INFLUENCING A FIELD: THE ROLE OF INFLUENCERS IN THE COSMETICS INDUSTRY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

SCHULICH SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

YORK UNIVERSITY TORONTO, ONTARIO

JULY 2022

ABSTRACT

The study explores the influx of influencers in the markets and how they change the practices of consumers by employing practice theoretics as enabling lens. It focuses on cosmetics industry by employing a multi-method qualitative approach including archival research, observational netnography and interview with consumers as well as professionals in the industry including influencers; brand owners and managers; marketing, talent and influencer agency professionals; makeup artists and lastly; a cosmetics magazine editor. Our preliminary findings consist of two level of change introduced by the influx of influencers to the market. The first one is practice entity changes including complexification of practice entities and valorization of new goals/meanings. Entity level changes are available to grasp or ignore by consumers and they are observed at the market level. On the other hand, consumer performance changes are the responses of consumers to practice entity changes. They are diversification, perfecting and rejecting strategies to plug and unplug changes into cosmetics practices. Therefore, the research aims to explain now only the institutional change brought by the influx of the influencers in the markets but also how consumption practices are shaped by consumers by responding to those changes in their daily routines. The study offers theoretical and practical implications as well as future research directions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful for many people who supported, guided, and encouraged me during the process of completing this work. I thank my committee members, Eileen Fischer, Markus Giesler, Ela Veresiu, Andreas Strebinger and Zeynep Arsel, who provided guidance and direction of this research and writing process. I also thank the other faculty members in the Marketing Department at the Schulich School of Business for investing their time and energy into training me and pushing my research ideas further.

I am grateful for the continued inspiration, help, support and friendship of the Marketing Department's current and former doctoral students: Saeid Kermani, Orcun Turan, Jenn Sedgewick, Rowan El Bialy, Shahzeb Jafri, Vitor Lima, Benedikt Alberternst and Luciana Velloso. I am also very thankful for my colleagues and friends from CCT community: Duygu Akdevelioglu and Lez Trujillo; academic siblings from Bilkent University: Anil Isisag and Alev Kuruoglu. This research would not be possible without the emotional and intellectual support of this giant family of colleagues and friends. I will be forever in debt.

This research also would not have been possible without the support of my family. I am grateful to my parents for supporting me in every decision of I made in life. I thank every member of my family who believed in me. I need to acknowledge the support of my friends in Toronto who became my family abroad. I would not survive in a city I arrived alone without them. I thank my husband, Ramazan, for his unconditional love and support. This research would not be possible without his sacrifice to support my studies.

Lastly, I would like to thank my students who are my muse to push forward, fight for equality and believe in myself.

DEDICATION

To my husband, Ramazan, for inspiring me every day with his unconditional love and never-ending support.

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PART 1 - INTRODUCTION

> "Do you know Amanda Steele? She has **a social media following bigger than the population of Uruguay**. She is also too young to sit at a bar—or vote in the next election. **Sixteen-year-old Steele (a.k.a. MakeupbyMandy24**) is just one of a generation of beauty influencers who are documenting every topknot on Instagram and **dominating the lists of most-searched videos on YouTube** with their makeup tutorials. These new beauty gurus aren't just offering contouring tips. **They're changing the way we shop for, experiment with, and consume beauty…**" (Allure 2015, emphasis added)

Although applying makeup is an age-old practice, social media influencers like Amanda Steele are new in the cosmetics market. In the space of two decades, influencers have become ubiquitous not only in the makeup arena but also in markets such as food, travel, and fashion. Global spending on influencer marketing rose from an estimated $2 billion in 2017 to about $8 billion in 2019 (Gerdeman 2019), and one forecast suggests spending will reach a value of $15 billion by 2022 (Schomer 2019). With the rise of influencers as a feature of many industries, scholars from multiple disciplines have attempted to shed light on the phenomenon.

Efforts have been directed toward explaining what influencer characteristics, their posts, and the platforms they use lead to certain impacts on viewers (e.g., Evans et al. 2017; Hughes, Swaminathan, and Brooks 2019). Scholars have likewise focused on identifying what influencer traits and tactics are associated with a greater or lesser level of consumer attention and admiration (e.g., Backaler 2018; Danny Brown and Fiorella 2013; Duncan Brown and Hayes

2008; Evans et al. 2017; Hughes, Swaminathan, and Brooks 2019; Kapitan and Silvera 2016; Levin 2020; McQuarrie, Miller, and Phillips 2013). Researchers have also addressed market-level questions such as how influencers incite desires (Kozinets, Patterson, and Ashman 2017) and redistribute the institutional work performed in a field (Dolbec and Fischer 2015). These studies collectively suggest the impact of influencers on markets may be varied and profound.

However, although recent research points to the potential for consumer's practice performances to be reshaped owing to influencers (Scholz 2021) there is no comprehensive understanding of how influencers like Amanda Steele may collectively impact consumption practices in the contexts they frequent. This dissertation aims to fill this gap by asking the question: how does the influx of influencers into a field affect consumer practices therein? My study will investigate influencers as an emergent category of actor that may destabilize settled practices and help to launch new elements in institutional fields.

To answer this question, my study employs a practice theory lens. This perspective is well suited for theorizing the source of changed behavior in the development of practices (Warde 2005: 140), and the persistence, and disappearance of practices (i.e., Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012). According to Shove and colleagues, practices include: materials, competences, and meanings. They argue that studying practice change requires investigating interconnected practices that share similar elements which thread through them, and that may change over time (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012). Practice theory opens avenues for researchers to study routinization and disruptions of practices at micro levels of analysis. Recently there have been calls to apply it to study macro level phenomenon (see Hui, Schatzki, and Shove 2016; Nicolini 2016). This study heeds this call by adopting a practice lens to examine both field-level and consumer-level practice changes triggered by the influx of influencers into a market. Influencers

in marketing and social sciences at large are discussed by shedding light on the institutional changes they may help introduce, and on the varied effects of these field level changes on consumer practitioners. The influx of influencers into markets also represents an opportunity to examine elective rather than imposed alterations to practices, which have been focal in past research on consumer behaviours (e.g., Canniford and Shankar 2013; Cardoso, Rojas-Gaviria, and Scaraboto 2020; Epp, Schau, and Price 2014; Godfrey, Price, and Lusch 2021; Gonzalez-Arcos et al. 2021; Phipps and Ozanne 2017; Seregina and Weijo 2017; Thomas and Epp 2019; Woermann and Rokka 2015).

To address my research questions, I investigate the role of influencers in the cosmetics market. In the last decade, the cosmetics market has experienced a growing demand in the North America, and it is expected to expand even more in the future (Euromonitor International 2019a; 2019b). Millennials and generation Z consumers are likely to be current with the latest makeup trends given their avid use of social media (Euromonitor International 2019a; 2019b). In the last decade, the number of influencers and followers have grown exponentially in the cosmetics industry. For example, Bethany Mota was the top beauty content creator on YouTube in 2015 with 8.2 million followers (Pixability 2015), which to 10 million by May 2020. YouTube's current top cosmetics creator, Jeffree Star, boasts 18.2 million followers, while Huda Kattan leads cosmetics influencers on Instagram with 43.9 million followers (May 2020). By 2018, total views of beauty content by influencers on YouTube is believed to have reached over 349 billion (Pixability 2018). These numbers show no signs of slowing down (Pixability 2018). Some suggest that the cosmetics industry embraced influencer marketing more eagerly than any others (Gilliand 2018). Therefore, the cosmetics field is an ideal setting in which to observe the influx

of influencers in a complex, evolving market system, and to learn how they impact the practices of consumers.

Methodologically, this dissertation draws on the analysis of three sources of qualitative data: archival news media, social media posts from selected influencers, and 30 in-depth interviews. Interviews were conducted with consumers and professionals in the industry: influencers; brand owners and managers; marketing, talent, and influencer agency professionals; makeup artists; and a cosmetics magazine editor.

This dissertation is organized as follows. I begin with a literature review that covers literature relevant to understanding influencers and pointing out the conceptual gap that this dissertation aims to fill. The enabling lens section follows. It explains practice theoretics and how I employed them to answer my research question. I then describe the cosmetics industry context and provide methodological details on my data collection and analysis. This is followed by my findings. I conclude with a discussion including contributions and future research directions.

PART 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

I have structured this literature review into three parts. The first section provides an overview of foundational perspectives on social influence before the era of influencers. The second dives into a conceptualization of what influencers are and what is known about influencers from multiple fields. The last focuses on contemporary consumption studies showing how influencers carve out the theoretical gap focal to this dissertation.

Before Influencers: Social Influence Theoretics

Before social media were invented, scholars devoted an overwhelming amount of attention to consumers attitudes and beliefs, and how their behaviors can be influenced. The construct of social influence and studies concerning it paved the road for the contemporary understanding of influencers. I present a brief overview of social influence theoretics.

An early contributor to this classic research stream was Herbert Kelman. In his famous study on opinion changes, he identified three processes entailed in social influence (Kelman 1961): compliance, identification, and internalization. Compliance occurs if an individual accepts the influence from another person or group in hopes of achieving a favorable reaction from the other. Motivation may include gaining a reward or avoiding a punishment. The opinion

adopted through compliance only occurs when the source of influence is present, therefore it is difficult to observe a permanent effect.

Identification is the adoption of a set of behaviors from a person or a group owing to their self-defining relationship with that person or group. It entails imitating the desired influencer behaviors and connecting it to self-image. When compatibility is reached between the value system of the individual and the behavior or attitude that is being promoted by an influencer, internalization occurs. The characteristics of the influencing agent, such as likability and trustworthiness, play a crucial role in the process. Depending on these characteristics, social influences may be long lasting. To summarize, Kelman's theory of social influence has been investigated in various contexts and forms a foundation for understanding how influencers may affect consumer decision making processes, attitudes, and behaviors.

Another leading scholar of social influence is Cialdini (1987) whose research on persuasion has had considerable impact on contemporary consumer behavior theorists. Cialdini's findings on social influence drew attention to the role social cues and descriptive norms play in the persuasion processes. He posited that norms are unwritten rules that suggest what is acceptable or desirable in a group and investigated sources of those norms. Further study examined what social cues aid in the identification of who to follow in a group so individuals can fit in, aspire, and satisfy their need for belonging or confirm the accuracy of their thoughts. In that sense, Cialdini's theory is a powerful tool for looking at social dynamics and understanding influencer and follower relationship broadly (Cialdini 1987).

After Cialdini's iconic book, the social influence literature shifted its focus toward compliance and conformity behavior to explain a target's susceptibility to outside influencers. In the literature, compliance refers to complying with a communication in the form of a request,

while conformity entails the act of changing one's behavior to match the responses of others (Cialdini and Goldstein 2004). According to Cialdini and Goldstein's review of the social influence literature, there are three main motivators for the reception of outside influence (2004):

1. A goal of accuracy: form accurate perceptions of reality and react accordingly
2. A goal of affiliation: to develop and preserve meaningful social relationships
3. A goal of maintaining a positive self-concept: to maintain a favorable self-concept by behaving in a consistent way

This article emphasizes the ways in which these goals interact with external forces to engender social influence processes that are subtle, indirect, and outside of awareness (Cialdini and Goldstein 2004).

To understand the behaviors of buyers, the power of social influence has been extensively investigated in the consumer behavior literature. Imitation is one facet of social influence that has attracted attention. White and Argo documented the reactions of consumers being imitated or mimicked by other consumers, which we can translate as their reaction to influence (White and Argo 2011). While imitation is a strong signal of power, some consumers may not wish to influence other's choices because they desire to disassociate themselves from the social other (White and Argo 2011). In other words, consumers like to influence others and enjoy the flattery of being mimicked, if the follower is not their social other. This theory illustrates the social context present in the comments section of influencer posts as an environment where people interact and influence each other in addition to the influencer's impact. Influencers may also jump in and comment, thereby interacting with their followers, which illustrates social engagement in a more interactive form.

Another important mechanism related to social influence among consumers is social comparison (Ordabayeva and Chandon 2011; Shalev and Morwitz 2012). According to this theory, consumers often make their buying decisions actively through processes of comparing themselves to others (Ordabayeva and Chandon 2011; Shalev and Morwitz 2012). Social influence is particularly strong when there is a risk of exclusion (Duclos, Wan, and Jiang 2013). Reactionary consumer behavior can be observed in response to potential benefits or losses presented by the influencer especially in the context of financial risk taking (Duclos et al. 2013).

Consumer behavior is thought to be powerfully influenced by social context cues that actively affect decision making (e.g., Dahl 2013). Even though social influence studies have not directly engaged with social media influencer content, they have the potential to shed light on the relationship between influencers and their followers in various shapes and forms. Collectively they signify that influencers have a potential to impact consumer behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs. In line with this body of psychological research, an influencer can, in general, be conceptualized as: a potentially powerful actor who signals social cues that may affect the beliefs, desires, aspirations and self-perceptions of consumers.

Predecessors of Influencers: Opinion Leaders, Early Adopters, and Market Mavens

Of greater relevance to the current study is consumer research on actors in social networks who play an important role in market systems: opinion leaders, early adopters, and market mavens. These theories shed light on early conceptualizations of influencer studies.

Before conversations about social media influencers emerged in the 2010s, the consumer behavior literature addressed similar concepts: the opinion leader, and the early adopter. The opinion leader concept was coined by Lazarsfeld and colleagues, referring to individuals who act as information brokers intervening between mass media sources and opinions of individuals (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1948). Opinion leaders have a combination of knowledge or expertise, and influence people's opinion and choices (Robertson, Zielinski, and Ward 1984). They were regarded as knowledgeable about a particular product class (Jacoby and Hoyer 1981) and were seen as disseminating their ideas on that product class to the general public through networks of consumption (Watts and Dodds 2007). Conversely, early adopters can exert either a passive or active influence on later purchasers because they are the first ones to try. Their influence generally occurs through product-related conversations (Midgley and Dowling 1978).

In the late 1980s, Feick and Price (1987) introduced a new concept, the market maven. According to their research, people are heavily influenced by market mavens, individuals who have information about many kinds of products, places to shop, and other facets of the market, and initiate discussions with and respond to information requests from other consumers (Feick and Price 1987). Market mavens can be regarded as influencers who have general knowledge and experience with the market. They differ from opinion leaders because they both have marketplace knowledge or expertise, but market maven expertise is not product specific (Feick and Price 1987).

Researchers have begun to study market mavens who use technology to share information and opinions (Geissler and Edison 2005). Barnes and Pressey's (2012) study connects the two areas of literature by investigating market maven behaviors across three different channels: virtual worlds, the Web, and real life. The findings suggest that maven

behavior is not completely transferable across channels because the context influences maven propensity (Barnes and Pressey 2012). Even though market mavens can transfer their broad knowledge of the marketplace from one product category to another, it is more challenging to transfer their knowledge between online and offline arenas.

Market mavens and opinion leaders are market actors who are neither marketing professionals nor "mere" consumers. Those streams of research are partially relevant to contemporary discussions of social media influencers and shed limited light on the phenomenon of interest. In contrast to market mavens and opinion leaders who traditionally have most of their influence through offline face-to-face networks, the hallmark of contemporary influencers is their social media reach. Moreover, these literatures have mostly focused on how market mavens or opinion leaders influence consumers and focused less on their impact on market systems more broadly.

Social Media Influencers (SMIs) and Influencer Marketing

Studies investigating contemporary social media influencers started to appear in the 2010s and gained momentum late in the last decade with the increasing presence of such influencers in various industries. Some of the earliest work focusing on social media influencers conceptualized them as a new type of independent third-party endorser (e.g., Freberg et al. 2011). Arguments suggest that social media influencers shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media tools (Freberg et al. 2011; Khamis, Ang, and Welling 2017). Followers are also an essential part of the discussion since they help make influencers

visible (Abidin 2016). This literature also highlights how influencers engage in impression management through self-promotion techniques or self-branding efforts (Khamis, Ang, and Welling 2017; Trammell and Keshelashvili 2005).

As work on influencers has evolved, focus on how brands can use influencers as a medium to reach out to consumers has increased (Backaler 2018; Brown and Fiorella 2013; Brown and Hayes 2008; Levin 2020). Influencer marketing can be a paid or sponsored trigger of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Scott 2015). The success of influencer marketing is thought to depend on the influencer's characteristics and their posted content, which are further moderated by social media platform type and campaign advertising intent (Hughes, Swaminathan, and Brooks 2019). Studies also suggest that identifying when a brand mentioned in a post is paid for or not increases positive attitudes toward the brand and shares the intention of the influencer (Evans et al. 2017). Acknowledgements of liking, using, or desiring a promoted product by an endorser mediates the relationship between source, message factors, and persuasion via endorsement (Kapitan and Silvera 2016). In summary, the effectiveness of influencer marketing, from a brand's point of view, depends on the harmony between the influencer and followers, as well as the perceived authenticity of the influencer which signals trust for consumers.

This stream of research offers great insights into influencer, brand, and consumer relationship in which communication flows from brand to consumer via influencer. Even though studies have explored the details and nuances within this communication flow, limited light has been shed on consumer practices in market contexts as they may be affected by influencers.

Influencers and Consumer Culture

Consumer culture researchers studying influencers have noted that communal norms shared by influencers and their audiences shape the forms of communication that are effective in online contexts. Researchers have also argued that the influencers most able to build up and sustain audience attention are those who accumulate cultural capital via their public displays of taste (McQuarrie, Miller, and Phillips 2013). Influencers such as food bloggers have been shown to help stimulate passionate versions of technologically enhanced desire (Kozinets, Patterson, and Ashman 2017).

Recent studies have described influencers as agents attempting to establish distinctive personal brands as they compete for online attention economies (Smith and Fischer 2021; Lee and Junqué De Fortuny 2021). Research also indicates that influencers are more than endorsers of brands and can play the role of emotional entrepreneurs by creating bonds with their followers; they offer emotional support in consumption practices for consumers (Mardon, Molesworth, and Grigore 2018). Further, studies reveal that collaborative, co-constructive and communal interdependence between influencers and followers formulates a cult of personality for influencers that is posited to be drastically different than for entities such as endorsers or celebrities (Cocker and Cronin 2017). And influencer interaction with consumers has a potential to boost self-worth of consumers (Cocker and Cronin 2017). Some work has suggested that influencers who create user generated content in blogging and YouTube contexts can build up consumption communities via their patterns of social interaction (Gannon and Prothero 2018). Besides the relationship with consumers, influencers also build unique relationships with brands (Nascimento, Campos, and Suarez 2020).

Consumer culture research has partially uncovered how influencers may affect market systems. For example, Dolbec and Fischer (2015) found that avid consumer use of social media to share their tastes and opinions could redistribute the institutional work in a market system as well as lead to a new category of actors. A study by Veresiu and Parmentier (2021) explored the Advanced Style movement in North America, showing that influencers play a pivotal role in this movement (Veresiu and Parmentier 2021).

Despite such studies, a gap remains in our understanding of how influencers might affect practices within market systems. A notable exception is a recent study by Scholz (2021) who offers insights on how consumers actively incorporate influencer content into their own practice performances. His findings suggest that consumers integrate influencer content into their practice performances through six distinct processes: positionally vetting, granularly validating, actually learning, methodically immersing, pragmatically interpreting, and ideologically bolstering. One of the key contributions of the paper is to update McCracken's (199) classic model of endorsers' impact to account for mediated practices acquired from influencers. While this study points the potential for influencers to impact consumer practices, it stops short of fully illuminating how influencers may exert systemic influences on practices. Therefore, more investigation is required to address the research question that is focal to this thesis.

PART 3 – ENABLING LENS

Practice Theoretics

Overview and Origins

Practice theories are comprised of related perspectives with alternative conceptualizations rather than constituting a single unified theory. This family of theories aims to explain human and nonhuman interactions in wider social and material structures (Warde 2005; Nicolini 2012). Practice theories provide a lens to study ordinary doings and the significance of materiality in everyday life (Schatzki 2005; Warde 2005). In other words, the essence of practice theoretics is an understanding of the emergence, persistence, and evolution of practices (i.e., Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012).

Taking a step back to look at the foundational work of practice theoretics, we see the central premise bridging the agency-structure divide by emphasizing the material realities in connection to agent behaviors and structures (e.g., Reckwitz 2002). To explain practices, several theorists have conceptualized different components that constitute a practice. Foundational works by Giddens suggests that practices are shaped by available resources and organizing rules (1984), while Bourdieu emphasizes more structural elements including habitus, capital, and field (1977; 1984). Capital can be economic, social, or cultural, and be observed as embodied, objectified, or institutionalized forms (Bourdieu 1984; 1977). Together these scholars are sometimes referred to as “first generation” practice theorists who collectively suggested that practices are an organized set of actions linked to wider complexes and constellations, a nexus, and this nexus forms the domain study (Giddens 1984; Hui, Schatzki, and Shove 2016).

Key Development in Practice Theories

"Second generation" theorists such as Schatzki (2002), Reckwitz (2002) and Shove, Panzar and Watson (2012) have developed new takes on the nexus of practices by applying themes such as social change, power, and large social phenomenon (e.g., Hui, Schatzki and Shove 2016). These themes have arisen in response to the two main criticisms of practice theories: 1) studying "small" phenomenon such as cooking, cleaning etc. but not "big" topics such as finance systems, institutions, or power; and 2) fixation on practices to the neglect of entities and practitioners (Hui, Schatzki and Shove 2016).

Hui and colleagues have attempted to address such criticisms by introducing new approaches to the practice theory toolkit. They have conceptualized processes such as "suffusing" and "threading," through which practices may be dynamically interconnected (Hui, Schatzki and Shove 2016). Hui and colleagues state that "certain phenomena can pervade practices and complexes thereof, providing a kind of atmosphere in which actions are performed and practices carried forward" (Hui, Schatzki and Shove 2016:4). For example, affective elements may suffuse through and connect practices (Reckwitz 2016). Further, Schatzki has shown ho certain sayings and texts may pervade a nexus of practices (2016). Collectively, studies suggest that suffusing as a form of connection is often subtle (e.g., affect, language, culture etc.) and numerous elements may suffuse through multiple practices (Hui, Schatzki and Shove 2016).

According to Hui and colleagues, "threading through" refers to things, for instance, an object or a practice, that can move or advance through the nexus of practices, thereby linking the

practices through which they pass or to which they are connected (Hui, Schatzki and Shove 2016: 5). The main difference between threading and suffusing is that threading progresses on identifiable trajectories and paths linking practices are concrete and traceable (Hui, Schatzki and Shove 2016). In contrast, factors such as affect or culture that \ suffuse through practices are more subtle (Hui, Schatzki and Shove 2016). Shove's research illustrates examples of threading involving energy supplies, products components, or people involved in multiple practices and identifying their individual roles and evolving status in the infrastructure in which their practice takes place (e.g., Shove 2010; 2003; Shove and Walker 2010). Shove's take on emphasizes that practices are dynamic by focusing on evolution rather than static conditions.

It is worth noting that suffusing and threading are not mutually exclusive forms of interconnection (Hui, Schatzki and Shove 2016). Thus, they can both be conceptually identified as components of connections in any given study. In this dissertation, I primarily focus on things that thread through to connect cosmetics practices to understand the dynamism of practices. However, I am also attuned to elements that may suffuse practices.

Shove's Practice Theoretic Perspective

To trace components that thread through practices over time, it is helpful to adhere to a specific practice theoretic perspective. In this paper, I adopt Shove's characterization of practices as incorporating materials, competences, and meanings (e.g., Shove 2010; 2004; Shove and Walker 2010; Shove and Pantzar 2005; Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012; Hui, Schatzki, and Shove 2016). This choice was made because Shove's characterization is particularly suited to my focus on systemic transformations in practices.

According to Shove and colleagues' framework, the material elements of practices include: things, technologies, tangible physical entities, and the stuff of which objects are made. In her view, competence encompasses skills, know-how and technique; and maning include symbolic significance, ideas, and aspirations (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012: 14). All three elements (materials, competences, and meanings) are present in every practice, but any given practice element can evolve or change over time. Shove's work highlights how transitions within a given bundle of practices can induce changes in other systems of practices and how new carriers can reinitiate practices as well (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012)

Shove proposes that to understand systematic changes, it is helpful to detect and trace the movement of elements that thread through practice bundles across time. This conceptualization opens the door to exploring dynamics in larger systems such as marketplaces, institutional fields, or economies (e.g., Nicolini 2016). The underlying idea is that changes to some elements of a practice may trigger reconfigurations of both its own elements and those within the nexuses of interacting practices (Hui, Schatzki, and Shove 20016, Gonzales-Arcos et al. 2021).

Shoves' perspective also points to a differentiation between practices as entities and practices as performance. Practices as entities exist at the field level and provide scripts or templates that individuals draw upon as they integrate practice elements into their practice performances. Consumers do not simple replicate practices as entitities; rather, they are pro-active, creative practitioners who selectively integrate practice elements (Shove and Pantzar 2005, 45). Moreover, the successive moments of performances of practice elements constitutes and sustains or reconfigures the practice as entity over time (Akaka, Schau and Vargo 2021; Shove et al. 2012). This study draws on the notion of practices as both entities and performances to investigate changes over time.

Practice Theory in Consumer Culture Research

Prior consumer research employing practice theoretics has focused on the development of practices and the consumer experiences revolving around them. Topics that have been explored include: taste (Arsel and Bean 2013), choice (Allen 2002), value creation (Schau, Muñiz, and Arnould 2009), consumer journeys (Schau and Akaka 2019), practice diffusion (Akaka, Schau, and Vargo 2021) and the meaning of materials and their transformation (Türe and Ger 2016). These studies have helped illuminate how consumer practices evolve and change as consumption occurs over time, across social structures and through marketing communication efforts (Askegaard and Eckhardt 2012; Sandikci and Ger 2010; Zanette, Pueschel and Touzani 2022). Another topic is the destabilization of consumers' misaligned or disrupted practice routines (e.g., Canniford and Shankar 2013; Cardoso, Rojas-Gaviria, and Scaraboto 2020; Epp, Schau, and Price 2014; Godfrey, Price, and Lusch 2021; Gonzalez-Arcos et al. 2021; Phipps and Ozanne 2017; Seregina and Weijo 2017; Thomas and Epp 2019; Woermann and Rokka 2015). This research offers insights on how consumption practices evolve, and how consumers engage with, adapt to, or abandon practices or certain elements thereof.

Some consumer research has conceptualized practice change at the individual practitioner level, while other studies are more relevant to the practice as entity level. This dissertation distinguishes between changes within the performance of practices by individual consumers and changes in practice entities. Practice performances of specific consumers may change when they enter a new phase of life, such becoming a parent for the first time (Thomas and Epp 2019) or when family members move out of the household (Epp, Schau and Price 2014). Conversely, it is also possible to explore macro changes at the practice entity level that affect large populations of

consumers, such as when a geographic region experiences extreme drought (Phipps and Ozanne 2017) or a ban on plastic bags (Gonzales-Arcos et al. 2021).

Although these consumer studies offer insights on change of practice from multiple angles, they stop short of illuminating how practice entities may evolve and how consumer practitioners may respond when influencers become common in an institutional field.

PART 4 – METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I describe the research context by illustrating its relevance to the research questions. Following are the data collection methods employed in the study. The chapter concludes with data analysis.

Context

In the last decade, the cosmetics market has experienced a growing demand in North America, and this is expected to continue (Euromonitor International 2019a; 2019b). Attributing this growth to a particular cause is difficult; rather a complex set of factors seems to be fueling the increasing demand among consumers. In this section, I summarize the changes in the cosmetics industry under four headings: social media platforms; product and brand offerings; the rise of independent (indie) brands; and the influx of influencers.

Social Media Platforms

Interest among consumers in makeup trends and techniques has grown since the 2000s (Euromonitor International 2019a; 2019b), and social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube have played a central role in the circulation of information. Millennials and generation Z consumers appear to stay current with the latest makeup trends through their avid usage of

social media (Euromonitor International 2019a; 2019b). Social media encourages young consumers to keep up with everchanging makeup trends via constant exposure.

Product and Brand Offerings

Concomitant with the growth of social media usage by cosmetic consumers is the rising of number of cosmetic brands (Euromonitor International 2019a; 2019b). Before the early 2010s, cosmetic brands were big fashion/beauty power houses or multi-brand companies in beauty/health categories. These were polarized as either expensive brands sold at luxury retailers with high price points or generic brands sold at drug stores/supermarkets at an affordable cost (Euromonitor International 2019a; 2019b). Product use was traditional, with one purpose per product such as eyeshadow for the eyelids and lipstick the lips. That changed with the popularity of multiuse items such as sticks that can be used on the eyelids, cheeks, and lids; as well as creative repurposing of products such as using lipstick on undereye discoloration (Euromonitor International 2019a; 2019b).

The Rise of Indie Brands

The third trend, starting during this time period is an increase in the number of independent brands, products, and tools available to the public. Particularly noteworthy is the rise of indie brands introduced by makeup artists, social media influencers or celebrities. Most started by selling a small range of products through their website but over the course of two to three years some have gained space in reputable retail spaces such as Sephora and Ulta. Kylie Cosmetics is a great example: it has gained 1.4% of the US color cosmetics space within 3 years

of launching (Euromonitor International 2019a). This percentage may seem small, but 20-year-old founder Kylie Jenner racked up more than $420 million in sales in 18 months selling $27 lip kits and $42 “kyshadow” palettes (Creswell 2017). More broadly, indie brands together make up 20% of the total market share (Euromonitor International 2019a). Combined, the share of the market now owned by indie brands is more than the second biggest established player Estee Lauder Cosmetics Inc’s market share, around 19% (Euromonitor International 2019a). The market share gain by indie brands was rapid. It grew from 18% in 2014 to 20% in 2018 and is expected to continue (Euromonitor International 2019a).

The Influx of Influencers.

Finally, and most relevant to this dissertation, is the cosmetics industry’s trend of the increasing presence of influencers (Euromonitor International 2019a; 2019b). The number of influencers and followers have grown exponentially. In 2015 Bethany Mota was the top beauty content creator on YouTube with 8.2 million followers (Pixability 2015); as of May 2020, she has 10 million followers. The current top name in cosmetics on YouTube is Jeffree Star with 18.2 million followers, while Huda Kattan leads cosmetics influencers on Instagram with 43.9 million followers (May 2020). By 2018 there had been over 349 billion views of beauty content created by influencers on YouTube (Pixability 2018). These numbers show no signs of slowing down (Pixability 2018).

These trends in the cosmetics industry contribute to its complexity as an evolving market system with interlinked relationships of multiple market actors including categories of brands, retailers, influencers, and consumers.

Data Collection

To answer the research question, this project employs qualitative research methods that integrated data from multiple sources to draw a multi-actor perspective of the marketplace. The actors represented are: brands, agencies, industry professionals, education institutions, media, influencers, and consumers. The data includes archival materials, observational netnographic data, and in-depth interviews.

The first step of data collection entailed gathering archival materials to develop a better understanding of the research context and to gain a perspective into some of the actors whose views are reflected in publicly available sources. This data was helped to inform interview data collection. Archival data was critical for drawing a timeline tracing the influx of influencers into the cosmetics industry, and for developing and understanding their interactions with other actors including legal institutions, brands, retailers, producers, celebrities, and consumers.

The primary source for archival data was sourced from the Factiva database. Articles that contained the key words “makeup” and “influencer” in the heading and lead paragraph were downloaded from Factiva on April 5th, 2020. Sources searched were limited to newspapers, magazines, and online blogs from Canada and the U.S. The first article identified using this

method is dated May 20th, 2002, and the last one is dated April 5th, 2020. The dataset is 479 pages long (single spaced) without any pictures (see Appendix A, Summary of Archival Data).

Table 1 – Summary of Archival Data

Data set keywords	**Database**	**# of pages**
"influencer" and "cosmetics"	Factiva	479
"influencer name"	Factiva	842
"colour cosmetics"	Euromonitor	34
TOTAL		**1,355**

To supplement the primary archival dataset, additional searches were completed in the Factiva database using the names of influencers selected for observational netnography (see Table 2 – Summary of Observational Netnography) to gain background information about them. The database offered results for 11 of these influencers. This dataset consists of a total 842 single-spaced additional pages (see Table 3 – Influencer-based Archival Research).

Table 2 – Summary of Observational Netnography

Name	**# of Followers on Youtube**	**Brand**	**Product category**
Jeffree Star	17,900,000	Jeffree Star Cosmetics, brand collaborations (Morphe)	Color cosmetics, makeup tools
James Charles	17,300,000	Sisters apparel, brand collaborations (Morphe)	Fashion, color cosmetics
Nikkie de Jagger	13,300,000	brand collaboration (Morphe makeup brush, Ofra makeup collection)	Color cosmetics, makeup tools
Tati Westbrook	9,640,000	Tati beauty	Color cosmetics, makeup tools, beauty supplements
Kylie Jenner	8,100,000	Kylie Cosmetics	Color cosmetics, skin care
Jaclyn Hill	5,870,000	brand collaboration (Morphe)	Color cosmetics

Manny MUA	4,780,000	Lunar beauty	Color cosmetics
Huda Kattan	3,920,000	Huda Beauty	Color cosmetics, fragrance, skin care
Samantha Ravndahl	984,000		
Makeup By Alli	748,000		
Allie Glines	656,000	Allie Glines	Makeup bag
Allana Davison	656,000	brand collaboration (MAC)	Color cosmetics
Jamie Paige	469,000	Amie by Jamie Paige	Jewellery
Emily Fox	426,000		
Kathleen Lights	418,000	brand collaboration (ColorPOP)	Color cosmetics
Jackie Aina	330,000	brand collaboration (Anastasia Beverly Hills)	Color cosmetics
Deepica Mutyala	259,000	Live Tinted	Color cosmetics
Makeup By Cheryl	156,000		
Samantha Jane	86,200		

Bronwyn Papineau	57,700		
Karina Waldron	26,900		
Drea CN	15,500		
Making up Ashlee	5,650		
Abbey Yung	3,080		

Table 3 – Influencer-based Archival Research

Influencer Name	**# of pages**
Tati	77
Samantha Ravndahl	7
Nikkie Tutorials	94
Manny MUA	26
Kylie Jenner	417
Kathleen Lights	9
Jeffree Star	26

James Charles	104
Jaclyn Hill	13
Jackie Aina	20
Deepica Mutyala	49
TOTAL	**842**

In the last step of archival data collection, I pulled industry data from the Passport database of Euromonitor, searching coverage of the colour cosmetics industry, encompassing makeup products designed for skin, cheeks, eyes, and lips, in the US and Canada. Data in Euromonitor reports: market shares; growth in market shares of brands; and growth in product categories. Current market trends are included as well as predictions for the future based on survey data. These reports helped me to understand industry dynamics and trends from a different perspective given that it is released by a research company, not a competitor in the cosmetics market. The reports I found are Colour Cosmetics in Canada (2019), Colour Cosmetics in the USA (2019), and information on Kylie Cosmetics (as of 2019) which was the only influencer-owned brand available in the database. This dataset is 34 pages single-spaced. The total archival data set to 1,355 single-spaced pages.

The next step was an observational netnography (cf. Kozinets 2010). Between March 2020 and March 2022. I observed posts and topics of discussion in several mass media websites, blogs, and social media sites such as Allure, Glamour, Cosmopolitan, Beauty Velle, Influenster, and Lab Muffin Beauty Science, to gain a sense of how influencers operate in the cosmetics

industry and how they engage with other actors in the market. The reason behind including these popular media resources is that Factiva database includes only major newspaper, magazine and online pages yet not being able to detect forum-like discussions and blog posts in the aforementioned websites. They were essential to observe reactions of consumers and how they interact with each other in the topics related to beauty influencers and makeup practices.

I also followed cosmetics influencers from US and Canada on YouTube and Instagram to observe their posts and engagements during the same time frame. Initially, I included influencers mentioned at initial archival data research. However, they were all big names with millions of followers, so I expanded the list to include some medium and small size influencers. To determine which influencers to include I consulted posts at the MakeupAddict subgroup of Reddit, with discussion posts including "Top ten influencers to follow in 2019" or "Influencers from Canada to watch" etc. (See Table 3 for the complete list of influencers). The first eight influencers have 1M+ followers and were all mentioned in archival data search. The next group has 100K to 1M followers, and only four of them were mentioned in archival data sources. The last group of influencers have fewer than 100K followers including two followings of less than 10K. This stage of the data collection helped me engage deeply with the influencer content and learn how they interact with other actors especially consumers and brands.

Based on my observations, I realized that many influencers have established their own brands in makeup or makeup related categories while others have been collaborating with other brands on limited edition releases. In Table 3, I indicate any brands each influencer owns and whether they collaborated with an established brand and in which category of products.

Conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews (Belk, Fischer, and Kozinets 2013) comprised the last stage of data collection. It was essential to gain insights from consumers but

also other marketplace actors. Therefore, I conducted 30 interviews: 15 with consumers and 15 with professionals in the industry including: influencers; brand owners and managers; marketing, talent, and influencer agency professionals; makeup artists; and a beauty magazine editor (see Table 4). The first informant in the study was found through an acquaintance. Subsequent informants were found through snowballing. The interviews ranged in length from 40 to 120 minutes.

Table 4 – Overview of Interviews

Pseudo name	**Designation**	**Preferred pronoun**	**Affiliation**	**Generation**
Alex	agency owner	he/him	influencer agency	
Brain	agency owner	he/him	influencer agency	
Charles	agency owner	he/him	marketing agency	
Dahlia	Marketing manager	she/her	talent agency	
Emily	brand manager	she/her	talent agency	
Faye	brand owner	she/her	indie brand	
Gloria	Makeup artist and brand owner	she/her	indie brand and makeup school	

Heather	makeup school director	she/her	makeup school	
Isaac	Editor	he/him	cosmetics magazine	
Amelia	Influencer	she/her		
Betty	Influencer	she/her		
Clara	Influencer	she/her		
Daisy	Influencer	she/her		
Elsa	Influencer	she/her		
Finn	Influencer	she/her		
Amy	Consumer	she/her		GenZ
Bella	Consumer	she/her		GenZ
Claire	Consumer	she/her		GenZ
Dora	Consumer	she/her		GenZ
Esme	Consumer	she/her		Millennial
Farah	Consumer	she/her		Millennial
Gemma	Consumer	she/her		Millennial
Haley	Consumer	she/her		Millennial

Izzy	Consumer	she/her		Millennial
Joy	Consumer	she/her		Millennial
Kyra	Consumer	she/her		Millennial
Lily	Consumer	she/her		Millennial
Mia	Consumer	she/her		Millennial
Natalie	Consumer	she/her		Millennial
Owen	Consumer	he/him		Millennial

To better benefit from the wide ranges of experiences of informants, I developed different interview guides designed for: consumers, influencers, and other marketplace actors. For each type of informant, I aimed to collect data on their cosmetics practices and performances, while interviews with consumer and marketplace actors also touched on their relationship with influencers. In the influencer interviews, I included questions regarding their professional journey and relationships with other marketplace actors. Collectively, they helped me to understand cosmetics consumption practices at entity and performance level with the insights

into their interlinked relationships. To prompt conversations, I employed the insights that I gathered from archival and observational netnography.

Data Analysis

To better understand my context, I conducted an inductive analysis of the archival data. I open coded emergent themes as I came across them in the data (Strauss and Corbin 1990). I followed an iterative, hermeneutic approach of tacking back-and-forth between theory and data (Arnold and Fischer 1994; Thompson 1997), paying particular attention to the changes that happened in the market.

Based on this analysis I formed a timeline of changes occurring in the cosmetics market once influencers came into picture. This timeline approach was useful to draw an overarching picture, yet it didn't reveal what was happening with each actor. To address this, I returned to the refined list of actors and recoded the data separately for each actor category. This helped me to create a background for the next phase of data collection.

When analyzing both my observational and interview data, I identified emergent themes that corresponded to my research questions and followed an iterative, hermeneutic approach of tacking back-and-forth between theory and data (Arnold and Fischer 1994; Thompson 1997). After initial coding, I employed practice theoretic insights to reanalyze the data in a more theoretical way to come up with more compelling insights.

PART 6 – FINDINGS

1. Practice Entity Changes

1a. Complexification of Practice Entities

Consumers' performances of applying makeup or skincare—like performances of all practices—vary widely as some consumers apply only one product, often mascara or lipstick. In contrast, influencers performing for their audiences tend to use many more products and incorporate multiple stages into routines that previously could be done in one step. For instance, an eye makeup would require not only eyeshadow but also eyeliner and mascara, and even go further to include prepping with an eyeshadow base and finishing with a lid topper. Therefore, in the practices of creating a complete "look," influencers emphasize including new steps, often including a wider range of products, that are more elaborate that those that had previously been performed by everyday consumers. Such practice entity level changes encouraged by influencers, is referred to as the "complexification of practices."

Practice complexification is illustrated in influencers-introduced content often referred to as "Get Ready with Me" (GRWM) posts. In these videos influencers record themselves applying their daily makeup as they explain the steps. In her most recent GRWM video, makeup influencer Nicol Concillio[1] filmed herself applying a moisturizer, face primer, eyeshadow primer, six different eyeshadow shades, foundation, concealer, eyeliner, fake lashes, mascara,

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rHW-s3rFWY

contour, bronzer, blush, highlighter, lipliner, lipstick, powder, eyebrow pencil, and number of brushes to go with each step and product. Nicol is a favorite influencer of informant, Claire, who mentioned watching GRWM videos of her favorite influencers to grasp their makeup and skincare routines. Not coincidentally, the steps Claire says she takes in her makeup routine are now almost identical to those in Nicol's GRWM tutorial videos.

Cosmetics practice is complexified not only through the inclusion of multiple products but also through the mixing of different brands and the use of a wide range of tools that are deployed in a specific sequence in the practice. As influencers showcase cosmetics products, they encourage their followers to use of an array of application tools. Although brushes and sponges have long been included in the practices of professional makeup artists, influencers videos imply they should be incorporated in everyday consumers' daily application of makeup and skincare.

To illustrate, consider Nicol Concilio's GRWM video,[1] and the tools in the order used (see Appendix B for the photos taken from the video). She starts with a fluffy eyeshadow brush to work on her crease, then switches to another fluffy eyeshadow brush to apply a darker color on her crease, followed by a third brush and the darkest color applied on top of the previous two shades. Then, using a flat brush to apply concealer on her eyelids, she creates a "cut crease" look. She adds a shiny topcoat on the same area through finger application. Different techniques are mixed and matched based on the finish of the product even though they are all eyeshadows. According to her, each step requires a different method for the desired look. Then she applies her liquid eyeliner and mentions that her technique is not perfect, and that it can be corrected afterwards by using a makeup remover wipe. She states a preference for makeup remover wipes over water or regular wet wipes because they are more effective and gentler to the eyes. The

addition of fake eyelashes follows. The use of an eyelash tweezer allows her to hold lashes at the right angle for easier application. Foundation is added after the eye makeup is finished. She suggests doing the eyes first because fallout from the eyeshadows it is easier to clean. She uses a damp makeup sponge to blend the foundation and a powder brush to set the face with translucent powder. Highlighter is used on her cheekbones as well as on the inner corner of her eyes with a small pencil brush. Then, she adds bronzer and blush to the apples of the cheeks. To complete the look, lip pencil and lipstick are used. The final touch is to spray her face with a setting spray. In summary, Nicol's daily makeup routine video illustrates the complexification of the practice entity. In her daily practice, there are multiple products in varying categories that are applied with a specific technique and sequence.

Along with the intricacy of new materials comes complexity by new competencies. Informants mentioned how they observed influencers demonstrating blending techniques using both their fingers and an array of brushes. Such competencies can be seen as tacit knowledge that industry experts such as makeup artists may long have processed but were not previously readily accessible or relevant to everyday consumers. Influencers, through their tutorials, articulate these competencies and make them visible. Industry professional informants point directly to the complexification of practices triggered through the introduction of new competencies. Heather, the director of a makeup school in the US, explained that this increasing visibility is driving demand for new competencies to be taught in their courses:

> So, because that information is all out there, we're finding that more and more [demand for courses]. And this is why our Saturday workshops, originally, we started out with five and they were basic things like teen makeup, mature makeup, an evening look.

> And in the last few years, we've had to add much more content. So, highlighting and contouring, the perfect palette. So how to get that pouty look, how to do a flawless face, more of that clean makeup. So, because consumers are much more aware of the different looks that are available to them, knowing what professionals are doing, we've seen much more interest in the general consumer wanting to learn that for themselves. So that's also forced us to cater more to those folks by introducing more classes. So, I mean, it's good for us because it feels like we have a much more direct link to the end consumer and can now cater directly to what their needs are. Where in the past it was like, well, let's see how much interest there is in this. So, it's definitely a win-win, I would think, for the consumer and for the for the companies. (Heather, makeup school director)

Heather acknowledged the popularity of competencies such as contouring and highlighting among consumers and the role of influencers in both making consumers aware of the looks and of the skills required to achieve them. Catering to the demand, Heather's makeup school offers both weekday education for professional makeup artists and weekend workshops for consumers who want to learn same techniques. Interestingly, Heather characterizes the demand for training generated by influencers as a "win-win" for companies like hers. Influencers generate a demand for competencies that they themselves cannot completely fill, creating opportunities for other actors, like makeup schools, to further contribute to the evolution of practices in the field.

My analysis suggests that the introduction of new materials and competencies by influencers into practices tends to be ongoing. Influencers, in their quest for attention (Smith and Fischer 2021) repeatedly update practices by adding new elements. After tools such as brushes

and sponges had become a part of the entry level of cosmetics practice, influencers expanded their coverage to the maintenance that these materials require. Jackie Aina who is a cosmetics influencer, gave an interview on her routines and mentioned the maintenance and organization involved in practice:

> 11:40 a.m. Take a late shower, have a late breakfast, and begin my day. Because I don't work a typical 9-to-5 job, weekends are workdays as well. I deep clean my beauty tools and organize my makeup closet. For each item I add to the closet, I remove an existing item. I receive thousands of products a year and it can be overwhelming. I have to pay for trash removal. (Jackie Aina)

Jackie's daily routine goes beyond the maintenance of her makeup closet to include cleaning, which was previously a less elaborate portion of makeup practices. Over the last decade, companies have introduced cleaning tools such as specialty soaps and shampoos for brushes and sponges as well as "mini washing machines" designed specifically to wash sponges and brushes (HB team, 2019[2]). Influencers have helped build consumer know-how about cleaning tools by displaying them on YouTube and TikTok videos. Sophdoeslife's beauty blender washing machine review video received more than 1.8 million views[3]. In the video, she demonstrates how the machine washes different makeup tools such as sponges, brushes, and cotton pads. She suggests that the machine does not perfectly clean sponges, cotton pads and foundation brushes but does a better job with eyeshadow brushes. According to her, it is still

[2] https://hudabeauty.com/us/en_US/blog-the-best-makeup-brush-cleaners-and-machines-60591

[3] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2_1j-UHj70

worthwhile to purchase because it is easier to use the machine than to wash them all by hand at the sink.

To summarize, influencers encourage integration of additional materials and competencies to the practice which makes them more complex. This is process is an ongoing one, as influencers compete for attention by bringing an ever-evolving array of new elements to the practices they promote to their followers.

1b. Valorization of New Goals/Meanings

As influencers populate the marketplace, they also suggest new goals to achieve through practices, causing these goals to become part of the practice's meaning. While not all goals suggested by a given influencer become part of practice entities, some do as consumers become familiar with them. The following commentary points to goals that influencers are valorizing:

> In the past, the only way to learn about the tips and tricks of makeup was by attending school or reading books. Thanks to advancements in technology, now those talented individuals can share their secrets right to our fingertips through short videos. All it takes is 60 seconds to watch, listen, and learn how to make your eyes pop and your concealer stop creasing. It's, dare we say, glam-tastic! Visually being taught how to do something is much easier to understand and it resonates with people. (Cundiff, February 2, 2017).

This passage points to at least two valorized goals: making one's eyes look bigger (making them "pop") and stopping concealer from creasing. If these goals existed previously, they were tacit and have become desired owing to influencers explicitly articulating that these should be achieved.

Consider the "fox eye" trend as an example of valorization. In 2020, the goal of creating a fox eye look was triggered after influencer/super models Kendall Jenner and Bella Hadid went through cosmetics surgeries to make their eyes look slanted. Influencers such as Brianna Fox then introduced makeup tricks to mimic their looks. Brianna has 800,000 followers; however, her video has been watched more than 2.5 million times (as of December 2021). The trend become so viral on social media that Teen Vogue released an article[4] about it (Li, August 20, 2020). The article illustrates how the fox eye look became a trend but also the huge backlash it received from Asian beauty community:

> The fox eye trend is described as this: "Shaving off the tail end of your eyebrows (eliminating everything from the arch to the tail) to draw on a straighter brow; using a brown or black eyeshadow to create a sharp, cat-eye flick up towards the temples; and then, adding a touch of the same eyeshadow to the inner corners of your eyes pointing towards the bridge of your nose." The result is a cat-eyed, slanted look most commonly seen in Asian features. But unlike the participants of the fox eye challenge, Asian folks aren't applauded for their genetics. In fact, "slanted eyes" have historically been one of the most common insults used against Asian people. Jordan Santos, a Filipino beauty

[4] https://www.teenvogue.com/story/fox-eye-trend-cultural-appropriation-asian-features

influencer, told Teen Vogue that her eyes were used to "other" her in her youth by her non-Asian peers. (Li, 2020)

Jordan Santos and others raised concerns of appropriation of Asian culture through fox eyes and joined the conversation by calling out the trend. Over the last two years, the fox eye look became a new goal that was first achieved through cosmetic surgery by top influencers. It then trickled down as influencers, through their videos, introduced tips on how to mimic the look using makeup. Their posts on social media platforms such as TikTok generated over 74 million views using the #foxeye hashtag (Li, 2020). At that point, the "slanted eye" look had gained such popularity (CNN, August 2020[5]) that it precipitated a backlash especially among Asian influencers (CNN, 2020).

This example illustrates that new goals/meanings generated by influencers are unlikely to be universally embraced and may even be contested. To stand out and attract attention, influencers may emphasize their own take on goals worth achieving and the techniques that will help makeup users achieve those specified goals.

One influencer, Pink Mirror, explains her goals, and her technique for covering dark under eye circles as:

> Knowing how best to apply your makeup is important if you want to hide your under eye bags. If you use makeup wrong, you may accentuate under eye bags to add even more years to your complexion. You will want to use an eye cream that has been formulated for tackling puffiness such as the Clinique All About Eyes. Gently pat the

[5] https://www.cnn.com/style/article/fox-eye-trend-asian-cultural-appropriation-trnd/index.html

product into your skin as dragging it too harshly can cause even more fine lines. Store it in the fridge as the cool temperatures will tighten the skin for a firmer appearance. Once you have applied your foundation as normal, it's time to conceal the under eye area. You will want to apply a peach corrector before your concealer to neutralise any dark hues. The cult classic Bobbi Brown Corrector comes in a large variety of shades, so no matter your skin tone you can still neutralise dark eye circles. You want to avoid placing product on the bags itself as this will accentuate them and make them look larger. Instead, dab the product just beneath the bags and blend in a downwards direction towards your cheekbones. Apply your corrector in this way first, then go in with concealer to brighten the area (Pink Mirror, July 20, 2017).

As the quotation indicates, covering under eye bags, circles, and darkness is a goal Pink Mirror highlights, and she presents several products and techniques to achieve it. Another influencer, Deepita Mutyala, uses a completely different technique to address the same goal:

It sounds like the set-up for a prank, but beauty expert Deepica Mutyala swears by the trick of putting red lipstick on your eyes to cover dark circles. Her YouTube tutorial has ignited a viral beauty sensation just weeks after she posted it in early January. Within a month, it's been watched nearly 4 million times. So, how does it work? Dark circles are usually blue or green in tone. If you look at a primary color wheel, the exact opposite of those colors are oranges and reds. Applying a bright red color underneath your eyes actually neutralizes the color you're hoping to cover. (Hint: You can apply the

same technique to red or splotchy areas by using a green-ish color.) (Today, Oct. 30, 2015[67]).

As of September 2021, Mutyala's video[8] has been watched more than 10 million times. She made a name for herself discussing the difficulties of covering under eye darkness for South Asian people due to their skin tone (Rao 2018, Digiday) and their unique needs to achieve trending looks in the beauty community. This exemplifies how even shared goals may evolve and become heightened for one community compared to another.

My findings also suggest that valorization of goals/meanings at the practice as entity level may occur through normative discussions of the practice. To illustrate, "Makeup Mistakes to Avoid" is a new genre of video content that became popular in the second half of 2010s, especially among influencers who have professional makeup or client experience. Andreea Ali's video[9] made her famous with more than 16 million views (as of December 2021). The video's concept is simple: the influencer applies the same products (or the same brand but different shades or finishes) to each side of the face, illustrating what is "right" and what is "wrong" according to themselves (see Photo 1 and Appendix C for photos taken from the video).

[6] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5SW_xMyESI

[7] https://www.today.com/style/red-lipstick-under-eye-circles-testing-out-viral-beauty-craze-t4996

[8] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qV57W0hZgxM

[9] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0daIFQjLIc

Figure 1 - Thumbnail of Andrea Ali's Makeup Mistakes to Avoid Video

The video starts with her explanation: “On my left side, I decided to do the makeup the way I see on a lot of women and everything in here is a mistake and then on my right side, I decided to do everything the right way, the way I would do it.” (Andreea Ali, 24 Jul 2017). It includes normative statements of what is “right” and what is “wrong” based on Andreea Ali’s perception. Then, she talks about how to do makeup “wrong” and “right.” It starts with her bare face, stating she is not going to use a primer on her left side (aka wrong side), “because it is what most of you do, you don’t use a primer, you don’t prime, not good young lady!” then points her finger to the camera in a joking way. After applying primer to her right side, she applies foundation to her entire face. She showcases the foundation application which is a swiping/rubbing motion by stopping it before her jaw line and poses the question: “you probably do your makeup early in the morning in the bathroom with not the best light, artificial light… am

I right?" and makes a disapproving face. She uses the dry sponge on her left side with rubbing motions, while tapping the damp sponge on the right side and applies the concealer on her nose, forehead, and the inner corner of her eyes and chin. Moving to contouring, she makes an exaggerated disapproving face by sucking her cheeks to pop her cheekbones as it is described in magazines. It is a wrong application technique for her because it makes her cheekbones look as if they dropped lower. On her right side, application begins at her hairline by pointing out a little hole under the cheekbones. That is where you supposed to apply the product. When she moves to eyebrows, she overlines her left brow by making a square and filling it fully. She comments: "it [this look] should be against the law because no one has eyebrows like this at least naturally." Her right-side look is deemed to be "natural" by imitating brow hair with light strokes of a brush and combing the hairs upward to make the eyebrow look fuller. After several more steps, she moves to the lips and applies lipliner lower than her lip line on the left side to showcase what she sees on many women including her mom. She mentions whenever she does her mom's makeup, she complains: "Why did you overline with lips?" but Andreea says: "I just followed your natural lip line." She purposefully overlines her lips on the right side to demonstrate that overlining lips is more flattering.

Throughout the video, Andreea Ali uses a normative tone, displaying her way of doing things versus what she observes is commonly done by others. The techniques she showcases are not necessarily new, but the combination of them to produce the desired look she promotes is a competence that is emphasized more and more. In other words, her contribution to the practice as entity is enhancing the normative discussions of what is right and wrong. The practices themselves may vary from one influencer to another, but thanks to these Mistakes to Avoid videos, more normative dimensions are being attached to the practice entity.

The influx of influencers in the marketplace encourages complexification of the practice entities that can be traced by following the materials and competencies threading through the practice. Influencers encourage valorization of new goals and meanings in the practice entities. Together they triggered an evolution of the practice entities that all actors in the marketplace refer to.

2. Consumer Performance Changes

Changes in practices at the entity level introduced by influencers are not necessarily reflected in everyday consumer's enactments of practices. My analysis identified three different consumer patterns of reaction to evolving practice at the entity level: diversification, perfecting, and rejection.

2a. Practice Diversification

Some consumers observe the complexification of the practices, try their best to conform, and follow some of the new elements modelled by influencers. This can entail acquiring and incorporating new materials into practices; developing new competencies; and/or associating new meanings with practices. Since consumers do not necessarily abandon previous practice elements, this is referred to as "practice diversification" inspired by influencers.

Natalie, an avid follower of a number of influencers, reflects on her own practices as follows:

I mean, that's where it's escalated … I would watch I remember even the OG YouTube. … Easy Neon was one of them that I really watched. I liked her eye makeup. And then I was so fascinated by how much a makeup brush can make a difference. **There's one thing when you buy those palettes, they come off this little a thing and you're like, I try. I used to try to myself, oh my God, look like a clown. But then I watched these YouTubers, and they have this really good quality makeup brushes. And it makes such a difference**. They have artwork on your face, even. I watched a video of James Charles. He did a whole art painting on his forehead. It's crazy how they do that. So, I was fascinated. I was like, oh, I really want to try to look. At the time I was a student. I mean, I was not working, and I used some of my student money. I was going to go to Sephora and try all this stuff. So, I bought some eyeshadows. I bought makeup brushes. And most of them were from the Sephora collection, I think. And yeah, I didn't have a lot of money at the time. So, I was just like trying whatever I could. And a lot of the stuff was also from drug store. I watched a lot of drugstore dupe videos and I do this makeup. I'm like, oh my God, it makes a difference on your face. I applied the same techniques, I never knew how to apply it and the eyeliner before, I was terrified, oh how do you make the match or there would be a gap here. **But over time you get to learn and once it's like school, once you learn something now, you're OK, I want to learn something new. So then I would go watch more videos, I would save money and go and buy something new, like a new blush or a new palette**. I was fascinated by these eyeshadow palettes because there's so many different colors. And I'm curious what I look like in this color or that color. And then there was a whole era where I was into

different colored lipsticks. I started with very simple pinkish tones, which my mom got me. That was like, oh, no, I want to I want to try a red. I even had a phase where I would wear dark purple lipstick. (Natalie, consumer)

Natalie observes influencer content, listens to what they suggest and makes purchases based on what she likes and learns. In this quotation, she refers to new materials (brushes) and competencies (applying palettes with a brush) promoted by influencers, and Natalie adopts these elements into her own makeup practice. An important take away from Natalie's remark is her likening the experience to school, with always something new to go back to and learn. This reflects the fact that consumers' practice diversification may be an ongoing process triggered by frequent engagement with the content generated by influencers.

While practice diversification appears common among consumers, it is important to recognize that even the most avid fans of influencers do not incorporate all new elements into their practices. Haley is an ardent consumer of cosmetics who went so far as to develop a system to keep up with the industry:

I sometimes keep track [of] new products [that] are coming out and I will plan it so I might have a list of products I'm going to order. And then I'll slowly order them piece by piece to try them out. … I'm disciplined in how I order it. I also get inspired by the beauty influencers I follow. If one of them starts talking about a product, then I'll kind of put it on my radar and then maybe later I purchase. (For instance), a face spray turned out to be horrible for me. I kept on hearing about that from a lot of influencers I

liked. So, I was like, oh yeah, you know, maybe when I feel like shopping one day, I'll pick it up and I did it. (Haley, consumer)

As we can see from Haley's system of purchasing new products, influencer content serves as input into her ongoing shopping list and helps her decide what new products to try. Sometimes the product works for her and become part of her makeup routine. However, as with the face spray, products are sometimes rejected, even though they are recommended by several influencers she follows. Diversification is not an automatic result of exposure to influencers, but rather one that involves trial and error.

Consumers may conform with the changes introduced by influencers to the practice entity level and acquire new materials and competencies by following them. As a result, they expand their repertoire of products, brands, techniques, and know-how on their cosmetics practices.

2b. Practice Perfecting

A second consumer response to the evolution of practice at the entity level driven by influencers can be referred to as "practice perfecting." Unlike diversification, adding new elements to practices, consumers "perfect" an element or the whole practice by integrating some materials and competencies from influencers in ways that allow them to achieve their aims through their practice performances. This may entail adding new materials, substituting new materials for ones previously used in a practice, or mastering new competencies.

For instance, Mia explains why she incorporated setting sprays into her makeup routines:

> One product that I've recently learned about, which has changed the game for me, is the makeup setting spray. …I used to put on makeup, and it used to look a little sticky and blotchy by the end of the day. And I never used to figure out how is everyone getting perfect makeup like I don't know. So it was through the YouTube, not the YouTube, Instagram influencers. I would see that every video they use that they put the spray on, and I don't know how to do that. So, I went to buy gifts for all my relatives from Mac and stuff, and I asked them to give me the most basic makeup setting spray, which is good for the skin. And then I realized that it's just that one brand, it sets the makeup so well that it looks very natural on your skin. So, a lot of hit and trial but I reached where I feel comfortable overall (with my makeup looks). (Mia, consumer)

As we can see, setting spray is now a part of Mia's makeup practices. The incorporation of this new material element allowed her to achieve results she had previously found elusive: keeping her makeup from becoming sticky and blotchy. Through watching influencers, she solved her problem with this new element.

Sometimes practice perfecting involves mastering new techniques that lead to superior results. When Claire is asked to talk about her skin care routine, she responds as follows:

> I got my inspiration from Hyram, definitely, yeah, Hyram! And then definitely the YouTube influencers as well. [I learned from them to] take off my makeup with a double cleanse, I get the oil, oil cleanser, take it off and then go in with the face wash. I learned those techniques from influencers predominantly. (Claire, consumer)

During her interview, Claire repeated that influencers from YouTube and TikTok, specifically like Hyram, helped her learn competences that resulted in achieving cleaner skin, without drying it too much. She now "double cleanses" her face twice every day. She stressed now that her skin cleaning technique is perfected, and she is not open to changing it.

Practice perfecting almost inevitably involves trial and rejection of some influencer-inspired elements. The pursuit of the perfect hair care practice is a common theme among consumers interviewed and achieving curly hair is frequently a frustration. This topic has been addressed by influencers who advise on "curly girl methods", a term coined over the last few years. Some advocate the purchase of sulfate free products, while others highlight the importance of applying products in the right sequence or refraining from brushing one's hair. Faced with this plethora of possibilities, Izzy describes her quest to become a curly girl:

> Hair is a big subject for me, because all my life I thought of [my] straight hair ... as [a] wall. And I would spend hours all trying to make them curly and nothing would work. And I just get used to the fact that I have straight hair…. But a few years ago, when I stopped dying my hair blonde and I cut them short … they started to curl. And I realized there was this movement for curly girl method, and I was so passionate about that. And now you see they are all curly. I'm extremely happy over the moon about that. So, I had to develop a completely new way to how to handle my hair. It was upside down from everything that was I was doing all my life. So, there was no brushing. You are not supposed to use the towel. You can't rub your hair. So, I bought a specific shampoo that has no silicone. No. No sulfates, no something else, so super hard to find, you have to

> read all the ingredients …. Then I buy a specific conditioner that is super nourishing and moisturizing and quite heavy, but not so heavy to make them to spade. And then you use tones of styling. I've never used styling on a daily basis in my life and now I use hair gel, I use mousse. And then after using the hair dryer, I applied the custard and I thought, that'll be just all squeaky glue on my head. But now it looks all vivid and it keeps the shape of the curls. And I absolutely love that. It's also that I've tried so many products over the last one and a half years. I think I have a whole bag of the shampoos and conditioners and styling that didn't fit me some, some of popular products. So, I sell them and the rest of them are just lying there and I'm looking at them thinking, OK, that's the price I paid for learning my way into Curly life. (Izzy, consumer)

As this passage indicates, Izzy's life-long goal was to achieve curly hair. She paid attention to all the techniques and products from influencers weighing in on the curly girl method. She tried new products and techniques to find a perfect routine for achieving the results she sought. Her bag of half empty products, rejected because of the results they produced, underscores that for her, new practice elements are incorporated only if they advance her pursuit of practice perfecting. This helps to illuminate how practice perfecting differs from practice diversifying. Consumers diversify when they respond to influencers by continually trying new practice elements merely because they are suggested. A consumer intent on perfecting a practice will largely ignore new elements once they have achieved results that align with their goals.

2c. Rejection

When an innovation is introduced to a market, consumers may resist changing their behaviors. Thus, it is unsurprising that when influencers introduce new elements to practices as entities, some consumers stick to their old ways.

Some respondents, like Haley, resist incorporating new elements for many reasons. Discussing influencer eyeshadow routines, she explains:

> I kind of realized that it was also really hard to copy their looks. They were just so elaborate. And because I'm in the more professional environment, like I can't just go in with, like, a crazy, like, elaborate eyeshadow or like super B phase. So I also don't have the time to do that. And I didn't think it looked very good on me like I had a lot of trouble, like most of the black makeup artists, I find that they tend to have a very elaborate, glamorous look. So, it was really good. If you're going out of your day to day, I was like, oh, I don't really need that. Like, I just mostly I mostly was just wearing makeup to conceal my acne scars. So as long as that was covered, like I didn't really need anything more than that, I realized. (Haley, Consumer)

As Haley's account indicates, she rejects new practice elements because mastering the competencies seemed "really hard." Moreover, the new meaning of practice demonstrated by influencers, really glamourous, is discordant with those she associates with applying eye makeup (covering up acne scars). Although Haley initially experimented with some of the new influencer material elements, she quickly ceased because she "didn't think it looked very good" on her.

Later in her interview, Haley mentioned that she did not make any further purchases and stopped watching similar influencer content.

Practice rejection also occurs because, in some cases, consumers are watching influencers for entertainment rather than to learn new things. Informant, Farah, incorporated watching influencer videos into her daily rituals because she finds them interesting, but only rarely inspiring. She states:

> Honestly, I will sometimes just look at the Glossy Girl hashtag, on Instagram. Yeah, I'd kind of see what's happening there and see if there's something that I want to imitate. But that's about it. Yeah. I did follow like Andreea Ali. I like, I love how well she talks about techniques, you know, in how to do things and I was like. Oh, I should really follow some of her techniques for, like, concealing or something like that. But then, as you know, by the end of watching that video, I was just like nah I don't have time for this. I enjoyed it. I really enjoyed watching the video. I'm not going to follow it, No. So, it's mostly me just looking at Instagram to see what's up. (Farah, consumer)

As Farah points out, she enjoys the influencer content and even follows new elements they introduced, but she is not willing to acquire them. In contrast to informants such as Natalie or Claire, who follow influencers closely and frequently incorporate new elements based on what they see, Farah enjoys watching the videos but "doesn't have time" to change her ways.

In some cases, consumers who initially diversified their practices eventually become frustrated and reject new elements. This appears like alienation after reflexive engagement with the makeup world, and often comes when consumers experience what they regard as a failure in

acquiring the know-how they desired. Particularly frustrating is when consumers perceive that attempting to incorporate new elements into their makeup practices has been excessively costly in terms of time and money. Farah's account of her journey to try to perfect her practices involving foundations exemplifies this:

> That was a terrible experience. I'm not going to lie. That was a terrible experience because like I told you, I for some reason, am not able to determine my own skin color so then the number of like wrong foundation patches that I've had, you know, I'm just like, oh my God, what's happening here? So that was very much a process of trial and error and wasting a lot of money on, well, I started off with the drugstore brands. I did start overwatching influencers. That's when I kind of started watching influencers because I'm like, I need to know how to do this right and but yeah, I would waste a lot of even though I would like swatch it in the shops, I would still get my swatches wrong and still come home with the wrong-colored product. What am doing … wrong? So that was really frustrating. (Farah, consumer)

Her narrative indicates intense frustration not only with the new materials she tried to incorporate into her practices, but also with the competencies associated with choosing and applying the products. After "overwatching" influencers, she concluded that she doesn't enjoy the process of acquiring, applying, and wearing the product, so she abandoned the practices associated with this product altogether.

Consumer performances are altered due to practice as entity changes introduced by influencers. They can be grouped into three categories: diversification, perfecting and rejection.

Consumers diversify when they acquire multiple materials and competencies associated with the practices to expand their performances. Influencers help them to learn and play with new elements. In contrast, when consumers respond with perfecting they add or drop elements of practice to achieve a specific state of performance. In this response, we observe one material and matching competence associated with one goal or meaning. Lastly, rejection occurs when influencer content is engaged with, but the practice elements are not acquired. Alternatively, consumers take a step further by purchasing products, but fail to achieve competence. In the end, they quit the practice because it is not a good fit or too challenging for them to master. These responses are not mutually exclusive, and consumers may react to each element of the practice by engaging any one of the behaviours.

PART 6 – DISCUSSION

A tacit assumption that prevails in current literature is that influencers play an intermediary role between brands and consumers by encouraging them to buy specific products and brands (e.g. Backaler 2018; Brown and Fiorella 2013; Brown and Hayes 2008; Dolbec and Fischer 2015; Evans et al. 2017; Gerdeman 2019; Hughes, Swaminathan, and Brooks 2019; Kapitan and Silvera 2016 ; Kozinets et al. 2010; Kozinets et al. 2017; Levin 2020; McQuarrie, Miller and Phillips 2013; Schomer 2019). This dissertation holds their influencers impacts are more varied and profound, and that we can better understand them by attending to practices at the entity and performance levels. Specifically, influencers can complexify and valorize new meanings at the practice as entity level, and consumers responses can range from diversifying, to perfecting practice performances, to resisting changes and maintaining their preferred practices performances.

To help indicate the transferability of these theoretical insights, consider the fishing industry as an example. Consumers who are fishing aficionados may watch videos about fishing posted by influencers on YouTube to learn about the contemporary versions of the practice as entity; influencers in this field ma have complexified and valorized practices as entities through their posts. Yet when fishing consumers perform practices, they may exhibit diversification, perfecting or rejection. For instance, they may include a number of different linings or hooks but stick to one specific style of tying knots when they build the fishing line, and do not include steel weights in their practice. Altogether, whether consumers choose their hook for a style of fishing in their practice is where we can observe the impact of influencers. Just as in the cosmetics industry, regardless of which novel elements consumers integrate into or resist incorporating in

their performances, the practice persists. Influencers invented neither makeup nor fishing practices, and their influence on them only exists only to the extent that some consumers routinely incorporate some influencer-initiated changes into their practice performances. I argue that the theoretical insights identified here are transferable to any established market inundated with influencers.

Influencers as Active Marketplace Agents

Influencers have been studied across different disciplines, yet there is no consensus on how to conceptualize them. Common treatments have regarded them as third-party endorsers (e.g., Freberg et al. 2011; Khamis, Ang, and Welling 2017) and as person brands or self-brands (e.g., Abidin 2016; Khamis, Ang, and Welling 2017; Trammell and Keshelashvili 2005). One of the most cited definitions of influencers is Abidin's (2015) who states that:

> Influencers are—everyday, ordinary internet users who accumulate a relatively large following on blogs and social media through the textual and visual narration of their personal lives and life-styles, engage with their following in "digital" and "physical" spaces, and monetize their following by integrating "advertorials" into their blogs or social media posts and making physical paid-guest appearances at events (Abidin 2015:1).

Although Abidin's definition captures some key features of influencers and sets them apart from other similar market actors such as opinion leaders and market mavens, it stops short of fully reflecting the dynamic and powerful presence this category of actor has in the marketplace. It also suggests that "advertorials" with monetary benefits are ubiquitous, yet according to data collected from influencers few make much money, especially those who have less than 50,000 followers.

Influencers themselves have some parsimonious and noteworthy reflections on what defines them. Popular influencer, Morgan Turner, stated this in a recent post:

> "I'm a product knowledge enthusiast, I love knowing anything and everything about makeup and sharing with you guys (my followers)" (Morgan Turner, Youtuber, Dec 2022)

She also noted that YouTube is not her full-time job. That she plans, records, and edits all videos by herself as well as answering all follower comments. Further, the money she earns through YouTube barely covers her expenses while the brand deals, she receives are used in the form of free samples/products.

In the light of my data collection and analysis, I offer the following characterization of influencers, emphasizing key features that hold no matter how large or small their followings, and regardless of what industry they are in. Influencers are active agents in the marketplace who strive for attention through their social media posts, specialize in one or more social media

platforms, are not affiliated with one company but often work with multiple brands, and who present content about the marketplace(s) in which they are operating.

This characterization is aligned with Abidin's definition in that it sets influencers apart from other actors who do not rely on social media as influencers do. Conversely, it makes no assumptions about whether or how influencers monetize their social media activity.

My definition stresses that the content influencers generate is platform specific. Even though consumers may never reflect on an influencer's dependence on platforms, agencies and influencers themselves know that each platform requires specialized content and related skillsets. Informant Brian, who owns a social media agency, states that they specialize in Instagram, a photo-based platform in which curation, aesthetics, and photography skills matter more than anything else. He notes that once Instagram integrated, Reels, a function that allows people to post short videos similar to those on TikTok, influencers adept at Instagram had a difficult time translating their skills. Platform specific expertise can be compared to field-specific capital (e.g., Arsel and Bean 2013; Bourdieu 1984).

Attention to the fact that influencers are not employed by or affiliated with a single company or brand is highlighted in my definition. They may work with an agency, but it is as a medium representing their personal brands. One of the main benefits they offer consumers is to share an array of products and brands, especially comparing them to each other. In crowded marketplaces such as cosmetics, fashion or food, there are a plethora of alternatives for many products or services. It is a different dynamic than celebrity endorsers who are hired by a company to promote their products (e.g., Freberg et al. 2011). Even in situations where influencers are hired to showcase a brand, it has not been expected that they endorse all its products. To do so would violate expectations regarding influencers. In some cases, the trust

between influencers and their followers may be affected by a bad experience from a suggested product (e.g., Kapitan and Silvera 2016). Therefore, it the norm for influencers to showcase likes and dislikes for different products and brands.

Lastly, influencers are expected to have some knowledge about the practices and products associated with the marketplaces about which they create content. It is common for industry professionals to become influencers in their field. Makeup artists such as Andreea Ali, Julia Adams or Wayne Goss has become makeup influencers. However, influencers need not be experts, so long as they have some knowledge about, and passion for aspects of the markets they frequent. Jena Froese was a nurse and Morgan Turner was a Physical Education teacher before becoming fulltime cosmetics influencers.

Influence of Influencers

One of the main motivations behind this paper is to explore the distinctive facet of the influence that influencers may have. Prior literature has largely considered influencer impacts on the success of promotional campaigns. Topics under examination include the characteristics of influencers themselves, the content of their posts, and the story of the brand and product that is included (e.g., Hughes, Swaminathan, and Brooks 2019). Other research has discussed the impact of the disclosure of paid agreements between influencers and brands (Evans et al. 2017), and the adoption of a more consumer-oriented take such as liking, using, or desiring of the promoted product (Kapitan and Silvera 2016). While valuable, these studies collectively say little

about the potential change influencers may trigger in consumption practices. This paper stands out for its focus on how influencers may affect consumers' practices.

This paper follows the tradition of Shove's conceptualization of practice elements, materials, competencies, and meanings, and traces the threads of the makeup practice nexus to showcase changes in the practice. It also leverages a conceptual distinction between practice as entities and consumer performances to offer a nuanced account of how influencers may, or may not, reshape practice. At the practice as entity level, influencers contribute to the complexification of practices and a diversification of the goals/meanings associated with them. All actors in the marketplace (including brands, experts, media, influencers, and consumers) are exposed to these changes and "new" forms of practice emerge owing to the performances of multiple actors.

At the performance level, responses to the evolution of practice entities vary widely, ranging from diversification, to perfecting, to rejecting. These responses are not strong personal stances, but are rather a matter of individual styles of consumers reacting to influencers. For example, a consumer may diversify her lipstick collection in response to practice innovations introduced by influencers, yet her foundation choice and application technique may remain unchanged for years despite exposure to influencers who promote new brands and ways of using them. Even though these threads of practices are close to each other and interwoven to create a complete makeup look, their dynamic nature allows for different modes of responses by a given consumer.

Differentiating practice as entities and consumer performance responses allows us to account for a wide array of consumer behaviors that may otherwise be lumped together. Consider Lily who diversified her lip balm application practice by purchasing different brands,

scents, textures, and finishes; Owen who perfected his practice with only one lip balm recommended by an influencer, repurchasing it year after year; and Haley who purchased one lip balm following an influencer recommendation, but rejected the product and reverted to her original practice after a single trial. All three were influenced by the practice level changes in the marketplace having been exposed to the complexified options such as multiple finishes and differentiated meanings such as daytime lip balm being different than nighttime lip balm. Yet the way and the extent to which their practices are influenced is distinctly different.

The influence of influencers is far more complex and varied than can be captured by any analysis that simply considers how effectively they convey messages from brand to consumers. Influencers enter markets that are comprised of an interwoven network of practice, and their influence threads through those interconnections from practice as entities to practitioner responses.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

While my dissertation has advanced our collective understanding of how influencers change market systems by introducing changes at the practice-as-entity level, there is room for a more fine-grained understanding of this process. In particular, it will be useful for future research to examine longitudinally the changes in particular practice bundles, to better delineate both how and why they change over time, with particular attention to the interplay between influencers, followers, and other actors in the institutional field.

My theoretical insights are largely transferable across marketplace contexts inundated with influencers. However, there are some theoretical and conceptual boundaries that must be

acknowledged. The cosmetics industry is well established, yet it is evolving rapidly as a huge range of new brand and products are introduced. The embrace of influencer marketing in this context made it a fruitful avenue to explore. However, findings from this context may not be as relevant to markets in which technological and social innovations are even more profound, and established practices far less institutionalized. For example, the online gaming industry has a dedicated social media platform (Twitch) as well as a presence on other platforms such as YouTube or TikTok. What sets this marketplace apart from cosmetics is that it is new and specialized. Influencers were present in the market when it was established, rather than flooding to it afterward. They helped to create market practices from the beginning. Therefore, additional research would be required to understand how influencers impact practice in a context such as the online gaming industry, which can be said to have been born under the influence of influencers.

Additionally, the current research has been limited to understanding how the inundation of influencers has impacted consumers and their practices. Even though practice as entity changes are relevant for all marketplace actors, a full understanding of the impact of influencers requires examination beyond consumers. My interviews with industry experts, brand representatives and agencies indicated that they are considering the strategic responses they need to compete in the face of entity level changes. To illustrate, my informants Alex, Brian, and Dahlia have all introduced new categories of agency structures in response to changes triggered by influencers. My brand manager informant Jenn strategized novel promotion techniques such as using loyal consumer posts to mimic influencer content. My study stops short of analyzing these institutional impacts of influencers. More research is needed to explore how influencer inundation and the changes they trigger affect marketplace actors aside from consumers.

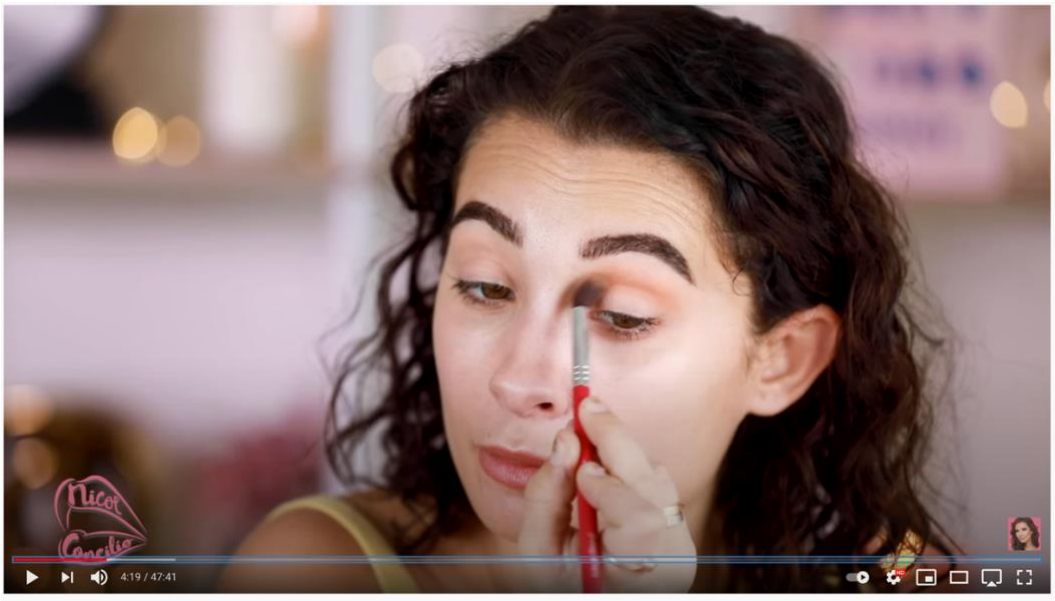
Appendix A - Summary of Archival Data

Market Actors/ Timeline	**2000s**	**Early 2010s**	**Mid 2010s**	**Late 2010s**
Influencers	Vague category referring to behind the scenes actors	Mediator between brands and consumers Award given to the best influencers	Increasing numbers of influencers Attempt to be differentiated through positioning and engaging in social issues	Success stories of influencer brands Influencer to influencer relationships
Agencies		Started to appear	Gained popularity Manage brand and influencer relationships	Creating networks of influencers Pushing standards for

			Represent influencers	influencer marketing
Major brands	Working with influencers before social media age	Sponsoring events and awards for influencers	Engaging influencer marketing Attempts to find alternatives for influencer marketing	Using influencers as endorsers Emphasis on social issues in branding
Indie brands	Not very visible in the mainstream retail space	Various launches by makeup artists, bloggers, and influencers	Introduced not only new brands and products but also new categories Increased popularity with influencers	Emphasis on product design and packaging Success of influencer-owned brands

Regulatory institutions and legal issues				Influencer marketing and its taxation Fragile behavior of influencers and agencies
Consumers		Makeup enthusiasts as a new category	New consumption rituals	GenZ and millennials driven influencer marketing

Appendix B - Nicole Concillio's Getting Ready with Me (GRWM) Video Illustrative Screenshots



Screenshot 1 - Application of transition color to crease of eyelid area with a fluffy eyeshadow

Screenshot 2 - Adding a darker color in the same area for more emphasis 2nd fluffy eyeshadow brush

Screenshot 3 - Adding 3rd color to the same area of the eyelid with 3rd fluffy eyeshadow brush

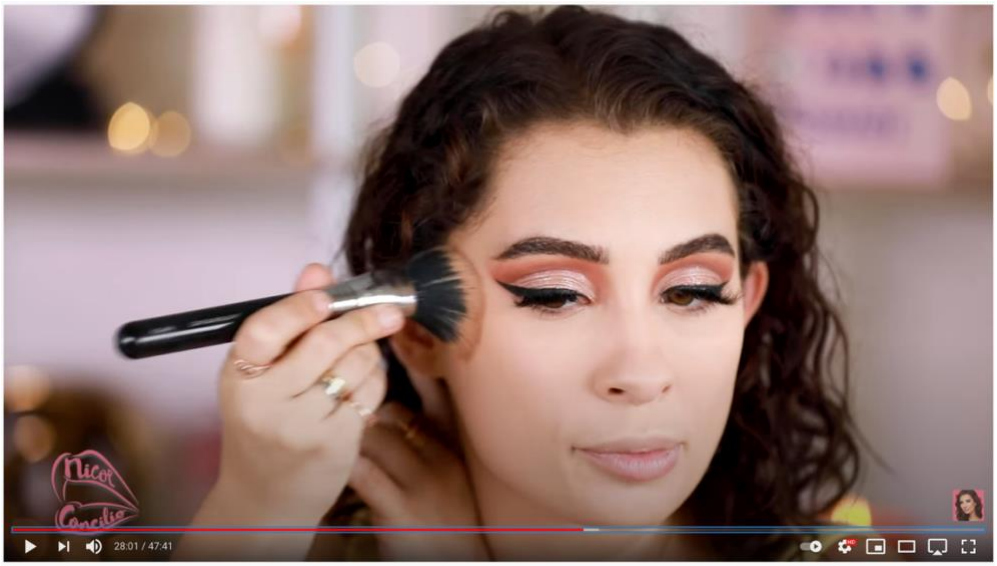
Screenshot 4 - Applying concealer to the eyelid to block out the previously applied colors with a flat brush

Screenshot 5 - Adding a glittery color with finger application

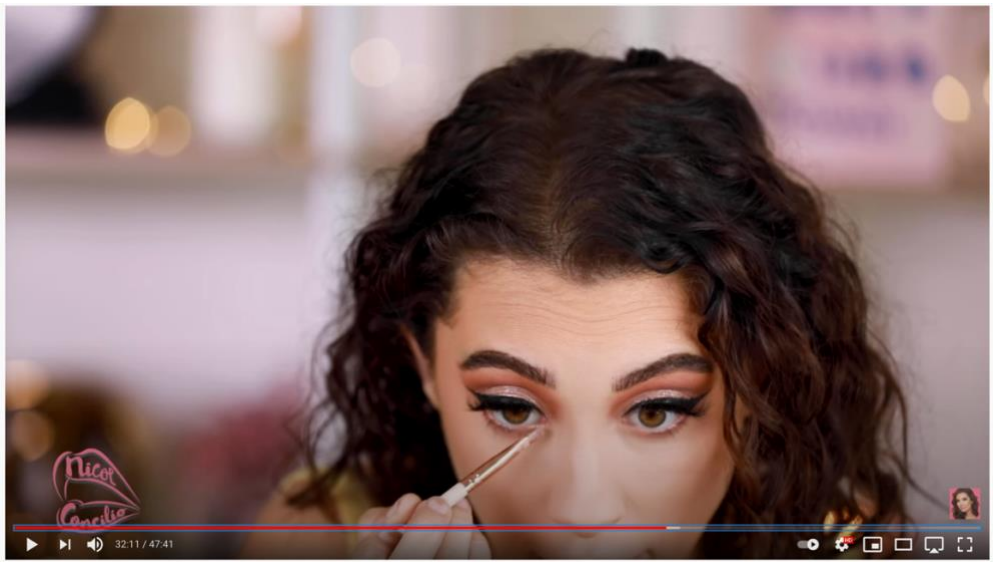
Screenshot 6 - After the eyeliner application, cleaning the edges with a makeup wipe

Screenshot 7 - Application of fake lashes with a tool

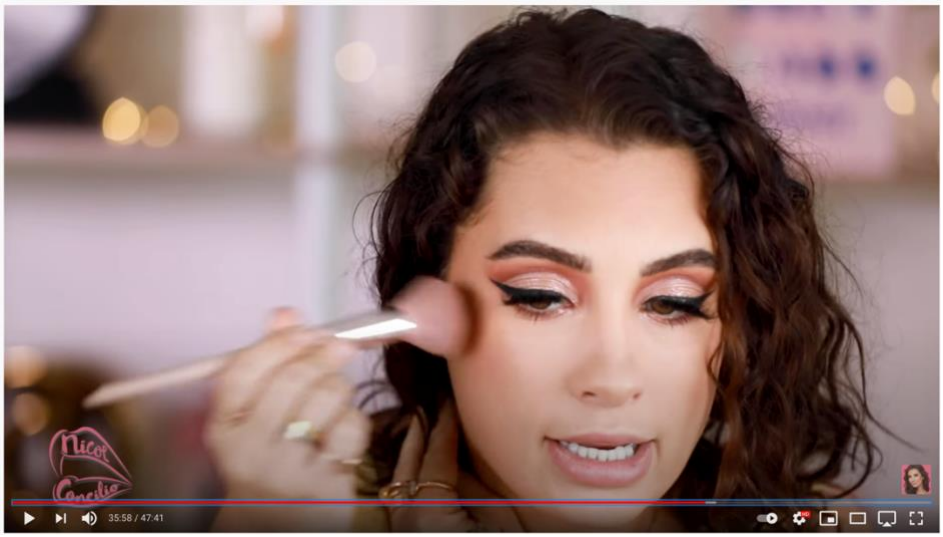
Screenshot 8 - Foundation application with a beauty sponge



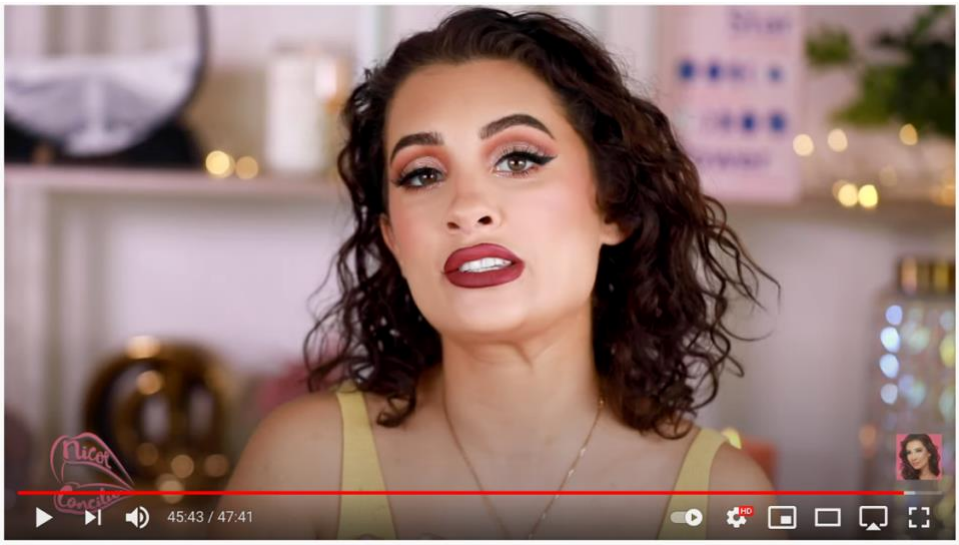
Screenshot 9 - Face powder application with a powder brush



Screenshot 10 - Highlighter application to the inner corner of eyes with a pencil brush

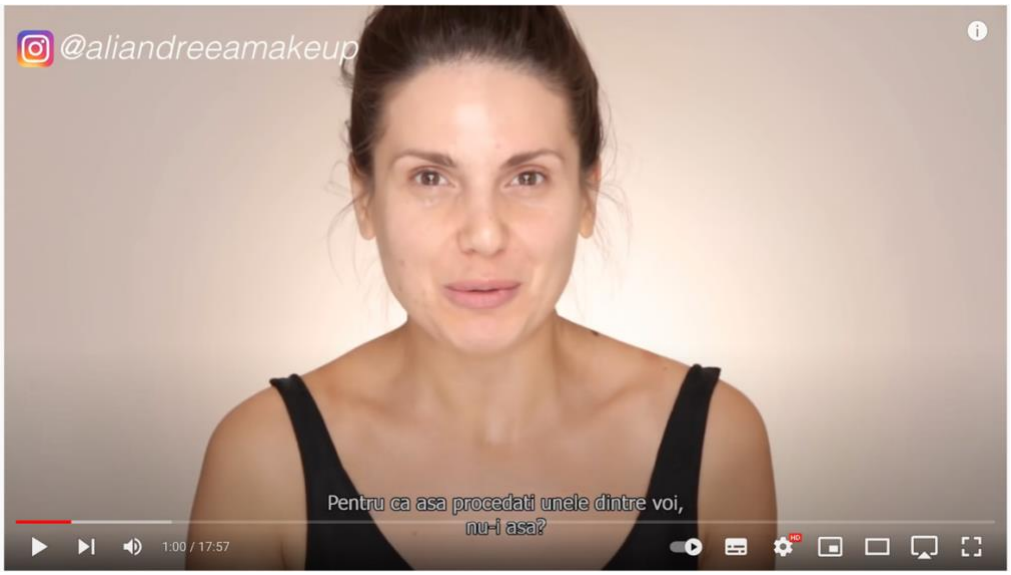


Screenshot 11 - Blush application after bronzer application with a blush brush

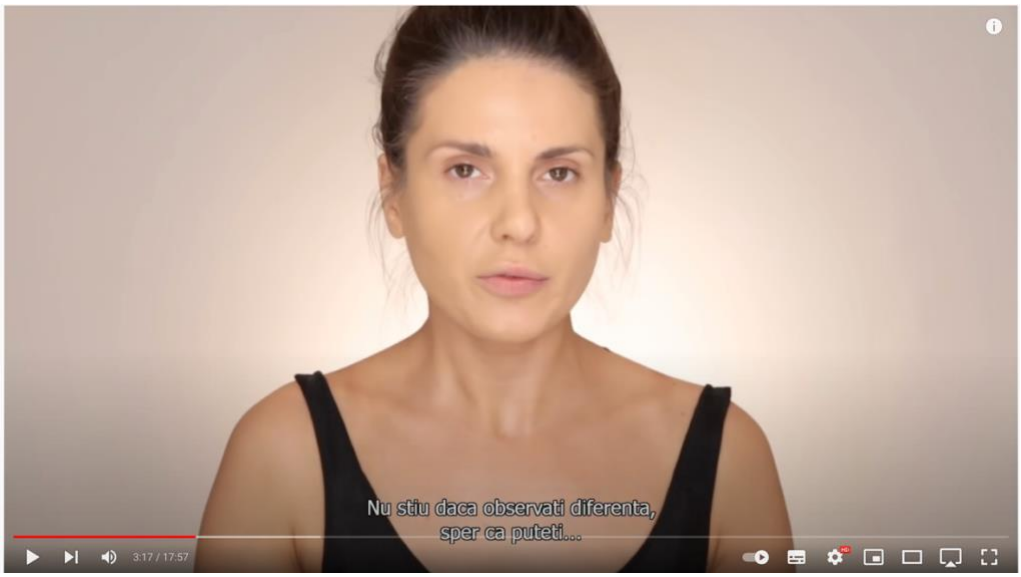


Screenshot 12 - Final look after lip pencil, lipstick and setting spray

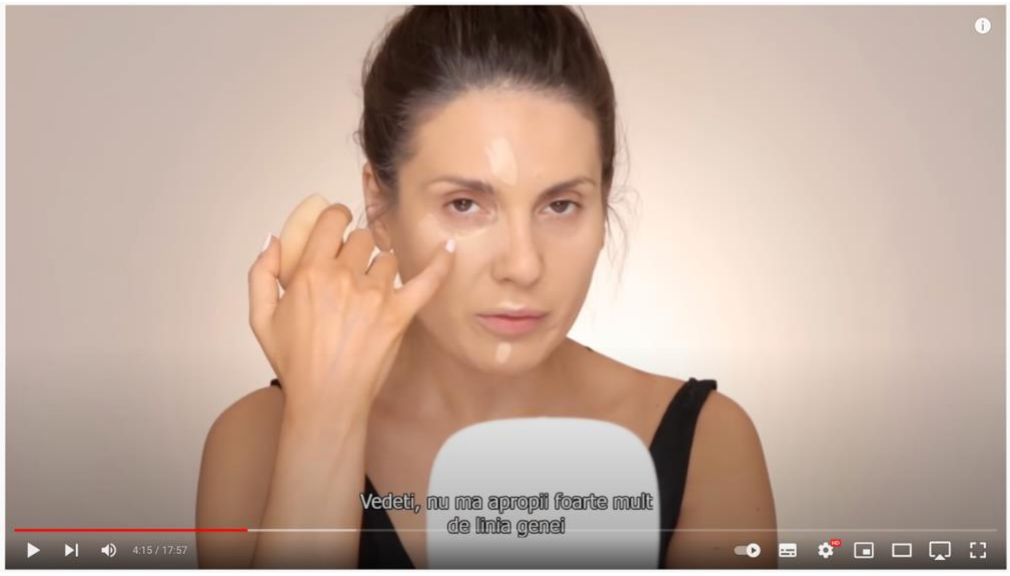
Appendix C - Andreea Ali's Makeup Mistakes to Avoid Video Illustrative Screenshots



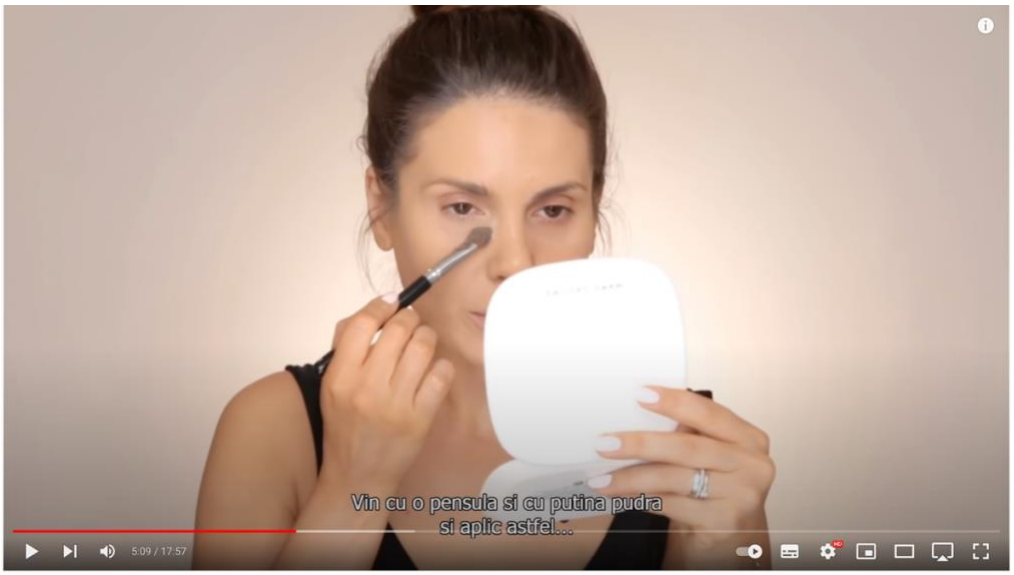
Screenshot 13 - Bare face only moisturized beforehand



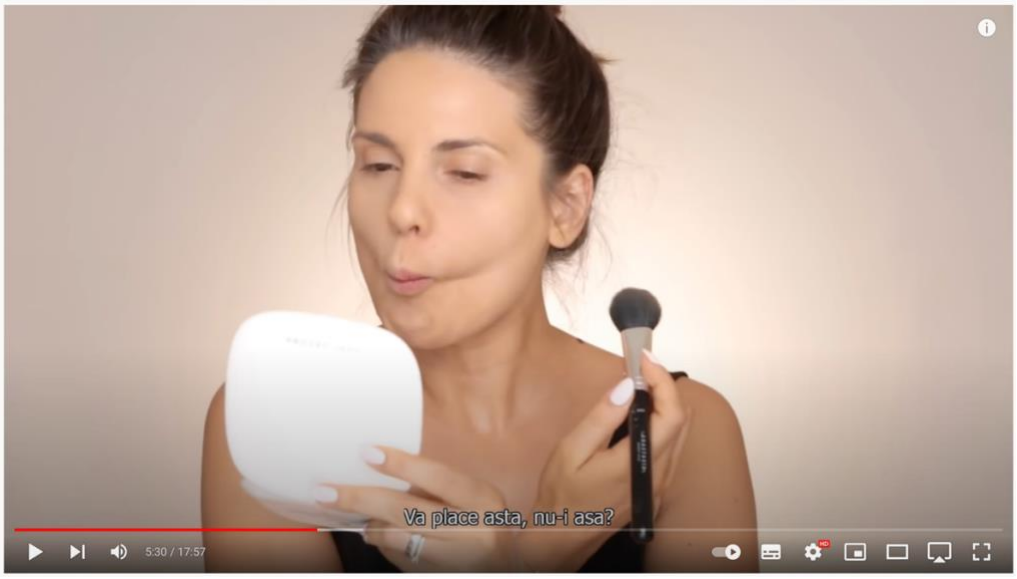
Screenshot 14 - Foundation application to the entire face



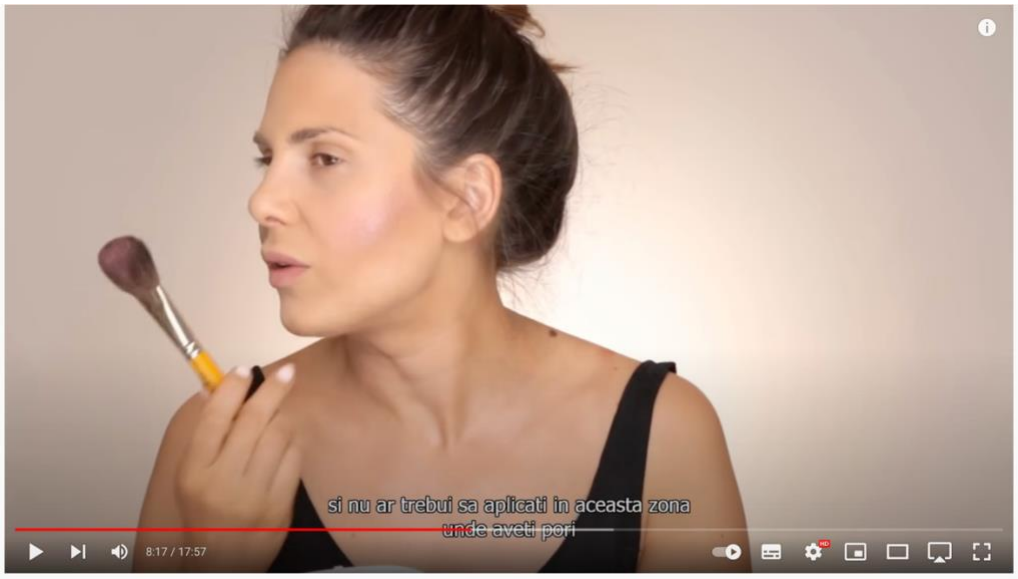
Screenshot 15 - Concealer application to the right side



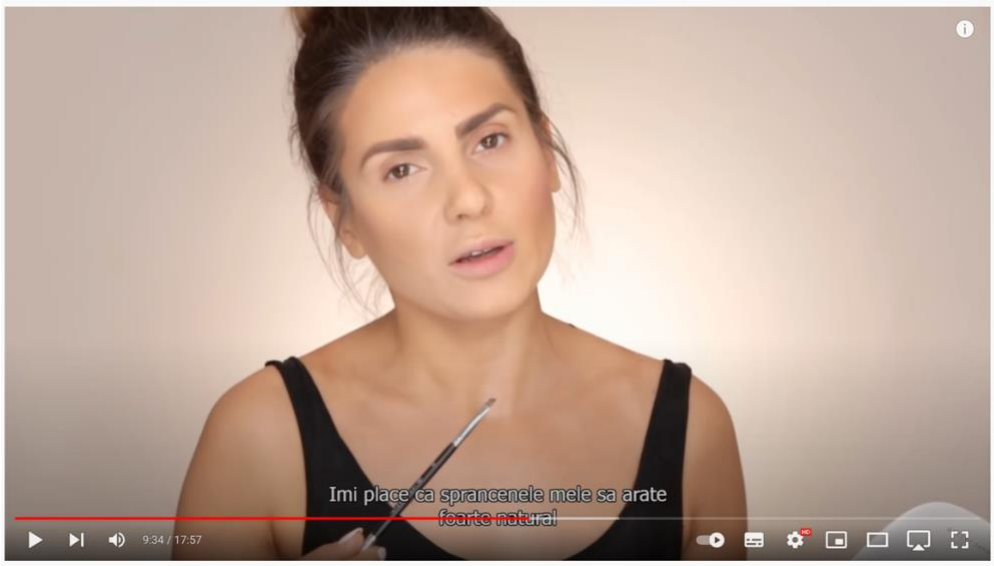
Screenshot 16 - Setting powder application with a small eyeshadow brush to the right side



Screenshot 17 - Contouring application to the left side with an exaggerated move

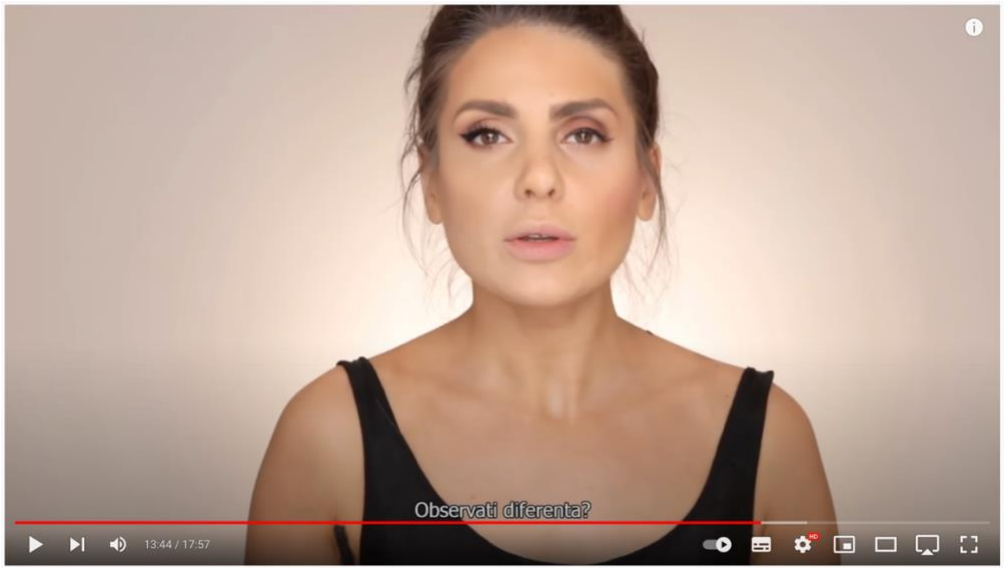


Screenshot 18 - Emphasizing the texture and imperfection on the cheek area of left side due to wrong placement of contor, bronzer and blush colors

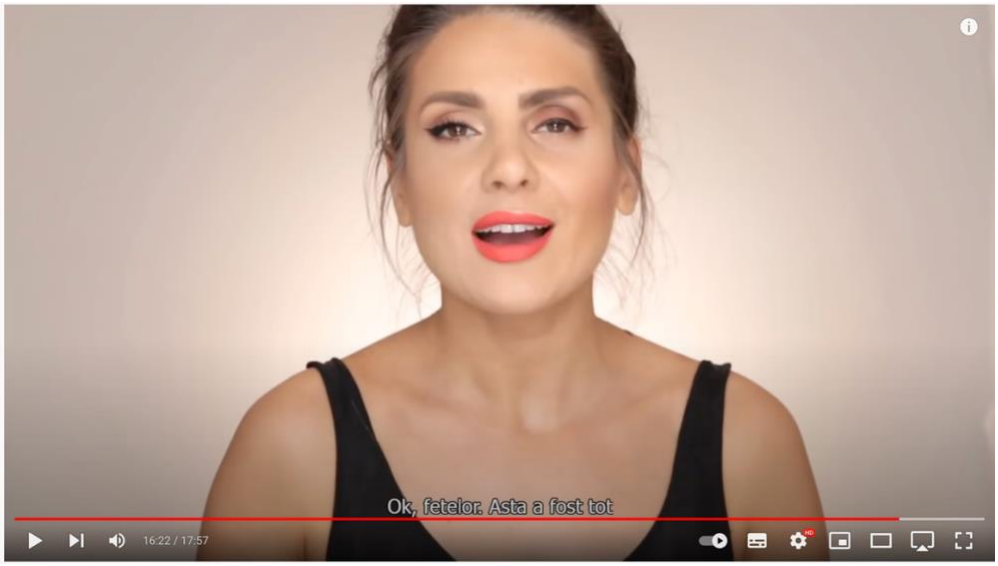


Screenshot 19 - Eyebrow makeup on the right and left side of the face with different techniques

Screenshot 20 - Eyeshadow application to the left side is completed with one brush and using a clean brush for each color on the right side



Screenshot 21 - Complete eye makeup looks after eye liner application with different techniques



Screenshot 22 – Complete lip makeup looks by under-lining the lips on the left side and over-lining on the right side

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