

### As Influências das Técnicas de Persuasão no Comportamento de Compra do Consumidor On-line do Segmento da Beleza – Ações Experimentais Aplicadas no Instagram (IB Imports)

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### Abstract

In this article we investigate the behavior of consumers in the beauty segment on the online environment, recognizing the persuasion influence techniques in the consumers purchasing decision process and brand interactions. The methodology used was to analyze the generated metrics by the social network Instagram in the experiments carried out by IB Imports company. In these actions, four persuasion techniques were applied to real consumers and the positive results and effects of these techniques were determined. Thus, it becomes necessary to analyze market trends, the target audience and investment on the organization of the applicability of the techniques and the generated impacts.

*Keywords:* Consumer behavior. Persuasion techniques. Buying decision. Instagram. Marketing experiment.

### Resumo

Neste artigo, foi investigado o comportamento dos consumidores do segmento da beleza no ambiente on-line, reconhecendo as influências das técnicas de persuasão no processo de decisão de compra dos consumidores e as interações com a marca. A metodologia utilizada foi a de análise das métricas geradas pela rede social *Instagram* nos experimentos realizados pela empresa *IB Imports*. Foram aplicadas nessas ações, quatro técnicas de persuasão a consumidores reais e, após, foram apurados os resultados positivos e os efeitos das técnicas. Dessa forma, torna-se necessário analisar as tendências de mercado e qual é o público-alvo para poder investir na organização da aplicabilidade das técnicas e prever os impactos gerados.

**Palavras-chave**: Comportamento do consumidor. Técnicas de persuasão. Decisão de compra. *Instagram*. Experimento de marketing.

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### **1** Introduction

For individual microentrepreneurs in Brazil who do not have a point of sale, the challenge is to increase the volume of business. The country has about 10 million workers registered as an Individual Microentrepreneur (MEI), according to the Federal Government's Microentrepreneur Portal. The state of Rio de Janeiro alone has 12% of this total. The viable alternative for many of them is to use the internet as a sales channel, as social networks are fertile ground to implement the connection between company and customers.

The purpose of this article was to analyze the marketing actions of a company that sells female beauty products via Instagram. Through this experiment and using four persuasion techniques, it is intended to analyze the metrics generated by customers after disclosure in the *stories* of the company IB Imports on eight specific days, which occurred during the month of October 2019.

Each persuasion technique is guided to one of the fundamental principles that govern human conduct, they are not just sales techniques, they are techniques that will relate to some psychological profiles that are part of the company's target audience.

According to the Brazilian Personal Hygiene, Perfumery and Cosmetics Association (ABIHPEC) (2019), in 2018, Brazil was the 4th largest consumer in the world in the Personal Hygiene, Perfumery and Cosmetics sector, only behind the United States, that holds the first place; China, that came in second, and Japan, that came in third. In other words, Brazil completely led the market in Latin America, with a 48.6% share in the sector.

Based on market perceptions, reading of authors' production in the digital marketing area and experiments applied in the company's *stories*, it is intended to understand how the persuasion techniques influence consumer behavior in the beauty segment in the online sector. This problem generated objectives to be achieved, such as: the consumer profile, the female behavior in this environment, the persuasion techniques that have had an impact on this audience, the strategies, the market niche and the conversion rates.

Sale is one of the most important items for marketing, since the sector needs to validate its product with the consumer. Thus, this production is justified in a complex scenario, and persuasion techniques, when well applied, are crucial tools for the successful sale of products. Thus, these techniques need to be discussed, as the market is always in motion. According to Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan (2017), marketing must adapt to the changes that occur in consumers in the new economy.

The general objective of this study is to analyze the results of the experiments carried out on the Instagram social network of the company IB Imports in the use of persuasion techniques as a marketing and sales strategy.

### 2 Methodology

The methodology used to meet the analytical structure of this marketing experiment is based on bibliographic research to illustrate the research area and the corpus to be worked on and analyzed (the digital marketing actions and the possible results). The independent variables are the posts using the persuasion techniques, and the dependent variables are based on the likes, shares, comments and reposts that may arise, as this is not possible to predict before the disclosure.

This article reports an experimental activity because the authors did not directly and/or indirectly manipulate the sample of interaction generated after each action.

The approach was exploratory, as it used persuasion techniques such as reciprocity, affection, authority and scarcity in the actions carried out on the IB Imports Instagram profile. The period of analysis was four weeks during the month of October, 2019. The strategies were

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to use on Thursdays and Fridays of each week to publicize the products with the different techniques already mentioned.

These days were chosen because they are the days with the highest sales volume. The result of each action had one day to be analyzed and sought to expose the impact caused on the public who likes the IB Imports company page. As already mentioned, the metrics involved in these experiments are represented by likes, shares, comments, reposts and conversion into sales.

The choice of the company in question was essential to develop this project, since the partnership with the company was established so that there was great freedom to analyze the data and plan actions, making accessibility and the creation of strategies, unrestricted.

The follow-up of posts on Instagram *stories* was done over 24 hours. This is the period that the publication is available for viewing by brand followers. What the target audience promotes after this time period will not be recorded in the survey, but will be observed to better understand consumer behavior and the time it takes to react to the brand's communication strategies.

Data collection was carried out in the report issued by the Instagram of the profile being analyzed, after the specified period.

### 3 Bibliographic Review

### **3.1 History of Beauty**

In the 20th century, in a reality in which women were not allowed to vote, wear makeup, as they were seen as prostitutes, much less choose their own husband, a woman decided to dare; Her name was Helena Rubinstein. Born in Krakow in 1872, she challenged her own parents by refusing an arranged marriage in order to follow her ideals. She moved to Australia at the age of 22 and took with her some jars of the facial cream that her mother always used on her daughters. She used to think big, she wanted to recreate the cream formula and teach women about rules of beauty. As she got the right formula, she was able to be one of the pioneers in the beauty market and built a great empire combined with marketing strategies. She also created makeup products and was the first woman to open a beauty institute and employ beauty consultants in her business. She passed away in 1965 and her brand was sold to L'Oréal in 1988, but the company's values remain the same: "science in the service of beauty, women's liberation and the audacity to rewrite the rules" (Rubinstein, 2019).

In Brazil, the history of cosmetics began in 1801 when, with the permission of Dom João VI, the first soap factories were installed. During the reign of Dom Pedro II, the famous perfumery Desmarais, which sold essences, soaps, brushes, sponges, dressing gowns, perfume bottles, mirrors, wigs, dyes and cosmetics, such as rice powder, was installed in the center of Rio de Janeiro. There was also Casa Granado, founded in 1870. It was one of the first pharmacies in Brazil which had, some time later, the royal coat-of-arms of Brazil and Dom Pedro II as its illustrious client.

With the spread of radio and, from the 1950s, television, companies began to invest in advertising, and sales of shampoos, creams, soaps, toothpastes, lotions, soaps, deodorants and perfumes exploded.

In recent years, the numbers continue to grow. According to data released by (ABIHPEC, 2019), between January and July of 2019 the sector had real growth of 1.5%, an extremely positive increase due to the economic crisis and instability experienced in the country.

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### **3.2 Consumer Profile**

According to Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2005), consumer behavior is the study of why people buy and everything that involves this process. Factors such as culture, personality, life stages, income, attitudes, motivations, values, previous experiences, are highly influential, and define purchasing patterns. According to the authors, this behavioral analysis of the consumer helps the company to discover how to please its audience and, consequently, convert more sales. However, there is no single solution to understand the purchase action. Analysts in this sector often use a variety of techniques to achieve objectives.

For Ferreira (2008, p. 74), a possible interpretation in the purchase action may be linked to the customer-supplier connection, as follows:

Study of the relationship of individuals with the products and services they purchase or use, dedicating themselves to all psychological and behavioral responses that may occur in the context of their role as consumers.

As pointed out by Ferreira (2008), research must be developed in companies to define and develop new products that will be introduced in the market. This way, technicians study strategies to improve the brand identity (Branding), measurement of ethical marketing practices, among other information that are extremely important for the company's image. These surveys are the pillars for discovering influences on consumer behavior, and the way out is in new ways of communicating. Technologies are transforming the way people communicate today.

It is necessary to be close to those to whom we want to communicate, speak their language, attract them by curiosity. In the digital marketing era, selling, more than ever, is a consequence of believing and engaging with a brand. (Carvalho, 2018, p. 291).

According to Carvalho (2018), in the article "Social networks and digital influencers - A description of the influences on the behavior of digital consumption", in the last decade some authors have already warned about a new type of relationship between consumers and companies, influenced by the revolution of social media. According to the author, in this publication, "new consumers are getting more demanding, as they have the information they need in the palm of their hands, and so offering only a good product or service is no longer enough" (2018, p. 289).

For Kotler et al. (2017), the role of marketing must adapt to the changing nature of consumer paths in the global economy. Thus, the path may be to approach the customer in different ways and surround them in the face of these transformations in the ways of buying, researching, analyzing and exposing buying wishes.

Based on these mechanisms for maintaining and winning customers, exposing business ideals to the public that identifies themselves with it, delivering added value to products and services, and strengthening the relationship and exchange with the customer, can make this buyer part of the company. After all, only a fundamental part for the machine's gear on the market is valued.

### **3.3 Persuasion Techniques**

According to Cialdini (2012), there are six fundamental psychological principles that govern human conduct, which are: **Reciprocity**, **Coherence**, **Social Approval**, **Affection**,

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Authority and Scarcity. Based on these principles, strategies are created to persuade potential customers and, thus, achieve more sales.

The first fundamental psychological principle, **Reciprocity**, according to Cialdini (2009), is when the consumer tends to repay, in the same proportion, a benefit that has been granted. An example linked to this principle is the free sample. When the company offers a sample of its product for potential customers to know, in addition to showing the benefits and quality of the product, it is still a gift. In a supermarket, the target customer is approached by a smiling attendant who offers the product and explains the product's properties or qualities with sympathy. This action involves you and increases the possibility of purchase in order to get to know the product better.

The principle of **Coherence** tries to be consistent with what has already been done, that is, trying, in some way, to support the decisions made. According to Cialdini (2012, p. 69) "the impulse to be (and seem) coherent is a very powerful weapon of social influence, often leading us to act against our best interests". The company's ideals set out in the business plan, such as mission, vision and values help the company's coordination to support the decisions made in the medium and long term.

The third principle, which is **Social Approval**, happens when a behavior is suitable for others to follow. Cialdini (2012) states that the lack of familiarity with some situation makes individuals more likely to follow the leadership of others, that is, when the situation has not been experienced before, it is easier to believe that the other individual's action is correct to do. In advertising the principle is widely used with phrases like "the best-seller!", "the one that keeps growing!" to convince the consumer that the product is good.

In the principle of **Affection**, individuals are more likely to respond to requests from their peers and people who share the same tastes as them. The rule of affection is widely used by organizations in order to make sales and strengthen the image of the product or brand. For example, when a friend recommends you and offers you a product, the likelihood that you will accept is much greater than if they were a stranger. This is the principle of affection. Beauty is also an influencing factor in the principle of affection, "research shows that we automatically attribute to good-looking individuals, favorable traits such as talent, kindness, honesty and intelligence" (Cialdini, 2012, p. 175).

The principle of **Authority** causes individuals to act in a certain way to obey an authority figure. The credibility and status that the authorities have may have more influence, as they tend to think that individuals who are in a high position or have great power have more knowledge or right than others to give a correct opinion. Authorities can be diverse, each individual has someone who they consider an authority, so in many commercial campaigns, influencers or personalities are used to talk about products, as this brings credibility to the product and the brand, leading the audience (people who believe that this influencer is an authority) to know the product and start consuming it.

The last principle **scarcity**: "people attach more value to opportunities when they are less available" (Cialdini, 2012, p. 262). Most of us are influenced by promotions when they say: "last units", "only today!", "Limited stock". According to the author, scarcity awakens emotions, which makes rational thinking difficult. The human being does not like restrictions, research indicates that the act of restricting something to individuals increases their desire to own what is being restricted.

### 4 Result and Discussion: Experiment - IB Imports

The company chosen for analysis was IB Imports, due to the proximity to it, which allowed freedom in data analysis and action planning. The purpose of the experiment was to analyze the applicability of persuasion techniques and their influence on consumer behavior in

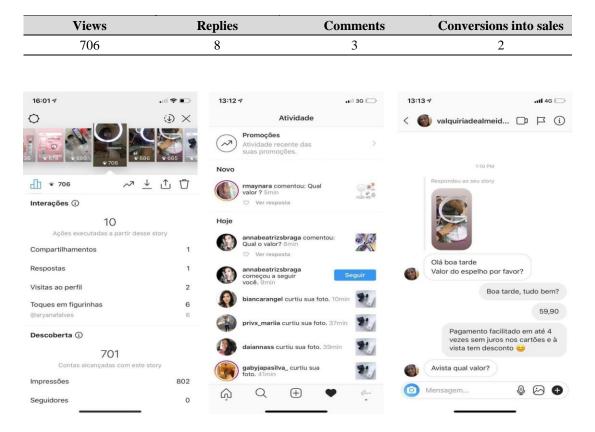
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the online beauty segment. The company's audience is female, whose age group comprises women aged between 18 and 44 years old, who like to wear makeup and beauty professionals. For this, the Instagram profile of the company IB Imports was analyzed for four weeks, in the month of October of the year 2019, always on Thursdays and Fridays, in which four persuasion techniques were applied for analysis. The techniques applied were **Reciprocity**, **Affection**, **Authority and Scarcity**.

On the first day of analysis, October 10, 2019 (Thursday), one of the clients, who is a makeup artist and makeup teacher, posted a *story* tagging the store and recommending a LED mirror, used to facilitate lighting during the makeup process, that she had acquired at IB Imports. She is known in the city of Campos dos Goytacazes-RJ, where the company's headquarters is, and she shows authority since she is a professional in the field. IB Imports reposted her recommendation and got the results shown in Table 1. It is clear that the authority makes people show interest in the products, as they feel safer with the indication of a "specialist" in the field.

As a professional posted a positive review of the product and reinforced the quality of it, she was able to make the consumer (this professional's follower) more susceptible to purchase (Figure 1).

# Table 1Authority technique application results



**Figure 1** – Authority technique application results on Instagram Source: Search data.

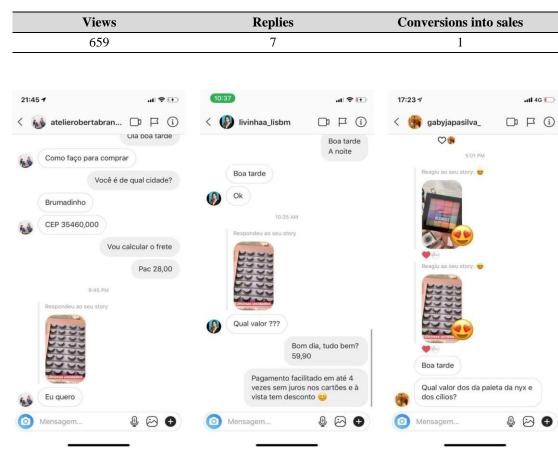
On the second day, October 11, 2019 (Friday), the technique used was scarcity. The store published the video promoting a "fake eyelash pack". In the video it was possible to see the phrase saying that they were the "last available units". The results of this technique can be

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seen in Table 2. It can be seen, on the day of application, that the technique used, not combined with another technique, was ineffective in its results.

The techniques suffer influencing factors that are external to the company, so it is necessary to know the ideal moment for the application of them. This moment can be analyzed using Instagram's own metrics that indicate the online movement of the public that follows the company's page. Therefore, the scarcity technique, in this case, could have been used together with another technique to achieve better results, for example, the use of the authority technique. Also, the fact that the same product is available in another competing store, may have caused consumers not to feel the effect of scarcity (Figure 2).

### Table 2



### Scarcity technique application results

**Figura 2** – Scarcity technique application results on Instagram Source: Search data.

The publication had results according to Table 3. It was registered that the action generated 13 visits to the store's profile. It can be analyzed that the relationship between IB Imports and its customers is a determining factor for the success of the applicability of the techniques, as the customers were shown to be engaged with the company's proposal and answered the requests. For Carvalho (2018, p. 291):

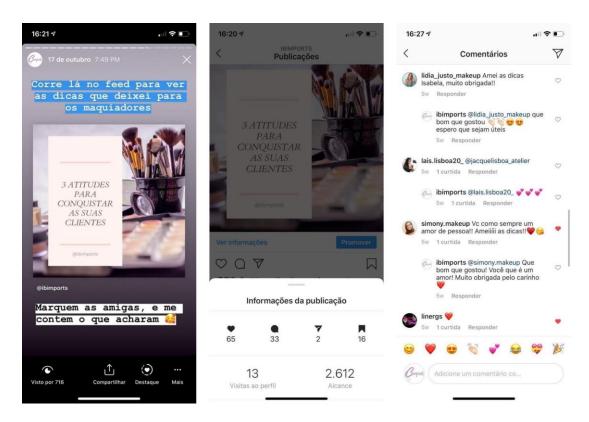
It is necessary to be close to those to whom we want to communicate, speak their language, attract by curiosity. In the digital marketing era, selling, more than ever, is a consequence of believing and engaging with a brand.

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In the second week of experiments, on October 17th (Thursday), aiming to apply the Reciprocity technique, the store posted, on the feed, a specific content for makeup artists. In the text, it pointed out three attitudes that these professionals should have in order to win over their customers, and asked them to go to the publication and give an opinion on the subject (Figure 3).

## TableReciprocity technique application results

Impressions	Likes	Comments	Saves	Visits to the profile
2.612	65	33	16	13



**Figure 3** – Reciprocity application results on Instagram Source: Search data.

On October, 18th (Friday) the store gave a local influencer, Juliana Ribeiro, who had 33,000 followers on her profile in the month of the survey, a gift. She is also a makeup artist and works at a famous salon in the city of Campos dos Goytacazes. The influencers, according to Karhawi (2017, p. 48):

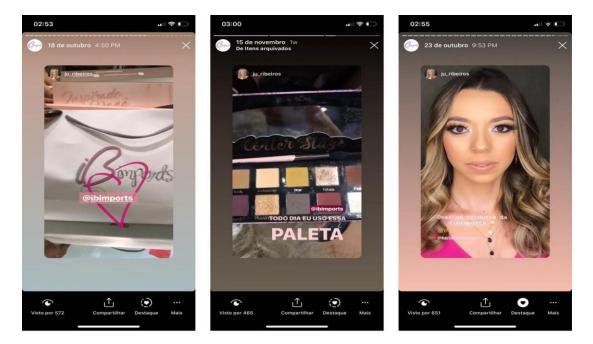
Are those who have some power in an individual's purchase decision process; power to put discussions in circulation; power to influence decisions regarding the lifestyle, tastes and cultural assets of those in your network.

Choosing this influencer was strategic, as she is a consumer of the brand and is related to a public of greater purchasing power in the region. After Juliana's recommendation to advertise imported products, the store had only one question about a recommended product.

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It was noticed that the number of views did not increase and that this action was not very effective. However, even though it was not the main intention of this experiment, another technique ended up being effective in this case, the **Reciprocity** technique. Juliana posted *stories* tagging the store five other times while using the products she won. The reciprocity technique proved to be effective, as it was noticed that the influencer tried, more than once, to reciprocate the gifts she received, as shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4** – Authority and Reciprocity application results on Instagram Source: Search data.

On October 24 (Thursday), some profiles of clients who are makeup artists were selected and a photo of their work was sought to be published in the IB Imports stories, tagging the respective makeup artists.

The purpose of the action was Reciprocity and the store did not ask them to repost the photos, it just published them. If the action were effective, the store would gain visibility in several different profiles, increase its number of views and also make it possible for more profiles to get to know the page.

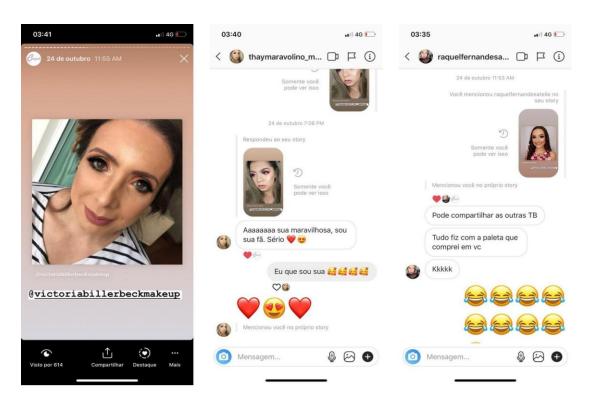
The relation between the photos posted by the store and the ones reposted in the makeup artists' stories can be seen in Table 4. It was found that the action was positive and brought good results. In addition to increasing visibility, this specific action also helped in engagement and, consequently, in the relationship between consumers and the brand, as shown in Figure 5.

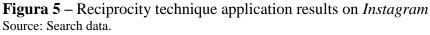
### Table 4

### **Reciprocity technique application results**

Photos posted by the store	Photos reposted by the makeup artists		
26	24		

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IB Imports, in its beginning, worked only with imported brands, however, after doing several market analyzes, it saw an opportunity and started working with national brands as well. This initiative started in August 2019.

On October 25 (Friday), two influencers were chosen to apply the techniques. The first one has an Instagram profile called "Mundo da Letícia", in which she posts about her routine at home, work and her project to empower women.

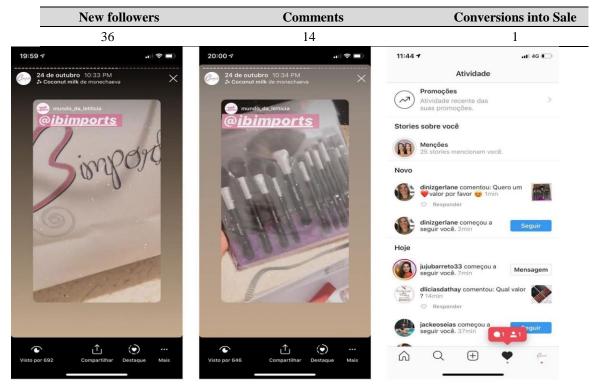
In her videos, Letícia defends the importance of women taking care of their appearance and health. In view of this perception, the participation of this influencer in the action was considered relevant. The techniques of authority and affection were applied to Leticia's profile.

The products chosen for advertising were selected in line with style, quality and affordable prices. This strategy sought to please its audience and, at the same time, expand the company's market share in the market.

After the post, the stores gained new followers, received comments on the pictures of the products she had received (a kit of brushes, as shown in Figure 6). The results are illustrated in Table 5.

Comments and likes on photos of other products were also recorded. There was a conversion in sale. The reciprocity technique was also noticed, because Leticia liked the products and published a few other times as a way of thanking and recommending the lipstick she won. After these new posts more comments were received.

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### Table 5Authority and affection technique application results

**Figure 6** – Authority and affection technique application results on *Instagram* Source: Search data.

On the same day, the influencer Larissa, better known as "Pantera", was also chosen. Larissa's characteristic is an irreverent and funny personality. IB Imports sent gifts to the influencer. She is very fun when posting on her Instagram, and uses slang and expressions that are typical of the city of Campos dos Goytacazes-RJ, so that the public can identify with the informality. Always with funny *stories* about her daily life and her "desabafos de pobre", which makes people identify and interact with her. The choice was to strengthen the brand in its new product mix: national brands.

The action generated 20 new followers for the store, and a lot of likes and comments, not only on posts of products she won, but also on others. The principle of reciprocity also acted again, since "Pantera" published *stories* a few other times using the products she won, as shown in Figure 7.

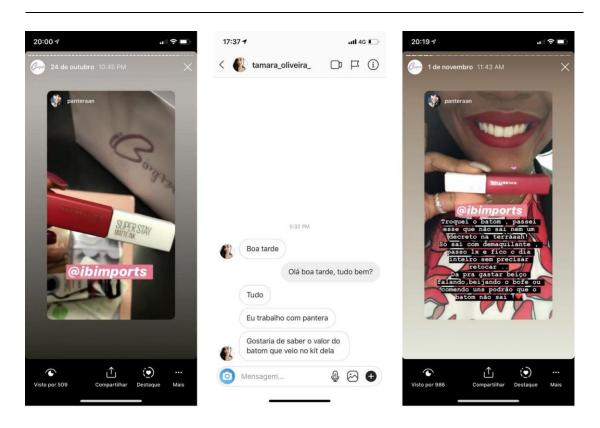
The focus was to promote, with the actions of the influencer, a lipstick of high durability. In her own irreverent way, she said that she had gone to the gym and the lipstick did not come out, and that she also took the "kiss test" and the lipstick was intact. She won a product she liked, so as a way of retribution, she made some posts recommending it.

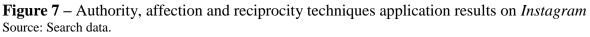
With these new posts, the store had more comments and messages asking about the lipstick and also about other products in the store. Some sales were made in short term, and the lipstick she recommended the most, sold out. The results are shown in Table 6. The action was effective in short term but also generated returns in medium and long term.

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### Table 6Authority, affection and reciprocity techniques application results

New followers	Messages	<b>Conversions into Sale</b>	
20	20	3	





On October 31 (Thursday) the chosen influencer was Mirella, owner of the profile "Meu Lar 74" on Instagram. In her profile, she reveals her routine at home and also talks about themes such as fashion, family and travel. She is already known in the city, as she works promoting products for stores in the city. Mirella promotes products from stores with different customer profiles such as: supermarket, beauty salon, clothing store, among others.

It is believed that principles of authority and affection would be relevant, as she is an influencer who has an image of credibility due to the results of the work already done. The choice of products was an agreement between the brand and the influencer who organized the actions, Mirella's needs and the products that the store should promote.

The results of her recommendations can be seen in Table 7. Comments were received on the product photos in the feed as well as messages via WhatsApp.

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Table 7	
Authority and affection techniques application results	

Views	Questions about price	New Followers	Conversions into Sale
1.000	10	100	5

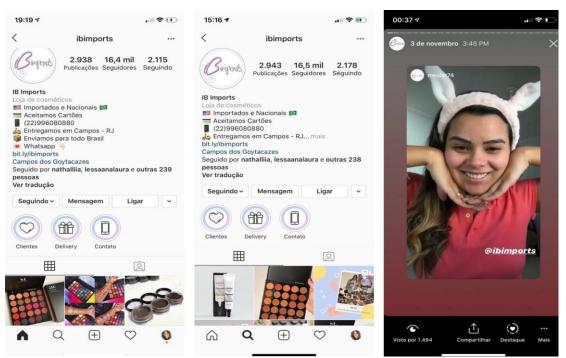
On November 1 (Friday), the last day of application of the strategies, Mirella posted again one of the products she won. In this case, a lipstick that she used the night before and approved. Again the store received messages, now specifically with an interest in the referred lipstick.

The reciprocity technique also took place on November 3rd. She recorded a video in her *stories* in which she appeared doing makeup using the products she had won and tagged the store; that made IB Imports gain more followers. The techniques applied were effective, as shown in Figures 8 and 9.

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**Figure 8** – Authority and affection techniques application results on *Instagram*. Source: Search data.

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**Figure 9** – Authority, affection and reciprocity techniques application results on *Instagram* Source: Search data.

Table 8 presents a brief summary of all the techniques applied in this study as well as the results achieved.

### Table 8

### Summary of the techniques applied and the results achieved.

Techniq			
ue	Technique's goal	Numbers	Results
applied			
Authority	To analyze the power of influence of a beauty professional when recommending a product they have purchased from the store, reinforcing its quality.	706 views 8 replies 3 comments 2 conversions into sales	Positive according to the demand. It generated conversion into sales
Scarcity	To analyze the effect of scarcity on the consumers.	659 views 7 replies 1 conversions into sales	Ineffective when not combined with another technique and also for suffering influencing factors that are external to the company. Even so, it generated a conversion into sales.
Reciprocity	To analyze the behavior of the followers when asking them to engage with the content created specifically for the target audience.	2.621 impressions 65 likes 33 comments 16 saves 13 visits to the profile	-
Authority	Prospect new clients and make sales.	-	Ineffective, with only 1 comment, However, even though the reciprocity technique was not the main objective of the action, was effective.

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Reciprocity	Strengthen relationships with followers, recommending their work; gain visibility in new profiles by reposting photos.	26 photos reposted 24 replies	The result was positive. Of the 26 posted photos, 24 were spontaneously reposted.
Authority and Affection	Increase the market share of the brand in the market, seeking a new audience and informing them about the new products that the company is working on.	36 new followers 14 comments 1 conversion into sale	The result was positive. Besides reaching the target audience, it generated a conversion into sale.
Authority and Affection	Increase the store's visibility on Instagram, prospect potential customers and increase brand credibility.	1.000 views 10 questions about the price 100 new followers 5 conversions into sale	The results were positive, as the store gained 100 followers in 24 hours, the number of views increased and there were also people interested in products and conversions into sale.
Authority and Reciprocity	Potentialize the sales of a given lipstick recommended by the influencer and increase the perception of product quality.	-	The results were positive, the store received questions about lipstick and managed to generate sales in medium term. The reciprocity technique generated positive results, as Mirella reposted, at other times, the products she won from the store.

### **5** Final Considerations

It was found that the persuasion techniques had a positive impact on the online beauty sector, through experimentation with different dissemination actions of the company IB Imports. For the actions performed and observed, it was considered that most techniques work best when combined with some other technique. The analysis of these applications can assist entrepreneurs and marketers in choosing the appropriate strategies and application methods to generate success in their business.

The aim of this study was to contribute to the promotion of reflection on the need to plan the techniques used in social networks, in order to create the impacts expected by companies, which consist of: increasing profits, retaining customers and giving greater visibility to the company, creating its intangible capital - its reputation.

Therefore, a deep knowledge of the consumer's profile of the brand is necessary. Such movement becomes preponderant, as it facilitates the communication processes with the public and the strategies created to solve the needs of those specific customers. In IB Imports' case, the female audience, aged between 18 and 44 years. According to the results presented, the most appropriate persuasion technique was Reciprocity, because in the female world, bonds of trust and interaction are fundamental factors to establish the consumption of goods.

It is suggested, for better efficiency in the applicability of the techniques, to carry out analysis of market trends, more regularity in its application, in addition to using more than one technique concomitantly and, before applying them. In view of the study and experiments, identifying the power of authority of influencers was necessary, since they had a great impact on sales and interaction results.

This way, it can be seen that the conversion rates of purchase in short term were considered low, however in medium and long term, it was proven that they paid off. Even with the passing of the day of action, more sales were recorded, resulting from the application of persuasion techniques.

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### **Authors' Contributions**

#### **Isabela Mambreu Siqueira:** Contributed to bibliographic research and field research.

**Mozarth Dias de Almeida Miranda:** Contributed to bibliographic research, revision of academic text, direction of research and treatment of results.

### Thiara Mourão Fernandes da Costa:

Contributed to the methodological coordination of the research.