

A Cosmetics Marketing Case Study: Targeting Teenagers through Social Media

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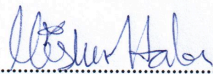
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ABSTRAKT

Internet není novým fenoménem, ale určitě vyvolal globální revoluci. Je to globální fenomén, protože úzce souvisí s komunikací, která ovlivňuje všechny společenské třídy, všechny věkové skupiny, pohlaví, náboženství a kultury. Tvůrci internetu si jistě ani nemohli představit, jak by mohl vývoj tohoto fenoménu jít, a to se stále ještě vyvíjí. Společně s růstem internetu byly vytvořeny sociální sítě s cílem usnadnit spojení mezi lidmi.

Cílem této práce je provést analýzu toho, jak sociální sítě ovlivňují mladistvé v jejich spotřebních návycích. V analýze budeme pozorovat chování dívek pod vlivem YouTube kosmetických guruů, které jsou zodpovědné za podporu prodeje kosmetických výrobků.

Klíčová slova: E-marketing, internet, sociální sítě, mladiství, kosmetické výrobky, kosmetičtí guru

ABSTRACT

The Internet is not a new phenomenon, but certainly this provoked a global revolution. It is a global phenomenon because it is closely related to communication, which is influencing all social classes, ages, genders, religions and cultures. The creators of the Internet did not imagine how the progress of this phenomenon could go and it is still developing. Along with the growth of the Internet, social networks were created to facilitate the connection between people.

The goal of this thesis is to make an analysis of how social networks are influencing teenagers in their consuming habits. In the analysis we will observe the behavior of the girls under the influence of YouTube beauty gurus that are the responsible for promoting unconscious marketing of beauty products.

Keywords: E-marketing, Internet, social networks, teenagers, beauty products, beauty gurus

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INTRODUCTION

In the twenty first century, marketing is one of the most important activities of a company. Thanks to marketing, certain products of any company can be presented to the final consumers. Marketing has provoked a profound impact among the people by exerting a notorious influence in their buying habits, lifestyles and even in their forms of work.

In the early 1990s marketing on the Internet originated. Allowing the marketing to work itself limitless and expanding throughout the world. Marketing grew a lot at the same time that the Internet was developing, with advertisements full of colors and with high quality graphics. The Internet has changed the world of marketing and business in general. Thanks to this technological development the term E-Marketing was born.

These technological developments together with new communication methods were developed. It is worth mentioning this because what was previously mentioned, it has one thing in common, which is the Internet.

The Internet provoked a global revolution; it is a global phenomenon because it is closely related to communication, which is influencing all social classes, ages, genders, religions and cultures. Thanks to this phenomenon new methods of communication were created such as social networks.

Social networks were created with just one purpose, and it was to connect people. It means that it is necessary to have a computer and yourself; in this case it is very easy to get connected with somebody and chat with a specific person. Nowadays, a lot of different social networks exist. The most popular are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

Social Networks do not work to communicate only but transmit different information through them. For example, Facebook is the biggest social network that exists, which helps companies; brands and organizations share their history and let them connect directly with their consumers.

In this thesis we will observe how social networks work to promote specific products and services (beauty products) that are influencing teenagers in this digital age. We will also learn how YouTube's beauty gurus are responsible for making unconscious marketing of beauty products and how the gurus transmit this information to their viewers, which are teenagers.

I. THEORY

1 INTRODUCTION TO THE MARKETING

The American Marketing Association says, “ Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.”¹

Since marketing was created, the purpose of it was and remains to be the voice of a company because it is the only way they can communicate to their final consumers and persuade them to buy their products. In the research I have made, marketing is a strong “concept,” since it is covering a lot of aspects of the publicity.

Marketing has achieved a “profound impact” in the lives of millions of people by exerting a notorious influence in their buying habits, lifestyles and even in their forms of work. Few examples that can prove this theory are most things that people use daily like the types and amount of foods they eat, the clothes they wear, the movies they watch, the books they read, the beauty products they buy, etcetera. Everything what is found, acquired, and used, is the result of one or more activities related to marketing.²

1.1 THE INTERNET AND MARKETING

Marketing on the Internet was originated in the early 1990s as simple web pages with a small text offering the information of certain products. After some time, the marketing grew a lot at the same time that the Internet was developing, with advertisements full of colors and with high quality graphics.³

Nowadays, the Internet is a very important way of communication used by thousands of people all around the world. As we already know, the Internet is an interactive medium unlike traditional media such as radio or television that let the people search for their preferences and consumption necessities that they may have. The Internet has changed the world of marketing and business in general. Currently, Internet Marketing or also known as E-Marketing is the alternative most frequently used by the companies to disseminate and promote their products and services. The real importance of marketing on the Internet is shown by its power that becomes almost infinite.⁴

¹ “American Marketing Assosiation,” July, 2013, accessed January 22, 2015, <https://www.ama.org/AboutAMA/Pages/Definition-of-Marketing.aspx>.

² Ivan Thompson, “Mercadotecnia,” Promonegocios, August, 2005, accessed January 21, 2015, <http://www.promonegocios.net/mercadotecnia/introduccion-mercadotecnia.htm>.

³ Rafael Muñoz, “2. Internet: El Marketing Se Hace Infinito,” Marketing XXI, accessed April 21, 2015, <http://www.marketing-xxi.com/internet,-el-marketing-se-hace-infinito-146.htm>.

⁴ Ibid.

1.1.1 E-Marketing

The term E-Marketing is used to put together marketing techniques, which are related with the Internet. It is basically a digital version of traditional marketing techniques that have been replaced. Internet Marketing is about promoting a product or service using the web as a channel.⁵

The people are looking and buying goods and services more on the Internet because they believe that is more comfortable to do it from their houses than to go somewhere and look for it. The online marketing groups the techniques and media used such as emails, web sales sites, blogs, video series, podcasts, social networks, etcetera.⁶

The competitive advantages of traditional marketing are:

- *Immediate post* of information and content without any geographic limitations.
- *Customized ads* in relation to the content or research. For example, systems like AdWords allow people to show relevant ads related
- *The results are measurable* and advertisers can make useful statistical data to improve their campaigns.⁷

Some types of the marketing online that are used nowadays are:

- Paid ads: the use of banners or text ads placed on websites or blogs in order to drive traffic to your website.
- Marketing through email: it is based on creating email lists of stakeholders to create marketing campaigns.
- Marketing on Social Networks: help to get traffic and customers on social networks like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.
- Video marketing: this type of marketing consists in publishing videos on networks like YouTube or Vimeo with the aim of promoting products or services.⁸

The positive part of the online marketing is that it requires the same basic skills that are used for traditional marketing, the same as the traditional vendors, working to gain the

⁵ Alfredo Bizzocchi, “¿Que Es Internet Marketing?,” Ideas Marketing, accessed April 21, 2015, <http://www.ideaschicago.com/que-es-internet-marketing/>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

interest of some precise target customers. The web marketing works to attract potential customers to make sales of goods and services.⁹

1.2 THE DIGITAL AGE

“*All media work us over completely.*” Marshall McLuhan¹⁰

The Internet is not a new phenomenon, but certainly this provoked a global revolution, as it was known 40 years ago. It is a global phenomenon because it is closely related to communication, which is influencing all social classes, ages, genders, religions and cultures. The creators of the Internet did not imagine how the progress of this phenomenon could go and it is still developing. Nowadays, this invention is as important, as was the telephone or television.¹¹

In the very beginning the purpose of the Internet was exclusively for communication (such as e-mails). This allowed people to communicate with everybody without any barriers. But, with time nobody knew that this communication method would go much further than it was, creating new social networks.¹²

Nowadays, the age of the “cyber culture” is our present. The “selected” power and the economy, remain blind due to the reality of the Internet and the high impact that this provokes the society by staying in their comfort zone and denying their actions.¹³

Historically speaking the free enterprise and the ideologies have had to emphasize to material things in order to understand the behavior of the human beings and the market. Today the result is to pretend to continue explaining to humanity and the societies from the material scope, when it is evident that the information involved are the paradigms of the “real” politics, businesses, the social aspects and environmental issues in the world currently. The information that is flowing quickly through the electricity is provoking the Internet to work without any barriers by just making a *click*.¹⁴

The author of this article is not trying to say that the internet is something negative, on the contrary, he is trying to explain how good it can be to find any kind of information by

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Cesar Octavio Larrañaga, “La Verdadera Era de La Información,” Forbes, August 20, 2013, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.forbes.com.mx/la-verdadera-era-de-la-informacion/>.

¹¹ “Importancia Del Internet,” accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.importancia.org/internet.php>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Cesar Octavio Larrañaga, “La Verdadera Era de La Información,” Forbes, August 20, 2013, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.forbes.com.mx/la-verdadera-era-de-la-informacion/>.

clicking some webpages but the people need to do it in a responsible way in order to not fall down in their comfort zones.

The “new technologies”, the network, the computers and the communication of our present have caused dominant patterns to make the diversification popular among multiple sectors. The encounters and clashes between cultures that has taken people by surprise.

Since the past mid-century, the material consumerism increased too much, but the question is: What is the advantage of all the consumerism that we are making when by the end all the resources that we are consuming are infinite? It is unavoidable that our actions have a great impact over us without any exception. Moreover, if we add to our present the cyber culture, the natural resources are nothing compared to the voracious appetite for electric energy, the images, the sounds, the goods, the instant and the information, where the virtuality is real and the realness is virtual.¹⁵

When we have a PC in front of us at full speed, our technological possibilities are much better. Psychologically speaking, when the terms: “ME” and “THE OTHER” appears. Furthermore, the people in general are persuaded to live in the cyber culture more than taking attention to their morality. That is the reason why everybody needs to be responsible for their own actions and in particular the public servants, commercial servants and financial servants which have a bigger responsibility to assure their own information to the people.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

1.3 SOCIAL NETWORKS

Social networks were created with just one purpose, and it was to connect people. Basically, it means that it is necessary to have a computer and yourself, in this case it is very easy to get connected with somebody and chat with a specific person, to comment on their walls, share pictures or whatever you feel like doing.¹⁶

Nowadays, there exist a lot of social networks that are connecting everyday people such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, Flickr, Hi5, and one of the most important is Facebook. This last one previously mentioned has provoked a high impact on the people because they realize that they could communicate with people that they have not seen for years, or for instance the impact was more visible from the people that are around the age 50 because in their childhood the internet did not exist and it was more complicated to contact a person but now they can look for a person by just writing his or her name and surname. Twitter is almost the same as Facebook; the only advantage is that you can also communicate with your favorite celebrities.

Another big channel that I would like to add into social networks is YouTube that is the biggest video research all around the world. The videos you can find on this website are infinite, anything from music videos to basic tutorials of how to do something (make-up, kitchen, IT services, etcetera).

1.3.1 Facebook

Facebook is a social network created by Mark Zuckerberg. His goal was to design a space where students of university could share content easily through the Internet. His project was so innovative that eventually it spread so fast that it was available to any network user. Nowadays, Facebook is the biggest social network that exists, which helps companies, brands and organizations to share their history and let them connect directly with the people. A personal profile account is the same; it lets people personalize their pages by publishing posts, pictures and sharing links.¹⁷

Facebook is free to users and the advantage of it is that it can generate revenue for the advertisements that are exposed, including banner ads and sponsored groups. All the users

¹⁶ WebSite Team, "What Are Social Networking Sites?," BBC, October 10, 2012, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/guides/about-social-networking>.

¹⁷ "Servicio de Ayuda," Facebook, accessed April 21, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/help/174987089221178>.

can register through their emails being celebrities, bands and musicians, companies and individuals.¹⁸

Nowadays, Facebook has over 350 million active users and more than 35 million users update their status each day. Another interesting fact is that 2.5 billion pictures are uploaded each month. Facebook has the 3rd place in the top 100 searches by children under 18.¹⁹

1.3.2 Twitter

Twitter is a social network like Facebook but what makes it different from the others is the limitation to write messages. Twitter allows users to send and read text with a maximum length of 140 characters better known as “tweets”. The principle of Twitter is based on followers, when you choose to follow another user that user’s tweets appear in chronological order on your main Twitter page. Twitter became very famous because it became very popular among celebrities, journalists and politicians, allowing people to have more direct communication with these kinds of people.

Thanks to this network and the limitation that it has with the messages is where hashtags (#) are created. Hashtags works to easily find tweets from other users that are speaking about topics of your interest. For example, if someone writes a tweet and adds the hashtag #UTB, everybody can click it and you can see all the tweets of the users who are talking about UTB at that moment.²⁰

Twitter has some interesting facts that people cannot imagine. For instance, Katy Perry is the user with the most followers; the singer has over 67 million followers. Also the brand YouTube is the most followed brand with 49 million users. It is worth to mention that the blue bird of Twitter is called Larry Bird.

Jack Dorsey, the founder of Twitter was very angry when Instagram was sold to Facebook for \$1 billion in cash and was stocked in April 2012, after some time in the same year, Twitter bought Vine (video- sharing app) for \$30 million dollars.²¹

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ “50 Interesting Facebook Facts,” Random Facts, accessed April 25, 2015, <http://facts.randomhistory.com/interesting-facebook-facts.html>.

²⁰ Paul Gil, “What Exactly Is 'twitter'? What Is 'tweeting'?” About Tech, accessed April 22, 2015, <http://netforbeginners.about.com/od/internet101/f/What-Exactly-Is-Twitter.htm>.

²¹ Eli Langer, “140 Things You Don't Know About Twitter,” CNBC, March 20, 2015, accessed April 25, 2015, <http://www.cnbc.com/id/101511848>.

1.3.3 Instagram

Instagram is a free application for iPhone or Android that lets you take pictures and after you can modify them with special effects before you share them on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr. The most important characteristics of Instagram are the square photographs, similar to those pictures which were taken with the Kodak Instamatic cameras in the 60's. Instagram has eleven digital filters that transform pictures, improving the quality of the photos. In this application you can also use hashtags, which means that if you click on some specific hashtag, all the pictures that were shared with that specific hashtag will appear.²²

There are some interesting facts that are worth mentioning. Justin Bieber is the most followed person on Instagram. The hashtag #selfie is found in more than 57 million photos. The "selfie Queen" is Kylie Jenner, she has 451 photos of herself posted on Instagram.²³

1.3.4 YouTube

In this thesis I would like to go into specific detail about this website. I think that it is adequate to mention this, since I am related to it. I have a channel under the name Misha Haba. My channel is about beauty make-up tutorials, I started doing tutorials 3 years ago. I started because of the influence of other beauty gurus all around the world. I found it very easy because I have a big passion for makeup and when I realized that I just needed a camera and a computer, for me it became very easy to make my first tutorial. When I began doing tutorials I was very inspired by three girls, they were Dulce Candy, Carli Bybel and Michelle Phan. I saw how they started from the bottom and now they are very successful Youtubers.

The Google Company founded YouTube in May 2005. YouTube let people discover new things that are provided by millions of users that are uploading videos. This forum permits people to connect, inform and inspire others to join this huge platform in order to

²² Francisco Rubira "Que Es Instagram y Para Que Sirve?," El Confidencial Digital, June 24, 2013, accessed April 22, 2015, http://www.elconfidencialdigital.com/opinion/tribuna_libre/Instagram-sirve_0_2076992284.html.

²³ "23 Interesting Facts About Instagram," BuzzFeed Community, January 22, 2014, accessed April 25, 2015, <http://www.buzzfeed.com/javim2/23-interesting-facts-about-instagram-bw9q#.jrwP20Mqo>.

make a big community.²⁴ Moreover, thanks to this platform a lot of people were found there by talent researchers and sent them to the success.

Once you enter to this platform is very important to follow certain rules that are required.²⁵ First of all, in my case I need to be very careful when I edit my videos because I like to decorate them with some music and sounds, but I need to download music that is copyright free because if do not I can obtain a fee and have legal problems. This is the most important rule that YouTube is asking you to respect. Another big requirement is to be constant, YouTube offers you a time schedule to help one to organize certain ideas that may appear, and it is important to mention that they are offering you this help to own your success. After following these important rules and reaching 100,000 subscribers you can be part of a partnership. At this time YouTube informs you that you belong to their partnership program and you can start to gain money.²⁶

People find YouTube very attractive due to all the opportunities that they are offering you, but it is important to mention that the people who enjoy these opportunities are very creative in their way of recording, editing and showing their videos.²⁷

1.3.5 Beauty Gurus on YouTube

According to the Oxford dictionary, the word “Guru” means an influential teacher or popular expert.

Everybody can be considered a guru in the branch of whatever they like. In this case, a beauty guru might be an expert in the cosmetic industry without having a degree in cosmetology or image design, since the Internet is our main source of information.

The YouTube Beauty Gurus may not be that important for you, but they are extremely popular girls, controversial, and the greatest example of how online marketing works in the 21st century. For instance, the most popular YouTube Guru is Michelle Phan. She is the woman with the largest number of subscribers nowadays. She got so famous just by the professionalism with which she makes her videos by just having a good camera, nice background music and explaining properly how to make the beauty look.²⁸

²⁴ “About Youtube,” YouTube, accessed February 12, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/yt/about/>.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Rebecca Haden, “Youtube Beauty Gurus: An Analysis,” *Haden Interactive* (blog), July 18, 2011, accessed March 11, 2015, <http://www.hadeninteractive.com/youtube-beauty-gurus-an-analysis/>.

Some of the successful beauty gurus are the best marketers for YouTube and other companies, which earn thousands of dollars per month plus free goodies to be shown in their videos. In this case a lot of companies save money in their marketing methods.²⁹

Rebecca Haden made a small analysis of a successful beauty guru and she mentions in her blog that to reach the success there are three main points that you need to follow:

- Quantity: The more videos you upload the more subscribers you get.
- Value: To promote yourself and products, the main focus is based on the information provided by showing new things.
- Personal Connection: To speak directly to your fans like if you would be speaking with your sister.

It is very easy to reach success but you will find it way more difficult by receiving critics and haters but it is part of the industry, the more videos you make the more money you get and the companies save money by promoting some new products because they know that somebody else will do it for them.

1.4 TEENAGE CONSUMERISM

Six years does not seem to be a long time to think about major changes. However, this period has generated a big dynamism in the technological universe that forces us to think in a completely different world that existed in 2006.³⁰

Six years ago the predominant source of information was the television in the lives of children. Half of teenagers invested three to four hours per day of their time watching television and 80% of them used to say that their lives would be nothing without it.³¹

In 2006, only half of teenagers had a cellphone, and almost everybody listened music from a CD. Also, six years ago children were watching movies on videocassettes. In that moment, four out of ten teenagers had a Walkman or a Discman. The iPod and the MP4 practically did not exist among adolescents.³²

In 2006, the Internet was present just in the 15% of the houses and the vast majority of young people from all social sectors were going to cyber coffees or coffee shops to use the

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Roxana Morduchowicz, *Los Adolescentes Del Siglo Xxi* (Argentina: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 2013), 11-13.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

Internet. For this reason, the teens in that time were just using the Internet one hour per day or even less. The Internet was used exclusively to play online or chat but no teenagers were speaking about social medias or had a Facebook profile account. Only 2 out of 10 children were using the Internet to make research for their homework.³³

It is hard to believe that only six years have passed since that cultural radiography. Some quantitative studies of cultural consumerism are performed worldwide every 5 or 6 years, because it is long enough to survey a new cohort of high school students and also is a good period of time to analyze the technological changes.³⁴

1.4.1 Teenagers of the XXI Century

All the teenagers live in a visual world, and this is so by the decision of adults.³⁵ A small example to support the author's conclusion is to have more screens in a house than graphic media, which is always the decision of the parents. The parents are the ones who buy the technology that are in the house. These decisions do not always follow economic reasons, it is cheaper to buy a book than a television, or maybe to buy a newspaper than a second laptop and a magazine is also cheaper than to buy a DVD for each room of a house.

In conclusion, a home with more screens than graphic media (books, newspapers, magazines) reflects the choice of the parents for a visual world for themselves and their children.³⁶

-The home of a teenager from 11 to 17 years:

- The 100% have a TV (the 60% have 2 or more)
- The 100% have a cellphone
- The 90% have a radio
- The 70% have a computer
- The 70% have a DVD player
- The 65% have a telephone in their houses
- The 50% have books (more than 6)
- The 50% have the Internet
- The 50% buy newspapers (at least once a week)³⁷

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 22-23.

³⁶ Ibid.

The level of access to cultural goods can be understood not only from the big extension and dissemination of media and technologies in a society but also priorities with relation to them.

It is worth mentioning that in this section I would like to focus more on girls than boys since this thesis is analyzing the behavior of the adolescent girls.

Nowadays, the rooms of teenage girls have a diversified access to cultural goods and technological equipment. The media seem to have a specific route when they first arrive home. Generally, it is firstly installed in the living room or spaces that the family have in common but after a time it becomes incorporated into the daily routine of the family and stop being a novelty, it multiplies by bring replaced by a new one (the parents buy a new gadget/computer/ telephone) and it ends up in the daughters room.

This phenomenon gives the teenage girls a greater autonomy and independence in their own consumption and behavior.³⁸

- The room of a teenager girl from 11 to 17 years:

- The 65% have a cellphone
- The 45% have a TV
- The 35% have books (no educational books)
- The 25% have a computer
- The 25% have a DVD player
- The 25% have a radio
- The 10% have Internet
- The 10% have magazines

This last data shows clear percentages of girls all around the world leaving behind the cultural aspects.³⁹

1.4.2 Teenagers and Computers

The computer is the technology that has grown more in the last years. Seven out of ten teenagers own a computer/laptop, it is more than double from the last 6 years. Half of

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 26.

³⁹ Ibid.

teenagers have Internet in their houses. All teenagers are surfing daily on the web without any limits. According to Roxana Morduchowicz, the girls are able to spend more than 5 hours watching videos on the Internet.

The computer is so present in the lives of the teenagers, that it is psychologically proven that if they do not use the computer one day they feel empty and lonely.⁴⁰ The more time is passing the more time the teenagers spend on the Internet. Roxana Morduchowicz made a questionnaire to some girls and the results are quite shocking:

- For which reason are you using the computer?

- The 75% use social networks
- The 50% to watch videos
- The 50% to hear music
- The 40% shop online
- The 40% play online
- The 40% search information (homework)
- The 40% use/check emails

It is quite interesting to see the results when just less than the half (40%) uses the Internet for some research and the majority are using it for checking their profiles on social media.⁴¹

What teenagers appreciate the most from the Internet is the communication that they can have with their friends and in second place is the information they can obtain from it. In one year, teenagers in general spend more time on the Internet than in school. Without any doubt is a situation that needs to be followed since the results are very shocking. My question is if the Internet is fulfilling their lives? – According to the American Journal of Epidemiology, in a study that they did in 2010, the teens that spend the most time in front of any kind of screen (TV, computer, cellphone) have a big increase in body fat over a certain period of time.⁴²

The biggest issues in these last years are not just health problems but there also started to appear a few physical problems. To go more into detail I would like to cover a very

⁴⁰ Ibid., 43.

⁴¹ Ibid., 45.

⁴² “5 Truths About Teens and Screens,” FIT, accessed April 11, 2015, <http://fit.webmd.com/teen/recharge/article/teens-screen-time>.

important characteristic, which is the self-esteem and their everyday behavior thanks to the influence of the media, to be more precise with YouTube videos.

1.4.3 Teenagers and YouTube Videos

Are YouTube videos generating concern about beauty and self-esteem?

It is a very important question that a lot of adults should ask, moreover, the parents that are involved with teenage children, since the new generations are changing drastically.

Back in 2014 a new phenomena appeared on YouTube, girls between the ages of 9 to 14, which started to upload videos that caused fear among parents by the content of the videos. The videos were of teenagers with freshly applied eyeliner and some lip-gloss while saying a monologue about what was happening to them at school. One girl precisely when she was speaking and telling her teenage drama concerns was not even looking at the camera and afterwards she displayed a string of photos to the viewers leaving it to the imagination of others and indirectly asking the questions whether she was beautiful or ugly.⁴³

There has been more than 500,000 videos founded since 2011 with titles such as “Am I pretty or ugly?” Parents and more experts were captivated by the phenomena which was spamming the web with such videos that were dealing with problems of self-esteem in girls at a very young age.⁴⁴

A psychology teacher at Northwestern University, whose name is Renee Engeln mentioned that people have problems with the acceptance of themselves. The teacher refers to Helen of Troy as a clear example of obsessing over beauty, he said the only difference nowadays is that people take care more of themselves because the Internet is providing a constant stream of images for comparison everyday. “*We imagine the world as it looks like online.*”- Renee Engeln.

According to Dr. Francesco Belviso who is a licensed clinical psychologist in Evanston, ILL., commented that the media complicates simple matters by creating beauty pictures which provoke that every single girl thinks that she would like to be a princess. Furthermore, unconsciously the parents are committing that “mistake” (if it can be

⁴³ Medha Imam, “Youtube Videos Generate Concern About Beauty and Self-Esteem,” North by Northwestern, February 24, 2014, accessed April 11, 2015, <http://www.northbynorthwestern.com/story/youtube-videos-generate-concern-about-beauty-and-s/>.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

mentioned that way) when they say to their little daughters that they are princesses since a very young age.⁴⁵

Pew Internet & American Life Project made a study about teenagers that have increased the amount of information, which they are sharing on social media sites since 2006. In 2012, 24% of teen social media users said that they were posting videos of themselves and 91% were just posting pictures. Asmat Jafry, a child psychiatrist at Edward Hospital in Naperville, ILL., blames the YouTube trend. She mentioned that there is an unrealistic concept of beauty that is provoking girls to feel anxious about their appearances. On the other hand, Engeln believes that the teenager's behavior is more like dysphoria that means a state of sadness or distress.⁴⁶

Another very important study, which is worth mentioning is from the Pew Research Center and was made in 2007, found that posting more pictures and videos initiates conversations. 48% of people said that they "sometimes" comment on videos, 24% of people comment "most of the time" on videos, as a result of this, 57% of all online teenagers watch a video on a video-sharing site such as YouTube.

Many experts involved in the issue said that parents could prevent this YouTube trend by supporting their girls more and by being more present when their children are online watching videos and by explaining to them the real meaning of beauty from the beginning. The author of *Think Confident, Be Confident*, Marci Fox, mentioned that another way of solving this issue is that parents should build confidence in their children since a young age and to use cognitive therapy.⁴⁷

On the other hand, the University of Colorado made a study which says that the YouTube videos are very beneficial to teenagers because it is a very good way to provide them positive recommendations and advice about which products they should use daily such as Sunscreen. The Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology published that the teenagers who watched videos and followed the advice from YouTube Gurus have learned and retained the same amount of knowledge about UV light and how important is to protect your skin from it in order to wear nice makeup.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ "Study: Beauty Not Disease Motivates Teens to Wear Sunscreen," University of Colorado Cancer Center, February 13, 2014, accessed April 11, 2015, <http://www.coloradocancerblogs.org/study-beauty-disease-motivates-teens-wear-sunscreen/>.

1.4.4 YouTube as an Industry

I mentioned before that I was very inspired by Michelle Phan, she is not only a YouTube Guru but she is also radically changing the beauty industry. She is one of the best vloggers (video bloggers), “haul videos” (haul video means the videos posted online which displays items recently purchased) and other beauty content, which are crushing big brands in the beauty industry.⁴⁹

YouTube is a worldwide revolution because according to Google research 50% of all beauty shoppers watch a beauty video on YouTube while they are shopping for beauty products; most of them are under the age of 20. A new study that was recently made by the YouTube marketing company: Pixability, said that the shoppers are bypassing major brands for product recommendations, instructional guidance, and the social engagement from a lot of YouTube beauty Gurus and vloggers who create videos with content focused on skincare, makeup, hair, nails, etcetera.

On the 4th of February of 2014, Pixability, released a comprehensive study which was named “Beauty on YouTube: How YouTube is Radically Transforming the Beauty Industry and What That Means for Brands,” which shows one of the most active and leading-edge industries in the digital video marketplace. All the creative and advertising investments, major brands have garnered only the 3% of the 14.9 billion beauty that is related to video views on YouTube.⁵⁰

“YouTube is the new free marketing” – Michelle Phan

Pixability analyzed and identified how 168 major brands and 45,000 YouTube beauty Gurus socialize, produce and manage more than 877,000 beauty videos talking about products such as hair care, skincare, nails and makeup. In their report they highlighted the difference between those manufactured products and those manufactured videos about the products. YouTube recognizes only a few independent beauty personalities by their successful work.

⁴⁹ Greg Jarboe, “Youtube Vloggers and Haul Girls Crush Big Beauty Industry Brands [study],” Search Engine Watch, February 4, 2014, accessed April 11, 2015, <http://searchenginewatch.com/sew/study/2326673/youtube-vloggers-and-haul-girls-crush-big-beauty-industry-brands-study>.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Pixability's beauty studies uses more data than any other institutions who make studies, and their work is to deliver both critical market insights and important prescriptive measures for well known brands and beauty content producers. Some keys of their reports include the next characteristics:

- Teenagers challenge brands and agencies: Teenage girls produce content in their own bedrooms to multi-billion dollar beauty corporations.
- YouTube emerges as a lifestyle utility: It does not matter what time is it for the viewers to watch beauty videos to get inspired and to get prepared for their work.
- Television mentality does not work on YouTube: The 25 top YouTubers receive 2,600 % more comments on their videos than beauty brand channels content.
- Beauty brands need to create a wider variety of YouTube content- and more of it: YouTube top beauty Gurus has 10 times more videos on their channels than beauty brands. The top beauty vloggers publish YouTube content 7 times more frequently than beauty brands.
- Beauty brands are not getting found on YouTube: YouTube's beauty-brand uses 7 times more playlists and 170% more metadata tags at the bottom of the videos than the beauty brands that only show the 2.5%.⁵¹

Another important fact is that in August of 2010, Pixability featured an interview with Jordan Blum of Beautychoice.com. He discussed Beautychoice.com's outreach to the top YouTube channels in the beauty advice category. Beautychoice.com gives products to professional makeup artists and YouTube beauty Gurus like Michelle Phan, who then link back to beautychoice.com and they are marketing the products unconsciously which Blum called "product placement on steroids" that have generated millions of dollars in product sales for beautychoice.com.⁵²

A very clear example of Michelle Phan's successfulness is when she did her "Lady GaGa Poker Face Tutorial", which has more than 34 million views and her channel has almost 862 million views and over 5.7 million subscribers.⁵³

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Michelle Phan, "Lady Gaga Poker Face Tutorial," YouTube, May 8, 2009, accessed April 11, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFMaLuI1uxc>.

1.4.5 Teens and Makeup

After an exhausted search for articles and books about teenagers and makeup I could find that there are not too many articles speaking about it. For our society, it is already normal that girls around the age of 12 are wearing makeup, it seems that “modern” children are being sexualized earlier and earlier.

Since I could not find much about the topic, I would like to say my point of view on the topic. From my own experience of making YouTube tutorials, I could see that most of my viewers are young, around the age of 13 to 17. I always try to be very innovative with my videos: the more new products I show the more subscribers I get. Every month I spend a lot of money buying new products to try them out and give a demo and say my opinions to my “subbies”. The people who always comment on my videos are the teenagers, asking me to look for cheaper versions so they can buy them as well.

In some of the cases I fully understand that teenagers do not have enough money to buy some kind of products, but my question is: If they are so young why they need such products? – It is a controversial question because I make the videos for the girls. In the beginning, my target viewers were expected to be over the age of 18. After some time when I started to realize that my subscribers were teenagers I tried to focus more on their interests, for instance everyday makeup tutorials or prom tutorials. Always trying to have inexpensive products so they could buy them as well. 2 points of view exist: the teenagers and mine. The teenagers want to look nice and “pretty” since a very young age, and from my point of view, I very much enjoy making the videos and I would like to build a career on YouTube.

2 MAKEUP INDUSTRY

“Whether I’m wearing lots of makeup or no makeup, I’m always the same person inside” – Lady Gaga.

A major importance of physical appearance and the rise of the cosmetic industry have been introduced in the course of the twenty first century. They are presented in a society where leisure and economic wealth allow the people to buy these products.

The constant appearance of new cosmetic products changes seasonally and is available to consumers who are not just mature women but also to teenagers. The market is so big that there are a lot of options depending on the skin type, color and the most importantly the price.⁵⁴

Although a large-scale of cosmetic manufacturers date back to the Industrial Revolution, it is true that the economic boom comes from the forties of the twentieth century, due to the advertising, which highlighted the need to beautify appearance. During those years, companies such as Lux did advertising campaigns around the world where Hollywood stars like Bette Davis, Kay Francis and Dorothy Lamour were recommending their soaps.⁵⁵

Nowadays, actresses do the same thing with their lipsticks or blush varieties, inaugurating a marketing activity which unconsciously impulses the people to buy that precise products. The promotion is always based on the idea of emulation, if the actress gets good results with the product so that means that other users may try to imitate them expecting to obtain the same results, for instance, the effective campaign performed in the nineties by the company Max Factor, based on the makeup of Hollywood.⁵⁶

Most of the makeup manufacturing companies are multinational. Companies like Max Factor, Margaret Astor, Clarins, L’Oreal, Clinique, Lancome and Estee Lauder have offices in many countries, allowing them to have a greater diversification of its products and more effective promotion and marketing.

⁵⁴ Guzman Urrero, “Historia Del Maquillaje,” The Cult, January 17, 2008, accessed April 12, 2015, <http://www.thecult.es/Tendencias/historia-del-maquillaje/La-industria-del-maquillaje.html>.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

For that reason, ad campaigns play a fundamental role in the strategy of these brands. It has become quite common to see certain personalities on TV to make the brands more exclusive.⁵⁷

On the other hand, some makeup companies do not use marketing at all because they believe that their products are sold by themselves. One of the most influential brands that believe in this theory is M.A.C. Cosmetics.

2.1 M.A.C. Cosmetics

“A Makeup Brand defined by appreciation of individuality, artistry and self expression.”

M.A.C. was established in Toronto by Frank Toskan (photographer) and Frank Angelo (beauty salon owner). Both were frustrated by the lack of colors that existed back in that time, so their dream was to develop a makeup line that could fulfill their professional needs. The two businessmen cooked their own cosmetics in their kitchen and sold them in the beauty salon and in 1984 this duo launched the makeup line due to the successfulness they had at a department store in Toronto.⁵⁸

The brand grew in a short period of time because it became very popular among makeup artists. The most attractive thing was the packaging of the products; everything was black, even if the eye shadows were colorful and pigmented, they wanted to keep everything simple.⁵⁹

The company took the industry to the top thanks to their wide range of variety and colors that manage to blend different styles. The most interesting fact was that M.A.C. was different from the other companies. It was the first company, which invested money into the training and education of its staff instead of investing on pointless traditional advertising. That is the reason why the company became so attractive to the customers.

In 1994, news about AIDS was spread across the globe, so the co-founders were searching for a way to respond to the epidemic and help socially. The employees' huge courage pushed them to make an HIV/AIDS organization called “Viva Glam” (it still exists) by creating a limited edition of a lipstick/ lip gloss. Every year they launch a new lipstick/ lip gloss with the help of a celebrity spokesperson from the entertainment and

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ “Our History,” M.A.C Cosmetics, accessed April 12, 2015, <http://www.maccosmetics.jobs/mac/our-history.html>.

fashion industries, and the best part is the total quantity of money made by the purchase of the lipstick/ lip gloss goes straight to the foundation.⁶⁰

In 1995, The Estee Lauder company purchased a percentage of M.A.C., positively extending the brand's distribution all around the world. In that year, thanks to the extension of the brand they were awarded as winners and were the only brand that could get into the backstages of fashion weeks (until nowadays).⁶¹

In 1998, Estee Lauder acquired the remaining shares of the company, and John Demsey was named president of M.A.C. Cosmetics. Under his leadership, the link between fashion, culture and beauty has been strengthened, allowing M.A.C. to be on the top. M.A.C. has also participated in prestigious film festivals, theatre scenes, and movies all over the world.

Nowadays, M.A.C. continues to satisfy the needs of its consumers and is constantly developing by creating collections inspired in a lot of themes and by celebrities. Also the demand for makeup artists has risen because they are required to be in every store of every city where M.A.C. is located. Also it is worth to mentioning that the efforts and social awareness programs that the brand has are very successful and well known among the people. Besides its commitment to the M.A.C. AIDS fund, the company supports animal-free testing and M.A.C. Cosmetics is owned by The Estee Lauder Company which is one of the world's leading manufacturers and marketers.⁶²

The brand has become very popular among teenagers due to the YouTube videos. The brand has very accessible prices and is full of collections every year, this maybe the reason why teenagers adore this brand. Moreover the collections are inspired by a lot of interests that the girls may have, for example Maleficent, when the movie had its worldwide premiere, M.A.C. also launched a limited edition of Maleficent inspired in Angelina Jolie's makeup in the movie that same day, in Mexico the collection was sold out in 2 hours.

The dream of every makeup artist is to work at the counter of M.A.C. Inside of the company there are a lot of motivations and trainings that push the staff to move forward, and the best part is that if you are good at your job you get selected to go and work for the fashion weeks all around the world.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

The reason why the brand is so detailed in this chapter is because of the popularity that it has on YouTube and from my knowledge, since I have worked for the company. I would like to highlight that I am fascinated by the fact that the company does not have any marketing at all, and their products are sold like hot bread. The wide range of lipsticks with different textures and colors is the reason why it got so popular between teenagers.

II. ANALYSIS

3 TEENAGERS AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

After learning some of the main characteristics which were mentioned before in this thesis, we will be able to recognize “unconscious” marketing and the effects that this has among teenagers by the usage of social networks.

In this next chapter we will learn more about the behavior of teenagers and we can see how social networks affect their consumer behaviors. Also we will see not just the point of view from the teens, but also the point of view from the biggest YouTube beauty guru (Michelle Phan) and we will see what she thinks about this new platform, which is YouTube.

3.1 Research Goals

The main goal of this analysis is to study in depth, what teens think about the issue concerning their usage of social networks and the affects this has on their consumer behavior. Another important goal is to know the point of view of a famous beauty guru and be able to obtain an objective conclusion.

3.2 Methodology

A quantitative method was used to obtain detailed and accurate results for this analysis. The quantitative research method used was a questionnaire. Questionnaires are excellent tools to obtain precise information. In this case, the questionnaire is about teenagers, social network usage and their behavior as a consequence.

The questionnaire consists of 14 questions of multiple choices with the purpose to obtain concrete results. The questionnaire was answered by 100 different girls. The questionnaire was made at the counter of M.A.C. in Puebla, Mexico. After each girl finished answering the questionnaire, I manually wrote the results on a different paper.

3.3 Research Sample

The respondents of this questionnaire were just girls between the ages of 14 to 20 years old. All the girls were Mexicans. The reason why only girl respondents were needed was to know their point of view regarding beauty products and whether the use of social networks influence their decisions when they were buying these precise products.

The questions are divided in two important sections; all of them are related to the same topic so that means that the questions are interconnected. In this way, I will be able to complete the purpose of this analysis.

The first section is about the usage of social networks with a question like: How many social networks you have? By observing the answers to this kind of question we can realize how many social networks they have, how much time they are able to spend on the Internet and how this is affecting their social lives.

The second section of questions are based more on their consumer behaviors that they make when they buy some specific beauty products and how much money they can spend by acquiring them.

The questions can be found in the Appendix section. The results will be shown in different types of graphs to have a better appreciation of them followed by some points of view.

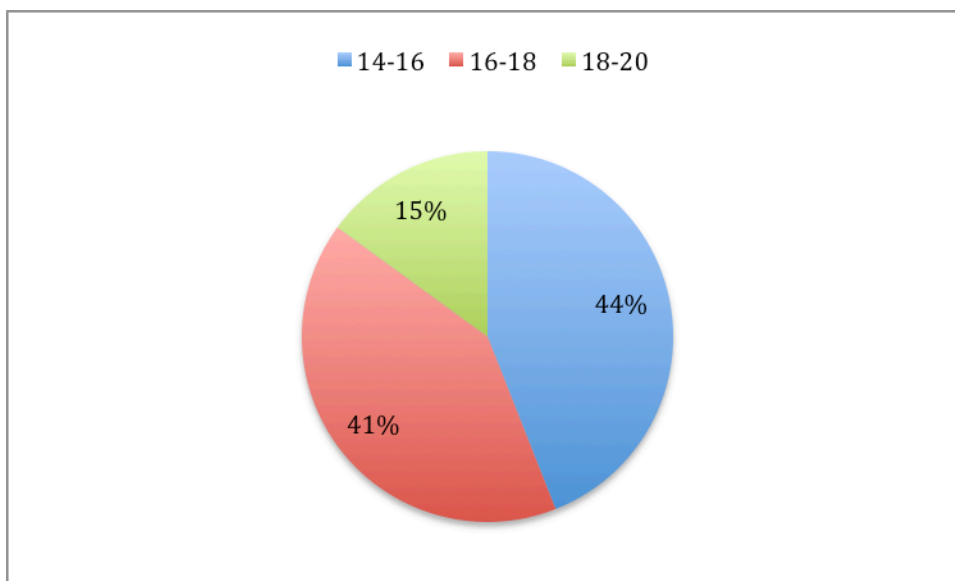


Figure 1, The age of the teenagers.

In Figure 1 we can observe that the 44% of the girls are between the age of 14 to 16, while the 41% are between 16 to 18 and the rest, that is the 15% are from 18 to 20. Which shows that I gave the questionnaire to teenagers.

3.4 Main Research Results

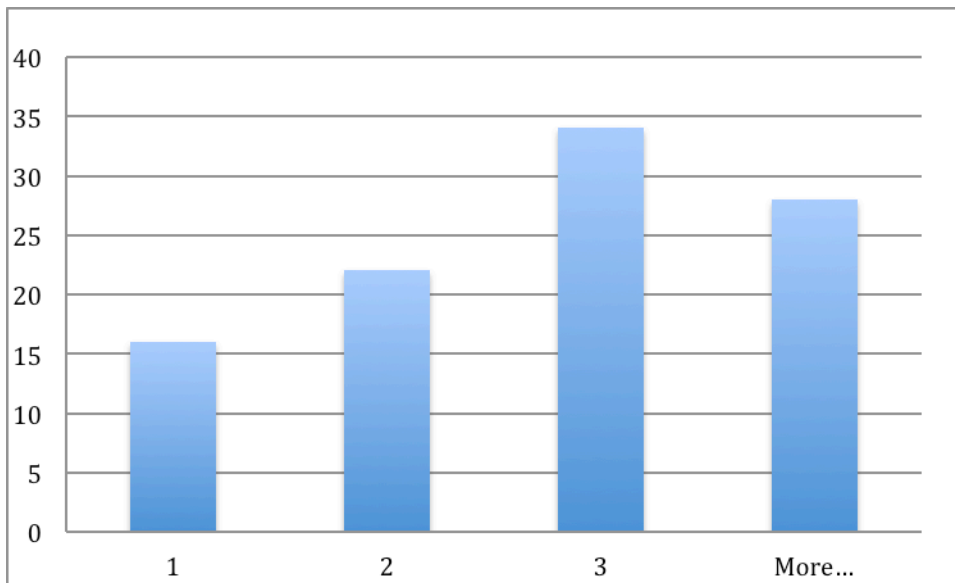


Figure 2, Social Networks.

In Figure 2 we can see that 28 out of 100 teenagers have more than 3 social networks. This means that they have many sources of information that might influence their opinions. Just 16 girls said that they have one social network and that is Facebook; they said that besides their phones, Facebook was another way to communicate with their friends. The girls that have 2 social networks were 22. They said that besides Facebook they like to post pictures on Instagram because a lot of people from different parts of the world can put a “Like” on their pictures thanks to the hashtags that are writing below the pictures (the more “likes” the better).

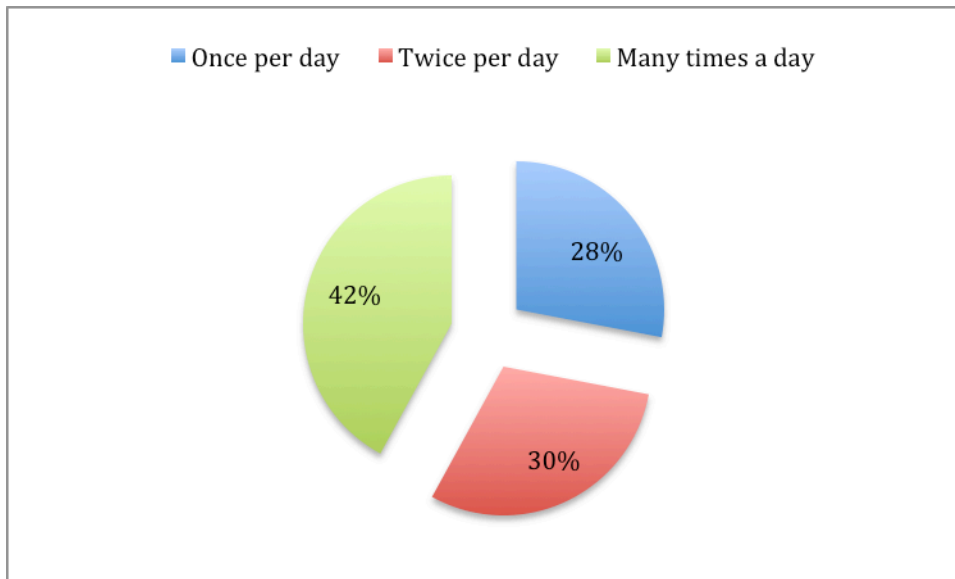


Figure 3, The usage of social networks.

As it was mentioned before, teenagers spend many hours a day on Internet. The issue is that they do not need a computer/laptop anymore; they can check their social networks from their phones. Currently, a lot of people including teenagers have Internet on their phones for little money per month. We can observe this in Figure 3, 42% check their social networks many times a day. Some of them confessed that they check Facebook while they are at school.

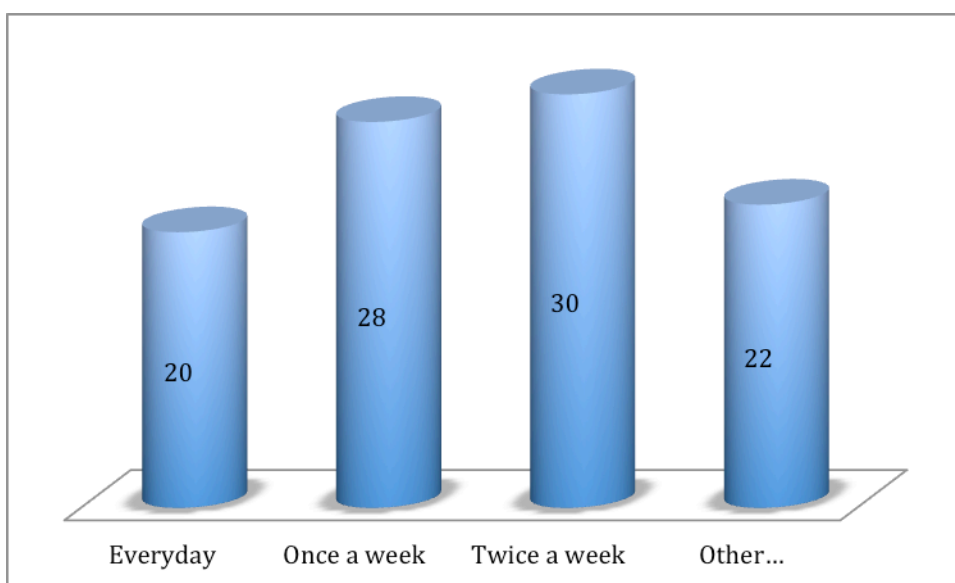


Figure 4, The photos or status posted on social networks.

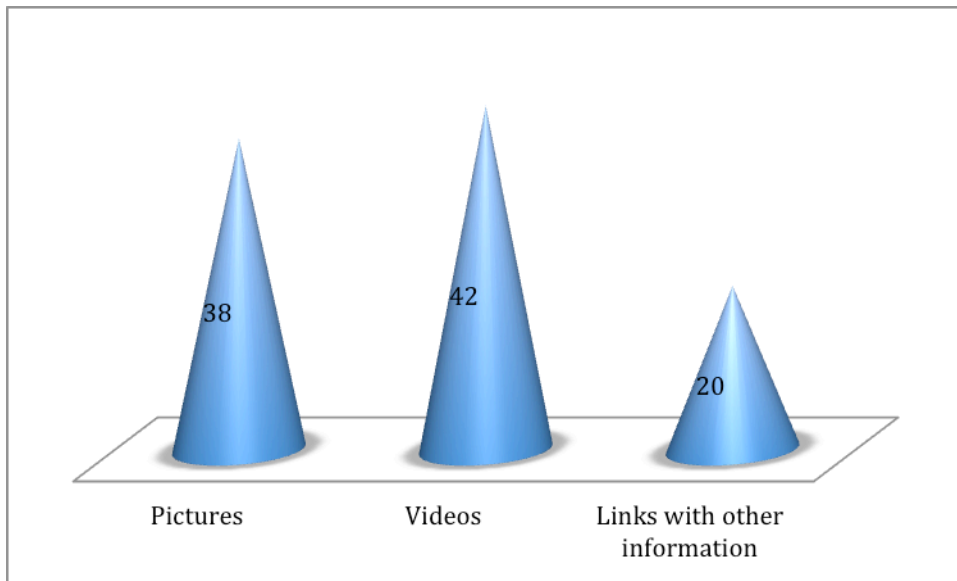


Figure 5, The most viewed content.

In Figure 5 we can clearly see that 42 girls said that the posts that they like to watch the most are videos. The videos that they watch with frequency are tutorials and DIY (Do it yourself). But the videos were not the only popular answer, 38 girls answered that they like to observe photos of different content.

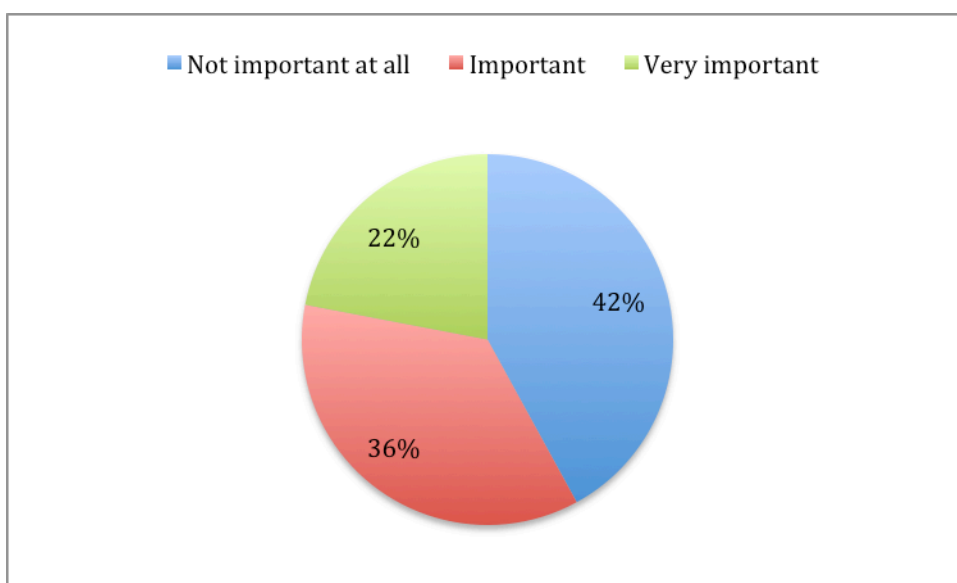


Figure 6, The importance of a social network profile.

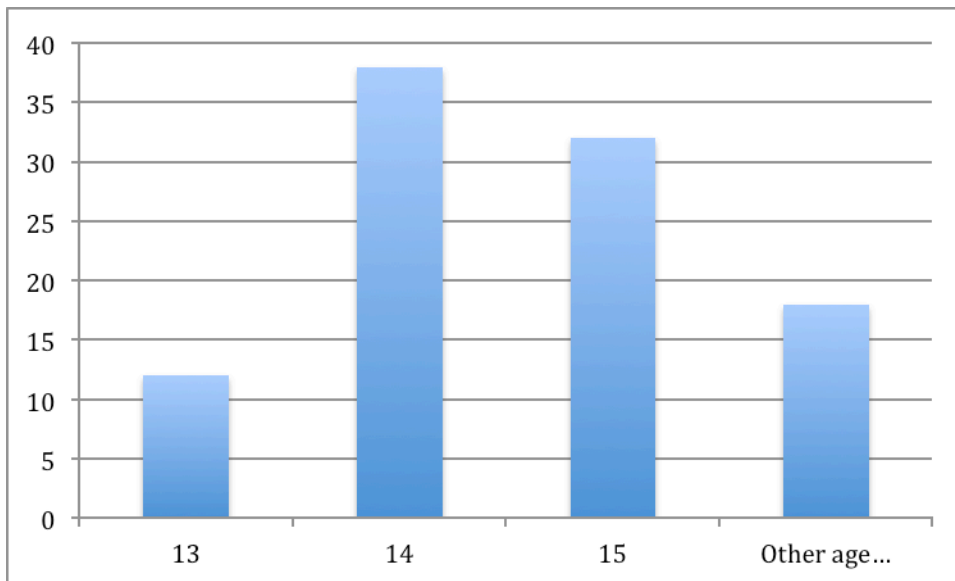


Figure 7, The age when they started wearing makeup.

In Figure 7 we can appreciate the answers from the girls, 38% of them began to wear makeup at the age of 14, which is actually quite a young age. 32% started to wear makeup when they were 15, in my opinion it is an average age. Lastly, 18% started to wear makeup at a different age, but when I was observing the girls they were looking more introvert than the girls that began to wear makeup at the age of 15. It is also important to mention that the 12% started to wear makeup at an earlier age than 14 which, we cannot leave unnoticed.

That means that since a really young age they start to wear makeup and I suppose that the parents let them do that, so these statistics prove that for society this activity seems normal among young girls.

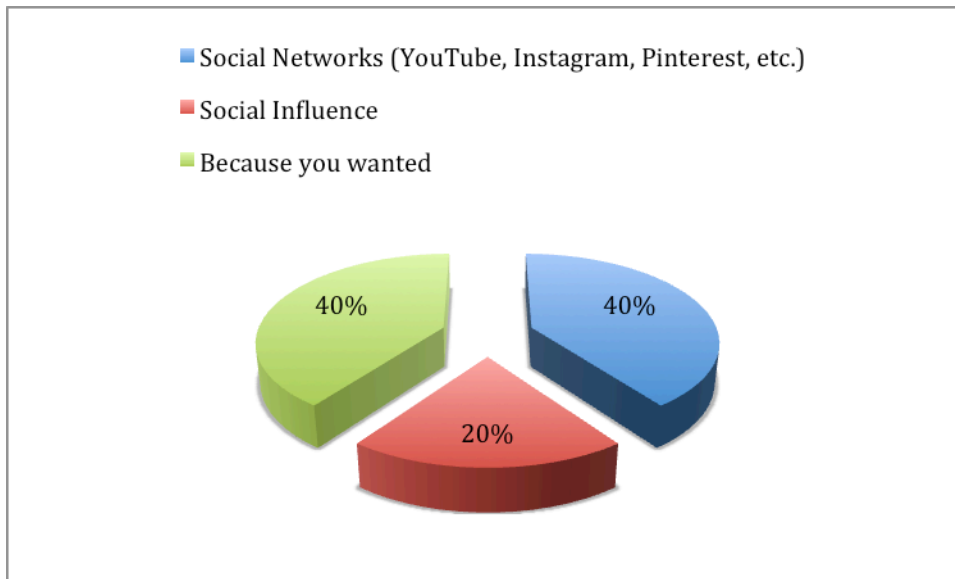


Figure 8, The reason why they started to wear makeup.

In Figure 8 we can observe that 40% are influenced by social networks and also because they wanted, I do not know if they felt uncomfortable by the options or maybe they were lying but is clear that pictures and videos are involved in their lives. 20% admitted that it was because of social influence, for example one girl told me that she began to wear makeup because her best friend that was 1 year older than her started to wear makeup as well.

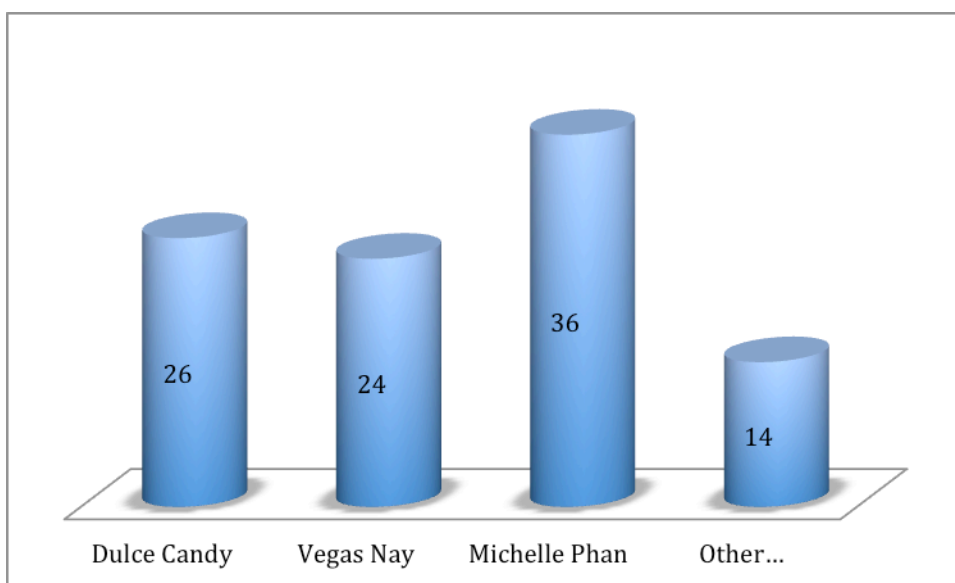


Figure 9, Favorite beauty guru.

In Figure 9 we can observe that 36% chose Michelle Phan as their favorite guru, that means that according to these results Michelle Phan is a big icon in the beauty industry and a great inspiration for Mexican girls and I believe that for other girls that are all around the world. Another great Latin icon is Dulce Candy, 26% chose her as their favorite guru and last but not least is Vegas Nay a great Instagram beauty guru who is posting around 15 pictures per day, 24% chose her as their favorite guru.

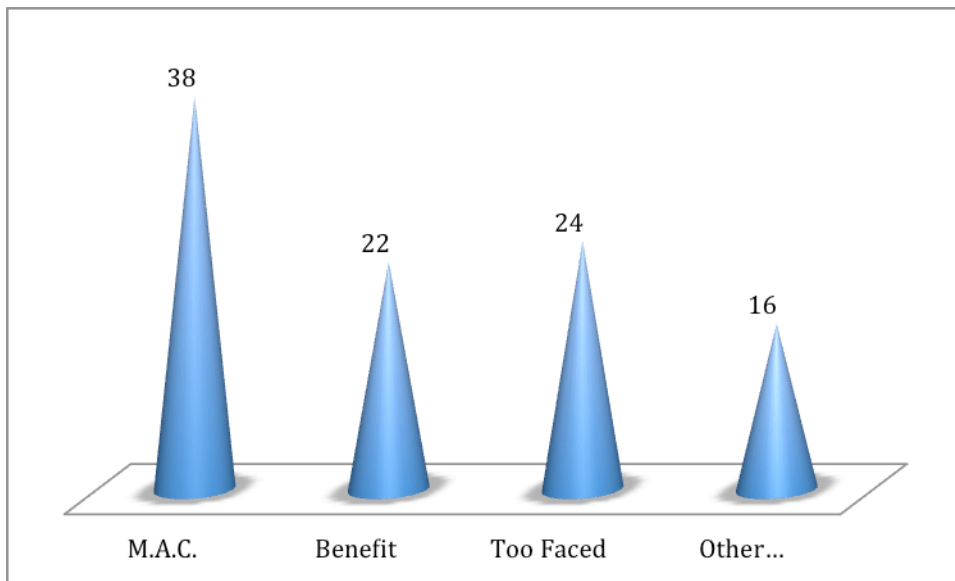


Figure 10, Favorite makeup brand.

In Figure 10 we can observe that the vast majority chose M.A.C. Cosmetics as their favorite makeup brand with 38%, with this result it is obvious that this precise makeup brand is very influential and the most fascinating thing is that it is such a popular brand without the necessity of marketing. 24% chose Too Faced Cosmetics as their favorite brand but in this occasion, I need to admit that their packaging is adorable. 22% chose Benefit as their favorite brand, it is a new brand that entered the market not too long ago so maybe because of that fact it is quite well known on social media. Last but not least, 16% said that they prefer other brands for economical reasons.

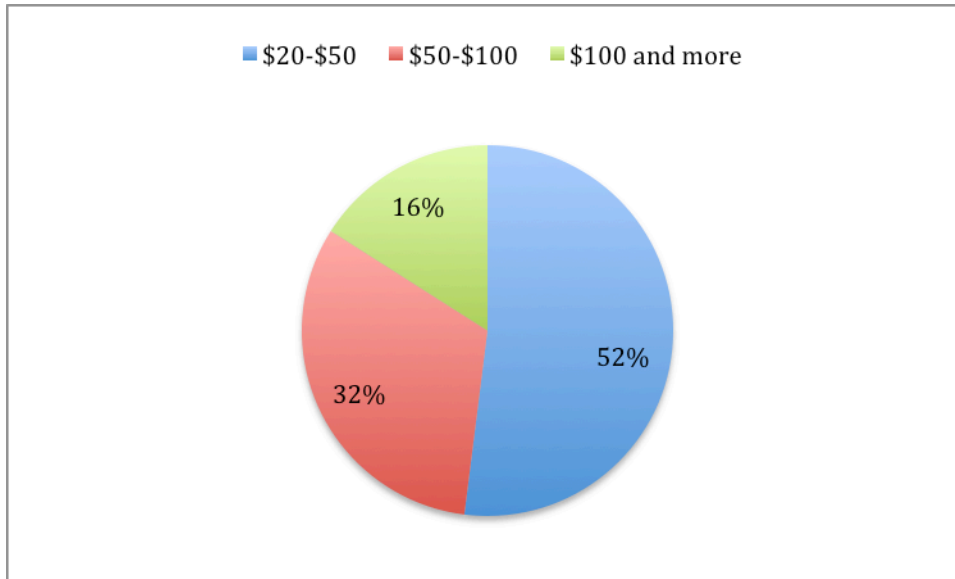


Figure 11, Money spent per month on beauty products.

In Figure 11 we can observe that the majority of the girls spend \$20 to \$50 dollars per month on makeup, I asked them from where they obtain the money and they answered that it is the money that their parents give them per month for food/ school, that means that some of them rather not eat so they can buy something at the end of the month. 32% spend \$50 to \$100 dollars per month, that is quite a lot money for teenagers but they admit that when they go shopping with their mothers they asked them to buy makeup rather than clothes. 16% spend over \$100 dollars per month, my question is if the mothers know that they spend that much money on some lipsticks and innovations from makeup brands?

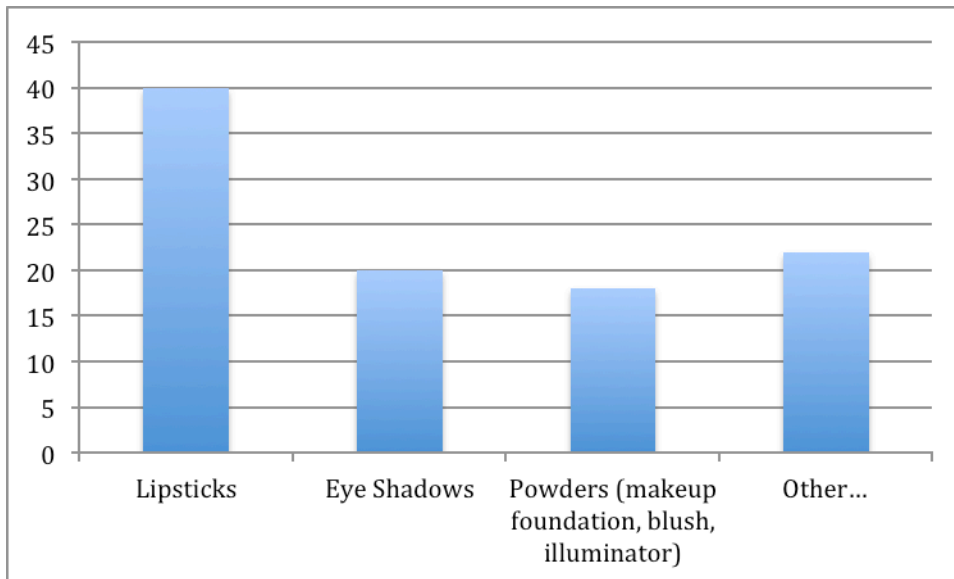


Figure 12, *Bestselling Products.*

In Figure 12 we can observe that 40% buy lipstick. On the market the variety that exists among lipsticks is huge, there are more than 5 types of textures, over 50 different types of shades and colors. For example, when I was working for M.A.C. there were a lot of popular colors that were always sold out such as Diva (wine, matte color) or Candy Yum-Yum (pink neon, matte color), and the reason why they were so popular was thanks to the Instagram/ Pinterest pictures made by gurus. 20% prefer to buy eye shadows because some of them mentioned that they do not like lipstick that much. 18% buy powders rather than other products but their reason was because some of them suffered from acne so they were not feeling comfortable with their bare skin.

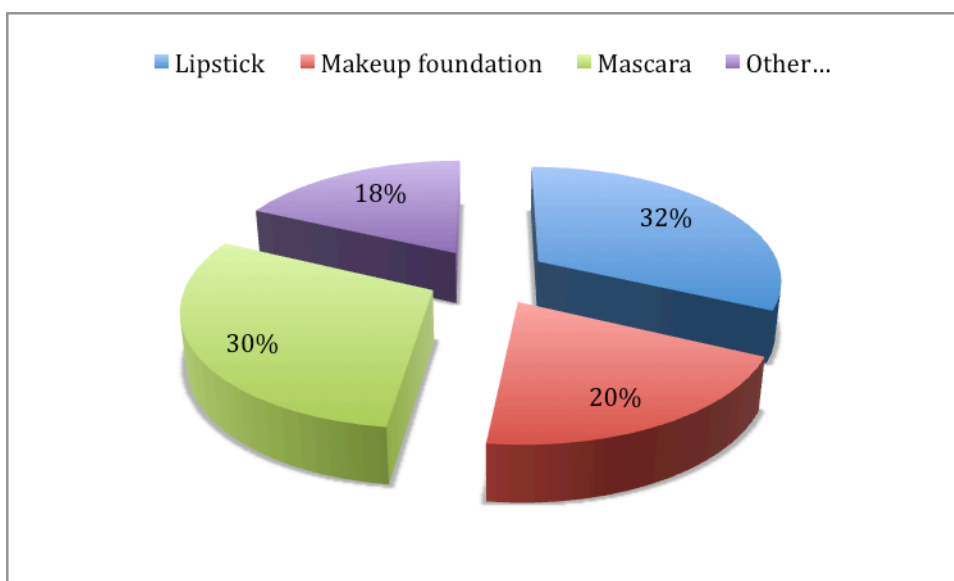


Figure 13, *The first product purchased.*

In Figure 13 we can see that 32% bought lipstick as their first product. Their justification for it was that they wanted to have some color on their faces when they were going to some special event with their parents. 30% bought mascara as their first product. I also remember that mascara was my first bought product as well. 20% bought makeup foundation but again they justified it by the acne issues that they were suffering from. 18% purchased other beauty product as their first product ever bought.

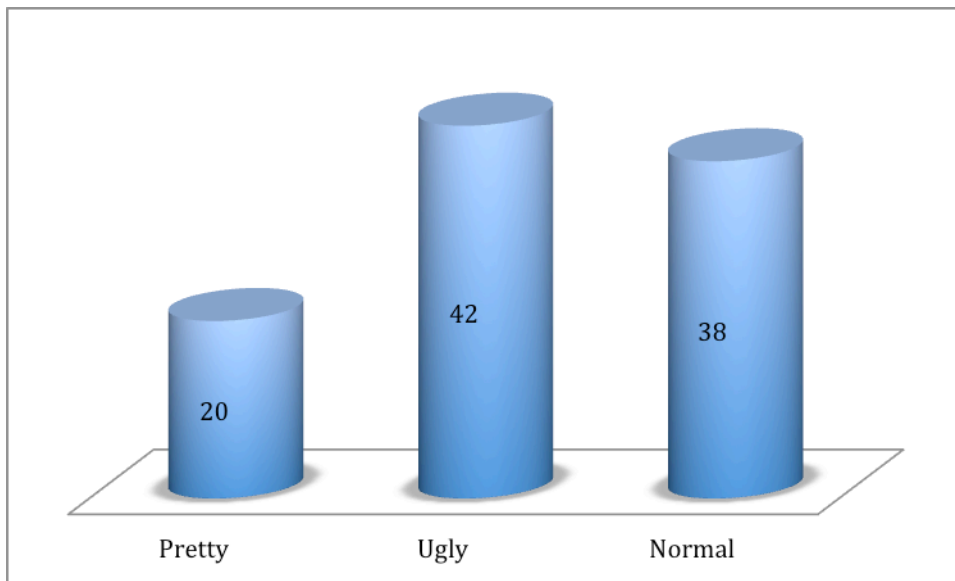


Figure 14, The feeling without makeup.

In Figure 14 we can appreciate the most shocking answers that came from teenagers. I wrote that options as answers because I knew that it would cause controversy but I did not expect that it would turn out with these results. As it was mentioned before, some psychologists and psychiatrists were giving their opinion on this topic, but with these results I can prove that it is true, the self-confidence issue that some young girls have. 42% said that they were feeling ugly without makeup, how is it possible that girls that are 14 can feel ugly without makeup? In my opinion it is absurd but I could notice that they are able to be in front of a screen for hours appreciating the beauty of other girls trying to imitate them. 38% said that they feel normal. I think they are right to feel that way because they are just girls. Last but not less important, 20% said that they feel pretty. I would expect to receive that answer from all the girls but at least we can see how parents are involved with their children and how they are helping them grow up in a healthy environment.

3.5 Discussion

So far we can observe that the “modern” generations are involved with beauty issues even if they are not mature enough to give a logical opinion about it. Girls have not reached a sufficient age to comment on the topic; on the contrary they think that wearing makeup from an early age is normal.

We can see and say that this consequence is not provoked from the social point of view only, but the main protagonists of this situation are social networks. In the answers given by the girls we can see that the majority of them have 3 different social networks for different reasons. The most popular ones were Facebook and Instagram.

The girls said that they check their social networks many times a day because they like to see new posts and they also like to share publications with their friends, whether they are pictures or comments. Girls also admitted that they like to watch videos on YouTube because this is the most accessible and easiest way were they could learn a bit more about beauty products.

The majority of the girls started to wear makeup at the age of 15, some of them said that the reason was that they felt social pressure from friends, but others said that they felt inspired by social networks (videos and pictures shared by other girls that were of the same age).

In the answers given in question number 10 we can see that their favorite makeup brand is M.A.C. Cosmetics. As it was mentioned before in chapter 3, M.A.C. does not invest money at all on their marketing, but it is obvious that the beauty gurus on YouTube are in charge of doing that marketing when they show or use products from this brand. This is motivating the girls to buy those products as well. In addition, the majority of the girls are spending from \$20 to \$50 dollars per month on beauty products. It is quite a lot of money for teenagers.

The last answers definitely cause an outrage, because in this case we can clearly see that somehow social networks are not just influencing teenagers but they are damaging them as well. The damage is in their self-esteem, 42% of the girls said that they feel ugly without makeup. Social networks are causing a blurry view among teenagers. Some of them are not able to differentiate reality from what they can imagine.

4 VIDEO INTERVIEW OF MICHELLE PHAN

In the beginning of the year I wrote an email to the manager of Michelle Phan, asking him for the possibility of making an interview with Michelle Phan via Skype. Unfortunately, he answered that Michelle is busy until the summer of 2016. Due to the situation I needed to look for an interview of her on the Internet. I was searching for a good quality video interview and I found it. The video is under the channel of Re/code. The video is called “YouTube Star Michelle Phan Full Interview” made by Dawn Chmielewski.⁶³

In the video when Michelle Phan is introduced by Dawn, she seems to be very comfortable and relaxed, because she enters into the forum dancing. The first question from Dawn is: How did you start on YouTube back in 2007? – Michelle’s answer is that back in 2007 the internet was a total different landscape online and Myspace was the number 1 social media, and YouTube was only 2 years old freshly bought from Google so that was the biggest thing in the College community to be on YouTube. She mentions that she saw YouTube as an opportunity because she had the need to have a platform (while she is smiling) but she also mentions that her first videos, which she uploaded on her personal YouTube channel were about dogs, nothing compared to what she is doing now. In that same answer she added that back in 2007 she was turned down at a beauty counter because she did not have the experience of sales, so instead of feeling bad about it another door was opened to her and that was her laptop. She recorded her first beauty tutorial ever, without expecting people to watch it, she just wanted to share it with the YouTube community. After a week she was surprised because her video had over 40,000 views and with comments from girls all around the world, asking her for advice. That was the beginning of her YouTube career.⁶⁴

She said that if you told someone 10 years ago that you can make a lot of money and you can have a substantial career just by uploading a video of yourself either telling jokes or doing makeup instructions then people would think that you are crazy. Back then, media was more on TV but we are living in a Digital Age where media is viewed anywhere even from your mobile phone and beyond.

⁶³ “YouTube Star Michelle Phan Full Interview | Code Mobile 2014,” YouTube, October 31, 2014, accessed April 14, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojvGM6TVDS8>.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Dawn asks her: How is it that Lady Gaga changed your life? – Michelle’s answer: first of all her music is incredible and it was the first time ever when somebody created a full transformation of herself. It was when she made a full transformation not just of herself but also it was a beauty transformation that she was transmitting to the people through her video.⁶⁵

After some minutes, having a discussion about different technologies Dawn asks Michelle: How did you come to the attention of makeup companies? – Michelle answers this saying that the break through was Lancome. There was one woman called Carie Dimond at that time, she was in charge of the public relations of Lancome but she was very curious about Michelle’s work. Carie could not understand how Lancome was spending so much money on making YouTube videos and Michelle was very successful at it by not investing any money at all and she was also showing only Lancome products that she had at that time. The difference was that she had thousands of views and the Lancome channel only had 500 views; so Carie contacted Michelle understanding her ideology of YouTube: To make videos with passion with the intention to connect people. Thanks to Carie, Michelle became the online spokesperson for Lancome.⁶⁶

After having a long relationship with Lancome, Michelle decided to come up with a new and authentic idea that was Ipsy, it is a webpage which sells samples of products from different brands. She came up with this idea because in 2010 she went to Thailand with her friends and she said that one afternoon they went to a shopping mall center and she saw a small kiosk full of girls spending thousand and thousand of dollars by acquiring samples of products from expensive brands such as La Mer, YSL, Lancome and many others. She said that was an intelligent shopping method because in that case you can obtain one sample and test the product before buying a full price product that sometimes might be an expensive experience. In the end there exists the possibility that the product will not work properly on your skin. So thanks to her experience in Thailand she created Ipsy.

Ipsy is a sample organization that by spending just \$10 per month you receive a cute small bag (reusable) filled with 4 or 5 medium sized personalized products. She said that when you register on this the website you need to answer a long questionnaire in order to fulfill your necessities.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

After 5 more minutes with unnecessary information for this thesis the Interview was done. Nowadays, Michelle Phan is not just the owner of Ipsy, but she has also written a book and she owns a makeup line with the collaboration of L’Oreal. At the end of 2014 she signed a contract with Endemol (the largest production company all over the world) to create more videos with a diversification of channels.⁶⁸

After analyzing the interview we can observe Michelle’s interest is to make a huge community, she said that if this community would work properly many job opportunities could exist for a lot of people.

4.1 Analysis of a Beauty Guru

The analysis of a beauty guru is going to be based on my broader observation of the industry since I am participating in it as well.

The person who chooses to describe herself as a guru is unconsciously telling people that the content of her videos are based on instructions of how to do a specific task. To be more precise, it is how to achieve a beauty look. The main work of a beauty guru is to give instructions of characteristics like makeup, beauty and fashion in general.

The majority of beauty gurus are teenagers or young adults that are in school or university and do not have a regular job. Usually, the girls after are recording videos and editing them after school, our main goal is to upload 1 video per week (it is very popular among beauty gurus to have once per week a video with a new beauty “look”).

Currently, anybody can be a beauty guru, there are no limits to achieve it, but the problems that exist now are that every beauty guru considers himself or herself as a professional makeup artist, which means that it is a lie. That is the reason why the majority of makeup artists are against beauty gurus. Of course not all of them are like this but the vast majority of girls uploading videos are an informal group without controlled boundaries.

“Tutorial” is the most frequent word among beauty gurus. Tutorial means the narrative videos produced by the girls. It is a step-by-step video followed by instructions of how you can repeat the same look. Usually, this kind of video is recorded in the bedroom of the

⁶⁸ Todd Spangler, “Youtube Star Michelle Phan Inks Pact with Endemol Beyond,” Variety, May 2, 2014, accessed April 15, 2015, <http://variety.com/2014/digital/news/endemol-beyond-inks-pact-with-youtube-beauty-star-michelle-phan-exclusive-1201170144/>.

person who is doing the tutorial (it is the privacy of the person trying to make subscribers feel more comfortable), and the funniest thing is that you will rarely find a tutorial without a candle as a decoration. I realize that having a candle in the background makes the video more cute and girly.

Another popular video that can be found from beauty gurus are product reviews also known as “Haul video”. This video consists of buying new products showing them in detail to the camera, gurus are explaining every single detail of the product and the benefits that you can obtain from them. In this type of video, “unconscious marketing” appears. This is very beneficial for the companies, because thanks to these videos the products are sold like fresh bread. Of course the companies earn money in their marketing because they know that the beauty gurus are in charge of that.

The beauty gurus are responsible for performing all the tasks related to the production of the videos, including a specific theme in each of the videos. For instance, a specific makeup routine to go to school or more complex looks used by a celebrity on a red carpet. Beauty gurus are in charge of looking for similar products used by the celebrities to achieve the look. To record a tutorial, they use and show the products used at the same time that the camera is recording. After finishing we edit the videos to cut unnecessary parts (the shorter the video the better), we decorate the video with music and the last step is to render the video to upload it on YouTube.

The routine of YouTube gurus involves both making videos and participating in the conversations proposed by other gurus that are in the community. In this case, the relationship between them can be good and supportive and thanks to this routine collaborative videos appear. A collaborative video or “collabs” is a video where 2 or more beauty gurus produce a video with a theme. This is an excellent strategy to have more subscribers, because when the people see 2 beauty gurus in one video they feel positive about it and they subscribe to both channels. It is like a chain, the more “collabs” the more subscribers.

In the virtual world of the beauty gurus everything is possible. Creativity is the main role in the videos. All the gurus expect to gain recognition and one of the most important ways is by being approached by cosmetics companies. The beauty gurus that have hundreds of thousands of subscribers sign deals with makeup companies and can become online ambassadors of a certain brand. This is a big responsibility but they get rewarded with new products and of course, money. This is the highest point a beauty guru can get

and if the girls are constant with new and creative videos the best that can happen to them is to sign a contract to make a makeup line under the names of the beauty gurus. A clear example of this situation is what happened to Michelle Phan 3 years ago. She was so successful with her videos that L'Oreal offered her to produce her first line of makeup. Michelle's line of makeup is called EM Cosmetics.

4.2 Recommendations

The recommendations I can give to beauty gurus are, that I know that is hard to follow certain characteristics but it is very important to be aware of the content that we upload to YouTube. Sometimes we do not realize what we are actually doing, but with some bad comments we can affect the lives of other teenagers regarding their self-esteem and bad usage of social networks. Human beings by nature are egoists and we just take care of our interests but if we manage to balance our personalities combined with the content of our videos we can change the mentality of teenagers. Our main work is not just making quality videos but we also have a social responsibility to fulfill and this means that we need to focus more on the interests of our viewers, giving good and reasonable advice to teens according their age.

Not all teenagers receive support from their parents and they are looking for this support on social networks. Unfortunately, these kinds of girls are not old enough to have judgmental criteria and they tend to fall into bad influences. That means that we need to do something for them so that they can feel good about themselves. With the help of our work and our videos we can show them the benefit, not only from the physical point of view, but also more with deep messages.

CONCLUSION

We can observe the different points of view that were mentioned in this thesis. It concerns 2 aspects: the teenagers and the beauty gurus. It is very important to concentrate on each one from different sides. Michelle sees the YouTube platform as a new opportunity for young entrepreneurs while teenagers have big concerns about themselves by following beauty advice to feel prettier. We must see that if we see this situation from both sides it can be either positive or negative. In my opinion I do not want to say that one side is much better than the other one since I am doing tutorials as well. I always try to look after the interests of my subscribers because if I do not do my job well, the people do not enjoy watching my tutorials, and I can believe that it is the same situation with the other beauty gurus. I think that to do this precise work (YouTube videos), we need to be conscious that we have some social responsibilities to follow. The purpose of making videos is not to affect teenagers regarding their physical or psychological aspects but we see it more from a different side that it is to help them develop and show them different options of how they could look, in order to make them feel more self confident.

I have the same opinion as Michelle Phan about YouTube, which is a great platform, you can develop as a person and in a professional way, and the best part is that you are working while you are enjoying it. Actually, it is a totally different atmosphere, the Internet has changed the way people work which I think is very exiting because now this gives us more opportunities as entrepreneurs to create more jobs for people or vice versa.

In the very near future, I am talking about 5 years; technology will continue to grow along with the Internet, which means that the next generations will continue to be influenced by technology.

Time passes so fast that not just teenagers are living together with this platform but from now also small children are getting involved with the Internet. I can also observe that younger girls are being sexualized with little examples such as painting their nails when they are 3 years old or buying makeup toys. For this reason it is very important that the parents take care of their children from a very young age. They need to speak with them so children can grow up in a healthy environment and also be able to develop without any problem with society. It is important to mention that with the help of parents, children can create their own judgment without falling into certain stereotypes.

Social networks are the most effective method to connect people. But sometimes this can be such a bad influence on teenagers that is affecting their everyday lifestyles.

Unfortunately, teenagers spend so much time surfing on social networks that they lose the notion of reality and this leads them to make decisions that sometimes does not benefit them at all. It is very important as a society to raise awareness for the “new modern generations” to have a healthy mental growth.

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APPENDICES

P I Questionnaire.

APPENDIX P I: QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How old are you?

- 14-16
- 16-18
- 18-20

2. How many social networks do you have?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- More...

3. How often you check your Facebook (or other social network)?

- Once per day
- Twice per day
- Many times a day

4. How often you post some picture/ status on your profile?

- Everyday
- Once a week
- Twice a week
- Other...

5. Which kind of posts you like to watch the most?

- Pictures
- Videos
- Links with other information

6. How important is for you to have a profile account?

- Not important at all
- Important
- Very important

- 7. Since what age you wear makeup?**
- 13
 - 14
 - 15
 - Other...
- 8. Why you started to wear makeup?**
- Social Networks (Youtube, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.)
 - Social Influence
 - Because you wanted
- 9. Who is your favorite beauty guru?**
- Dulce Candy
 - Vegas Nay
 - Michelle Phan
 - Other...
- 10. Which is you favorite makeup brand?**
- M.A.C.
 - Benefit
 - Too Faced
 - Other...
- 11. How much money you spend per month on makeup?**
- \$20-\$50
 - \$50-\$100
 - \$100 and more
- 12. Which is the product that you buy the most?**
- Lipsticks
 - Eye Shadows
 - Powders (makeup foundation, blush, illuminator)
 - Other...
- 13. Which was the first product you bought?**
- Lipstick
 - Makeup foundation
 - Mascara
 - Other...

14. How do you feel without makeup?

- Pretty
- Ugly
- Normal

