence the decision-making process. The first part also consists of the research of online marketing and how social media influencers affect brand perception, specifically Instagram influencers in a particular segment. The fashion industry has been chosen as one of the

biggest ecommerce sector <sup>1</sup>with a global market value 795,5 billion US dollars in 2021. (Orendorff, 2022)

The second part of the thesis is practical. Qualitative and quantitative research methods are used. The first step is to select a specific segment- the apparel market. Information from statistical research was collected and the leading country from the fashion industry worldwide were identified. According to Statista's research on leading countries in the fashion industry in 2021 by Brands Countries IPX, France is the country with the fastest growing and popular brands worldwide. Brands Countries IPX represents market dominance in the fashion industry and is based on industry influence, prestige value, and marketing activity of all fashion markets of the country (Sabanoglu, 2021). As a result, France was taken for the analysis.

Brands choice was not random and depended on characteristics (focused on clothing, based in France, have a post with influencers, or be tagged by an influencer). Ten brands were chosen from recommendations of fashion magazines and blogs (frenchgirldaily.com, leoncechenal.com, Vogue) as it focused on French fashion brands that are famous among French people, and should be recommended to wear to achieve "Parisian style", and through the influencer's tag. Brands that have branches in another country except for France and exceeded the mark of 500,000 followers were excluded. Data was collected from French apparel brands and began with an analysis of the number of followers. It decided to filter out the first 10 photos that scored more than 1000 likes on the accounts of people that tagged the brand. It leads to influencers, not traditional celebrities with an audience from 4984 to 1,400,000. Some of the influencers whose accounts were not active, deleted, or deactivated are excluded. Likes and comments were taken for the analysis as well. The percentage of likes towards the number of followers identified as well as the percentage of comments towards the number of followers.

After the analysis of the number of comments towards the number of followers, the most impactful influencers of each brand are identified. The percentage ratio ranges from 0,1% to 3,9%. It was decided to continue analysis of influencers with a percentage number that exceeded 1%. As the result, 2 micro fashion bloggers (2,4% and 3,9%) were identified. The number of followers for chosen micro- influencers was from 4984 and 21,600. For the content analysis, in the first 10 pictures sorted by date of publishing (from the newest to

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<sup>1</sup> Purchase or sell products/ services online

the oldest) of each micro-influencer total number of comments was collected, each 10<sup>th</sup> comment was filtered out and content from relevant comments was evaluated. On pictures, influencers must tag a fashion brand, use hashtags related to a fashion, or wrote about a brand under the post. Posts that are not related to a fashion as well as posts with a hidden number of comments were excluded from the evaluation. Content of the comment must be written in a decent language<sup>2</sup>, relate to a product or an influencer, and show the person's perception of the post. Comments that are rude, humorous, does not relate to the fashion, brand perception, or the influencer (e.g., 'Please follow me on Instagram, what is the name of this place? red is also my favorite color!'), answers to a comment of the other follower (e.g., 'Ooh, yes! I agree'), and emoji (e.g., '❤️❤️❤️, 😊, 🙌', etc.) are not included into the analysis.

Since one of the influencers focused on a French- speaking audience, comments were analyzed both in French and in English. Comments in French translated to English using a Google translator.

Original comments were divided into 5 subgroups: express sympathy for the influencer, express willingness to buy the product, do not like the product/brand, ask for additional information, and like the product/brand. Comments were analyzed by their content and were written in a suitable subgroup.

Microsoft Excel was used for summing the total number of followers, likes, and comments. Also used for calculation percentages.

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<sup>2</sup> Not intended to offend or insult something or someone



### **3. Literature Review**

#### **3.1 Consumer's decision making process**

Consumer behaviour in organisations and society is needed for choosing services, products that can meet their needs and influence them on their purchase decision (Zhao and coll. 2021). It focuses on how consumers spend available resources on consumption-related items. (Nilesh, Gajjar, 2013) Fishbein and Aizen (1975) introduced the Theory of Reason Action (TRA) to explain and analyse the process of decision-making. They thought that the behaviour was decided by the behavioural intention, and the behavioural intention was affected by the attitude toward the individual difference. Nevertheless, Pagani (2011) pointed out that the benefit of the quality of being able to provide good service is not a significant influence to the consumer behaviour, yet the other factors such as the detail, cost, and entertainment become the most significant factors. Aneela Hoque (2018) believes that influencers have high influential power with their ability to make the viewer feel like they know them as their 'friend'. The image of the 'friend' makes the viewer feel more comfortable and trustworthy. They feel honest, honourable, and genuine, far more so than actors and actresses. The bona fide factor is so important for heightening their ability to sell or recommend a product to their audience. Their perceived accessibility is also important. They are not so prestigious and unreachable like celebrities.

The "classic model" is illustrated as a linear model that shows the main stages of the decision-making process. There is plenty of studies, researches, and literature regarding the consumer's decision-making process including Engel's "Consumer Behaviour book" (1968), Howard and Sheth's "The theory of Buyer Behaviour" (1969), Francesco Nicosia's "Nicosia model" (1966). (Karimi and coll. 2015) Even so, most models follow one created by American philosopher John Dewey in 1910, and despite all the technological changes, this model is still relevant to the modern customer experience.

The five stages are in the consumer buying decision process are: 1) Problem recognition, 2) Information search, 3) Evaluation of alternatives, 4) Purchase decision, and 5) Post-purchase behaviour.

##### **3.1.1 Problem Recognition**

The stage starts when consumer realizes that he/she has some problems or needs that they have to solve. Marketer must identify the circumstances that cause particular need. He can

gather information from consumers about how stimuli rouse up interest in products. Using this information, he can use it to develop strategies that will cause consumer interest. An internal stimulus occurs immediately for a basic need, whereas an external stimulus is created by outside influences (commercials, sales, etc.). (Stankevich,2017)

A perfect example of this stage is when a person is trying to eat healthier food but cooks with a lot of oil on the pan. In another case, if he will not put enough cooking oil, his food will stick. He did not know that he needs a non-stick pan before the advertisement he saw online.

### **3.1.2 Information Research**

Finding alternatives in the offline world is quite problematic. At the same time, in the digital world, the problem is to have too many alternatives. (Hofacker and coll.)

Now when the consumer found out the problem, it is time to make some research on it. The information research stage in the consumer decision process tends to change continually, as consumers require obtaining more and more information about products, which can satisfy their needs. Recommendations, as well as information, can be obtained based on previous experience. (Shaw, 2018)

Back to the example of the frying pan. After the customer realized that he need a new pan, he started to collect the information from different sources: newspapers, friends and family's opinions, other people experiences, online. Research has found personal factors such as ability, self-confidence, education, and income can have a positive relationship with the level of information searched. Therefore, if a person realizes that he/she has higher competence to research, then he/she will search for more data (Vinay Karode, 2019).

### **3.1.3 Evaluation of Alternative**

This stage is very important in the decision-making process and also where marketers put more effort into it. When a person undergoes an evaluation of the brand, he chooses the best of them, which gives him more satisfaction. Evaluation requires evaluation of various alternatives with certain selection criteria. They consider price, brand, and many other factors during the evaluation process. (Stankevich, 2017)

The example is ongoing. After his research of other alternatives, the customer stopped between two possible options. The first one is cheaper than the other but has a lower

review, while the second one is more expensive and has better reviews. With all the pros and cons, he made a choice for the second option.

### **3.1.4 Purchase Decision**

When all stages above passed, the customer finally decided to form a purchasing decision. At this stage, the person has evaluated all facts and fell upon a logical conclusion, which is based upon the influence from emotional connections or upon marketing companies, or personal experiences, or a mixture of all. (Stankevich, 2017)

Finally, he decided to purchase the perfect option for him after long research. The payment procedure is done and now it is time to wait until it arrives.

### **3.1.5 Post-purchase Evaluation**

After the consumption, the consumer experiences certain levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction and classifying a correctness of the selected alternative. Two possible outcomes from this phase – satisfaction or dissonance. When consumer dissatisfied with the experience towards the purchase, therefore the buyer begins the process of searching, gathering information, and evaluating other options for a future purchasing decision, which provokes a new behavior. (Sternthal, Craig, 1982)

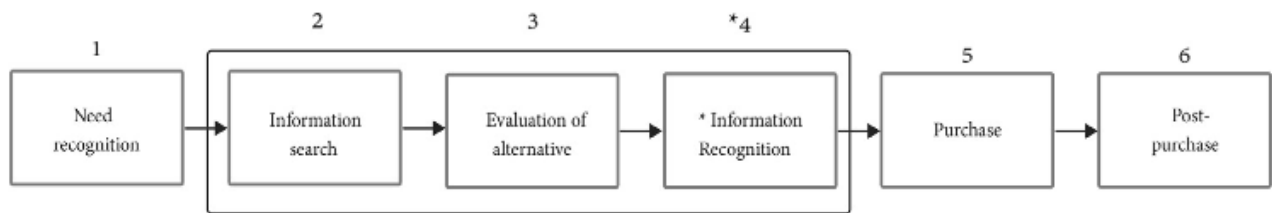
His purchase is arrived and goes above and beyond with meeting his expectations. He raves about it to his friends. Now he will purchase more from this company in the future.

### **3.1.6 Conclusion**

Based on this, suppliers can conclude that customer uses all five stages of the decision-making process in those products that purchased rarely or occasionally. Products purchased with low involvement usually have the most probability to skip one or more stages.

According to Vinay Karode (2019), the satisfaction level depends on many different factors. For example, people with higher education are associated with lower satisfaction; men tend to be more satisfied than women, older consumers usually more satisfied because of the lower expectations. Consumers who are satisfied with their life as a whole also demonstrate higher gratification. Consumer's purchase decision influenced by the information and sharing knowledge they receive about a product through social media, and if s/he holds a positive influence, it leads to the willingness to purchase more in the future.

A satisfied purchaser is more likely to repeat the purchase from the same seller, leave positive reviews and recommend products to friends and family too.



**Figure 1, Decision-making process. Source: “A retentive consumer behavior assessment model of the online purchase decision-making process”, 2021**

### **3.2 Information Processing Theory**

Decision- making process also involves some psychological factors, which the model above failed to explain. Thus, the information processing theory of consumer choice was proposed by James Bettman (1979).

Bettman assumes that consumers have limited ability to find and process information related to advertising products and use simple strategies rather than complex choices in decision-making. In other words, when choosing a product, consumers are under pressure from two different forces. On the one hand, we need to gather more information about the goods, feedback from other buyers, and better understand their property. On the other hand, it means a constant waste of effort and time, and consumers are interested in spending as little effort and time on product choices as possible. (Bettman, Luce, Payne, 1998)

This theory consists of seven levels:

- 1) Information processing capabilities
- 2) Motivation
- 3) Attention and awareness of perceived
- 4) Information collection and assessment
- 5) Memory
- 6) Process of Decision-making
- 7) Consumption and Learning process

### **3.2.1 Information processing capabilities**

The author assumed that the consumer has limited resources for processing information (lack of time, desire, information, etc.); consumers are not interested in complex calculations and complex searches. To cope with resource constraints, the consumer is likely to choose a strategy that makes the selection process easy and enjoyable. (Prakash, 2017)

### **3.2.2 Motivation**

Motivation is central in this model since consumer choice is designed to achieve one or more goals. The motivation determines the direction and intensity of the search for additional information in the course of the decision to buy. To explain the consumer's choice of an alternative, the author (Bettman, 1979) introduces a hierarchy of objectives, a series of intermediate steps that make the choice easier for the consumer. Bettman assumes that consumers already have their own purchasing experience and therefore the consumer does not need to go through all the stages of the hierarchy. This mechanism assigns and organizes consumer efforts to evaluate alternatives. (Prakash, 2017)

### **3.2.3 Attention and awareness of perceived**

The components of this stage are closely related to the hierarchy of consumer objectives. It concerns primarily the processing of impressions of the product received by the consumer. The consumer is paying attention to the product and trying to understand his impressions. The creator of the consumer's behavior model distinguishes two types of attention: arbitrary and involuntary. The first type is a conscious step, with the consumer targeting the effort to achieve the goal. The second, involuntary, is a response to events that complicate the process of choice, for example, by obtaining additional information from outside. Both types influence the consumer's choice of a product. In addition, the consumer continuously analyses the information in his possession to determine whether it is sufficient for a decision to be taken or whether there is a need to take further steps to find additional information. (Prakash, 2017)

### **3.2.4 Information collection and assessment**

If the consumer believes that he does not have sufficient information to make a purchase decision, he will look for information from outside sources. The newly received information is analyzed and evaluated for its usefulness in the selection process. The consumer continues to search for information until he decides that further search is too difficult and that the time and effort spent on it is too great in comparison with the value of the goods or services purchased. (Prakash, 2017)

### **3.2.5 Memory**

Component through which the information flows. All the collected information is kept in the user's memory and the stored knowledge is, first of all, referred to when it needs to choose a product or service. If he decides that his knowledge is not sufficient, he will certainly look again for additional product information. (Prakash, 2017)

### **3.2.6 Process of decision-making**

Bettman believes that the choice in the assessment process may be influenced by factors that have arisen in the decision-making process. These factors can be related to the individual, to the social environment (disagreements within the family or with colleagues), to situational factors, (decisions need to be taken urgently). It is therefore likely that the consumer will use different choice strategies in different situations. (Prakash, 2017)

### **3.2.7 Consumption and learning process**

In this stage, the model explains results after the purchase choice. The consumer in this step will gain experience after evaluating the alternative. The experience provides the consumer with information that can be applied to make the future choice decisions. (Prakash, 2017)

### **3.2.8 Conclusion**

In comparison with consumer decision-making process, in this theory the consumer portrayed as a person with limited possibilities for information processing. This theory mostly used when purchasing something cheap or simple (drinks, batteries etc.), where

people most likely would not waste their time by searching information about this product. Bettman discussed the theory in detail, but doesn't identify the criteria on which the consumer can rely when refer on one or other option. The focus is on the cognitive component of consumer behavior and awareness.

### **3.3 Four Views of Decision-making**

Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) described four models of decision-making as an understanding of how and why people behave in a certain way.

#### **3.3.1 An Economic view**

Economics is acknowledged as the main discipline in marketing. Buyer in this type of view is often characterized as a consumer who allocates expenses rationally to maximize utility. However, in reality, this face some criticism about these assumptions. A person cannot have a "perfect" decision and does not maximize price-quantity in terms of economic consideration and often they will settle down with a "good enough" decision. (Solomon, 2009)

#### **3.3.2 A Passive view**

In contrast with the rational economic view, a passive view describes the person who is mainly passionate about promotions and advertising. They tend to make irrational impulsive purchase decisions based on promotional offers. This type of view is criticized as it fails to describe the process of the decision-making stages during consumer's choice evaluation (search additional information, evaluate alternatives, etc.). Sometimes it is based on emotions and moods. Therefore, it is wrong to assume that the consumer will be passive while making purchase decisions. (Solomon, 2009)

#### **3.3.3 A Cognitive view**

The Cognitive view considers the consumer as a problem solver and information seeker. He actively gathers all necessarily information from trusted sources, friends, or family members and evaluate alternatives to make the most satisfactory decision. (Solomon, 2009)

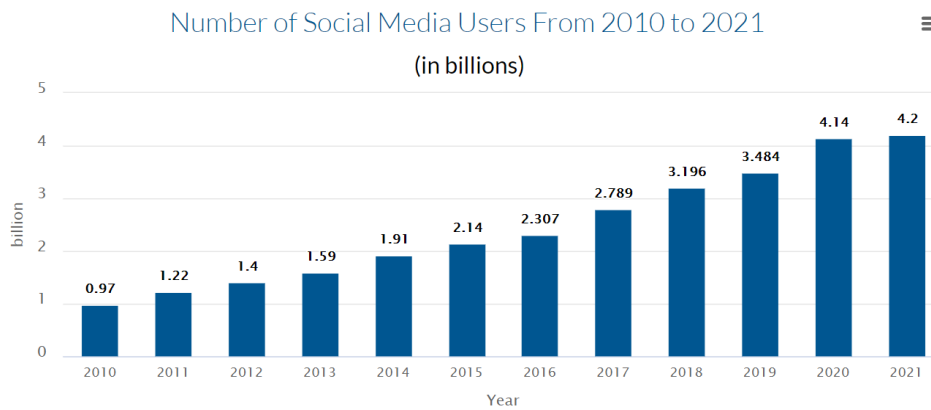
### **3.3.4 An Emotional view**

An emotional (or Impulsive) view involved buyers to make a purchase made on impulse. They usually do not undergo the process of searching, evaluating, and deciding. Positive emotions play an important role in the decision-making process and influence customers' decisions on where to shop, how long, and how often. (Solomon, 2009)

## **3.4 Social Media**

Social media plays a significant role in communicating with people and in relationship building (Ouiridi, 2014). It creates and allows sharing of user-generated content, learning new skills, and building networks and communities with common interests. Platforms are widely used by users of all age groups, gender, educational and cultural backgrounds (Persaud and coll. 2012). According to West and coll. (2011), 10 years ago 83% of 500 companies were using social media platforms to communicate with customers. Companies feel challenging to face the pressure of creating social platforms as customers expected (Persaud and coll. 2012). Many organizations and businesses engage social media to gain opportunities it provides. A study has shown that companies do not have strategies to select a suitable social media platform, however; social sites has a high positive effect on the business community and let them break new ground of communication with the customer. Clay Shirky on TED discussed how social media and the internet itself give us many to many patterns when at the same time television, radio, books give us one to many patterns. According to him, one of the biggest changes is that all media are digitized. The internet became a carriage for all media; calls, magazines, movies, and books digitized. "We Are Social" in collaboration with Hootsuite, estimated that at the start of 2021, number of users were 4.2 billion, which is 31.4% higher than in 2018 and 332.99% up from 0.97 billion in 2010.



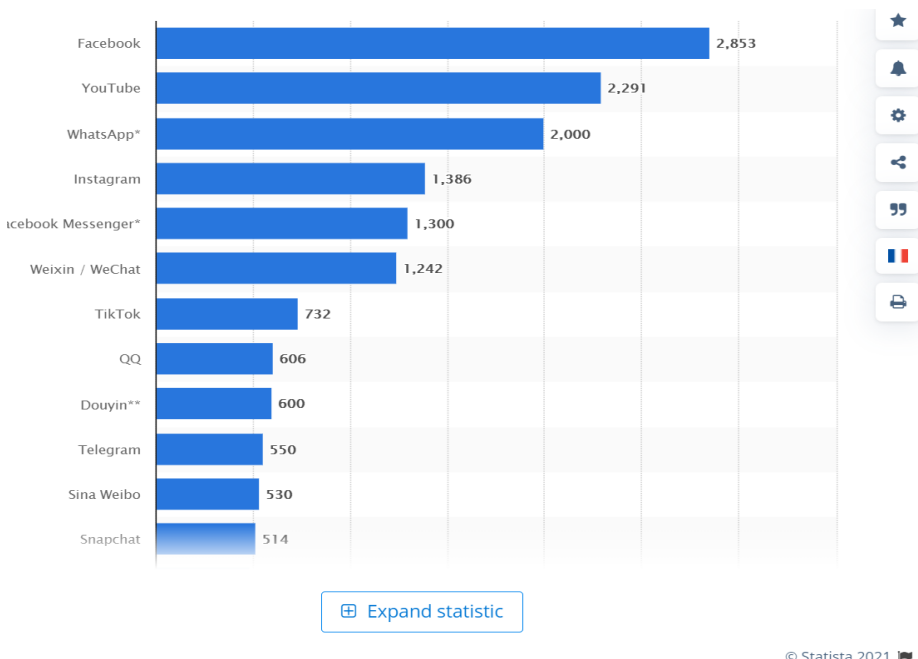


Source: Statista, Data Reportal, & eMarketer

Designed by FinancesOnline

**Figure 2, Number of Social Media Users. Source: financesonline.com**

On Figure3, the data presented by Statista Research Department and released on July 2021 where the market leader Facebook was the first social media network to exceed 1 billion users and currently comprise over 2.853 active users. The company also owns four of the biggest media platform such as Facebook (core platform), WhatsApp (2 billion), Facebook Messenger (1.3 billion), and Instagram (1.386 billion). The second place is owned by Youtube with 2.291 active users. Top- ranked social platforms originated mostly from the USA or China.



© Statista 2021

**Figure 3, Number of Active Users in Top Ranked Apps. Source: Statista.com**

### **3.4.1 Functions of Social Media**

Social media has a powerful influence on the personal and professional lives of individuals and organizations. It focuses on the formation of a social connection between individuals and groups with the same or different interests. The importance of social web as a conclusive source of information has created a new and necessary channel of communication. It is a quick and powerful way to communicate thoughts and feelings. The management of social media platform used by professionals and academicians have also been used for business purposes.

**The functions of the social network include the following (Sergeevich, 2013):**

#### **1. Communication**

As part of the communication function, people communicate, share news, information (photo, video, audio, links, comments) collaborate to achieve shared goals.

#### **2. Information**

The flow of information is twofold, as communicators act as communicators and as recipients.

#### **3. Identification**

When creating a profile, the user fills in the information about himself.

#### **4. Socializing (self-developing)**

#### **5. Self-actualizing (self-presentation)**

### **3.5 Online Marketing**

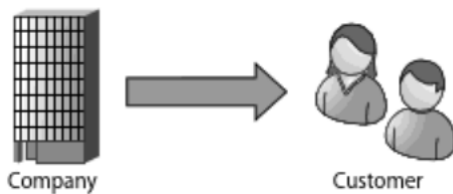
Nowadays the business marketplace is getting extremely aggressive and competitive; to support digital development social media changed the situation. (Khan, Islam 2017 p.521) Internet and social media changed people's buying habits by providing them 24/7 access to online shops, full of ranges of a product, unlimited sources of information about the product, etc. Moreover, they (consumers) can be a part of companies' marketing strategy by rating, leaving feedback, answering a questionnaire, and so on. They became "participants" more than viewers. Engagement in a social business term means that the buyers would like to spend time and energy to affect the business (Evans and coll. 2010). The main advantages for the firms of using social media are opportunity to gain information on buyers' tastes. This information is used in new product development, market segmentation (Sachoff, 2018).

Unlike traditional media, social technologies focus on collaboration rather than impression. Dr. Nilesh B. Gajjar (2011) also explained societal marketing concept as the main component of organizational effectiveness that builds a good image of the company, at the same time lack of social responsibility negatively affects the purchase decision.

### 3.5.1 Social Media Impact

Social media helps firms to increase brand recognition, brand appreciation by communicating with customers and let them communicating with each other as well. A positive image of the brand will create brand loyalty beyond the traditional methods.

Figure 4 illustrates the traditional business model where the company provided a product or a service with no further dialog.



**Figure 4, Traditional Business. Source: Social Media Marketing. The Next Generation of Business Engagement, 2010**

Figure 5 shows the evolved business model. The difference between these two models is that companies send marketing offers to the customer after providing service or the product clients provide feedback, directly or through the questionnaire. Great opportunity to listen and understand, make a response and increase the connection with the customer. (Evans and coll. 2010)



**Figure 5, Evolved Business. Source: Social Media Marketing. The Next Generation of Business Engagement, 2010**

Social Media platforms can also collaborate with e-commerce platforms to create more functions for users. According to “We Are Social”, TikTok for Business and Shopify has extended their partnership allowing users to synchronize their catalogue and be able to add “Shopping” tab on their page. At the same time, Shopify merchants will be able to tag their products in TikTok videos. One of the biggest and most well-known influencer, Kylie

Jenner, as an early adopter of this service, use these new features to increase sales of her cosmetic brand “Kylie Cosmetics”. (WeAreSocial.com)

Hootsuite researched that about 130 million Instagram users tap on shopping posts every month. It makes it easier for businesses to sell their product directly from the app.

Facebook has an advertising audience of 2.14 billion, 58% of people say they are more interested in the product or brand after seeing it in Stories, 50% of users visited the website after seeing the service or the product in Stories. (Hootsuite.com)

### **3.6 Word-of-Mouth**

The question: “What exactly is the marketing role?” can be answered in a more innovative way as a goal to deepen relationships and trust with the customer, companies who are interested in them, their needs and an experience. Customers stay loyal if they are emotionally connected to the company and the best way to connect- talk. Today companies paying attention to how to use Word-of-Mouth Marketing. George Siverman, the author of “The secrets of Word of Mouth Marketing” (2001) said, “Getting people to talk often, favorably, to the right people in the right way about your product is far and away the most important thing that you can do as a marketer”.

According to Lois Kelly (2007), technologies made it possible to communicate with people through different ways- starting with inexpensive online calls to blogs with possibilities to send feedback.

The old research of Columbia University (1940) concluded that advertisement does not influence the public but a small group, which then influence the public through WOM (Delagrave, Pierre 2006)

However, it has negative consequences if it comes to negative recommendations. To cover one negative comment it takes five positive. As stated by Barber and coll. (2010), Word of Mouth Marketing (WOMM) is powerful considering these five things:

1. It's honest- person is most likely to believe the person s/he knows
2. It is real- real people telling other people in real time.
3. It is catching- people love to share their experience and other love to listen.
4. It's custom driven- customer can decide when s/he will listen.
5. It's personal- the person who is trying to help

### **3.7 Influencers**

An influencer is a person with power and authority who is able to influence other's people decisions based on his/her authority. As they have an ability to share their lifestyle, hobbies, and interests, they also can come up with an idea and shape trends. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the growth of social media, a new type "social media influencers" became widely used. Now it can be everybody, from a kid to an animal or even a nonexistent person. Mainstream celebrities were the original influencer and they still play an important role, but now the door is open for a more diverse set of human beings. An adoption of using smartphones and social media broke down traditional barriers and empower a new generation to share their knowledge and experience, build an audience.

Mark Schaefer, social media strategist and "Return on Influence" author said, "If I wanted to be known 25 years ago, I'd have to be in the newspaper and on TV's programs very frequently and there would be some gatekeeper. Someone else would have to make a decision for me to be known. Now we don't have to go through the gatekeeper and wait to be picked- we can pick ourselves". (Backaler, 2018)

More and more people are dreaming about being an influencer, especially children.

Working online from home, meeting interesting people, traveling, and getting free products all these things are now associated with the word "influencer". When users perceive media persona as somebody similar to them, social attractiveness is the main factor that influences PSI (Parasocial Interaction). Online users perceive the media persona as a friend, which gives the feeling to be a part of the social world. (Yuksel, Labrecque, 2016)

**The next four levels of influencers below based on the audience size:**

#### **3.7.1 Mega- Influencer**

This type of Influencer included actors, singers, athletes, and so on. It can also include online famous people with a huge number of followers who achieved status "celebrity famous like". Usually, they have more than 1 million followers on at least one social platform. For marketers, it can be difficult to work with them due to high expenses (it can be 1million US dollars per post) and a good brand reputation. For example, Kim Kardashian, Kylie Jenner, and Charlie D'Amelio (TikTok famous). (Allasani, Goretz, 2019)

### **3.7.2 Macro- Influencer**

A macro influencer is one-step down from a mega influencer. That person has some amount of influence on people's attitudes, behavior in the area in what they are passionate about and have professional skills. His/her number of followers is about 200000-1million. Brands are more willing to work with them. For instance, passionate food blogger or beauty product reviewer. (Allasani, Goretz, 2019)

### **3.7.3 Micro-Influencer**

An ordinary people more known in a specific circle of their interest. It is more about the interaction between micro-influencer and his/her followers than the level of influence. For this type of influencer, it is not necessary to have a big amount of followers or wide online reach (between 2000-100000 followers). It is enough to be passionate about a particular topic, brand, etc. Chef's cooking blog, mother's blog with 3000 followers can be a perfect example. (Allasani, Goretz, 2019)

### **3.7.4 Nano-Influencer**

The newest type of influencer with the smallest number of followers (Fewer more than 1000). Despite that, s/he can keep followers interested and actively engage with them, listen to pieces of advice. (Allasani, Goretz, 2019)

### **3.7.5 Types of Influencers based on content:**

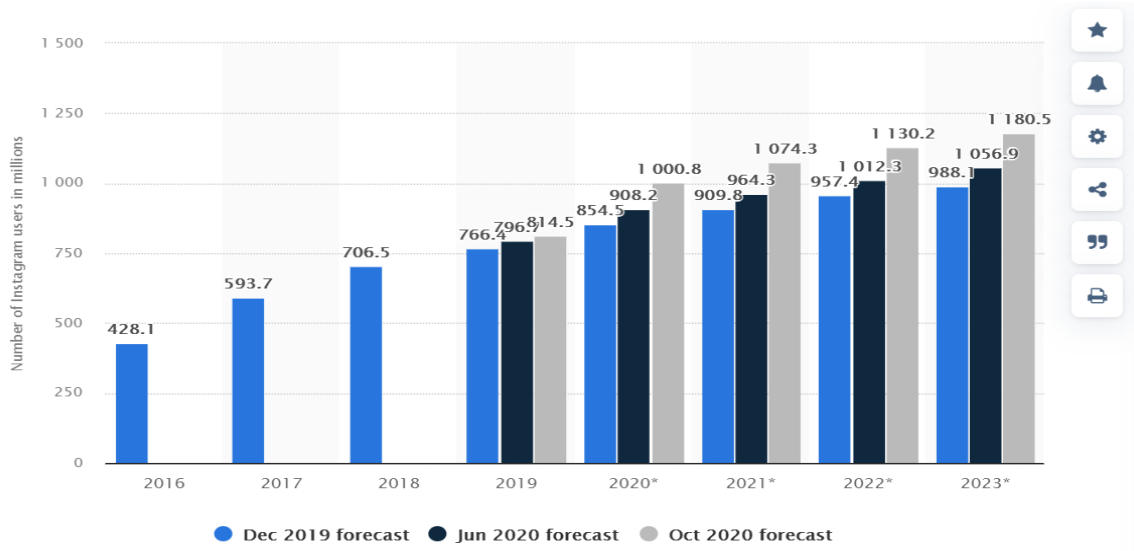
- Fashion
- Food
- Beauty
- Gamers
- Vloggers
- Travel
- Fitness
- Entertainment

### **3.7.6 Influencer Marketing**

To manage social media and keep up with competitors it is highly important to engage influencers in the strategy. More and more companies trying to increase their expenses on influencer marketing. To work with influencers companies usually uses paid agreement to share their product with a proper description of it on social media platform, such as Instagram, TikTok, etc. Another way is to give their product as a gift if they are confident about it for him/her to review. Collaboration is a marketing tool used to create something special with an influencer in order to let followers purchase the product from their favorite blogger. (Backaler, 2018) Influencers who are idolized and admired by the public can bring credibility and recognition to the brand.

### **3.8 Instagram**

The popularity of Instagram is growing up dramatically since 2010, especially among young people and photography lovers. Now it is one of the fast-growing social app widely used by opinion leaders. It is a perfect platform for creating posts, sharing photos and videos. Functions of Instagram are updating every month and there is always something new and fresh to try. Nowadays this app is also used as a communication platform or a marketing tool. From following user's favorite celebrity to tagging a friend in a photo or a video- Instagram has it all. For now, new functions of Instagram allow users to set up a "business profile", view insights, see daily online activity, reels, and save photos or videos. Moreover, Instagram is the most popular app among customers to follow their favorite brand. (Holmes, 2015). For November 2021, the giants in the global fashion market such as Prada, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, etc. could comprise over 40 million followers. Instagram as a marketing tool is a must-have for marketers because of its high approachability. Shopping lovers turn Instagram into a product discovery platform. According to Statista research, the number of users on Instagram at the beginning of 2021 was 910 million active users, and then it is going up to 1074 billion at the end of the year. Forecasts for 2022 and 2023 users are expected to reach approximately 1.2 billion. (Statista.com)



**Figure 6, Number of Instagram Users 2019-2023. Source: Statista.com**

### 3.8.1 Instagram as a marketing tool

Today there are no businesses that do not promote their products on Instagram. The 2020 research of Smartly.io shows that companies plan to spend half of their budget on social ads; Facebook as a king of social media had 96%; Instagram had 22% of marketers who planned to spend the most on social ads. It's followed by Twitter with 56%. (Soderlund, 2020)

Business Instagram gives an opportunity to keep up with trends. For instance, allows reaching customers in one click and promoting the product to a younger generation. Most of the users on Instagram are Millennial and Generation Z, so makes it easier for the marketer to reach people from a particular group. Posting high-quality pictures on Instagram (creating visual content) produces more engagement, increases brand awareness, and is more effective to remember the information than a text-only post.

Online shopping has become a most preferable way to choose and order due to its speed and convenience. It is useful, especially, for small, medium sized apparel brands who are mostly promote their products through social media. (Bharti, 2021)

### 3.8.2 Influencers in Decision-making Process

To understand how influencers affect the Decision-making process, "Theory of Social Learning" (1963) by A. Bandura and R. Walters is used. According to this theory, people learn through imitation, observation and modelling from other people. It means that adults



and children can learn new information and behavior via direct or indirect interaction. Three ways of factor's origin was highlighted. The first way is "cognitive (personal) factors", second is behavioral and environment factors. Makgosa (2010) explained an impact of celebrities on purchase behavior. Aligned with that, SLT is a contextual foundation in considering social media influencers who can build a purchase intention. Therefore, this theory claimed that individual's intention to buy is highly influenced by source reliability, expertise, product match-up. (Lim and co, 2017)

Being a voice of the brand, driving product engagement, and desirability of the product that is what marketers expect to have from the influencer. Make a feeling that they are part of followers' life by showing an attractiveness, similarity and trustworthiness. Influencers who are appear as an "expert" in a particular field perceived as a high trustworthy and expertise. So people tend to follow his/her towards the advertising messages, recommendations. (Leparoux and co, 2019)

## **4 Specification of the selected industry**

### **4.1 Fashion Industry**

The fashion industry referred to one of the most important part of the worldwide economy. The importance of dressing up is growing every year due to the high clothes production and diversity of designers in the global market. Of course, there is nothing abnormal about it because good quality, elegant clothes have always been a priority for people to show their high social status and a good taste in fashion. Nowadays, people use them to find their style and express their feelings. According to Statista research illustrated in Figure 8, global fashion sales in 2018 were 534 billion US dollars. In 2021, it is goes up to 662bln US dollars and expected to grow to 873bln US dollars by the year 2023. (Ward, 2021) It proves that the fashion industry is upward increasing trend and the fashion market is growing. Fashion products build emotional and psychological value when they are rare, good quality, and at a high price. Fashion is art; it is all about self-expression, being creative, breaking old concepts, and building a new one.

The disadvantage of the large production of clothes every year is that it is detrimental to the environment due to high water consumption and carbon emissions. Therefore,

companies searching for different ways to reduce emissions, recycle or use by its maximum by sharing. (Shrivastava and co., 2020)

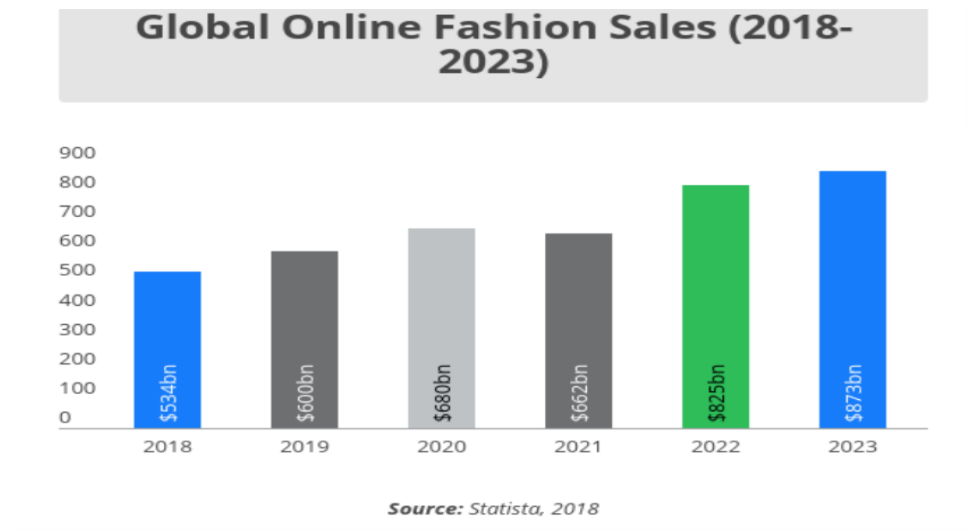


Figure 7, Fashion Ecommerce: 11 Essential statistics. Source: SaleCycle.com

## 4.2 Fashion bloggers

Fashion bloggers are the newest players in the fashion industry. For millennial consumers whose influenced by social media, such as Instagram, recommendations from fashion influencer has a valuable impact on them. By high clothing production, people became more fashion-sensitive and more affected by fashion trends. (Akawut, Jansom, 2021) They are becoming real celebrities, brands inviting them to the designer’s show. According to price segment in the fashion industry, fashion bloggers can be divided into two types:

1. Luxury fashion blogger
2. Mass market fashion blogger

### 4.2.1 Fashion bloggers and an ideal body image

Psychologist Leon Festinger proposed the “Theory of social comparison” in 1954 where he has explored human nature, which tends to compare one another in different aspects of their life.

Comparison can have negative consequences for a person who feels incompetent compared to a more capable human being. On the other hand, social comparison can lead to

improvement and a desire for a better life. At first, this theory was used for comparing a person's well-being, social status, but today it's also applying for a physical appearance and body image. Fashion advertising portrayed ideal body image and extreme beauty standards for people to fit in. As a result, this leads to low self-esteem, dissatisfaction with their own body, and other problems from psychological and sociological perception. Social media has an undeniable influence on social comparison. Fashion models always have been criticised for being too thin and underweight, which leads to low confidence among teenagers. The growing status of fashion bloggers in the fashion industry explained by their ability to be their own model and display fashion looks that break the rules about an ideal body image. Compared to traditional fashion models, fashion bloggers teach their followers to find their own style, be confident and accept who they are. (Choi, 2020)

#### **4.3 Fashion blogs and its influence**

Fashion blogs have a crucial impact on the decision-making process. Recommendations can change their decision on purchasing, recommend a specific brand and that is how emotional connections appear. Followers perceive the brand that actively engages with the blogger as recommended and trustworthy. A positive image of the blogger affects the positive image of the brand. Fashion blogs can be used to discuss fashion trends, how to mix different brands, and spread ideas. It is advertising for both designers and brands of various standings. It can give a start to a small business or no-name designer as well as a high-end designer to remind the public about its name. Many big organizations started a fashion blog and it is worth the mainstream media coverage from well-known media publications, such as New York Times, the Rolling Stones magazine, etc.

In summary, a fashion blog is a highly successful integral part of the fashion world. As fashion is timeless, blogs never stay the same; they always have to be updated. It is required a lot of time and effort to keep up with trends worldwide. In addition, of course, in a business sphere, there is serious competition.

#### **4.4 Apparel Market**

Apparel market includes all clothing segments and can be divided into the following product lines: men's apparel, women's and, children's. By the type, the market is segmented into formal wear, casual wear, sportswear, etc. Based on distribution channels,

it's classified into department stores, traditional specialist shops, ordering by catalog. Jewelry, accessories, as well as handbags, does not include.

Revenue of the global apparel market in 2020 was approximately 1.46 trillion U.S. dollars. It's expected to grow to 2.5 trillion by the year 2025.

Despite the current global situation, the apparel market is continuing to grow. Even well-known brands have to work hard to provide their share of the market. (Statista, 2021)

## 5. Practical Part

Cambridge dictionary (2021) describes “niche market” as a small segment of the economy's trade, frequently involving specialized products. M. Vaigel (2014) characterized it as a small part of the market without intensive competition that includes customers with the same interest, which are not satisfied with existing products.

The leading country for the fashion industry worldwide in 2021 is France, so it was taken for further research. The sample size of 10 local niche fashion brands that established in France. Brands are considered niche because they are focused only on clothes. All these brands promote their products via the Internet, especially social media. Instagram was taken to analyze how fashion influencers affect brand reputation.

Brands are presented below:

<b>1. MaisonCleo</b>
<b>2. Mirae</b>
<b>3. Ateliercailleparis</b>
<b>4. Mesdemoisellesparis</b>
<b>5. Ernestleoty</b>
<b>6. Rouje</b>
<b>7. Idanoparis</b>
<b>8. Ariadibarishop</b>
<b>9. Imparfaite</b>
<b>10. Admiseparis</b>

Table 1- Brands

## 5.1 Analysis of number of followers

In the analysis, the total number of followers, likes, and comments were collected, processed, and analyzed. The number of followers of influencers for each brand ranged from 4984 to 1,400,000. The number of comments ranged from 3 to 951, and the number of likes under the post from 1007 to 87,489. The more detailed information about number of followers, likes, and comments for each of the influencers can be found in Appendix 1. Percentage of likes towards the number of followers identified. The higher result shows audience that is more active on the brand's Instagram page. On the table below it is possible to see that the brand Ariadibarishop is leading with almost 22%. Despite the fact that the number of followers is not the biggest, total amount of likes is 255,559, which is the highest number among all 10 brands. It can be assumed that, Ariadibarishop chooses influencers who know their audience and have high accessibility. It is possible to see that Influencer number 7 (see Appendix 1) with 300,000 followers got 225,999 likes under the post, which is close to the number of followers of this influencer. It may be stated that the Influencer n.7 is approachable for the audience and considered trustworthy. It is recommended for marketers to consider her and offer a collaboration.

Brand	Total followers	Total Likes	% of likes compared to followers
Maison Cleo	1,769,500	45,228	2,55
Mirae	1,312,500	53,262	4,05
Mesdemoisellesparis	2,435,600	118,958	4,88
Ernestleoty	2,540,600	37,415	1,47
Ateliercamilleparis	862,927	18,090	2,09
Rouje	821,143	26,153	3,18
Idanoparis	565,200	22,688	4,01
Ariadibarishop	1,169,900	255,559	21,8
Imparfait	1,818,950	31,490	1,73
Admiseparis	1,152,700	39,155	3,39
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,449,020</b>	<b>647,998</b>	<b>4,48</b>

Table 2- Analysis of number of followers

The brand Ernestleoty with the total number of 2,540,600 followers got only 1,47%, which is the lowest result. Ernestleoty's Influencer number 1 got 0,5% of likes compared to the

number of followers, which is the lowest indicator among all influencers of all brands. So, influencer n.1 could be paying more attention to her followers and identify what they want to see from her. At the same time, Idanoparis with a smaller number of followers has a higher percentage (4,01%) despite the lowest number of followers. As shown in Appendix 1, influencer number 5 got 0,67% of likes compared to the number of followers, which is low. Overall, all brands had at least 1%, but no brand exceeded 22%. It could be stated that a high number of followers does not guarantee a big number of likes.

## 5.2 Analysis of comments

The table below presents the brand name, the total number of followers of each influencer of this brand, the total number of comments, and the percentage of comments toward followers.

<b>Brand</b>	<b>Total Followers</b>	<b>Total comments</b>	<b>% comments compared to followers</b>
<b>MaisonCleo</b>	<b>1,769,500</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>0,02</b>
<b>Mirae</b>	<b>1,312,500</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>0,04</b>
<b>Mesdemoisellesparis</b>	<b>2,435,600</b>	<b>1434</b>	<b>0,05</b>
<b>Ernestleoty</b>	<b>2,540,600</b>	<b>1308</b>	<b>0,05</b>
<b>Ateliercamilleparis</b>	<b>862,927</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>0,07</b>
<b>Rouje</b>	<b>821,143</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>0,09</b>
<b>Idanoparis</b>	<b>565,200</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>0,15</b>
<b>Ariadibarishop</b>	<b>1,169,900</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>0,07</b>
<b>Imparfait</b>	<b>1,818,950</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>0,03</b>
<b>Admiseparis</b>	<b>1,152,700</b>	<b>868</b>	<b>0,07</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,449,020</b>	<b>8583</b>	<b>0,06</b>

Table 3- Analysis of comments

It is possible to see that the highest result got the brand Idanoparis like in the previous calculation (Table2). The detailed percentage in Appendix1 shows that Influencer 9 is the leading among other Idanoparis' influencers with 0,4%. It can be explained by the fact that the audience wants to be emotionally involve in a discussion with not only the influencer

but with other followers as well. They may feel that their thoughts are important and desire to build and maintain a good relationship with each other. Total followers and total comments number are relatively low but still the brand got first place. Despite the fact that Ernestleoty is leading with the total number of 2,540,600 followers and Mesdemoisellesparis with the total number of comments, which is 1434 their percentage equals 0,5. Ariadibarishop got one of the lowest scores when in the previous calculation it was in the first place. Concerning MaisonCleo, the brand got the lowest number this time and also was one of the lowest results in Table2. Influencers 8 and 9 got the 0,1 and 0,36 % which is compared to other brands is low. While no value exceeded 1%. It could mean that the audience is not involve in discussions and don't really interested in products that influencers are offering. Maybe they should change their target audience or influencers that are advertising the products. The difference in results could be explained that influencers' target audience is more suitable for a particular brand, which is satisfies them. Identifying the target audience is very important for marketers so they can analyze and choose the proper influencer that will present the brand appropriately and help it to grow. Taking everything into account, it can be stated that the high number of followers does not guarantee a big and active audience.

### 5.3 Content analysis

Only 2 influencers from the previous analysis can step forward to the next evaluation. From the first 10<sup>th</sup> pictures listed by the date of publishing (newest to oldest), the total number of comments under each post was collected and every 10<sup>th</sup> comment calculated. The number of relevant comments was determined. These comments were divided into 5 subgroups: express sympathy to the Influencer, express willingness to buy the product, don't like the product/ brand, ask for additional information, and like the product. For Fani.lafigure total number of comments were 2001, each 10<sup>th</sup> comment is 200, and number of relevant comments- 67 (33,5%), where another 133 (66,5%) comments were irrelevant. Annagmurphy got 890 total comments, each 10<sup>th</sup> comment is 89, and relevant comments were 59 (66,3%) when the rest 30 (33,7%) are irrelevant.

<b>Influencer</b>	<b>Total comments</b>	<b>Each 10<sup>th</sup> comment</b>	<b>Number of relevant comments</b>
<b>Fani.lafigure</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Annagmurphy</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>59</b>

<b>Total</b>	<b>2891</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>126</b>
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Table 4- Content analysis

## Fani.lafigure

The first influencer is Fani.lafigure. Table 5 shows division into subgroups, the total amount of comments, and the percentage ratio. The largest group with 52,5% is the “like the product/brand” subgroup. It represents that the audience is satisfied with the product or brand promoted by the influencer. High commitment proves that the influencer knows how to present the product to her followers, so she can expect positive feedback. The second is the “express sympathy for the influencer” subgroup. With 41,8% it can be assumed that Fani.lafigure receives a lot of support and love from her audience. They have deep emotional connections and trust. Next is the “ask for additional information” division. It is possible to see that only 3 (4,5%) persons got into this subgroup, which is a relatively low result. It may be considered that the influencer, Fani.lafigure always trying to tag or write about the brand and other additional information, so followers don’t need to ask about it in the comments. The fourth one is the “express willingness to buy the product” subgroup with 1,5%, which is very low. It can be explained by the fact that not everyone can afford brands worn by the influencer or maybe they think that particular color/design will not suit them, so they prefer to see it on others. 0% got the “don’t like the product/brand” subgroup, which means that there is no person who doesn’t like the product. Fani.lafigure appears as a responsible social media person who works with the brands that would match her style, meet the needs and satisfy her followers as well. She recommends only brands that she wears herself and that is why her audience is so loyal. Overall, marketers or brands can expect positive feedback while working with this particular Influencer. Increases reach, boosts visibility.

<b>Division into subgroups</b>	<b>Total amount of comments</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1. Express sympathy for the Influencer</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>41,8%</b>
<b>2. Express willingness to buy the product</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1,5%</b>
<b>3. Don’t like the product/brand</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>



<b>4. Ask for additional information (where to buy, brand's name, name of the model etc.)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4,5%</b>
<b>5. Like the product/brand (outfit, colors, overall look)</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>52,5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5- Influencer 1**

## **Annagmurphy**

The second Influencer is Annagmurphy. For her division number 5 “like the product/brand” is the biggest percentage ratio with more than half (56%) from the total number of relevant comments. It can be stated that Annagmurphy’s followers are satisfied with the brands that she promoted or her fashion style overall is very similar to what they wear or would like to wear. “Express sympathy for the Influencer” is in second place with 37,3%. While collecting the comments under posts it was noticed that the Influencer tends to answer to almost all comments of her followers. It can be one of the main motivations for followers to leave feedback, so they can wait for her response back. It will make them feel engaged in the discussion and their thoughts considerable. The smallest number of comments were for the “Don’t like the product” and the “ask for additional information” subgroups. They got only 5 and 1,7%. While there were no comments that would express willingness to buy the product, which can mean that people are not driven enough by one post to buy the product or need to evaluate other sources of information.

<b>Division into subgroups</b>	<b>Total amount of comments</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1. Express sympathy for the Influencer</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>37,3%</b>
<b>2. Express willingness to buy the product</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>3. Don’t like the product/brand</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5%</b>

<b>4. Ask for additional information (where to buy, brand's name, name of the model etc.)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1,7%</b>
<b>5. Like the product/brand (outfit, colors, overall look)</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6- Influencer 2**

### **Conclusion**

In summary, all two influencers left a positive impression. Both had a significant number of those who liked the product or brand as well as those who expressed sympathy for them. It demonstrates Influencers' great ability to present the product to an audience. They positively affect brand perception. Annagmurphy presents a high approachability for her followers, and Fani.lafigue shows her audience a beautiful minimalistic design of her Instagram page. Although, Annagmurphy has much more followers than Fani.lafigue, there was not much difference in results. The least frequent questions are related to the "express willingness to buy the product" subgroup. It can be explained by the fact that people need to gather more information about the product from other sources before they will make a purchase decision.

### **6. Discussion**

The thesis was triggered by an interest in how in a modern society Instagram influencers affect purchase intentions through social media platform and how to make it useful for marketers and brands. This study shows that consumer behavior is a complex mechanism, which is affected by many factors (social, psychological, environmental, etc.). It is possible to see the presence of a connection between influencers and consumers in the decision-making process. In support of Aneela Hoque's theory where she discussed the power of influencers as their ability to present themselves as an open-minded and trustworthy person, simply be a „friend“ was proved in the practical part, when it is possible to see that

influencers who paid a lot of attention to their audience got a better engagement rate. It was also mentioned in the literature review that people will follow a person's advice if she or he is perceived as an „expert“ and focused on the particular field. For a fashion lover audience it is important to know that a person that they follow understands and watches the current trends. Berscheid, Walster (1969), and Byrne (1971) put forward a “theory of Similarity/Attraction” , where they explained that people are most attracted to other with similar attitudes or personalities. In the practical part when content analysis was done it showed that the “express sympathy for the influencer” and “like the product/ brand” subgroups got one of the highest percentage numbers. It means that the audience share some similarities in case of style, brand preferences, etc. Therefore, it can be said that this theory works in a case of influencers and their audience.

## **Conclusion**

The job that did not exist thirty years ago became a crucial role to play in modern society and economics. They became celebrities and seize not only social media platforms but film productions, TV shows, businesses, etc. Their ability to influence others people's behavior made them a profitable tool in marketers' hands. However, there is always a risk when working with an influencer. Different tools to gain a big number of followers are mass use. Therefore, it's very important to analyze the real audience involvement. As it was demonstrated in this study, the big number of influencer's followers does not guarantee a big number of potential customers for a brand.

Finally, it's possible to see that social media marketing for brands, especially focused on the fashion industry is very effective but requires new investments and a lot of effort to make good product sales.

This study has several limitations. First, Google translator was used to translate some comments from French, which can cause a misunderstanding or misperception of some words. The accuracy of translated sentences can be missed. Second, all the brands' or influencers' posts could not be included in this research. So chosen posts do not represents all followers' perceptions of the brand or the influencer on the Instagram page.

Additionally, only 10 brands with each 10th post were analyzed, and at the end, only 2 influencers were observed. However, it can provide a rough understanding of why it is important for brands to work with influencers and how consumers react to a product presented by an influencer. Third, not all people that liked the post could be a follower of

an influencer on Instagram. The detailed information of people who viewed this post is private information only for the user of this page.

From the obtained results, recommendations for a chosen brands are presented. Appendix 1 gives a full view of influencers and their followers' engagement. For the brand Imparfait, which got the lowest results in both analyses it would be recommended to try to find more suitable influencers, who can represent brand's originality. Almost all influencers got a decent amount of percentages in followers to likes ratio, but when it comes to followers to comments ratio nobody could achieved 1%, except two influencers that were analyzed in the practical part of this thesis. Regarding the brand Mirae (0,1% was the highest for the brand, but the lowest among all brands' percentage ratio) it would be recommended to collaborate with influencers who can present more efficient posts. Based on the results it can be concluded that most people are ready to follow advice and had a positive attitude towards a brand if an influencer had the right presentation of the product, and was perceived by an audience as a „friend“, whose recommendation you would follow. It can be confirmed by the fact that followers leave their comments and express an opinion under posts.

For marketers, it is essential ability to understand reasons that encourage people to buy a product they provide. So analyzing the percentage ratio of the number of comments towards the number of likes should be used as one of the methods. For the influencer, it can be useful as well to analyze the audience engagement.

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## Appendix 1

INFLUENCER and Number of followers of foll.		Likes	Comments	% of likes to number
<b>Rouje</b>				
1. 188000	2490	55	1,32	
2. 141000	2521	30	1,78	
3. 135000	4174	35	3,09	
4. 80000	1812	28	2,26	
5. 25500	1304	38	5,11	
6. 22200	1202	107	5,4	
7. 5943	1343	12	22,5	
8. 106000	7672	146	7,2	
9. 59300	1820	88	3,06	
10. 58200	1815	161	3,11	
Sum 821143	26153	700		
<b>Idanoparis</b>				
1. 41500	1078	68	2,59	
2. 58200	7328	177	12,5	
3. 37900	1515	109	4	
4. 22600	1185	52	5,2	
5. 154000	1036	44	0,67	
6. 11300	1228	14	10,8	
7. 55000	3291	102	5,9	
8. 58200	1238	93	2,12	
9. 29700	1241	130	4,17	
10. 96800	3548	63	3,66	
Sum 416624	35809	910		
<b>Ariadibarishop</b>				
1. 15500	2752	67	17,75	

2. 58100	1357	174	2,33
3. 289000	3558	51	1,23
4. 17300	1334	69	7,7
5. 56300	1744	17	3,09
6. 41500	1620	47	3,9
7. 300000	225999	201	75,3
8. 125000	5805	30	4,6
9. 179000	9854	172	5,5
10. 88200	1536	73	1,7
Sum 1169900	255559	901	
<b>Imparfait</b>			
1. 7350	1296	3	17,6
2. 25900	1094	235	4,22
3. 57100	1282	109	2,24
4. 10600	1103	5	10,4
5. 898000	9826	44	1,09
6. 590000	6838	24	1,15
7. 61100	1358	9	2,22
8. 15900	1031	9	6,48
9. 100000	5748	107	5,74
10. 53000	1914	107	3,61
Sum 1818950	31490	652	
<b>Admise par is</b>			
1. 58100	1405	209	2,41
2. 122000	1777	28	1,45
3. 135000	2632	43	1,94
4. 144000	2669	23	1,85
5. 92500	5879	100	6,35
6. 133000	2697	99	2,02
7. 53100	2613	54	4,92
8. 73500	3457	101	4,7
9. 41500	2358	60	5,68
10. 300000	13668	151	4,5
Sum 1152700	39155	868	
<b>Atelier camille paris</b>			
1. 5943	1067	48	17,9
2. 4984	1147	124	23
3. 24800	1210	17	4,8
4. 261000	4654	169	1,7
5. 118000	1477	26	1,2
6. 53500	2114	43	3,9
7. 108000	1163	17	1,07
8. 95400	1508	44	1,58
9. 61300	1940	94	3,16
10. 130000	1810	89	1,39
Sum 862927	18090	671	
<b>Ernest leoty</b>			
1. 364000	2002	47	0,5
2. 103000	1666	121	1,6

3.	85600	6108	53	7,1
4.	21600	2197	847	10,1
5.	383000	4302	21	1,12
6.	24300	1563	47	6,4
7.	1400000	14888	58	1,06
8.	52600	2036	3	3,8
9.	45600	1147	44	2,5
10.	60900	1506	67	2,4
Sum 2540600		37415	1308	
<b>Mirae</b>				
1.	126000	2264	63	1,8
2.	132000	1970	200	1,5
3.	140000	3799	41	2,7
4.	25400	1259	21	4,9
5.	83000	1320	23	1,6
6.	44300	1643	26	3,7
7.	218000	11800	126	5,4
8.	350000	23200	26	6,6
9.	56800	2147	80	3,7
10.	137000	3860	35	2,8
Sum 1312500		53262	641	
<b>Mesdemoiselledeparis</b>				
1.	193000	1929	18	0,9
2.	1400000	87489	951	6,24
3.	91500	1594	34	1,74
4.	15800	1037	45	6,56
5.	180000	3411	146	1,8
6.	10800	1451	97	13,4
7.	164000	2851	21	1,73
8.	50700	3199	31	6,3
9.	319000	14990	77	4,6
10.	10800	1007	14	9,32
Sum 2435600		118958	1434	
<b>MaisonCleo</b>				
1.	22500	1900	9	8,4
2.	151000	5216	13	3,4
3.	305000	5114	152	1,6
4.	236000	1444	32	0,6
5.	122000	2254	22	1,8
6.	669000	6991	43	1
7.	14800	1191	14	8,0
8.	16200	1273	59	7,8
9.	1000000	5734	107	5,7
10.	133000	14111	28	10,6
Sum 1769500		45228	479	

Followers	Comments	% of comments compared to followers
<b>Rouje</b>		
1. 1188000	55	0,03
2. 141000	30	0,02
3. 135000	35	0,02
4. 80000	28	0,03
5. 25500	38	0,1
6. 22200	107	0,4
7. 5943	12	0,2
8. 106000	146	0,1
9. 59300	88	0,1
10. 58200	161	0,2
<b>Idanoparis</b>		
1. 41500	68	0,1
2. 58200	177	0,3
3. 37900	109	0,2
4. 22600	52	0,2
5. 154000	1036	0,02
6. 11300	14	0,1
7. 55000	102	0,2
8. 58200	93	0,1
9. 29700	130	0,4
10. 96800	63	0,06
<b>Ariadibarishop</b>		
1. 15500	67	0,4
2. 58100	174	0,2
3. 289000	51	0,01
4. 17300	69	0,4
5. 56300	17	0,03
6. 41500	47	0,1
7. 300000	201	0,06
8. 125000	30	0,02
9. 179000	172	0,09
10. 88200	73	0,08
<b>Imparfait</b>		
1. 7350	3	0,04
2. 25900	235	0,9
3. 57100	109	0,2
4. 10600	5	0,04
5. 898000	44	0,004
6. 590000	24	0,004
7. 61100	9	0,014
8. 15900	9	0,05
9. 100000	107	0,1
10. 53000	107	0,2
<b>Admiseparis</b>		

1. 58100	209	0,3
2. 122000	28	0,02
3. 135000	43	0,03
4. 144000	23	0,01
5. 92500	100	0,1
6. 133000	99	0,07
7. 53100	54	0,1
8. 73500	101	0,13
9. 41500	60	0,14
10. 300000	151	0,05
<b>Ateliercamilleparis</b>		
1. 5943	48	0,8
2. 4984	124	2,4
3. 24800	17	0,06
4. 261000	169	0,06
5. 118000	26	0,02
6. 53500	43	0,08
7. 108000	17	0,01
8. 95400	44	0,04
9. 61300	94	0,15
10. 130000	89	0,06
<b>Ernestleoty</b>		
1. 364000	47	0,01
2. 103000	121	0,11
3. 85600	53	0,06
4. 21600	847	3,9
5. 383000	21	0,005
6. 24300	47	0,19
7. 1400000	58	0,004
8. 52600	3	0,005
9. 45600	44	0,09
10. 60900	67	0,11
<b>Mirae</b>		
1. 126000	63	0,05
2. 132000	200	0,1
3. 140000	41	0,02
4. 25400	21	0,08
5. 83000	23	0,02
6. 44300	26	0,05
7. 218000	126	0,05
8. 350000	26	0,007
9. 56800	80	0,1
10. 137000	35	0,02
<b>Mesdemoiselledeparis</b>		
1. 193000	18	0,1
2. 1400000	951	0,009
3. 91500	34	0,06
4. 15800	45	0,03
5. 180000	146	0,2

6. 10800	97	0,08
7. 164000	21	0,9
8. 50700	31	0,01
9. 319000	77	0,06
10. 10800	14	0,02
<b>MaisonCleo</b>		
1. 22500	9	0,04
2. 151000	13	0,008
3. 305000	152	0,05
4. 236000	32	0,01
5. 122000	22	0,01
6. 669000	43	0,006
7. 14800	14	0,09
8. 16200	59	0,36
9. 1000000	107	0,1
10. 133000	28	0,02

Number of comments for the first 10 posts:

<b>Fani.lafigure</b>	<b>Annagmurphy</b>
172	117
188	61
161	86
143	106
263	42
200	49
235	78
175	74
218	110
246	167
2001	890

Influencer	Total comments	Each 10 <sup>th</sup> comment	Number of relevant comments
Fani.lafigure	2001	200	67
Annagmurphy	890	89	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>2891</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>126</b>

Division into subgroups	Total amount of comments	%
1. Express sympathy for the Influencer	28	41,8%
2. Express willingness to buy the product	1	1,5%



<b>3. Don't like the product</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>4. Asking for the additional information (where to buy, brand's name, name of the model etc.)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4,5%</b>
<b>5. Like the product ( outfit, colors, overall look)</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>52,5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Division into subgroups</b>	<b>Total amount of comments</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1. Express sympathy for the Influencer</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>37,3%</b>
<b>2. Express willingness to buy the product</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>3. Don't like the product</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>4. Asking for the additional information (where to buy, brand's name, name of the model etc.)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1,7%</b>
<b>5. Like the product ( brand, outfit, colors, overall look)</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>