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Saving Face: Comparing the Effects of Endorsement Marketing Strategies on Millennial Americans

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ABSTRACT

The rapid boom of social media in the 21st century has positioned it as a key instrument in the realm of marketing. Social media has also given rise to a new kind of endorser: the influencer. The present study tested the effects of expert influencers vs traditional celebrities on brand attitude and purchase intentions of makeup products, within a cohort of millennials. Results showed respondents tended to favor the expert influencer in terms of perceived expertise, brand attitude and purchase intention. This has important implications for marketers when it comes to deciding upon an endorser for their brand, with expert influencers having an advantage in the eyes of consumers.

Keywords: *Marketing, advertising, social media, millennials, expert influencer, celebrity.*

INTRODUCTION

Segment of Interest and Topic
As social media platforms continue to grow extensively, businesses are capitalizing on marketing opportunities required to reach broader audiences at a much faster rate. According to the "State of Small Business Report," presented by WASP Barcode Technologies (2017), as of 2016, 37% of small businesses are now using social media to reach their audiences, and 77% of small

businesses use social media to grow their business. Social media marketing aims not only to sell more products, but to enhance and create interactive relationships between consumers and companies (Rapp et al., 2013).

The millennial cohort has grown up socializing and purchasing products online on sites such as Facebook (Lincoln & Robards, 2016), and this group likely holds the most potential buying power for businesses using social media advertising tactics. As millennials remain the main driver of social media platforms, it is of interest to this study to test perceptions of this cohort regarding how they are influenced by two social media-based marketing efforts: celebrity influencers versus expert influencers.

The research will look to test if there is any difference between celebrities and expert influencers when it comes to brand attitude and purchase decisions of millenials. Millennials are commonly known as the people born between 1981 and 1993 (Trezzo, 2013). According to the Pew Research Center, 90% of adults (ages 18-29) use social media (Pew Research Center, 2015); and usage did not vary greatly between ethnicities, as 65% of Whites, 65% of Hispanics, and 56% of African Americans use social media today (Pew Research Center, 2015). These demographics were chosen for the researchers to compare which type of influencer each ethnicity prefers.

Research Problem

There seems to be a lack of research on whether expert influencers or celebrities are more effective with marketing to millennial consumers. Additionally, there is minimal research on whether ethnicity can play a factor in what type of influencer is more effective. With the lack of research in this area, businesses can be targeting their audiences less precisely, possibly leading to unfulfilled market opportunities. Companies can use this research to determine the most appropriate type of influencer for specific audience groups.

Significance of the Study

It is no secret that the advent of the Internet, and the consequent proliferation of social networking sites, has revolutionized the world. "More and more, we depend on technology for almost everything throughout our daily lives… it has changed us - personally and as a society - forever" (Vaughn, 2018). In this day and age of technological advancement, people simply do everything differently; technology has affected the way we operate, the way we access information, even the way we communicate with one another, for better or for worse. This has also inevitably permeated the way people do business with and interact with brands. This is particularly true when it comes to the millennial cohort, who are set to become the generation with the most spending power in 2018 with a budget of over $200 billion according to Forbes magazine (Schroeder, 2017). Considering these statistics, it is very important for marketers to pay attention to this age cohort and make strides toward understanding how to best appeal to them.

Social media has become a crucial factor when it comes to connecting with millennials. According to marketing strategist Zofia Antonow, over 85% of millennials own a smartphone that they touch at least 45 times a day, 5 out of 6 of them connect with companies using social media networks, and 62% of them state that if a brand engages with them on social media, they are more likely to become loyal customers (2017). Specifically, regarding the fashion and beauty industries, 72% of millennials report buying products based on Instagram posts (Arnold, 2017).

This is very revealing of how millennials come to make a purchase decision, as it showcases the fact that they are mostly online and tend to form opinions about brands depending on their social media presence. According to author Jacques Bughin, contributor to the McKinsey Quarterly, recommendations from peers play a critical role in millennials' purchase decision, with a small group of "power users" or "active influencers" holding a disproportionate share of total recommendations; particularly within the clothing industry, the author found that "5% of the recommenders accounted for 45% of the social influence generated" (2015). This means that millennials are looking for recommendations from individuals before purchasing a product, without necessarily knowing the recommender personally.

The information presented showcases the important role influencers play when it comes to the brand attitude and purchase decision of millennials. It is clear that marketers need to pay attention to this powerful age cohort, and that they must do so online through social media outlets if they hope to reap the benefits and remain relevant within the group. What remains to be discovered is exactly what type of influencer has the most effect on millennials. Do they prefer to follow in the footsteps of individuals who have acquired fame and fortune? Or would they rather heed the advice of individuals who are more like them, and who seem to have a certain amount of knowledge and expertise on the topic, product, or service? The present research will attempt to answer these questions.

Objectives and Purpose Statement
The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of influencer endorsements in creating brand favorability and motivating purchase decisions among the millennial population. Focusing on the beauty industry and specifically using mascara as a proxy, our questions and stimuli will examine if and how the brand perceptions and purchase decisions of respondents are affected when exposed to either a celebrity endorsement or an expert influencer endorsement. Through this research, we hope to uncover millennials' honest responses to influencer marketing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media sites now play a large role in the development of businesses, creating new opportunities and challenges for its participants (Aral et al., 2013); they have been specifically essential in determining consumer preferences (Hill et al., 2006; Aral et al., 2005). With the possibility of rapid business growth via social media platforms, organizations must begin to find better ways to target their audiences, as purchase decisions are highly influenced by social media interactions (Dennhardt, 2014). As influencers become more popular, identifying which type of influencer is more effective is necessary for businesses. Identifying effective influencers in online social networks can be critical to save costs and create more business opportunities in eWOM marketing (Liu et al., 2013). Further research will determine whether expert influencers or celebrities are more effective, and whether ethnicity can have an impact on the preferred type of influencer.

The influencer marketing industry has shown growth throughout the years, with no sign thus far of decelerating. According to figures from Statista, the worldwide market size of influencer marketing has grown from $1.7 billion in 2016 to a projected $13.8 billion in 2021. The State of

Influencer Marketing Benchmark Report for 2021, carried out by the Influencer Marketing Hub, reveals that more than 240 new agencies and platforms focused on influencer marketing were established in 2019, and that 90% of survey respondents believe influencer marketing to be effective. Testament to their effectiveness, studies show that opting for influencer marketing tends to generate more sales for brands (Jarrar et al., 2020).

An influencer is someone who uses an online social network as a platform to educate audiences through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media (Freberg et al., 2011). An expert influencer has expertise regarding the information he or she gives out and must have a high status in the social network they use to be effective (Liu et al., 2013). A celebrity is a famous or celebrated person (Merriam-Webster, 2017), but does not necessarily need a strong presence in social media to build their status, nor expertise regarding the information he or she gives out (Liu et al., 2013).

Research has been done on expert influencers in Singapore; the research defines microcelebrity (expert influencers) as mostly women and "a new style of online performance that involves people 'amping up' their popularity over the Web using technologies like video, blogs and social networking sites" (Senft, 2008). Unlike mainstream entertainment industry celebrities, who can become public icons with large-scale followings, a microcelebrity is more of an icon for a niche group of people (Marwick, 2013). The research focuses heavily on the art of the Selfie. Good selfie-taking skills comprise the ability to capture a well-framed digital self-portrait and the ability to edit the selfie to maximize "likeability"—using the number of "likes" on a post to qualify its popularity, and thus the potential to monetize audience reception through this measure of attention on-screen (Abidin, 2016).

As more social media platforms gain popularity, specific platforms serve specific products differently. For cosmetics, research points to the social network Instagram as the best place for influencers to do their work (Abidin, 2016). Research also points to the importance of YouTube in terms of cosmetics, as many consumers are not only looking for guidance to buy, but also how to apply it. YouTube was once a 'virtual village,' where amateurs share their user-generated content in online communities. Now, it has been transformed into a platform inhabited by professionally generated content (Hou, 2018). At this point, perhaps the argument can be made that YouTube is serving as television for Millennials. Through fieldwork the author found that influencers seriously consider the direct feedback and requirements from viewers and subscribers (Hou, 2018). This shows that expert influencers care about what their followers are saying as well as the interaction they receive with them; they ask for suggestions for video content, express the motivation to make friends on YouTube, and learn about audience reception by navigating through the popular metrics and data analytics of the platform (Hou, 2018; Chau, 2011; Lange, 2007).

There have been studies conducted to test the effects of influencer marketing on consumers in regard to personality such as Liu et al. (2015) and Dhar and Jha (2014). In 2015, Liu et al. conducted a study in China on how to identify effective influencers by focusing on the dimensions of trust, domain, and time. From a different perspective, Dhar and Jha (2014) conducted a study in India that focused on personality type as well as purchasing decision

making of individuals between the ages of 20 and 30 years old. Even though these studies have been conducted in countries outside of the United States, the results obtained and their implications remain relevant in terms of this research study.

Liu et al. (2015) developed a framework based on social identity theory to identify influencers in terms of domain dependency and trust dynamics and found that individuals "would prefer to identify with their ingroup members and are influenced by these members' opinions… [but] when they cannot identify with a member's ingroup prototype, their behaviors change to conform with an alternative ingroup." Trust is among these behaviors that change, which shows that consumers do place a lot of trust on word of mouth from members of their ingroup. Social media expert influencers target this trust by participating in advertisements that offer opportunities for personal interaction with consumers.

A study conducted in 2017 that explored influencer marketing techniques employed in the fashion industry found that blogs were the leading platform for influencer marketing in that industry in terms of effectiveness (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). Sudha and Sheena explain that a decision in fashion often requires much more devotion and involvement from a consumer, which gives bloggers a very strong position in terms of influencing the consumer. They influence purchase based on their personal opinion, ability and position, making them one of the "most powerful force[s] in the fashion marketplace" (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). Their research found that there is a significant difference between an influencer's level of influence within each level of the decision-making process. The research also found the relationship between consumer age and what media attracts them (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). This finding implies the importance of carefully positioning the use of influencers at certain stages of the consumer's decision-making process. It is important to note the results from the aforementioned fashion industry study, as they show that the millennial age group is most influenced by social media bloggers, and which media, such as pictures and videos, attracts them the most.

With the rise of technological advancements, it is fairly common for these influencers to target millennial populations online. In the study conducted by Sharon Pate (2013), millennials were likely to purchase online if the product was "liked" by a "friend" on social media, or if the product was endorsed by a celebrity. Match-up hypothesis, a concept originally presented by John R. Rossitier and Larry Percy in 1980, suggests that when celebrities possess similar attributes to the brand they are endorsing, this promotes a positive consumer association with the brand. This concept has been corroborated in a recent study that concluded that if the product is congruent with the perceived image of the celebrity, this results in a positive attitude toward the advertisement (Mccormick, 2016). This research demonstrates that the more connection there is between and product and an endorser, the more effective the endorsement becomes.

Geert Hofstede conducted a study regarding work-related values of people from 50 different countries. Within this study, he discussed the topic of uncertainty avoidance, which is a cultural dimension of how individuals view the impact of risk on his or her future (Hofstede, 1983). In certain cultures, there can be higher levels of uncertainty avoidance. When it comes to an intention to purchase or a purchase decision, level of risk has to be evaluated. The level of risk and uncertainty toward purchase decisions can possibly be lowered when a celebrity endorses a

product or when an expert endorses a product. In terms of sales of products that have a higher perceived risk, and often a higher technology component, consumers tend to have a stronger preference for expert endorsers than celebrity endorsers. For low technology products with lower perceived risk, consumers have no significant preference for celebrity or expert endorsers (Biswas et al., 2006).

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

The research will be conducted within the frame of Reference Group Theory, which explains how individuals relate and connect to "an actual or imaginary individual or group conceived of having significant relevance upon an individual's evaluations, aspirations or behavior" (C. Whan & V. Parker, 1977, p. 102). *Brand Loyalty: A Study of the Prevalent Usage of Celebrity Endorsement in Cosmetics Advertising* surveyed Swedish business students assessing respondents' loyalty to cosmetics brands and concluded that neither brand loyalty nor attitudinal loyalty is proven to be affected through the use of celebrity endorsers anymore than the use of non-famous models (Löfgren & Li, 2008). While celebrity endorsers do generate initial interest in a product, consumer loyalty is not sustained by this in the way other factors like product superiority and value do.

Another study conducted in Thailand aimed to test "the moderating role of reference groups on different types of shoppers and the moderating role of product involvement on consumer purchase intention" (Hoonsopon & Puriwat, 2016, p. 158). The study found that the influence of reference groups is more dominant than product involvement when it comes to the purchase decision of consumers. More specifically, social value shoppers and hedonic shoppers place a greater importance on cues from their reference groups than utilitarian shoppers.

Expert influencers are knowledgeable of the products they are using. Through their organic growth on social media, expert influencers have committed followers who trust them. Celebrity endorsers help with creating interest in a product, but if they lack expertise in the product then the advertising they star in may not be effective. Through the lens of reference group theory, it can be inferred that consumers will place more trust in expert influencers than celebrity endorsers. The present research will investigate this further and test this assumption to discover if, in terms of product promotion, cosmetic brands will have more success if their products are endorsed by expert celebrities rather than celebrity endorsers.

It is important to consider that within reference group theory individuals can fall into several subsections of reference group influence, such as informational, utilitarian, or value-expressive (Bearden & Etzel, 1982). Informational influence would cause consumers to be persuaded to purchase by providing them with the necessary information they seek regarding the product; this type of influence is beneficial for those with high uncertainty avoidance. Utilitarian reference would influence those who find it necessary to meet expectations set by others, causing them to change behavior by determining whether an action will result in reward or punishment (Bearden & Etzel, 1982). Value-expressive influence would influence a person to behave in a way that will resemble admired reference groups, or simply support groups for which they have affinity (Bearden & Etzel, 1982). Individuals will likely be more influenced by who they determine their reference group is, whether it be celebrity or expert. However, these groups could seek influence based on one of the aforementioned subsections of the theory.

The dependent variable to be tested is the respondents' purchase decision, by controlling exposure to the independent variables which are the two different types of influencers (celebrity vs expert). The mediating variable to consider is the attitude towards the brand, given that the brand Maybelline was chosen because video footage exists of both selected influencers sponsoring a mascara product by that brand. This choice was made in order to make the two influencers comparable. The confounding variables to be aware of are: the paid sponsorship from the celebrity video, the organic, non-paid recommendation from the expert influencer video, and the difference of ethnicity between both.

As such, our hypotheses for the study are as follows:

H_1: Respondents' attitudes toward the brand will be more positive after seeing it endorsed by a celebrity than after seeing it endorsed by an expert influencer.

H_2: The more susceptible a respondent is to informational influence, the more positive their attitudes will be toward the brand after seeing it endorsed by a celebrity.

H_3: The more susceptible a respondent is to informational influence, the more positive their attitudes will be toward the brand after seeing it endorsed by an expert influencer.

H_4: The higher a celebrity's perceived level of expertise, the more likely respondents will intend to purchase the product they endorse.

H_5: The higher an expert influencer's perceived level of expertise, the more likely respondents will intend to purchase the product they endorse.

H_6: Celebrity and expert influencers' perceived level of expertise are expected to differ.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Methodology

The purpose of the research is to explore the level of influence that using celebrity endorsements versus using expert endorsements will have on the purchase decision of millennial respondents across different ethnic backgrounds. The age of the millenials in this study will range from 21-34 years old (Hernandez, 2017). The millennial segment was selected due to its incredible purchasing power, given that it was estimated that millenials would spend $200 billion just in 2017, and that in 2018 they will become the generation with the most spending power (Schroeder, 2017). Participants will include those who identify as female. Additionally, our subjects' ethnicities will be diverse: Caucasian, Black/African American, Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic participants will be included. The study will specifically focus on mascara products, given that 106.54 million people in the United States reported using mascara in 2017 (NHCS, 2017). The instrument will be an online survey distributed through online communication engines in order to more easily reach the population of interest. Gigi Hadid was chosen as the celebrity influencer, promoting the Maybelline mascara in a video advertisement. She was chosen due to her relevance to the millennial cohort as she has 38.7 million followers on Instagram (Hadid, n.d.). Makeupshayla is a beauty blogger with a large-scale following of 2.6 million followers on Instagram and 516,000 on YouTube (Makeupshayla, 2017). Due to her expertise in cosmetics and the fact that she has also endorsed Maybelline mascara, she was selected as the expert influencer for this study. Please reference appendix B for a list of the selected stimuli.

Sampling

The sample was a convenience sample of 50 individuals who identified as female, who were part of the millennial cohort (age 21-34), and who had different ethnic backgrounds. These ethnicities included (but were not limited to) Caucasians, Blacks, Asians and Hispanics. The survey was distributed as an online link through email and other online communication engines such as Facebook messenger. Snowball sampling was employed by asking respondents to share the link with other respondents who are also part of the millennial cohort.

Instrument

The respondents will be asked to watch two short videos/advertisements that showcase mascara products. One of the videos is a celebrity endorsement featuring Gigi Hadid. The second video is a makeup tutorial by an expert influencer known as Makeupshayla. Both videos are promoting Maybelline mascara products. The questionnaire survey will be composed of 16 questions measuring the expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of the celebrity and expert influencers. This will be achieved using the Expertise, Trustworthiness, and Attractiveness of Celebrity scale (Ohanian, 1990). The questionnaire will also be using the Reference Group Influence: Consumer Susceptibility to Reference Group Influence (Park & Lessig, 1977) theory to measure the effect of the association the respondents' feel towards the different influencers.

DATA ANALYSIS

Sample
- Sample size: 46 respondents
- Age: between 21-34 years of age
- Racial/Ethnic background distribution:
    - 46.2% Non-Hispanic White
    - 30.8% Hispanic
    - 12.8% African American
    - 2.6% Asian American
    - 7.7% Other
- Marital status distribution:
    - 82.1% never married
    - 7.7% married
    - 10.3% living with someone
- Community distribution:
    - 38.5% Urban
    - 5.1% Rural
    - 56.4% Suburban

Validation

To validate the responses and ensure answers were made thoughtfully, the following question was included in the survey:

      Please answer "yes" to this question:
- Yes

- Maybe
- No

Scale Reliability:
- Informational Influence
  - Cronbach Alpha: 0.706
  - Variance explained: 53.679%
- Utilitarian Influence (Q7_1-3)
  - Cronbach Alpha: 0.755
  - Variance explained: 67.72%
- Value-Expressive Influence (Q8)
  - Cronbach Alpha: 0.788
  - Variance explained: 55.228%
- Attractiveness (Q92, 82, 84, 86, 88)
  - Q84 & Q86 removed to increase reliability
  - Cronbach Alpha: 0.734
  - Variance explained: 57.6%
- Trustworthiness (Q102, 94, 96, 98, 100)
  - Cronbach Alpha: 0.92
  - Variance explained 76.89%
- Experience (Q112, 104, 106, 108, 110)
  - Cronbach Alpha: 0.928
  - Variance explained: 78.276%
- Attractiveness (Q128, Q120,Q126)
  - Cronbach Alpha: 0.866
  - Variance explained: 81.054%
  - Additional findings: all variables used produced one factor which they didn't in the video one, variance explained of 74.2% and Cronbach alpha 0.908)(Q128, Q122, Q120, Q124,Q126. The options CLASSY and ELEGANT actually worked for the second video when they failed to work for the first video. The first video SPSS data considered ELEGANT and CLASSY so different from other variables that it created its own factor. However, we removed CLASSY and ELEGANT to stay consistent with how we analyzed responses for both videos.
- Trustworthiness (Q138, Q130, Q132, Q134, Q136)
  - Cronbach Alpha: 0.934
  - Variance explained: 79.699%
- Experience (Q148, Q140, Q142, Q144, Q146)
  - Cronbach Alpha: 0.936
  - Variance explained: 79.883%

RESULTS

H_1: Respondents' attitudes toward the brand will be more positive after seeing it endorsed by a celebrity than after seeing it endorsed by an expert influencer.

A Paired Samples T-Test revealed respondents found the brand more favorable after seeing it endorsed by an expert influencer than they did after seeing it endorsed by a celebrity; thus, we reject H_1.

Paired Samples Statistics		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	After watching this video, what is your attitude toward Maybelline cosmetics?	3.02	46	.802	.118
	After watching this video, what is your attitude toward Maybelline cosmetics?	3.43	46	.807	.119

H_2: The more susceptible a respondent is to informational influence, the more positive their attitudes will be toward the brand after seeing it endorsed by a celebrity.

A Bivariate Correlation analysis revealed a correlation of .235 between respondents' susceptibility to informational influence and attitude toward the brand, however the finding was not statistically significant at the 0.01 level; thus, we reject H_2.

Correlations		Information Influence	After watching this video, what is your attitude toward Maybelline cosmetics?
Information Influence	Pearson Correlation	1	.235
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.056
	N	51	47
After watching this video, what is your attitude toward Maybelline cosmetics?	Pearson Correlation	.235	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.056	
	N	47	47

H_3: The more susceptible a respondent is to informational influence, the more positive their attitudes will toward a brand after seeing it endorsed by an expert influencer.

A Bivariate Correlation analysis revealed a correlation of .422 between respondents' susceptibility to informational influence and positive attitudes toward a brand endorsed by an expert influencer significant at the 0.01 level; thus, we accept H_3.

Correlations		Information Influence	After watching this video, what is your attitude toward Maybelline cosmetics?
Information Influence	Pearson Correlation	1	.422**

			.002
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.002
	N	51	46
After watching this video, what is your attitude toward Maybelline cosmetics?	Pearson Correlation	.422**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.002	
	N	46	46

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

H4: The higher a celebrity's perceived level of expertise, the more likely respondents will intend to purchase the product they endorse.

A Bivariate Correlation analysis revealed a correlation of .452 between an expert influencer's perceived level of expertise and respondents' intention to purchase the product they endorse significant at the 0.01 level; thus, we accept H4.

Correlations			
		Compounded expertise for Gigi	After watching this video, how likely are you to purchase the featured mascara product?
Compounded expertise for Gigi	Pearson Correlation	1	.452**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.001
	N	47	47
After watching this video, how likely are you to purchase the featured mascara product?	Pearson Correlation	.452**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.001	
	N	47	47

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H5: The higher an expert influencer's perceived level of expertise, the more likely respondents will intend to purchase the product they endorse.

A Bivariate Correlation analysis revealed a correlation of .383 between an expert influencer's perceived level of expertise and respondents' intention to purchase the product they endorse significant at the 0.01 level; thus, we accept H5.

Correlations			
		Compounded expertise for Shayla	After watching this video, how likely are you to purchase the featured mascara product?
Compounded expertise for Shayla	Pearson Correlation	1	.383**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.009
	N	46	46
After watching this video, how likely are you to purchase the featured mascara product?	Pearson Correlation	.383**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.009	
	N	46	46

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H6: Celebrity and expert influencers' perceived level of expertise are expected to differ.
A Paired Samples T-Test revealed respondents found the expert influencer as more knowledgeable than they did the celebrity; thus, we accept H6.

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Compounded expertise for Gigi	2.7739	46	1.03504	.15261
	Compounded expertise for Shayla	3.9913	46	.80879	.11925

CONCLUSIONS

Ultimately, results showed that there was a positive correlation between the expert influencer's perceived expertise and the respondents' intention to purchase. Considering the results, respondents found the expert influencer as more knowledgeable than the celebrity. Additionally, respondents found the brand more favorable after exposure to the expert endorser as opposed to the celebrity endorser. In terms of applications for marketers, our results show that companies that use expert influencers have an advantage to win over consumers in a way celebrity endorsements can't. An expert influencer can provide a more authentic form of advertising which consumers find more interesting. Due to limited research in this topic, our research provides meaningful contributions to the field.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

There are some important limitations to consider about the present research. One of these is the limited amount of time for data collection, which inevitably led to having a small sample size. Also, due to the particular product tested, the sample was limited to only female respondents. Having a limited sample selection and a smaller sample size may make the results less representative of the general population. It is recommended that in the future researchers plan to expand the sample selection and collect data for a longer period of time so they may allow for more respondents to answer and thus ensure a larger, more representative sample size. The larger the sample size, the more the results can be generalized back to the general population.
The length of the questionnaire might have also presented a limitation. Since the questionnaire was composed of 53 questions and it required time to view two videos, respondents might have not answered all questions carefully and honestly. In order to sidestep this, researchers included a validation question to ensure the reliability of the responses, which inevitably led to the elimination of several of them. This contributed to the previous issue of having a small sample size, and it is recommended that researchers in the future ensure more time for data collection so that they may be able to increase the number of responses.

There is another limitation regarding the stimuli. Respondents were exposed to the Makeupshayla video longer than the Gigi Hadid video, which may have had an effect on their responses. The videos themselves were also quite different, even if they did discuss the same type Maybelline product. The Gigi Hadid video had a storyline, and several other actors in the scene. It also appeared to have a higher production budget. The Makeupshayla video, on the other hand, featured only Makeupshayla speaking directly to the camera about the product without any additional characters or special effects. Also, the actual mascara product was not

exactly the same; each influencer endorsed a different type of Maybelline mascara. In the future, researchers might want to utilize stimuli that are more similar and comparable to each other to have more control and decrease the number of variables that could have an effect on respondents' answers.

In the future, researchers might want to test the effect of using celebrity endorsements and expert influencers across other industries. The scope of this research was limited to one particular product category (mascara) within one specific industry (makeup/beauty), which might have had an effect on how respondents perceive the influencers. It would be interesting for researchers to test whether results could vary across different products and industries. They might also consider testing how well-known the selected influencers are, and if their exposure and amount of followers has any effect on how respondents perceive them. All in all, considering the purchasing power and prevalence of the millennial cohort, the researchers recommend continual research and attention to this age cohort across products, services, and industries.

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