

The impact of Social Media Influencers on the consumer's purchase intentions regarding beauty products: Exploring the effects of Source-Credibility

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Abstract

Title: The impact of Social Media Influencers on the consumer's purchase intentions regarding beauty products: Exploring the effects of Source Credibility

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In the past few years, many beauty companies have chosen to follow a recent marketing strategy, to promote their products/services, called influencer marketing. This new concept is the result of a fast growth of social media platforms and consequently the rise of social media influencers.

This dissertation was developed to evaluate how social media is being used as a platform for influencers and understand how influencers affect purchase intentions, regarding the beauty industry. The dimensions of expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness were considered mediators of credibility in purchase intentions.

Therefore, a survey was conducted with 132 valid responses obtained. The results demonstrate that consumers prefer to search for information, regarding beauty products, through social media influencers rather than the brands themselves, and that they are more likely to purchase a beauty product when it has been advertised by a social media influencer rather than when it is advertised by the brand. Moreover, it was found that consumers' purchase intentions are not higher for beauty products advertised by social media influencers who are perceived as experts, however, are higher for those who are perceived as trustworthy and attractive, and these mediate the effect of credibility on purchase intentions.

Keywords: Influencer marketing; Social media influencers; beauty industry; Expertise; Trustworthiness; Attractiveness; Purchase intentions.

Resumo

Título: O impacto dos influenciadores na intenção de compra de produtos de Beleza: Explorar os efeitos de *Source Credibility*

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Nos últimos anos, um grande número de empresas de beleza escolheram adotar uma nova estratégia de marketing, para promover os seus produtos/serviços, chamada *Influencer Marketing*. Este novo conceito resulta de um crescimento acelerado das plataformas de redes sociais e, conseqüentemente, a ascensão de influenciadores das redes sociais.

Esta dissertação foi desenvolvida para avaliar de que forma as redes sociais estão a ser utilizadas como uma plataforma pelos influenciadores e perceber de que forma afetam a intenção de compra dos consumidores, dentro da indústria da beleza. As dimensões de perícia, confiabilidade e atratividade foram consideradas mediadoras de credibilidade nas intenções de compra.

Deste modo, foi conduzido um questionário com 132 respostas válidas obtidas. Os resultados demonstram que os consumidores preferem procurar informação, relativamente a produtos de beleza, através das redes sociais ao contrário de através das marcas e, são mais prováveis de comprar esse mesmo produto quando esse foi anunciado pelos influenciadores ao contrário de pela marca. Para além disso, foi concluído que as intenções de compra não são mais elevadas para produtos de beleza anunciados por influenciadores que são percebidos pelo consumidor como tendo perícia, no entanto, são mais elevadas para aqueles que são percebidos pelo consumidor como confiáveis e atraentes. Estas duas últimas dimensões mediam o efeito de credibilidade nas intenções de compra.

Palavras-chave: *Influencer marketing*; Influenciadores de redes sociais; Indústria de beleza; Perícia; Confiabilidade; Atratividade; Intenção de compra.

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Table of Content

- Abstract** II
- Resumo** IV
- Acknowledgements** VI
- Table of Content** VIII
- Index of Figures X
- Index of Tables..... XII
- 1. Introduction** 1
 - 1.1. Topic Presentation 1
 - 1.2. Research Objectives 2
 - 1.3. Rationale..... 2
 - 1.4. Dissertation Outline..... 3
- 2. Literature Review**..... 5
 - 2.1. Evaluate how social media is being used as a Platform for Influencers, in the Beauty Industry..... 5
 - 2.2. How Influencer’s affect Purchase Intentions 7
 - 2.3. Summary of the Literature Review 10
- 3. Methodology**..... 12
- 4. Results Analysis** 17
 - 4.1. Results analysis for objective 1 17
 - 4.2. Results analysis for objective 2 18
- 5. Discussion**..... 23
- 6. Conclusion**..... 25
 - 6.1. Conclusion..... 25
 - 6.2. Limitations and Future Recommendations..... 25
- Reference list**..... 27
- Appendix** 38

Index of Figures

Figure 1: stimuli for the between-subject experiment between the influencer and the brand .	13
Figure 2: Conceptual framework.....	14

Index of Tables

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for both information search and purchase intentions of brand versus influencer advertisement 17

Table 2: Independent samples test for both information search and purchase intentions of brand versus influencer advertisement 18

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for the expertise dimension 19

Table 4: Independent samples test for the expertise dimension 19

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for the trustworthiness dimension 20

Table 6: Independent samples test for the trustworthiness dimension 20

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for the attractiveness dimension 21

Table 8: Independent samples test for the attractiveness dimension 21

1. Introduction

1.1. Topic Presentation

The Internet is the backbone of our society and so, devices such as personal computers, webcams, smartphones, and smartwatches allow for consumers to virtually share and create content from anywhere and to everywhere (Tuten, 2021). Therefore, in a world where technology keeps evolving, the emergence of social media has been crucial because it provides consumers with the social outlet to interact with each other, share opinions and produce content to other users, through all the tools and technologies that are internet-enabled. (Kudeshia and Kumar, 2017). Hence, the appearance of social media opinion leaders, or as we call them nowadays, influencers (Jin et al., 2021).

Considering these changes, consumers are becoming more informed, and brands are being forced to reinvent the way they advertise their products and approach their consumers (Zak and Hasprova, 2019). Compared to the traditional media, like television and newspapers, social media became more diversified, specialized, and fragmented because it can target the interests of a very specific audience (K.-P. Wiedmann and von Mettenheim, 2020). Consequently, brands have turned to what is called “Influencer Marketing” (Zak and Hasprova, 2019).

Influencer marketing has become a crucial source for brand marketers because influencers are deemed to be more effective in advertising than celebrities (Jin et al., 2018) and have demonstrated to have a big influence on their followers, mainly regarding purchase intentions (Lopes Almeida, 2021). Given their effectiveness, brands are resorting to this type of marketing to spread information regarding their products, and this works because these influencers are deemed to be authentic and credible market experts (Cheng-Xi Aw et al., 2021). Moreover, consumers feel empowered by not being limited to brand-generated content as their single information source, as they perceive this content to be sceptical (Kapitan and Silvera, 2015).

The beauty industry is a sector that undertakes constant innovation, is considerate and involved in consumer’s needs, and so, there is an increased focus on implementing effective communication strategies which, for the most part, involves influencer marketing (Paço and Oliveira, 2017).

Given that the beauty sector is evolving in their influencer marketing, it is important to understand how consumers perceive influencers in terms of credibility. The Source-Credibility model, created by Hovland et al. (1982) and further developed by Ohanian (1990) is crucial to

this research because it provides a meaningful measure of credibility, where to be credible, “a source should encompass three requirements: attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness.” (Wiedmann and Mettenheim, 2020, p.709).

1.2. Research Objectives

This study has two main objectives.

- Evaluate how social media is being used as a Platform for Influencers, in the Beauty Industry.
- Evaluate how Influencer’s affect Purchase Intentions.

These objectives will help determine whether the people that are exposed to an influencer created post are more or less likely to buy the advertised product. Additionally, credibility dimensions such as expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness will be tested to see whether an influencer with these qualities is perceived to be more credible and hence boost purchase intentions.

1.3. Rationale

As it is going to be discussed in the Literature Review chapter, social media influencers generally have an area of expertise that they are known for (Tafesse and Wood, 2021) and despite influencer marketing being a thematic that has led to a lot of research and studies, there is still a low level of understanding regarding the impact of beauty influencers and the beauty industry. Therefore, the findings from this dissertation will provide marketers with relevant insight on what to look for when selecting and Influencer endorser.

Due to time constraints on this study and for convenience purposes, this study will only be done on the Portuguese population. There is a lot of research done regarding the effects of culture, however there is a gap in the literature when it comes to understanding the Portuguese consumer’s behaviour and its relationship with influencer marketing. By understanding how consumers in Portugal react to influencer marketing in the Beauty Industry, managers and marketers gain insights on how to translate this knowledge into an opportunity.

The beauty industry is one of the biggest markets in the world, however, to date, there hasn’t been any research conducted on how social media influencers may have an effect on consumers’

behaviour towards beauty products. Moreover, the Portuguese populations as never been targeted as a subject of analysis regarding the beauty industry. This study will provide managers and marketers with insights on how to improve influencer marketing and consequently the profitability of companies.

RQ1: What impact do social media influencers have on the consumers' behaviour regarding beauty products

Additionally, the study aims to understand the role of credibility dimensions such as trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness and if these mediate the impact that social media influencers may have on purchase intentions.

The third research question developed is related to the credibility dimensions. This question aims to understand whether having credibility in the area of the product that is being advertised has any influence on the consumers' purchase intentions. From an academic standpoint, this study will complement the existing literature on the Source Credibility Model, since it targets Influencer marketing and the Beauty Industry, which is an area that is yet to be properly understood. By cross analysing the Beauty Industry with the Source Credibility dimensions, managers and marketers will be able to identify the dimensions that are more effective and strategically plan according to their target audience to better direct the consumer towards their products and services (Djafarova and Trofimenko, 2018).

RQ2: Are consumers purchase intentions affected by whether the influencer has Perceived credibility on the matter? If so, what dimensions have the biggest impact? Is this impact positive or negative?

1.4. Dissertation Outline

This dissertation will be divided into five separate chapters. In the first chapter there will be presented the Topic Presentation, Problem Statement, Scope of Analysis, Research Objectives and Academic and Managerial Relevance. The second chapter, the Literature Review, will be divided into two chapters following the two objectives of this study and will present an overview of previously published articles and academic papers regarding the main topic of interest. In the third chapter it will be provided a description of the methodology used, which included the research approach, and the development of the data collection tools. Afterward, in the fourth chapter, the results of the online questionnaire will be presented and

analysed in accordance with the objectives and hypotheses formulated. Lastly, on chapter five, the main findings of the study will be presented as well as the conclusions followed by some limitations that provide recommendations for future research.

2. Literature Review

This chapter will review previous academic literature that is relevant in understanding the scope of this study. Moreover, literature will help in finding an appropriate answer to the research questions in which this thesis is based. The Literature review will be divided into two chapters to bring clarity into this study's objectives.

2.1. Evaluate how social media is being used as a Platform for Influencers, in the Beauty Industry.

The beauty industry is a big growing business with over \$159 billion US dollars each year, worldwide (Wang, 2022). According to Dalziel and Klerk (2020, p.115), “the industry comprises any product used to care for, clean and improve the human body” and along with their functional benefits, beauty products are used to improve the aesthetic appeal of the users (Archnaet al.,2018) and to enhance attractiveness (Sankpalet al.,2016).

Beauty products are personal necessities (Sanidewi and Paramita, 2018) that are intended for “applying to the face, hair and body and include products such as creams, makeup, deodorants, skin-care products, hair dyes, nail polish, perfumes, toothpaste, and mouthwashes” (Dalziel and de Klerk, 2020). Statista (2020), states that skincare is the largest category within the Beauty Industry and accounts to 41% of the global market.

Social media is used by both individuals and organizations in order to create opportunities (Ouvrein et al., 2021). Individual users use this tool to share experiences and opinions with others (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010), while organizations try to achieve their marketing goals (eg: increase brand awareness, attract new customers, modify brand attitudes, and increase purchase intention) (Ananda et al., 2016). Organizations can achieve their marketing goals, through social media, by collaborating with social media influencers, also called social media influencer marketing (de Veirman et al., 2017a)

Zak and his colleague Hasprova (2019, p.2) defined influencer marketing as the “marketing products and services of those who take action to influence the purchasing behaviour of other people. Such buying influence is most often the result of popularity, reputation or even expertise of influencers”.

Influencers, just like traditional celebrities, have a large reach due to having a lot of followers on one or more platforms, however they differ in aspects like the origin of their fame

and nature of their influence (de Veirman et al., 2019). While traditional celebrities gained public recognition because of their extraordinary beauty (e.g., supermodels) or talent (e.g., actors and athletes), social media influencers branded themselves on social media through posting highly appealing self-generated content, either on a specific topic in which they present themselves as an expert (e.g., food, beauty...), or more generally, showcasing their lifestyles as a whole (de Jans et al., 2017; Khamis et al., 2017).

Jin et al. (2021) defined social media influencers as being “popular social networking sites users, who have established a substantial number of followers by being active and known within one or more related domains (mostly fashion, beauty, and lifestyle), which makes them credible and appealing to their fans”.

Influencers gain confidence and forge deep bonds with consumers by sharing personal content about their lifestyle and interests (Ladhari et al., 2020; Ki et al., 2020; Audrezet et al., 2020). In turn, social media users tend to see these influencers as attractive, authentic, and similar to them (Schouten et al., 2019; Jin et al., 2019; Ki et al., 2020). These influencers typically have their own circle of interests and gained their following by creating their online persona that can be known as being, for example, beauty experts, adventurers, or just ordinary mothers on maternity leave (Lou and Yuan, 2019; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020a; Casaló et al., 2020). This allows for them to reach a specific group of people with a common set of interests and therefore can better reach their audience to achieve the right product promotion (Ki and Kim, 2019).

Despite the popularity that this topic has had among the last couple of years, social media influencers are still understudied in the academic literature (Sundermann and Raabe, 2019; Bakker, 2018). Aligned with this, one main question that previous studies have raised is on how to select the ‘perfect’ social media influencer to help achieve the brand’s predefined goals (Ouvrein et al., 2021).

In the beauty industry, there are its own influencers called beauty influencers and most of them share their content across multiple social media channels (Baker, 2018). These influencers use their skills to partner with beauty brands and build awareness around products (Forbes, 2016). The content that they share mostly revolves around makeup tutorials, product reviews, the latest beauty trends, and product advertisings (Pratiwi et al., 2018).

The rise of social media has allowed these influencers to gain popularity and provided them with a platform to connect with consumers (Forbes, 2016). According to Forbes (2016), the thoughts and opinions of Beauty influencers may be more persuasive than the actual brands themselves, which makes them vital to brand storytelling.

Most consumers are likely to be influenced, to a certain extent, by some sort of marketing communication due to the highly saturated media environment (Arshada and Aslam, 2015). This ever-lasting exposure to marketing messages, that reveal the latest trends, results in motivating consumers to enter in a desire state (Workman and Studak, 2006), which triggers their consumer decision-making process (Dalziel and de Klerk, 2020).

Coulter and his colleagues (2002) and Tarczydlo (2019) have suggested that media is source through which consumers seek relevant product and brand information, namely regarding beauty products. Additionally, research suggests that, in general, Influencers have an effect on consumer's purchase intentions (Vrontis et al., 2021). Moreover, the beauty industry has been, in the last couple of years, one of the markets where using Influencers has proven to be efficient and therefore it has become a very common practice (Santos et al., 2021). This advertising method has become popular because consumers tend to conduct research before purchasing an item, and so, they look at social media and influencers with the purpose of obtaining some feedback regarding those products (Rebelo, 2017).

As previously explained, given that it has been suggested by Coulter and his colleagues (2002) and Tarczydlo (2019) that consumers turn to social media for product information and that most consumers, according to Forbes (2016), view influencers as being more persuasive than the actual brands themselves, the following hypothesis were formulated:

H1: *Portuguese consumers prefer to search for information, regarding beauty products, through social media influencers rather than the brands.*

H2: *Consumers are more likely to purchase a beauty product when it has been advertised by a social media influencer rather than when it is advertised by the brand.*

2.2. How Influencer's affect Purchase Intentions

Spears and Singh (2004) defined purchase intention as a conscious decision to buy a particular brand, and as stated by Hausman and Siekpe (2009), it can be affected by advertising.

Based on previous studies conducted on the subject, there is evidence that there is a positive relationship between purchase intention and social media influencers (Lisichkova and Othman, 2017; McCormick, 2016a). Measuring purchase intention is crucial because this represents as an indicator of actual purchase, and it is used to measure consumers' actions (Abdullah et al., 2020).

It has been proved that perceived attractiveness, trustworthiness, and credibility directly affect the consumer's purchase intention (Rebelo, 2017; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020; Saima and Khan, 2020). In relation to this, the more credible the influencer is, the more likely the consumer is of purchasing the recommended brands (Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, 2019; Rebelo, 2017).

There is a shared belief by both marketing and advertising practitioners that character has a significant effect on the persuasiveness of the message and so, selecting a credible spokesperson for a product or service is an important decision (Ohanian, 1990b).

The original source credibility studies were conducted by Hovland and his colleagues (1953), and has since been widely studied in psychology, communication, marketing, and advertising (Ohanian, 1990). These attempts to operationalize source credibility resulted in the development of multiple scales which included different sets of dimensions, however none of them were consistent in their manipulation checks of the experimental variables and so there was no consistency as to the number and types of dimensions that source credibility comprised (Ohanian, 1990).

Ohanian (1990) developed a reliable and valid scale for the measurement of Source Credibility, which was entitled Source Credibility Model. The source credibility model "suggests the perceived level of an endorser's attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise impact on the effectiveness of an endorsement" (Weismueller et al., 2020, p.162). According to Yoon and his colleagues (1998, p.156) "an attractive source (e.g., a movie star) can be perceived as an expert or nonexpert, trustworthy or untrustworthy, or a combination thereof". Therefore, because there are many combinations, it is Paramount that we understand the role that each dimension plays in determining the perceived credibility of a source for developing an advertising strategy.

Recently, these Source Credibility dimensions have been highly discussed within social media contexts (Weismueller et al., 2020) because credibility was found to have an impact on

the advertising value since traditional media is not perceived as credible as advertisement from peers (Shareef et al., 2019).

The first dimension, attractiveness, implies familiarity, likability, and similarity of the source to the receiver (McGuire, 1985). Sources who are well known, liked by and similar to the receiver tend to be understood as being more attractive (McCracken, 1989) and produce both positive beliefs (Chaiken, 1979) and positive product evaluation (Joseph, 1982) more effectively.

The second dimension, trustworthiness, refers to the honesty, integrity, and believability of an endorser (Hovland et al., 1953) and has been argued by Friedman and colleagues (1976) as being the foremost determinant of the Source Credibility Model given that consumers view the message of an untrustworthy source as questionable, despite their other qualities (Smith, 1973).

Lastly, expertise refers to the knowledge, experience or skills possessed by an endorser (Erdogan, 1999). To be considered an expert, the endorser doesn't need to be an expert on the subject because what matters is how the target audience (Hovland et al., 1953; Ohanian, 1991) perceives the endorser.

It is relevant to study whether all three dimensions of Source Credibility have an impact on consumer's purchase intentions. In her research, Ohanian (1991) stated that only expertise was significant in explaining Purchase Intentions and that the other two dimensions did not demonstrate a significant impact. However, by replicating Ohanian's study, Pornpitakpan (2003) contradicted what was previously determined and reached the conclusion that all three dimensions have a significant effect on purchase intentions.

In the lens of the Source Credibility dimensions, there is a lack of theoretical and empirical data regarding the effects of using social media influencers in the Beauty Industry and if this translates into Purchase Intentions. Despite the contradictions regarding this topic, we know that consumers go to social media in search for product and brand information regarding beauty products (Coulter et al., 2002; Tarczydlo, 2019) and that, in general, influencers do have a significant impact on consumers' purchase intentions (Vrontis et al., 2021). Therefore, we assume the possibility that this will also be the case for the Beauty Industry. This was the pretext for the hypotheses H3, H4 and H5:

H3: *Consumers' purchase intentions are higher for beauty products advertised by social media influencers who are perceived as experts than non-experts.*

H4: *Consumers' purchase intentions are higher for beauty products advertised by social media influencers who are perceived as trustworthy than non-trustworthy.*

H5: *Consumers' purchase intentions are higher for beauty products advertised by social media influencers who are perceived as attractive than non-attractive.*

2.3. Summary of the Literature Review

This study aims to understand the impact that social media influencers have on consumers' purchase intentions regarding Beauty products, in the Portuguese population. Previous literature suggests that this new topic affects consumers behaviours, however, there has not been any research directed into the Beauty Industry and the Portuguese market. This dissertation will deepen this new topic, and it will give to readers the information that is missing in past literature. To add some complexity to the study, it will be relevant to understand if the dimensions of the Source Credibility Model (Ohanian, 1991) have an important role on the impact that social media influencers have on purchase intentions and if both credibility and purchase intention are affected by the number of followers that an Influencer has.

To summarize what this study wants to accomplish, research questions presented on the first chapter as well as the hypotheses developed in the present chapter will be presented again:

Objective 1: Evaluate how social media is being used as a Platform for Influencers, in the Beauty Industry.

RQ1: What impact do social media influencers have on the consumers' behaviour regarding beauty products?

H1: *Consumers prefer to search for information, regarding beauty products, through social media influencers rather than the brands.*

H2: *Consumers are more likely to purchase a beauty product when it has been advertised by a social media influencer rather than when it is advertised by the brand.*

Objective 2: Evaluate how Influencer's affect Purchase Intentions.

RQ2: Are consumers purchase intentions affected by whether the influencer has Perceived credibility on the matter?

H3: *Consumers' purchase intentions are higher for beauty products advertised by social media influencers who are perceived as experts than non-experts.*

H4: *Consumers' purchase intentions are higher for beauty products advertised by social media influencers who are perceived as being trustworthy than non-trustworthy.*

H5: *Consumers' purchase intentions are higher for beauty products advertised by social media influencers who are perceived as attractive than non-attractive.*

3. Methodology

The research will be developed in different phases. Firstly, for the literature review, exploratory research was conducted, which consists of “studies that establish causal relationships between variables” (Saunders et al., 2019, p.188). Therefore, this was achieved by gathering information from various academic papers and journals to understand and develop the main hypothesis that will be studied.

Then, a quantitative and deductive approach was selected, where the researcher “works from the ‘top down’, from a theory to hypotheses to data to add to or contradict the theory” (Creswell and Clark, 2007, p.23). This approach was selected due to presenting benefits such as being more scientific, control sensitive and less biased (Jäkel, 2020). Moreover, this type of research allows for findings to be generalizable and is often used to predict patterns of human actions (Djamba and Neuman, 2002), which validates the choice of this method.

Finally, an online survey will be conducted, by means of the snowball sampling method (Kalton and Anderson, 1986). Online surveys are flexible, can be adapted to the researcher’s purpose, is time efficient and is more convenient for both the researcher and the respondents (Evans and Mathur, 2005). Moreover, conducting an online survey is a widely accepted and used method of conducting research in digital marketing especially (Grover and Vriens, 2006; Leeflang et al., 2014). Therefore, an online survey was conducted to retrieve quantitative primary data, and this facilitated the consumers being interviewed directly and previously formulated hypotheses were tested. The online survey will be created via the online platform Qualtrics and distributed in platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and personal email. Since it is expected that a large sample of Portuguese people, both females and males between the ages of 18 and 60 years old, will be responding to the survey, it will be distributed in both the Portuguese and English languages to make it more convenient.

The study will be based on a between-subject experiment. According to Charness and his colleagues (2012), in between-subjects experiment occurs when different participants are randomly assigned to conditions and are tested based on their exposure to certain stimuli. For the second and third parts of the survey, conditions will be created to test whether the respondent’s purchase intentions, regarding beauty products, is different when presented with an advertisement from the brand or the influencer and another where the social media influencer showcases one credibility dimension versus when they do not.

The questionnaire (appendix 1) was created to ensure the reliability and validity of the results and because there are three research objectives with different hypothesis within, the survey has three main parts to it.

In the first part of the questionnaire, it was asked for general information regarding social media behaviour to access the respondent's behaviour towards social media.

The second part of the questionnaire relates to the first research objective, which is to evaluate how social media is being used as a Platform for Influencers, in the Beauty Industry. In this section, in agreement with the between-subject experiment, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: In the first condition participants are exposed to an influencer created post, which is the advertising a skin care brand and in the second condition the participants are exposed to the same post but this time it was created by the skin care brand itself (Figure 1). Later, all groups are tested for the same catalogue of questions with a 7-point Likert scale (1= Entirely Disagree; 7= Entirely Agree), which was adapted from a study done by Belanger (2021). When a researcher wants to relate variables and estimate linear relations using, for example, correlations, a 5- (or 7-) point scale with endpoint labels is the best choice (Weijters et al., 2010).

For this part of the experiment, a fictional brand was created, "Active Beauty" to set the right stimuli for the experiment, just like Veirman et al. (2017) did for their research because this reduces biases and allows participants to separate information (de Veirman et al., 2017). The decision to use a real Portuguese influencer, Helena Coelho, was to ensure that participants viewed the influencer as being credible.

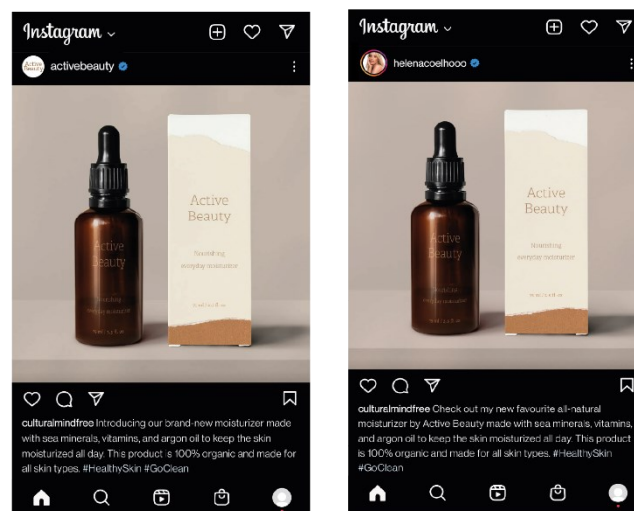


Figure 1: stimuli for the between-subject experiment between the influencer and the brand

For the first question, the items used were “I am likely to search for more information about the moisturizer in the post”, “I see the post as a reliable source of information”, and “I would search for more information about the product in the same account”, which allows to test whether respondents prefer to use social media as a tool to search for beauty products, or that they prefer to use the brand itself as an information tool. In the second question, respondents were tested for the same catalogue of questions with a 7-point Likert scale (1= Entirely Disagree; 7= Entirely Agree) which was adapted from Jaekel’s study (2020). The items used were “I would consider purchasing this product”, “I would purchase the product”, and “I would recommend this product to friends/family”, which allows to test whether respondents are more likely to purchase a beauty product when it has been advertised by a social media influencer or when it is advertised by the brand.

The third part of the questionnaire, which is to analyse how influencer’s affect purchase intentions, was also based on a between-subject experiment. The study wants to test whether exposing consumers to different realities can affect their purchase intention. This way, a cause-and-effect relationship will be established between influencer marketing and consumers’ purchase intention of beauty products using the three different credibility dimensions as mediators: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. The conceptual framework can be summarized as follows (Figure 2).

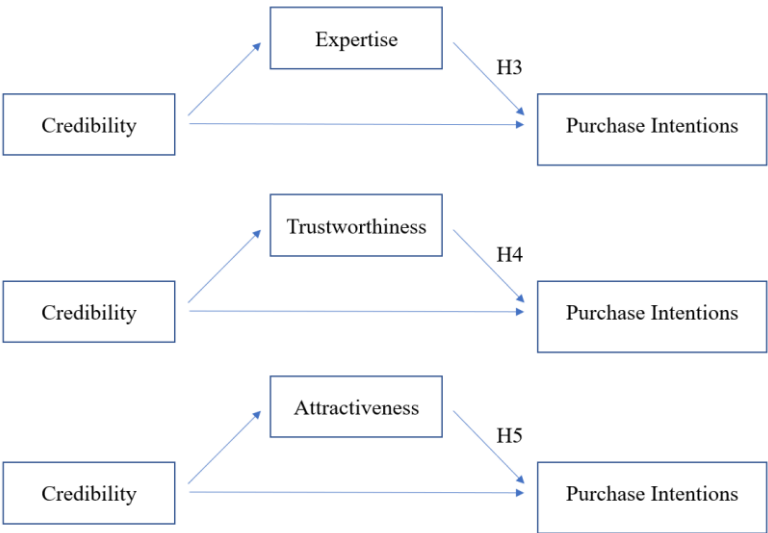


Figure 2: Conceptual framework

Conditions will be created to test whether the respondent’s purchase intentions, regarding beauty products, are different when presented with an advertisement where the social media

influencer showcases one credibility dimension versus when they do not. The respondents will be randomly assigned to one of these conditions, to see the differences in their purchasing intentions. For the experiment, a fictional influencer and a fictional brand are going to be created, for each dimension, to set the right stimuli for the experiment, just like Veirman et al. (2017) did for their research.

The decision to create three different fictional influencers and three different products is because this reduces biases and allows participants to separate information (de Veirman et al., 2017). Given that this research is designed to study the beauty industry, the fictional characters are all beauty influencers. After reading each scenario, participants were asked to rate the endorser according to several characteristics that were presented in a seven-point semantic differential scale adapted from the study conducted by Ohanian (1990).

The descriptive pairs that measure trustworthiness were: undependable/dependable, dishonest/honest, unreliable/reliable, insincere/sincere, and untrustworthy/trustworthy. The descriptive pairs for measuring expertise were: not expert/expert, inexperienced/experienced, unknowledgeable/knowledgeable, unqualified/qualified and unskilled/skilled. The following descriptive pairs measured attractiveness: unattractive/attractive, not classy/classy, ugly/beautiful, not sexy/sexy and plain/elegant.

After being asked to rate the influencer according to the credibility dimension, participants had to rate three questions using a seven-point Likert scale, with 1 “Not at all likely” and 7 “Very Likely”, to measure purchase intentions. To ensure reliability of items, the seven-point Likert scale had the following statements adapted from previous studies (McCormick, 2016; Till and Busler, 2000; Kamins, 1990; Kahle and Homer, 1985; Ohanian, 1991): the likelihood that the respondent would purchase the product, the likelihood that the respondent would try the product on if seen in a store, and the likelihood the respondent would actively seek out the product in a store.

Finally, the demographics of the participants, like age, nationality, and education level, were inquired.

Before distributing the online survey, a pilot was conducted to test whether the scenarios that were chosen to test the credibility dimensions were perceived by respondents in the correct way. Using the Qualtrics randomizer tool, respondents were randomly assigned to one of two conditions regarding the three credibility dimensions. Each respondent was either presented

with a text where the social media influencer showcased a credibility aspect or a text where they did not. All credibility dimensions were evaluated for their reliability according to the Cronbach's alpha, which ideally should be greater than 0.7 (Bhatnagar et al., 2014), and they all proved reliable. An independent sample t-test was also performed for the three conditions and confirmed that the differences in means were statistically significant for all of them which proved that the manipulation was successful and therefore the scenarios could be used for the main experiment.

4. Results Analysis

For this survey, a sample of 187 participants was gathered in which only 132 participants, from ages 17 to 79, completed it in its entirety ($M_{age} = 35,83$; gender identity= 32,6% male, 62,9% female, 4,5% prefer not to say; occupation: 59,8% employed; 1,5% unemployed; 9,8% retired, 28,8% student).

As previously explained, due to convenience and time constraints, the survey was only distributed among Portuguese People. Most of the respondents follow (or have previously followed) social media influencers on their social media platforms, 70,5%, and of these respondents, most follow more than 10 social media influencers. When it comes to the participants' buying behaviour of beauty products, the majority buys them 3-4 times a year, 28,8%.

In this study, there were used multiple item scales, therefore it was necessary to evaluate their reliability according to the Cronbach's alfa. They all proved to be greater than 0.7 (Bhatnagar, Kim, and Many 2014) and therefore reliable.

4.1. Results analysis for objective 1

To test the first two hypothesis, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: In the first condition participants are exposed to an influencer created post, which is the advertising a skin care brand and in the second condition the participants are exposed to the same post but this time it was created by the skin care brand itself. Participants were then presented with the same two questions and with the same items to classify on a 7-point likert scale. To analyse the results, an independent sample t-test was performed to test both hypotheses.

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Information search	Brand condition	66	2,2828	1,43013
	Influencer condition	66	4,4949	2,22821
Purchasing intention	Brand condition	66	1,9646	1,25423
	Influencer condition	66	4,2374	2,37779

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for both information search and purchase intentions of brand versus influencer advertisement

		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Information search	Equal variances assumed	-6,788	130	0,000
	Equal variances not assumed	-6,788	110,783	0,000
Purchasing intentions	Equal variances assumed	-6,868	130	0,000
	Equal variances not assumed	-6,868	98,571	0,000

Table 2: Independent samples test for both information search and purchase intentions of brand versus influencer advertisement

As it is shown on the Descriptive Statistics table (table 1), for both information search ($M_{\text{BrandCondition}} = 2,2828$, $SD = 1,43013$; $M_{\text{InfluencerCondition}} = 4,4949$, $SD = 2,22821$) and purchase intentions ($M_{\text{BrandCondition}} = 1,9646$, $SD = 1,25423$; $M_{\text{InfluencerCondition}} = 4,2374$, $SD = 2,37779$) regarding brand and influencer advertisements, there is a difference in means that is statistically significant with a p-value $< 0,000$ (table 2). This proves that, as hypothesised, consumers prefer to search for information, regarding beauty products, through social media influencers rather than the brands and that they are more likely to purchase a beauty product when it has been advertised by a social media influencer rather than when it is advertised by the brand.

4.2. Results analysis for objective 2

To test hypothesis three, four and five regarding the consumer's purchase intentions, respondents were presented with a situation where the social media influencer showcases one credibility dimension versus when they do not. Then, they were randomly assigned to one of the two situations for all three dimensions and asked to rate the influencer according to the dimensions and about their purchasing intentions. To analyse the results, an independent sample t-test was performed to test the three hypotheses.

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Expertise dimension	Non-Expert	70	5,2943	1,99499
	Expert	62	5,5355	1,49130
Expertise purchasing intentions	Non-Expert	70	4,6524	2,22809
	Expert	62	4,7204	1,96804

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for the expertise dimension

		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Expertise dimension	Equal variances assumed	-0,779	130	0,438
	Equal variances not assumed	-0,792	126,551	0,430
Expertise purchasing intentions	Equal variances assumed	-0,185	130,000	0,854
	Equal variances not assumed	-0,186	130,000	0,852

Table 4: Independent samples test for the expertise dimension

As it is shown on the Descriptive Statistics table (table 3), regarding the expertise dimension ($M_{\text{Non-Expert}} = 5,2943$, $SD = 1,99499$; $M_{\text{Expert}} = 5,5355$, $SD = 1,49130$) and the purchasing intentions within this dimension ($M_{\text{Non-Expert}} = 4,6524$, $SD = 1,99499$; $M_{\text{Expert}} = 4,7204$, $SD = 1,96804$), there is no difference in means between the influencer that was an expert and the one that was not and therefore, they were not perceived as being any different. Moreover, the independent samples test (table 4) shows a p-value $> 0,005$, and so we reject the hypothesis and conclude that consumers' purchase intentions are not higher for beauty products advertised by social media influencers who are perceived as experts than non-experts.

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Trustworthiness dimension	Non-trustworthy	66	2,4848	1,52681
	Trustworthy	66	4,9364	1,91228
Trustworthiness purchasing intentions	Non-trustworthy	66	2,1869	1,38135
	Trustworthy	66	4,3788	2,23560

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for the trustworthiness dimension

		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Trustworthiness dimension	Equal variances assumed	-8,139	130	0,000
	Equal variances not assumed	-8,139	123,926	0,000
Trustworthiness purchasing intentions	Equal variances assumed	-6,776	130	0,000
	Equal variances not assumed	-6,776	108,318	0,000

Table 6: Independent samples test for the trustworthiness dimension

As it is shown on the Descriptive Statistics table (table 5), regarding the trustworthiness dimension ($M_{\text{Non-Trustworthy}} = 2,4848$, $SD = 1,52681$; $M_{\text{Trustworthy}} = 4,9364$, $SD = 1,91228$) and the purchasing intentions within this dimension ($M_{\text{Non-Trustworthy}} = 2,1869$, $SD = 1,38135$; $M_{\text{Trustworthy}} = 4,3788$, $SD = 2,23560$), there is a difference in means between the influencer that was trustworthy and the one that was not and therefore, they were perceived as being different. Moreover, the independent samples test (table 6) shows a p-value $< 0,000$, and so we accept the hypothesis and conclude that consumers' purchase intentions are higher for beauty products advertised by social media influencers who are perceived as trustworthy than non-trustworthy.

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Attractiveness dimension	Non-attractive	66	2,4545	1,41489
	Attractive	66	5,3030	1,62944
Attractiveness purchasing intentions	Non-attractive	66	2,0051	1,21598
	Attractive	66	4,3636	2,22090

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for the attractiveness dimension

		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Attractiveness dimension	Equal variances assumed	-10,723	130	0,000
	Equal variances not assumed	-10,723	127,492	0,000
Attractiveness purchasing intentions	Equal variances assumed	-7,568	130	0,000
	Equal variances not assumed	-7,568	100,757	0,000

Table 8: Independent samples test for the attractiveness dimension

As it is shown on the Descriptive Statistics table (table 7), regarding the attractiveness dimension ($M_{\text{Non-Attractive}} = 2,4545$, $SD = 1,41489$; $M_{\text{Attractive}} = 5,3030$, $SD = 1,62944$) and the purchasing intentions within this dimension ($M_{\text{Non-Attractive}} = 2,0051$, $SD = 1,21598$; $M_{\text{Attractive}} = 4,3636$, $SD = 2,22090$), there is a difference in means between the influencer that was attractive and the one that was not and therefore, they were perceived as being different. Moreover, the independent samples test (table 8) shows a p-value $< 0,000$, and so we accept the hypothesis and conclude that consumers' purchase intentions are higher for beauty products advertised by social media influencers who are perceived as attractive than non-attractive.

Even though the independent samples t-test already confirmed that only for the dimensions of trustworthiness and attractiveness do people show purchase intentions, it was hypothesised in this study that the three credibility dimensions (expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness) mediated the effect of credibility on the consumer's purchase intentions. To test that the Hayes PROCESS Model 4 (2013) was performed three times (one for each credibility dimension),

with purchase intentions as the dependent variable, the type of scenario that the participant was assigned to (credible or non-credible) as the independent variable, and the variables that measured the perceptions of credibility as mediators.

Regarding expertise, and consistent with the previous results, it was not found any mediation effect of the dimension on the dependent variable since the value 0 was included on their confidence interval ($B = 0,2273$; $SE = 0,2861$; $95\% CI = -0,3300$ to $0,7857$).

On the other hand, both attractiveness and trustworthiness dimensions mediated the effect of credibility on purchase intentions ($B = 2,6164$; $SE = 0,3271$; $95\% CI = 1,9898$ to $3,2907$; $B = 2,248$; $SE = 0,3205$; $95\% CI = 1,6353$ to $2,8907$). Furthermore, it was also found that attractiveness led to higher levels of purchase intentions and the same happened for trustworthiness (appendix 2 for full statistics).

5. Discussion

As beauty companies continue to invest in influencer marketing, theorising and examining the relationship between influencers and consumer's behaviour is important. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to evaluate how social media is being used as a Platform for Influencers and evaluate how Influencer's affect Purchase Intentions, regarding the beauty industry.

As hypothesized, it was found on tables 1 and 2 that consumers prefer to search for information, regarding beauty products, through social media influencers rather than the brands themselves, which aligns with Coulter and his colleagues (2002) and Tarczydlo (2019) who have suggested consumers use the media as a source of product information. Sudha and Sheena (2017) have added to this point by referring that consumers prefer to search for information via influencer because this type of marketing promotes a level of credibility that traditional marketing finds hard to attain.

It was also found on tables 1 and 2, that consumers are more likely to purchase a beauty product when it has been advertised by a social media influencer rather than when it is advertised by the brand, which is compatible with the conclusions of Chopra and her colleagues (2021) in which they explain that despite consumers preferring the recommendations from friends or family as their number one source of information, they still prefer influencers over brands as they are perceived as an extension of their friend.

Moreover, it was hypothesized that consumers purchase intentions are affected by whether the influencer has perceived credibility on the matter, with the dimensions of expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness mediating this relationship. Previous research has shown conflicting results as Ohanian (1991) concluded that only expertise was significant in explaining purchase intentions, while replicating the same study Pornpitakpan (2003) determined that all three dimensions have a significant effect on purchase intentions. Furthermore, a number of authors (Pornpitakpan, 2004a, McGinnies & Ward, 1980, Friedman & Friedman, 1979) have determined that purchase intentions were only significantly affected by the expertise and trustworthiness dimensions. However, a more recent study carried out by Balabanis and Chatzopoulou (2019) did not establish that beauty influencers' expertness had an impact on the influence to purchase, which was then confirmed by Wiedmann and Mettenheim (2020) that concluded that "enhancing audiences' perceptions of endorser

trustworthiness and attractiveness leading to an advantageous brand image and brand satisfaction could lead customers to ultimately purchase the advertised goods” (p.715).

The findings of this study support those of more recent research. In this study it was found on tables 3 and 4 that, regarding the beauty industry, consumers’ purchase intentions are not higher for beauty products advertised by social media influencers who are perceived as experts. However, it was found on tables 5, 6, 7, and 8, that consumer’s purchase intentions are higher for those who are perceived as trustworthy and attractive. Furthermore, aligned with these findings, both attractiveness and trustworthiness dimensions mediated the effect of credibility on purchase intentions, as we can see in appendix 2.

The original Source Credibility model was made considering celebrity endorsers (Ohanian, 1990), and later argued by Premeaux (2005, 2009), that, for celebrities, the expertise dimension was the crucial requirement. However, since the appearance of social media influencers, the model hasn’t been adapted to better suit their needs. Wiedmann and his colleagues (2010) suggested that consumers might look at an influencer as someone who stems from the middle of society (unlike celebrities) and so, consumers might not want to be provided with an expert endorser but would instead prefer that of an unprofessional user. Huang and Chen (2006) also add to this topic by suggesting that consumers tend to rely on the perceptions of other consumers rather than experts.

Wiedmann and Mettenheim (2020) suggested in their study that in order to implement a successful influencer marketing campaign, trustworthiness is the dimension that one should pay more attention to, followed by the attractiveness dimension, and that the expertise dimension is insignificant. Their study reveals that not all credibility dimensions have the same weight as credibility measures and therefore there is a hierarchy in the Source-Credibility Model.

The analysis of the results from tables 5 to 8 fail to recognize any hierarchy of importance between the dimensions of trustworthiness and attractiveness. These results could indicate that specifically in the beauty industry there is no hierarchy among these dimensions, however because the study was not designed to test this, one can only claim this with confidence after carrying out an investigation to this effect.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Conclusion

Brand managers and marketers, especially in the beauty industry, are still struggling with how to approach influencer marketing and how to find the influencer that best fits their product and brand. Influencer marketing is directed towards encouraging consumers to purchase the advertised goods (Lee and Park, 2014), and purchasing intentions have been proven to be a reliable forecaster of the purchasing behaviour itself (Kalwani and Silk, 1982; Notani, 1997).

Therefore, the results of this study suggest that companies should invest in influencer marketing due to it being perceived as a more reliable information tool, when compared to the brands themselves, and that has better purchasing behaviour outcomes.

Additionally, this study provides practitioners with an overview of which of the dimensions of the Source-Credibility Model are relevant for the effectiveness of beauty influencers. It has been shown that to implement a successful influencer marketing campaign, companies should primarily pay attention to how consumers perceive the influencers' trustworthiness and attractiveness. Following in line with more recent studies (Balabanis & Chatzopoulou, 2019, Wiedmann & Mettenheim, 2020) and contradicting others (Pornpitakpan, 2004a, McGinnies & Ward, 1980, Friedman & Friedman, 1979), expertise has been proven to not be a requirement of credibility for beauty influencers.

6.2. Limitations and Future Recommendations

Firstly, the findings of this study are limited to social media influencers and the beauty industry and can only be generalized to the Portuguese market as 100% of the participants in the study were Portuguese. So, for future research it could be interesting to explore other nationalities and do a cross-cultural comparison to see if there are any differences in the results. Moreover, regarding product selection, it would be useful to carry out a study that would distinguish between high and low involvement or even premium versus luxury beauty products to see if the credibility dimensions that mediate the effect on purchasing intentions would be the same. Additionally, the difference between micro and macro influencers could be explored.

Secondly, a limitation occurred from the concepts of beauty product and influencers themselves. There is a lack of literature regarding the definition of these concepts and so, one

should be careful that participants may have not perceived the products or influencers in the right way. To mitigate this limitation, in the beginning of the survey, participants were presented with the definitions of these concepts.

Thirdly, even though the scenarios for the credibility dimensions presented in the main experiment were previously pre-tested, purchasing intentions could have been affected by the type of products selected. This could have happened because people who typically do use those products are not likely to buy them.

In terms of future recommendations, bearing in mind the results of this study, it would be interesting to further analyse why specifically, within the beauty industry, being an expert does not add credibility to the endorser and therefore does not increase the likelihood of purchase intentions. It has been explained previously, that regarding influencers consumers prefer to follow the advice of a non-expert, therefore it would be useful to explore if different types of beauty products (high involvement or luxury) would change these results. Additionally, a follow-up study could be done on whether a beauty influencer revealing sponsor discloser would affect their credibility.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Survey transcript

Block 1 – Introduction

Dear Participant, my name is Carolina Pereira and I am a Master's student at Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics and Aston Business School. The following questionnaire was developed within the scope of the final Dissertation and aims to better understand the customer's purchase intentions regarding social media influencers' marketing campaigns of beauty products.

Bear in mind that beauty products are personal necessities that are intended for applying to the face, hair and body and include products such as creams, makeup, deodorants, skin-care products, hair dyes, nail polish, perfumes, toothpaste, and mouthwashes.

Please be aware that there are no wrong or right answers and I kindly ask you to carefully read all the questions and answer as honestly as possible. All your data will remain anonymous and confidential, and your answers will only be used for academic purposes.

Thank you for participating and collaborating in this study.

Block 2 – Social media behaviour

Q1 - Do you follow (or used to follow in the past) any social media influencer?

- Yes
- No

Q2 - On average, how many social media influencers do you follow?

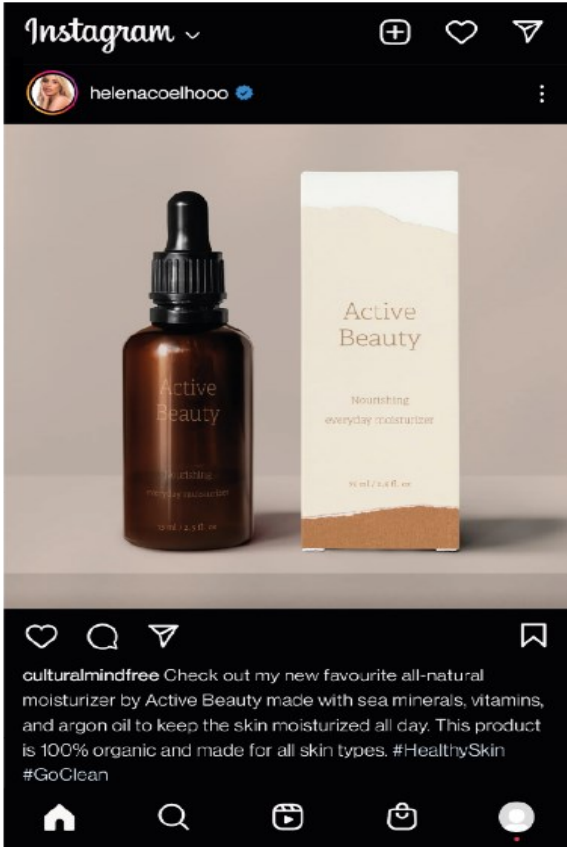
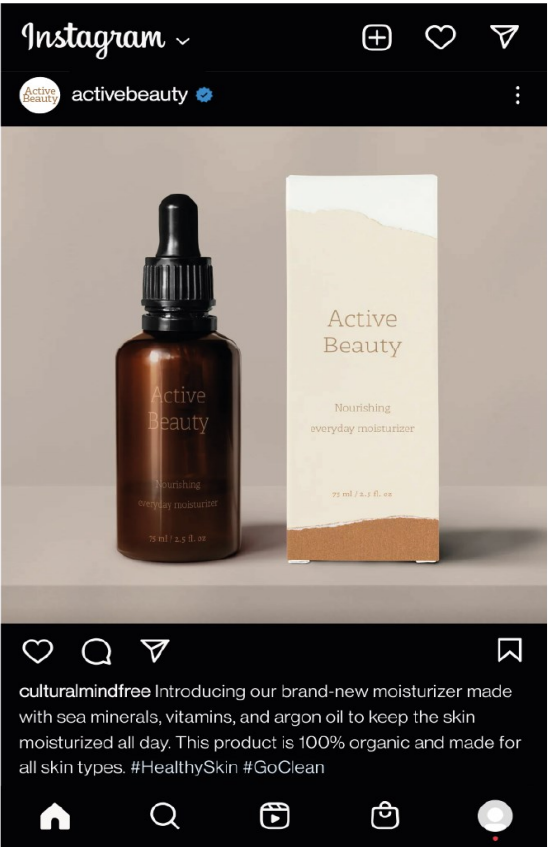
- 1-3
- 4-6
- 6-9
- >10

Q3 - How often do you buy beauty products?

- Less than once a year
- 1-2 times a year
- 3-4 times a year
- Every month
- More than once a month

Block 3 – Evaluate how social media is being used as a Platform for Influencers

(*Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the three conditions and presented the given content)

Influencer Condition	Brand condition
<p>Imagine that you are scrolling through your Instagram feed. You come across the post below by Helena Coelho, a very popular Portuguese beauty influencer, promoting a new moisturizer from Active Beauty. Please take thirty seconds to view the advertisement. Be sure to read the following questions thoroughly.</p>	<p>Imagine that you are scrolling through your Instagram feed. You come across the post below from Active beauty, a beauty company, promoting their new moisturizer. Please take thirty seconds to view the advertisement. Be sure to read the following questions thoroughly.</p>
	

Q4 - Keeping in mind the post that you just read, please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 (Not at all likely) to 7 (Very likely):

	1. Not at all likely	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Very likely
I am likely to search for more information about the moisturizer in the post	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see the post as a reliable source of information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would search for more information about the product in the same account	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5 - Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 (Not at all likely) to 7 (Very likely):

	Not at all likely	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	Very likely
I would consider purchase the product	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would purchase the product	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would recommend this product to my friends/family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Block 4 - Expertise condition

(*Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the two conditions and presented the given content with the addition of an Instagram post that illustrates the content.)

Expertise Condition	No expertise condition
X is a social media beauty influencer with a dermatologist degree . Recently she has been endorsing a new skincare product from the brand “Natureskin” that aims to prevent sun damage, wrinkles and helps with acne.	X is a social media beauty influencer. Recently she has been endorsing a new skincare product from the brand “Natureskin” that aims to prevent sun damage, wrinkles and help with acne.

Q6 - Rate the Influencer you just read about according to the following characteristics:

Not expert	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Expert
Inexperienced	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Experienced
Unknowledgeable	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Knowledgeable
Unqualified	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Qualified
Unskilled	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Skilled

Q7 - Regarding the product you just read about, rate the following statement on a scale from 1 (Not at all likely) to 7 (Very Likely):

	1. Not at all likely	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Very Likely
I would try the product if I saw it in store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would purchase the product	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would actively seek out the product in a store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Block 5 - Trustworthiness condition

(*Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the two conditions and presented the given content with the addition of an Instagram post that illustrates the content.)

Trustworthiness Condition	No trustworthiness condition
Y is a social media beauty influencer that has recently been featured in a Vogue magazine article entitled: “My beauty secrets”. Recently advertised a shampoo, from the brand “Unicare”, catered for both men and women. This shampoo help balance your hair’s pH levels with the benefits of growth stimulation hair repair and colour protection.	Y is a social media beauty influencer. Recently has advertised a shampoo, from the brand “Unicare”, catered for both men and women. This shampoo help balance your hair’s pH levels with the benefits of growth stimulation hair repair and colour protection.

Q8 - Rate the Influencer you just read about according to the following characteristics:

Undependable	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Dependable
Dishonest	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Honest
Unreliable	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Reliable
Incensere	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Sincere
Untrustworthy	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Trustworthy

Q9 - Regarding the product you just read about, rate the following statement on a scale from 1 (Not at all likely) to 7 (Very Likely):

	1. Not at all likely	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Very Likely
I would try the product if I saw it in store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would purchase the product	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would actively seek out the product in a store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Block 6 - Attractiveness condition

(*Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the two conditions and presented the given content with the addition of an Instagram post that illustrates the content.)

Attractiveness Condition	No attractiveness condition
Z is a social media beauty influencer with a modeling career . Recently has partnered with the brand “senses” to advertise a unisex deodorant. This is a natural based deodorant, with no fragrance that neutralizes your body odour.	Z is a social media beauty influencer. Recently has partnered with the brand “senses” to advertise a unisex deodorant. This is a natural based deodorant, with no fragrance that neutralizes your body odour.

Q10 - Rate the Influencer you just read about according to the following characteristics:

Unattractive	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Attractive
Not classy	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Classy
Ugly	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Beautiful
Plain	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Elegant
Not sexy	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Sexy

Q11 - Regarding the product you just read about, rate the following statement on a scale from 1 (Not at all likely) to 7 (Very Likely):

	1. Not at all likely	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Very Likely
I would try the product if I saw it in store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would purchase the product	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would actively seek out the product in a store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Block 7 – Demographic questions

Q12 – Gender

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

Q13 – Age

Q14 - Nationality

Q15 – Occupation

- Employed
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Student

Appendix 2: Hayes PROCESS models exploratory analysis

1) Expert dimension as mediator

Run MATRIX procedure:

***** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.1 *****

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. www.afhayes.com

Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

Model : 4

Y : expert_p
 X : dummy_ex
 M : expert_i

Sample
 Size: 132

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

expert_i

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,0681	,0046	3,1560	,6061	1,0000	130,0000	,4377

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	5,2943	,2123	24,9338	,0000	4,8742	5,7144
dummy_ex	,2412	,3098	,7785	,4377	-,3717	,8541

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

expert_p

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,7936	,6298	1,6613	109,7441	2,0000	129,0000	,0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	-,3378	,3704	-,9117	,3636	-1,0707	,3952
dummy_ex	-,1593	,2253	-,7070	,4808	-,6051	,2865
expert_i	,9426	,0636	14,8120	,0000	,8166	1,0685

***** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

expert_p

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,0162	,0003	4,4524	,0342	1,0000	130,0000	,8536

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	4,6524	,2522	18,4471	,0000	4,1534	5,1513
dummy_ex	,0680	,3680	,1849	,8536	-,6600	,7961

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y

Total effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
,0680	,3680	,1849	,8536	-,6600	,7961

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-,1593	,2253	-,7070	,4808	-,6051	,2865

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
expert_i	,2273	,2861	-,3300	,7857

***** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:

95,0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:

5000

WARNING: Variables names longer than eight characters can produce incorrect output when some variables in the data file have the same first eight characters. Shorter variable names are recommended. By using this output, you are accepting all risk and consequences of interpreting or reporting results that may be incorrect.

----- END MATRIX -----

2) Trustworthiness as mediator

Run MATRIX procedure:

***** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.1 *****

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. www.afhayes.com

Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

Model : 4

Y : trust_pu

X : dummy_tr

M : trust_in

Sample

Size: 132

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

trust_in

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,5810	,3376	2,9940	66,2421	1,0000	130,0000	,0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2,4848	,2130	11,6667	,0000	2,0635	2,9062
dummy_tr	2,4515	,3012	8,1389	,0000	1,8556	3,0474

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

trust_pu

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,8908	,7935	,9725	247,8249	2,0000	129,0000	,0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	-,0783	,1737	-,4510	,6528	-,4219	,2653
dummy_tr	-,0429	,2109	-,2033	,8392	-,4602	,3744
trust_in	,9116	,0500	18,2376	,0000	,8127	1,0105

***** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

trust_pu

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,5109	,2610	3,4530	45,9160	1,0000	130,0000	,0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2,1869	,2287	9,5608	,0000	1,7343	2,6394
dummy_tr	2,1919	,3235	6,7761	,0000	1,5520	2,8319

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y

Total effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
2,1919	,3235	6,7761	,0000	1,5520	2,8319

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-,0429	,2109	-,2033	,8392	-,4602	,3744

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
trust_in	2,2348	,3205	1,6353	2,8907

***** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:

95,0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:

5000

WARNING: Variables names longer than eight characters can produce incorrect output when some variables in the data file have the same first eight characters. Shorter variable names are recommended. By using this output, you are accepting all risk and consequences of interpreting or reporting results that may be incorrect.

----- END MATRIX -----

3) Attractiveness as mediator

Run MATRIX procedure:

***** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.1 *****

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. www.afhayes.com

Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

Model : 4

Y : att_pur

X : dummy_at

M : att_ind

Sample

Size: 132

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

att_ind

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,6851	,4694	2,3285	114,9922	1,0000	130,0000	,0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2,4545	,1878	13,0679	,0000	2,0829	2,8261
dummy_at	2,8485	,2656	10,7234	,0000	2,3230	3,3740

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

att_pur

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,8551	,7313	1,2506	175,5058	2,0000	129,0000	,0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	-,2495	,2094	-1,1918	,2355	-,6638	,1647
dummy_at	-,2578	,2672	-,9648	,3364	-,7866	,2709
att_ind	,9185	,0643	14,2905	,0000	,7914	1,0457

***** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

att_pur

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,5530	,3058	3,2055	57,2692	1,0000	130,0000	,0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2,0051	,2204	9,0981	,0000	1,5691	2,4411
dummy_at	2,3586	,3117	7,5676	,0000	1,7420	2,9752

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y

Total effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
2,3586	,3117	7,5676	,0000	1,7420	2,9752

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-,2578	,2672	-,9648	,3364	-,7866	,2709

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
att_ind	2,6164	,3271	1,9898 3,2907

***** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:

95,0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:

5000

WARNING: Variables names longer than eight characters can produce incorrect output when some variables in the data file have the same first eight characters. Shorter variable names are recommended. By using this output, you are accepting all risk and consequences of interpreting or reporting results that may be incorrect.

----- END MATRIX -----