The Effects of Influencer Marketing on Instagram and

TikTok on Brand Awareness in the fashion industry

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Abstract

Increasing brand awareness is the top goal that marketers seek to achieve when working with influencers on social media. To illustrate the effects of influencer marketing on brand awareness on TikTok and Instagram, this thesis analyzes ten fashion influencers that worked with the fashion retailer, Shein, in the past. One post per influencer on Instagram and TikTok was used to calculate variables like reach and engagement. The results show that both Instagram and TikTok are great platforms for fashion brands and retailers to promote their products through influencers. While TikTok showed a greater reach and engagement per post, Instagram is more predictable regarding the success of each post. Instagram shows a positive correlation between followers and reach, which implies that companies will reach a greater audience when working with macro-influencers. TikTok works differently due to a complex algorithm. This is why, in some cases, micro-influencers might reach more people than macro-influencers.

Introduction

Influencer marketing has become a popular marketing tool in the past years. Influencers are individuals on social media that are seen as trustworthy and are considered to be experts in their field by their followers (Scholz, 2020). Companies cooperate with these influencers to promote their products. Brands seek to achieve different goals with their influencer marketing strategy. The main objective in 2022 for companies was to raise brand awareness, followed by sales, and user-generated content (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022). With brand awareness, companies try to link their brand in the consumer's mind so that they remember the brand when they make a purchase decision (Azzari & Pelissari, 2020). Through influencers, companies hope to expose their brand to many potential customers and, thus, increase brand awareness. This paper intends to measure the effectiveness of influencer marketing when it comes to increasing brand awareness on Instagram and TikTok in the fashion industry. Influencers have changed the fashion industry in the past years. They serve

as trendsetters and people take fashion advice from the influencers (Fashion Gone Rouge, 2020). Because customers primarily seek fashion inspiration from social media influencers, most fashion brands and retailers work together with these individuals.

Literature review

Brand Awareness

What is Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is the conscious recollection of a brand (Renchen, 2020). It shows how strong a brand is linked in a customer's mind (Azzari & Pelissari, 2020). When a consumer then wants to make a purchase decision, all brands one is aware of will be available for selection (Langaro et al., 2015).

Nowadays, new brands emerge constantly which means that simply being aware of a brand does not yet lead to a positive or negative perception. Brand awareness does, however, serve as the first step toward building positive attitudes and behaviors towards a brand (Azzari & Pelissari, 2020).

Creating brand awareness

Brand awareness is created by constantly repeating the exposure of a brand to consumers. The exposure should be memorable so that the consumers will remember the brand (Langaro et al., 2015).

Brand awareness can be divided into two dimensions: brand recall and brand recognition. One speaks of brand recall when a customer remembers a brand when they encounter the product category or usage situation the brand covers. Brand recognition, on the other hand, describes the ability to recognize a brand's elements and products. Communication of the brand is the key to building brand recall and brand recognition (Langaro et al., 2015).

Influencer Marketing

Definition of Influencers

Influencers are individuals on social media who produce original content displaying their lifestyle and expertise (Scholz, 2020). Their content and portrayal of themselves allow them to accumulate a large network of followers. Their followers see them as trusted tastemakers and experts. Other resources call influencers opinion leaders that exercise a significant social influence on their followers (Leung et al., 2022).

Actively interacting with their followers allows influencers to build an active relationship. Just like companies, influencers build their brand by carefully managing their social media content and image. Followers then voluntarily decide to follow influencers with whom they feel a personal connection (Leung et al., 2022).

Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing is a strategy where companies carefully select individuals to promote their products on social media with the hope of increasing the company's performance (Leung et al., 2022). Companies work with these opinion leaders, that are followed by many people on social media, to post about the brand's interest and generate positive behavioral actions in their followers towards the brand. This leads to a co-creation of the brand by the influencers and followers (Martínez-Lopez, 2020). Influencer marketing can be seen as a hybrid of the "old" marketing tool of celebrity endorsement and new modern content-driven marketing campaigns (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022).

In 2022, the Influencer Marketing Industry is expected to grow to around $16.4 billion. In comparison, the industry was valued at $1.7 billion in 2016 (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022). The industry has been growing rapidly over the last years and that is why 75% of brand marketers locate some of their budgets to influencer marketing in 2022 (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022). Some marketers even spend 75% of their total marketing budget on influencer marketing (Scholz, 2021).

Influencer Categories

Brands have been using celebrities or other well-known opinion leaders as influencers for a while. These people, however, usually come with very high prices and are mostly too expensive for smaller brands. That is why smaller brands have started to leverage micro-influencers. Micro-influencers are social media personalities that are less known than celebrities but still have a big following (Appel et al., 2020).

Influencers are often categorized based on their number of followers (Santora, 2021). Nano influencers have one thousand to ten thousand followers, micro-influencers have ten thousand to 100 thousand followers, macro-influencers have 100 thousand to one million followers, and celebrity influencers have over one million followers. Influencers can also be differentiated based on the content they post, such as fashion, fitness, or food (Santora, 2021).

When it comes to choosing what influencer to work with, companies must look at the goals of the influencer marketing strategy. If the goal is brand awareness, it is recommended to leverage influencers with a large following as the reach of these influencers is higher. However, if a company would like to reach a specific target audience in a specific area, a smaller influencer is the better option (Haenlein et al. 2020).

Word-of-mouth marketing

Traditional word-of-mouth (WOM) occurs when a current customer shares their experience with a product without any influence from the company (Leung et al., 2022). WOM is appealing to marketers because it helps convince customers of a company's product fast and at a low cost (Trusov et al., 2009).

The internet has always been a popular tool for WOM marketing. Consumers can easily share their views and experiences with others (Trusov et al., 2009). Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) reaches more people and spreads more quickly than traditional WOM. Also, it allows customers to share their thoughts anonymously (Ishida et al., 2016).

While influencer marketing is also considered word-of-mouth marketing, it differs from traditional WOM since the influencer is purposely chosen and paid by the company to share their thoughts on the products (Leung et al., 2022). However, it is recognized as personal WOM since the influencer posts their thoughts on a personal channel, not through a commercial channel which makes it more trustworthy to customers (Ishida et al., 2016).

Impact on the consumer decision-making process

The consumer decision-making process consists of five stages: problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase transaction, and post-purchase experience evaluation (Avery et al., 2016).

Influencers play an important role when it comes to problem recognition. They can be a source of external problem recognition (Avery et al., 2016). The need for a product can be activated by an influencer in a consumer sees them trying out a new product (Appel et al., 2019).

Influencers also help as a source of information. Even though they are controlled by the marketer and would, thus, be considered marketer sources, consumers see them more as personal sources even though they do not know the influencer personally (Avery et al., 2016). The relationship between influencers and consumers is often described as a parasocial relationship, which is a one-sided relationship where the consumer develops a friendship with an influencer (Scholz, 2020). This leads to the consumer seeing the influencer as a trusted source of information. That is why influencers are considered a personal source since the consumer feels as if they would know the influencer (Scholz, 2020). Parasocial relationships are long-term relationships that are equivalent to friendship (Liebers et al., 2019).

Additionally, if a consumer can trust the influencer, they are more likely to form a positive attitude toward the brand the influencer is presenting and consider the brand in their alternative evaluation (Chetiousi et al., 2019).

Source credibility

Consumers follow influencers because of their independence from brands and expertise (Scholz, 2020). Since the consumers are aware of the fact that most of the influencers get paid for their posts, they choose carefully which influencers to follow. Consumers will neglect influencers that never say anything negative, only wear one single brand, and post about this one brand all the time (Scholz, 2020).

Trust is an important factor when it comes to credibility. Consumers have to be able to trust what the influencer is saying is true (Chetiousi et al., 2019). Thus, Influencers seem more credible and trustworthy when they give balanced arguments about products and try products from different brands. By doing so, influencers present themselves as consumers rather than agents of brands (Scholz, 2020).

Credibility increases if the brand product and the influencer show similarities, meaning they target the same audience (Liebers et al., 2019). An influencer will not seem credible if they endorse incongruent brands. With the industry rising, it gets more difficult for businesses to choose the right influencer that will best promote their products to the right audience (Liebers et al., 2019). That is why companies have to look at their brand personality, which is the human characteristics associated with a brand. Defining the brand personality makes it easier to find an influencer that is a good fit for the brand (Von Mettenheim et al., 2021)

A study has shown that consumers perceive the trustworthiness and the level of expertise as higher if the influencer matches the brand they are promoting (Liebers et al., 2019). If an influencer promotes a product with a low congruence to the influencer itself, followers perceive the message shared more as commercial intent (Von Mettenheim et al., 2021). Another study conducted by Liebers et al. (2019) showed that the familiarity of the influencer is also very important when it comes to credibility, meaning that consumers trust influencers more if they have been following them for a while (Von Mettenheim et al., 2021).

Fashion Influencers

Fashion is one of many niches for influencers. Fashion influencers post content that revolves around fashion and are often considered trendsetters. This allows them to influence their follower's opinions and purchase behavior (Chetioui et al., 2019). While trends were introduced on catwalk shows in the past, they are now presented on social media by influencers. Around 50% of all Instagram users follow some kind of fashion account for outfit inspiration (Fashion Gone Rouge, 2020).

Social Media Platforms

Instagram

Instagram is a social media platform that is mostly focused on picture sharing, even though short videos are slowly gaining importance (Haenlein et al., 2020). Instagram's goal is to bring people closer to things they love (Instagram, n.d.). The app was launched in October 2010. The platform shows its users the content of users they follow and so have a "connection" with (Haenlein et al., 2020).

When posting a picture, users usually use hashtags. Hashtags are words with a "#" in front of them. By putting the pound sign in front of text on Instagram, it turns the text into a link. When a user clicks on a hashtag, they will see all the photos that were posted using the same hashtag (Instagram, n.d.). This allows users to reach people that are not following them. An artificial intelligence algorithm decides the order and content of the posts a user gets to see on their feed which leads to lower exposure of posts (Haenlein et al., 2020).

Marketing on Instagram

There are different ways to advertise on Instagram. One way is to create a sponsored post. These posts will then reach people who are not following the account the advertisement is coming from (Haenlein et al., 2020). The platform offers an Ads Manager which allows for more advanced multi-platform campaigns. This means that you can launch the same campaign on Facebook and Instagram from one place. Businesses can decide when and where to launch

the campaign and they offer insights into the success of the campaign. On the ad manager, one can also specify their demographics to reach the target audience with the ad. Instagram also offers an even easier and faster way to create ads. It introduced the "boost" feature which turns any post into an advertisement within seconds (Instagram, n.d.). When it comes to influencer marketing, Instagram drives $6.6 million in sales for every million dollars spent (O'Brien et al., 2021).

Instagram Demographics

The main target audience for Instagram is 18 – 34 years. There is an even balance between female and male users on Instagram (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022). There are around two billion monthly active users on the app which makes Instagram one of the most popular social media sites worldwide. In the U.S. there are 157 million Instagram users (Statista, 2022).

TikTok

TikTok emerged in 2018. It was the second most downloaded social platform in the first quarter of 2020 and in January 2021 it was ranked seventh among all social platforms when it comes to worldwide users (Peña-Fernandez et al., 2022). TikTok has been the most downloaded app and it reached more than one billion monthly active users globally in September of 2021 (O'Brien et al., 2021). The focus of TikTok is short videos. Users often create these videos based on trending songs, dialogues from movies or TV shows, or certain sound effects. These sounds are crucial for linking content on the platform and reaching a wide audience. The app also uses hashtags, however, the sounds are more important. All videos that use a certain sound are combined in a "folder". Users can search for the sounds and then find all the videos using them (Haenlein et al., 2020).

TikTok is very fast-paced. New trends emerge every day and will only last for a short period. TikTok is divided into different subcultures with their trends, which makes it very

important for businesses to figure out which niche they want to work in. Examples of subcultures are fashion, fitness, healthy recipes, and so on (Haenlein et al., 2020).

The TikTok feed is divided into two parts. The "Following" feed shows the user videos of people they follow whereas the "For You" feed shows videos that the algorithm chose for the user based on certain actions on the app (Haenlein et al., 2020). The algorithm works very proficiently. The app's "For You" page is very explosive compared to Instagram and Facebook, which work more linear and incremental. Not much is known in detail about the algorithm, however, it is speculated that every video is sent to a minimum number of users. Depending on the performance of the video, it will be promoted more or less. Normally, engagement, such as likes and views, goes up as followers go up. However, the algorithm also allows new users to get millions of views without any followers. This is a big challenge for content creators since they must produce videos that are relevant to many users to receive views and likes (O'Brien et al., 2021).

Marketing on TikTok

The number of companies that use the platform for advertisement has increased by 500% in 2020. 70% of the top 500 brands have an account on TikTok (O'Brien, 2021). TikTok wants to point out the fact that brands will be more successful if they create videos that are entertaining to their target audience rather than a classic commercial (TikTok, n.d.).

TikTok supports brands to work with content creators by providing a Creator Marketplace that provides analytics tools. The app also pays users with more than 10,000 followers and more than 100,000 views in the last month. The CEO of ROI Influencer, Seth Kean says that for every million dollars spent on influencer marketing on TikTok, the brand sees $ 7.2 million in sales over the first 90 days (O'Brien, 2021).

TikTok Demographics

TikTok targets Generation Z. The main age group represented in the app is 13 – 24 years old (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022). This age group represents 63.5% of the US. In

2020, the US had 45.6 million active users. The app surpassed 100 million monthly active users in February 2021 (Peña-Fernandez et al., 2022). TikTok is female-dominant when it comes to the age group of 24 and younger. The gender bias balances out for the age group of 24 – 34 years (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022).

UN Sustainable Development Goals

Influencer marketing is all about a partnership between the brand and the influencer. That is why it is linked to the United Nations development goal number 17: Partnership for the goals. It says that the 17 sustainable development goals can only be achieved with strong global partnerships and cooperation. The same is true for a business. In order to achieve their goals, partnerships are very important. Influencers can help companies to reach their marketing goals especially when it comes to increasing awareness globally. The UN states that inclusive partnerships at the global, regional, national, and local levels that share the same principles and values and follow the same vision are crucial for successfully executing the agenda (United Nations, n.d.). When it comes to influencer marketing, it is also very important that the company and influencer share the same values to assure credibility. Without credibility, the partnership would not be successful.

Hypotheses

H1: Promoting products through influencers on Instagram will increase brand awareness in the fashion industry.

H2: Promoting products through Influencers on TikTok will increase brand awareness in the fashion industry.

Method

Subjects

Fashion Brands

The subjects included in this study are fashion brands and fashion retailers in the United States. To show the effect of Influencers on brand awareness, the online fast-fashion

retailer Shein was used as an example in this Study. Shein was founded in 2012. The company targets the Gen Z and millennial generation with its cheap prices and wide range of products (Shein, n.d.). Their Instagram account has 23.7 million followers and their TikTok account has 3.8 million followers.

Influencers

Other subjects that are important to the study are fashion influencers. The influencers promote the brand's product on their social media and, thus, share it with their followers. Shein has different ways of collaborating with influencers. They work with celebrities, like Addison Rae or Katy Perry, as well as micro-influencers. On Instagram, they use the hashtag #SHEINgals for their micro-influencers. Shein was the third most mentioned brand on Instagram in 2021 ahead of Nike and H&M (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022). The fashion retailer worked with over 50,000 Instagram influencers in 2021(Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022). On TikTok, the hashtag #sheinhaul is very popular. Influencers post videos of them showing what they have ordered on Shein. The hashtag has 4.8 billion views and #SHEINgals has 2.4 billion views on TikTok

Social Media

Social media platforms are the "workplace" for Influencers. They provide a place to connect with their followers and to "influence" them. While multiple social media platforms are used for influencer marketing, this study focuses on Instagram and TikTok. According to a study conducted by Influencer Marketing Hub (2022), Instagram was the most popular platform for companies for influencer collaborations. TikTok placed third after Facebook (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022).

Measures

Table 1: Components of Study

Table 1: Hypothesis, Variables, and Statistical Analysis									
Hypothesis	**Variables**							Hypotheses & Variable Relationships	Statistical Tests
	Influencer Followers (IF)	Influencer Engagement Rate Instagram (I)	Influencer Reach Instagram (IEI)	Influencer Engagement Rate TikTok (IET)	Views on TikTok (Reach) (V)	Increased Brand Awareness (IBA)	Monthly Users on Instagram and TikTok (MU)		
H1: Promoting products through influencers on Instagram will increase brand awareness in the fashion industry.	IF	I	IEI			IBA	MU	IF + I + IEI + MU = IBA	correlation; regression; line charts
H2: Promoting products through influencers on TikTok will increase brand awareness in the fashion industry.	IF			IET	V	IBA	MU	IF + IET + V + MU = IBA	correlation; regression; line charts
Adapted from: Rudestam, K.E. & Newton, R.R. (1992). Surviving Your Dissertation. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, Inc. page 138.									

Table 2: Hypothesis, Instruments, and Statistical Analysis

Table 2: Detail About Variables							
Data	Variables						
	Influencer Followers (IF)	Influencer Engagement Rate Instagram (IEI)	Influencer Reach Instagram (IR)	Influencer Engagement Rate TikTok (IET)	Views on TikTok (Reach) (V)	Monthly Users on Instagram and TikTok (MU)	Increased Brand Awareness (IBA)
Instrument / Survey	The average number of Followers of brand Influencers	Statistics	Statistics	Statistics	Analysis of views of videos from Influencers	Statistics	Analysis of variables
Author / Publisher	TikTok/Instagram	Tribegroup	Gothivarekar	Influencer Marketing Hub	TikTok	Statista	Statista
Type of data	Quantitative	Quantitative	Quantitative	Quantitative	Quantitative	Quantitative	Quantitative
Range of scores							
Adapted from: Rudestam, K.E. & Newton, R.R. (1992). Surviving Your Dissertation. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, Inc. page 140.							

Variable 1: Influencer Followers

This variable gives the number of followers an influencer has on TikTok and Instagram. This variable affects other variables in the study such as reach and engagement rates. The average number of followers of 10 Influencers on Instagram and TikTok will be used to represent this variable.

Variable 2: Influencer Engagement Rate Instagram

The engagement rate on Instagram describes how many people engaged with an influencer's post. Engagement includes likes, comments, saves, and shares. Engagement mostly comes from but is not limited to followers.

Variable 3: Influencer Reach Instagram

The reach of a post measures the number of users that have seen the post. Due to the algorithm, a post is not shown to all of a user's followers, however, the post can also be shown to non-followers.

Variable 4: Influencer Engagement Rate TikTok

The engagement rate on TikTok measures, as for Instagram, the number of likes, comments, shares, and saves for a video.

Variable 5: Views on TikTok (Reach)

On TikTok, the reach is measured by views. Each video a user posts shows how many people have seen it and, thus, measures how many people the video reached.

Variable 6: Monthly users on Instagram and TikTok

This variable shows how many people are using each app monthly. This gives an idea of the potential for reaching new customers through influencers.

Variable 7: Increased Brand Awareness

The goal of the study is to show whether the variables above will have a positive effect on brand awareness.

Procedure

Procedure To Locate Journal Articles and Data

For the location of journal articles, the Business Premier Database of the Wagner College Library as well as Google Scholar were used. The search was filtered to "peer-reviewed" articles. I looked at more general articles about brand awareness, influencer marketing, and social media marketing when it comes to search terms. Next, I narrowed down the search by focusing on Marketing on Instagram and Marketing on TikTok. Other search terms used were "influencer marketing in the fashion industry" and "the effect of influencers on brand awareness". The articles I chose presented a good idea and different opinions on the subject matter. The journal articles were retrieved on March 20[th,] 2022. Other sources of data will be the social media platforms Instagram and TikTok.

Statistical Methods to Present and Analyze the Data

For the presentation of the data, tables, line charts, correlations, and regression charts will be used.

Analysis of Fashion brands' social media accounts

To find a correlation between Influencers and increased brand awareness, the average number of followers of 10 Shein influencers will be used to calculate the engagement rate on Instagram and TikTok as well as the reach on TikTok. To calculate the average reach on TikTok, the average number of views will be calculated by using 10 influencer accounts and their average views per video.

Results

Table 3 shows the number of followers each of the selected influencers has on Instagram and TikTok. The reach was calculated using the Instagram reach rate depending on an influencer's number of followers. For the reach on TikTok, the number of views on a Shein video was used.

Table 3: Followers and Reach on Social Media

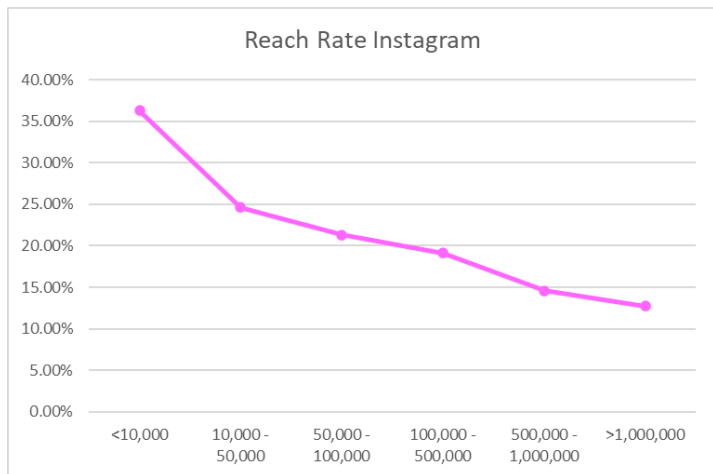| Influencer	Followers TikTok	Reach TikTok	Followers Instagram	Reach Instagram
1	46,200	7,065	2,200,000	279,400
2	30,500	11,700	23,700	5,830
3	4,333	3,956	189,000	36,099
4	1,600,000	274,000	372,000	71,052
5	57,700	488,200	31,100	7,651
6	84,000	504,400	397,000	75,827
7	97,300	850,600	2,361	857
8	6,159	4,200,000	1,500,000	190,500
9	4,300,000	295,000	674,000	98,404
10	1,300,000	534,900	32,200	7,921
Total	7,526,192	7,169,821	5,421,361	773,541

Source: Instagram, TikTok, and Gothivarekar (2021)

Table 4 shows the reach rate on Instagram based on the number of followers. The reach describes how many people a post on Instagram reaches.

Table 4: Reach rate on Instagram

Followers Instagram	Reach Rate Instagram
<10,000	36.30%
10,000 - 50,000	24.60%
50,000 - 100,000	21.30%
100,000 - 500,000	19.10%
500,000 - 1,000,000	14.60%
>1,000,000	12.70%

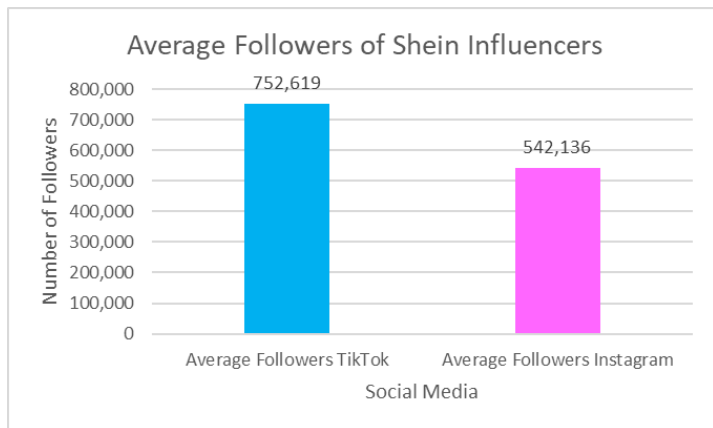Source: Gothivarekar (2021)

Figure 1: Reach rate on Instagram based on number of followers.

Source: Gothivarekar (2021)

Variable 1: Influencer Followers

Figure 2: The average number of followers of Shein Influencers on TikTok and Instagram.
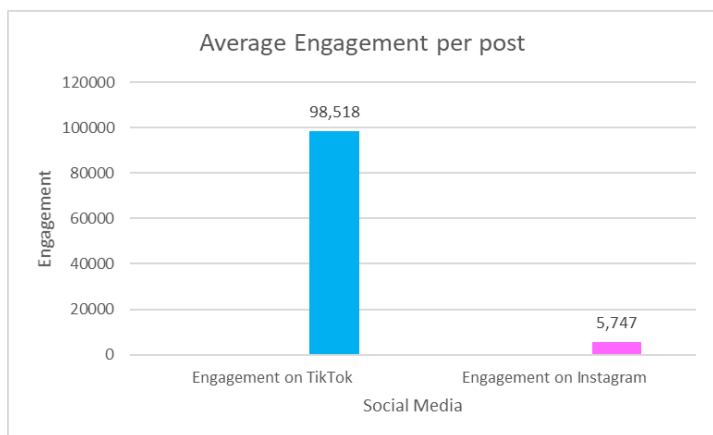

Source: Instagram and TikTok

Variable 2 and Variable 4: Influencer Engagement Rate Instagram and TikTok

Table 5 shows the numbers that were used for calculating the average engagement per influencer on Instagram and TikTok. The engagement rate is based on the number of followers of an influencer.

| Table 5: Engagement in Social Media		
	Engagement on TikTok	Engagement on Instagram
Engagement rate	13.09%	1.06%
Average Followers	752,619	542,136
Average Engagement per post	98,518	5,747
Source: Influencer Marketing Hub (2022)		

Figure 3: This chart shows the average engagement an Influencer's post generates on TikTok and Instagram. An engagement rate of 13.09% was used for TikTok and a rate of 1.06% for Instagram. The average number of followers on Instagram and TikTok of Shein influencers was used to calculate the engagement per post.

Source: Influencer Marketing Hub (2022)

Variable 3 and 5: Influencer Reach Instagram and TikTok

Figure 4: The bar chart shows the comparison between TikTok and Instagram regarding reach per post. The reach on TikTok is measured by the average number of views per video that a Shein Influencer posted promoting the fashion retailer. The reach on Instagram is calculated using a reach rate between 12.70% and 36.30% depending on the number of followers of each Influencer used in the sample.
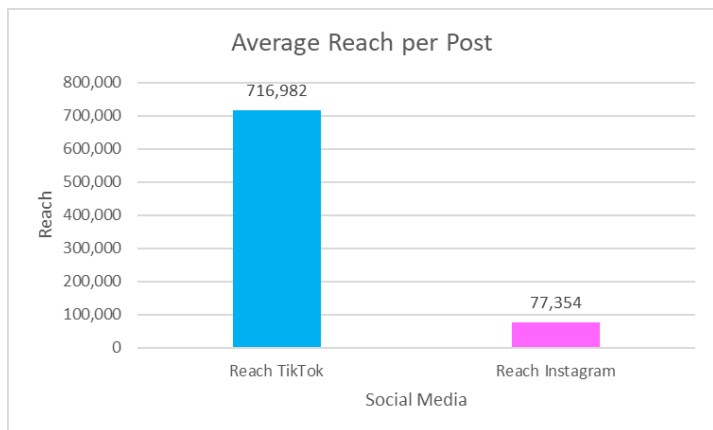
Source: TikTok and Gothivarekar (2021)

Figure 5: The Scatter Diagram shows that there is no correlation between the number of followers of an influencer and the reach per post on TikTok. The correlation coefficient for both variables is -0.18.
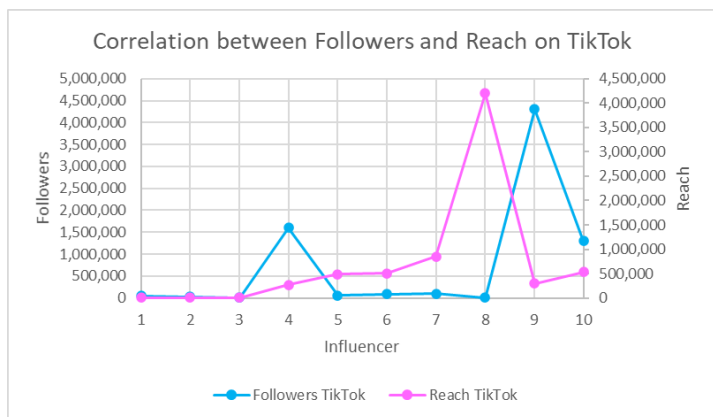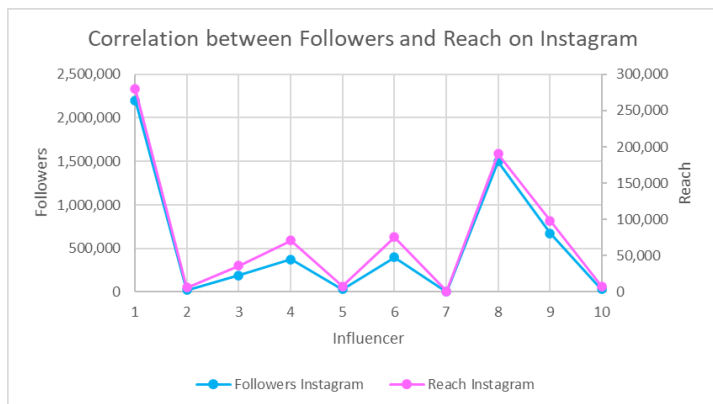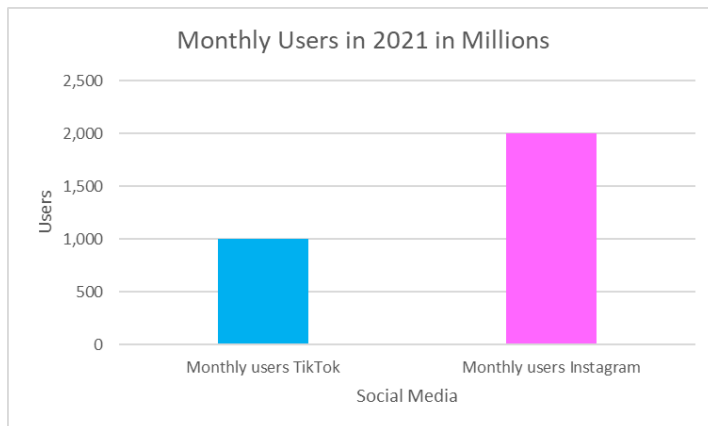

Figure 6: The Scatter Diagram shows a positive correlation between the number of followers and the reach per post on Instagram. The correlation coefficient for the two variables is 0.99.

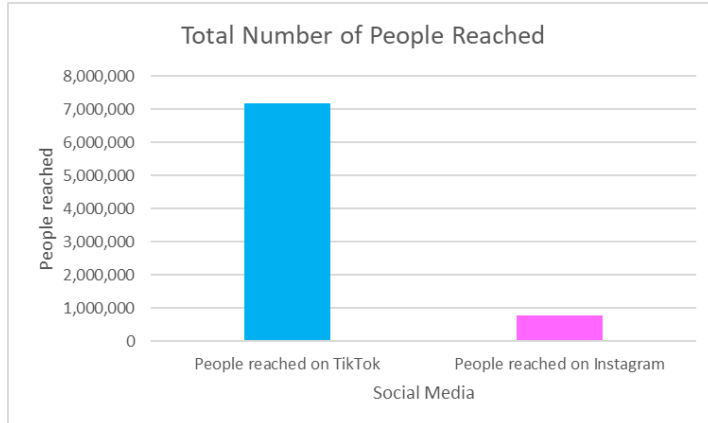**Variable 6: Monthly Users on Instagram and TikTok**

Figure 7: This chart compares the number of monthly users on both social media apps in 2021.

Source: Statista (2021)

Variable 7: Increased Brand Awareness

Figure 8: The bar chart shows the total number of potential customers who were reached with 10 posts by 10 different Shein Influencers on TikTok and Instagram.

Discussion

H1: Promoting products through influencers on Instagram will increase brand awareness in the fashion industry.

According to Figure 2, a Shein influencer has an average of 542,136 followers on Instagram. On average, one post on Instagram reached 77,354 people per influencer as shown in Figure 4. This makes a total of 773,541 (Figure 8) potential new customers who could have seen

one of the influencers promoting Shein on their accounts. Taking these numbers into consideration, it is obvious that influencers help brands like Shein to increase brand awareness on Instagram. The average engagement of 5,747 per post on Instagram (Figure 3) is low compared to the average number of people reached. However, a person does not have to like or comment on a picture to become aware of a new brand. The reach shows how many people actually saw the post which further represents the increase in awareness. Instagram had 2 billion monthly users in 2021, as seen in Figure 7, which makes it a great platform for advertisement as there is great potential for reaching a large number of people.

The benefit of using an influencer on Instagram is that a company can target a specific market. Followers of fashion influencers are very likely interested in fashion, otherwise, they would not follow the influencer. The followers of these fashion influencers want to see what the influencers wear and how they style certain clothes. They want to stay up to date about what is considered in trend at the moment. This means that if the influencer posts a picture and mentions where they bought the clothes from, the followers can purchase the same articles and discover new brands.

There is also a positive correlation between the number of followers and the reach per post, as shown in figure 6, meaning as the number of followers increases, the number of people reached increases as well. This implies that if a company decides to cooperate with an influencer with a large following, it is guaranteed that the post will reach more people than a post from an influencer with fewer followers would reach. Thus, considering the goal of increasing brand awareness, it is better to work with macro-influencers.

H2: Promoting products through Influencers on TikTok will increase brand awareness in the fashion industry.

Figure 2 and Figure 4 show that on average, a Shein influencer has a greater following and a higher reach per post on TikTok than on Instagram. The same is true for the average engagement per post (Figure 3). With one post per influencer, ten Shein influencers have reached a total of 7,169,821 people on TikTok. This number clearly shows that TikTok is also a great platform to leverage influencers if a company wants to increase brand awareness. However, there are some differences compared to Instagram. There is no linear relationship between the number of followers and the reach on TikTok as represented in Figure 5. An almost 0 correlation coefficient means that the number of followers per influencer does not dictate the number of views an influencer gets on their video. This is due to the complex algorithm of the app which makes the work with influencers a lot riskier on TikTok than on Instagram. The video of the fashion influencer on TikTok must be relevant enough to be shown to the right audience. This makes it difficult for fashion brands and retailers to predict how many people they will reach when they work with influencers. The brands could save money by working with micro-influencers because their video has the potential to reach more people than a macro-influencer. On the other hand, the company could also lose money if the video of the influencer does not perform well and, thus, does not reach any people. Working with macro-influencers is more expensive, however, would guarantee the brand to reach the current followers of the influencer, which would be a greater number than they would reach with a micro-influencer.

Conclusions

General Conclusions

The research shows that working with influencers can have a great impact on brand awareness for fashion brands. However, it has to be mentioned that not every brand might see success when working with influencers. Brands must think about what target audience their brand attracts. For example, if the company seeks to reach an older population, it might be difficult to increase brand awareness due to the lack of social media use in populations over 40-years-old. On the other hand, for fashion retailers like Shein, which mostly targets Generation Z, influencers are a great marketing tool since this generation spends a lot of time on social media and relies on the opinion of influencers. Since Shein works with a large number of influencers, these customers are constantly exposed to the brand which ultimately builds brand awareness.

Implications for Practice

The results of this thesis show companies that are still hesitant about working with influencers that influencer marketing is an effective way to reach the younger generation and increase the brand's awareness among this audience.

Additionally, the research helps companies choose the right influencers and platforms for their marketing strategy. It also gives insight into how the social media platforms work and how to use them as a company. This is crucial for the success of an influencer marketing strategy.

Implications for Research

Further research can be done to go into more depth when it comes to the increase of brand awareness through influence marketing. While the reach shows how many people have seen a post from an influencer, it does not indicate how many of these people will recall the

brand promoted by the influencer after seeing their post. Thus, research can be done on how well people remember brands after seeing a post from an influencer.

Furthermore, more companies with different target audiences can be analyzed to draw a comparison to Shein. This would give insights into how the success of influencer marketing is dependent on the target audience that a company wants to reach.

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