



# The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Comparative Study of TikTok and Instagram

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## **Abstract English**

This study investigates the impact of social media influencers (SMIs) on consumer buying behavior, focusing on TikTok and Instagram. It applies Uses and Gratifications Theory, Parasocial Interaction Theory, and Source Credibility Theory to examine how user motivations, trust, and platform dynamics shape purchasing outcomes. A quantitative method was used, with a structured survey of 125 active social media users. Results indicate that information-seeking and identity-related motivations are the strongest drivers of consumer engagement, while entertainment plays a secondary role. Trust in influencers significantly predicts purchasing decisions, including impulse buying, whereas perceived authenticity does not. Platform differences were also evident: TikTok users were more prone to impulsive buying, while Instagram users engaged more in product research and long-term brand relationships. These findings highlight the importance of tailoring influencer strategies to specific motivations and platform dynamics. Limitations include a convenience sample predominantly from Poland and the reliance on self-reported data. This research offers new insights into the psychological and contextual factors shaping influencer marketing effectiveness across platforms.

**Keywords:** Influencer Marketing, Social Media Influencers, TikTok, Instagram, Consumer Behavior, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Source Credibility, Parasocial Interaction, Trust and Authenticity, Purchase Intentions

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## **Abstract Portuguese**

Este estudo investiga o impacto dos influenciadores das redes sociais (SMIs) no comportamento de compra dos consumidores, com foco no TikTok e no Instagram. Aplica a Teoria dos Usos e Gratificações, a Teoria da Interação Parasocial e a Teoria da Credibilidade da Fonte para examinar como as motivações dos utilizadores, a confiança e as dinâmicas das plataformas influenciam os resultados das compras. Foi utilizado um método quantitativo, com um inquérito estruturado aplicado a 125 utilizadores ativos de redes sociais. Os resultados indicam que as motivações relacionadas com a procura de informação e com a identidade são os principais motores do envolvimento dos consumidores, enquanto o entretenimento desempenha um papel secundário. A confiança nos influenciadores prevê de forma significativa as decisões de compra, incluindo compras por impulso, ao passo que a perceção de autenticidade não tem esse efeito. Também se verificaram diferenças entre plataformas: os utilizadores do TikTok mostraram-se mais propensos a compras impulsivas, enquanto os do Instagram demonstraram maior envolvimento na pesquisa de produtos e em relações de longo prazo com marcas. Estas conclusões salientam a importância de adaptar as estratégias de influenciadores às motivações específicas e às dinâmicas de cada plataforma. As limitações incluem uma amostra de conveniência predominantemente oriunda da Polónia e a dependência de dados autorrelatados. Esta investigação oferece novas perspetivas sobre os fatores psicológicos e contextuais que moldam a eficácia do marketing de influenciadores entre plataformas.

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## Introduction

The rise of social media has significantly influenced marketing strategies, particularly through the emergence of social media influencers (SMIs). As of 2024, over 5.22 billion people worldwide use social media, creating an expansive digital landscape where influencers can thrive (Statista, 2024). Influencers, who range from micro-influencers with niche followings to macro-influencers with millions of followers, have become pivotal in shaping consumer perceptions and driving purchasing decisions. Many brands utilize influencer marketing by engaging SMIs to promote their products and services. Specifically, brand managers collaborate with SMIs to build a co-creative image of their brands on social media, encouraging functional responses tailored to consumers' interests (Bhardwaj et al., 2024). The global influencer marketing market value stood at 21.1 billion U.S. dollars as of 2023 (Dencheva, 2023) and in 2024, the market was estimated to reach a record of 24 billion U.S. dollars (Dencheva, 2024). It shows that the market continues to grow rapidly, highlighting the significant role influencers play in modern marketing.

Social media influencers (SMIs) have a substantial impact on the marketing industry by influencing consumer behavior and shaping purchasing decisions through their endorsements and content. They leverage their popularity, credibility, and reach to promote products and services, making them more relatable and trustworthy than traditional celebrities (Yang & Ha, 2021). Prior research has focused on understanding the effectiveness of influencer marketing in terms of consumer engagement and purchase intention. Studies have explored factors such as influencer credibility, authenticity, and the para-social relationships between influencers and followers (Suri et al., 2023). However, gaps remain regarding the platform-specific mechanisms that drive consumer engagement and trust. Specifically, while there is extensive research on the general effectiveness of influencer marketing, limited studies compare the role of TikTok and Instagram in shaping consumer purchasing decisions. Additionally, the way platform-specific features (e.g., short-form videos on TikTok vs. curated visual content on Instagram) influence consumer behavior remains underexplored. This study aims to bridge these gaps by investigating the fundamental factors driving consumers to follow influencer recommendations and analyzing the unique impact of TikTok and Instagram.

The main objective of this thesis is to analyze the key factors that drive consumers to follow social media influencers and how these motivations influence their purchasing decisions. Additionally, the study explores the role of trust, authenticity, and platform-specific influences

in shaping consumer engagement and buying behavior. To achieve this, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the primary motivations for consumers to follow social media influencers?
2. How do these motivations influence consumers' purchasing decisions?
3. What role do trust and authenticity play in influencer marketing effectiveness?
4. How do TikTok and Instagram differ in influencing consumer engagement with influencer content, and how does this affect their purchasing behavior?

A conceptual model is developed based on existing literature to structure the research, outlining the relationships between consumer motivations, trust, authenticity, platform preference, and purchasing behavior. The study tests the following hypotheses:

H1: The marketing influence of influencers effectively shapes and changes the preferences and purchasing behavior of their followers.

H2: Motivation to follow influencers impacts their marketing effectiveness and ability to shape consumer purchasing decisions.

H3: Trust and perceived authenticity of influencers positively impact consumers' purchase intentions.

H4: Consumers following influencers on TikTok exhibit different purchasing behaviors compared to those following influencers on Instagram.

This research follows a quantitative research approach, employing a survey strategy to collect data from consumers who actively follow social media influencers on Instagram and TikTok. Participants are selected based on active engagement with influencers, ensuring the study captures the perspectives of users who interact with influencer-driven content. The survey includes sections on demographic information, motivations for following influencers, trust and authenticity perceptions, and purchasing behavior, providing a comprehensive dataset for analysis. To ensure reliability and validity, the study analyzed the responses of 150 participants, with 125 valid responses included in the final analysis after accounting for missing data.

Data analysis is conducted using SPSS software, applying the following statistical techniques:

- Descriptive statistics: Used to summarize demographics, social media usage patterns, and general consumer attitudes toward influencers.
- Reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha): Conducted to test the internal consistency of consumer motivation indices (entertainment, information-seeking, and social interaction).

- Multiple Regression Analysis: Used to examine how motivations, trust, authenticity, and platform preference influence purchasing behavior. Separate models are developed to analyze the relationships outlined in the hypotheses.
- Assumption Testing for Regression: Ensuring validity through tests for linearity, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, and normality of residuals to verify model robustness.

By addressing these research questions and hypotheses, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of influencer marketing effectiveness across TikTok and Instagram. The findings provide valuable insights for brands and marketers aiming to enhance influencer marketing strategies by tailoring content to consumer motivations, optimizing trust-building efforts, and adapting engagement strategies across different platforms. Furthermore, the study adds to the literature by examining how trust, authenticity, and influencer marketing strategies vary across social media platforms, offering practical recommendations for maximizing consumer engagement and conversion.

# 1. Literature Review

## 1.1 Consumer Behavior

The rise of digital platforms has significantly transformed consumer behavior. As a consequence, it leads to more informed, empowered, and selective consumers. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become key channels for consumers to engage with brands, share their opinions, and seek product recommendations. The rise of social media as a shopping platform has changed how consumers behave, according to a Global Web Index study (2018), 54% of users now turn to social media to research products before purchasing. This change reflects enhanced consumer awareness and participation in digital ecosystems. Today's consumers actively share reviews and opinions, using mediums like YouTube, TikTok and Instagram to provide unfiltered insights into their experiences. Such behavior has empowered individuals to influence brand reputations and requires retailers to prioritize responsiveness and transparency in their customer engagement strategies (Journal, 2023). Ultimately, social media has shifted the balance of power in the consumer-brand relationship, placing greater influence in the hands of the consumer.

As of October 2024, there were 5.52 billion internet users worldwide, accounting for 67.5 percent of the global population. Among this total, 5.22 billion (or 63.8 percent of the world's population) were users of social media (Statista, 2024). A Global Web Index 2024 study shows that the shift of social media from a networking tool to a discovery platform has significantly changed shopping behaviors. Previously, traditional search engines were the primary resource for product research. Now, platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Pinterest have become key channels for exploring products. Notably, 41% of Gen Z and millennials make impulse purchases online every 2-3 weeks, with this figure rising to 48% among daily TikTok users. In contrast, only 10% of baby boomers exhibit such frequent impulsive buying behavior, highlighting the generational differences in shopping habits. Furthermore, over 50% of TikTok Shop users report that they have purchased from brands they discovered on the platform. It illustrates the effectiveness of well-curated and visually engaging content in influencing consumer decisions. The study also reveals that younger generations utilize platforms like Pinterest to seek inspiration. Approximately 51% of Gen Z individuals report that they use the internet to discover ideas and trends rather than just conducting straightforward product research. This trend fosters spontaneous purchasing behaviors and blurs the lines between entertainment and commerce (GWI, 2024). This shift shows that visual and personalized social

platforms now play a key role in driving spontaneous and emotionally influenced buying habits, especially among different age groups.

To understand consumer buying behavior in the digital age, it is required to conduct a holistic analysis of its key determinants. FitzGerald (2019) identifies personal, psychological, and social factors as critical, while Kotler introduces a cultural dimension that significantly shapes consumer decisions. Cultural factors, which are rooted in societal values and learned preferences, influence purchasing decisions differently across regions. Family, environment, as well as traditions contribute to these cultural norms and brands must tailor their strategies to align with such variations. Social factors also have a substantial influence, as consumers are driven by their peer opinions, societal acceptance, and their roles within social networks (Cloomack, 2020). This is evident in the rise of influencer marketing, where endorsements from popular figures or friends significantly impact purchasing decisions (Journal, 2023). Understanding these cultural and social determinants is essential for interpreting consumer behavior in the digital age and for developing marketing strategies that resonate across diverse audiences.

Personal attributes, including age, income, occupation, personality, and lifestyle, further differentiate consumer preferences. For example, eco-conscious individuals may prioritize sustainable products, while tech enthusiasts often lean toward innovation. Digital platforms help brands to segment audiences effectively, offering personalized content to resonate with diverse consumer bases. Psychological factors, involving perceptions, motivations, beliefs, and attitudes, play an equally significant role. These elements, while challenging to measure, are crucial in determining how consumers evaluate products and services. Online reviews, targeted advertisements, and personalized recommendations leverage these psychological factors to influence consumer decisions (Journal, 2023). Together, these personal and psychological factors highlight the need for brands to understand and respond to individual consumer drivers to create more meaningful and effective marketing strategies.

Consumers may be influenced by a variety of individual factors in their purchasing decisions; however, there is a widely accepted decision-making process that typically guides their behavior. Although this process can vary slightly from one individual to another, it generally includes the following stages:

1. Recognition of Need - The consumer identifies a specific need or desire that initiates the intention to make a purchase.

2. Information Search - Consumers seek information about products or services, often using online reviews, blogs and other digital resources to evaluate their options.
3. Evaluation of Alternatives - Consumers compare different products or services based on their personal preferences and priorities to determine which one meets their needs best.
4. Purchase Decision - After identifying the best option, consumers decide whether to proceed with the purchase or to delay it.
5. Transaction Completion - The payment is processed, and the consumer receives the product. A smooth transaction is essential for a positive experience.
6. Post-Purchase Evaluation - After using the product, consumers assess their satisfaction. They may respond to surveys or receive follow-up communication to ensure they are pleased with their purchase (FitzGerald, 2019; Journal, 2023).

The digital age has changed consumer behavior by making consumers more informed, selective, and active in their purchasing decisions. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become essential for product research, reviews, and recommendations, impacting purchasing behavior, particularly among young people. Personal, psychological, and social factors influence consumer decisions, while digital platforms allow businesses to engage with customers and customize experiences. As a result, the consumer decision-making process has evolved into a dynamic journey, influenced by real-time content and interactions, with influencers playing a central role in pushing these developments. To understand the mechanisms behind this shift, the following section introduces key theoretical frameworks, including the uses and gratifications theory (UGT), which explains how consumers interact with media and how influencers meet distinct psychological and social needs, influencing purchasing decisions.

## 1.2 Theoretical Framework for Social Media Influencer Marketing

The rise of social media influencers (SMIs) and their ability to shape consumer behavior highlights the need for strong theoretical frameworks to understand the mechanisms behind this phenomenon. Uses and gratifications theory (UGT) is particularly relevant for examining how individuals engage with media and the benefits they derive from it. This chapter focuses on UGT as the central theoretical framework, explores its applications to social media influencers, and discusses supplementary theories such as parasocial interaction theory and source credibility theory to provide a comprehensive perspective.

### 1.2.1 Uses and gratifications theory (UGT)

The uses and gratifications theory (UGT) offers a framework for understanding why individuals actively seek out specific media and content to meet their needs. Originating from early communication studies, UGT emphasizes the audience's role in media consumption, suggesting that users are goal-oriented, selective, and motivated by a variety of psychological and social factors (Katz, 1974; Rubin, 1994). According to UGT, individuals choose media based on their expectations of how well it satisfies their needs, including information-seeking, emotional connection, entertainment and stress relief (Livingstone, 2019). Unlike earlier communication theories, which viewed audiences as passive recipients of media messages, UGT highlights the active role individuals play in customizing their media usage to align with their personal goals (McQuail et al., 1972). This shift in perspective highlights the importance of UGT in examining personalized media behavior in contemporary, interactive digital environments.

In addition to examining individual motivations, UGT also explores the competitive dynamics between media and alternative sources of need fulfillment (Jacobson, 2020), suggesting that the gratification provided by platforms like TikTok and Instagram often competes with offline alternatives such as interpersonal communication or traditional media (Sabir et al., 2020). While UGT has developed into a valuable tool for studying relationships between media consumption, psychological satisfaction, and societal influence, it has been critiqued for its limited exploration of the interplay between the psychological and sociological factors influencing users' pursuit of satisfaction (Katz et al., 1973; Miranda et al., 2023). Despite these critiques, UGT remains instrumental in evaluating how users purposefully engage with media to meet evolving personal and social needs.

### 1.2.2 Application of UGT to Social Media Influencers

The rise of social media influencers (SMIs) has created an opportunity to apply the uses and gratifications theory (UGT). Influencers act as content creators who engage audiences by addressing various user needs, including cognitive, emotional, and social integration (Masciantonio et al., 2021). They utilize platforms like TikTok and Instagram to provide followers with entertainment, community engagement, and valuable insights, aligning with users' motivations for consuming media (Qiyang & Jung, 2019). For example, emotional gratification can arise from the parasocial relationships users develop with influencers, fulfilling their need for belonging and validation (Brailovskaia & Teichert, 2020). These dynamics

illustrate function as purposeful media sources capable of satisfying diverse user needs in ways that are central to the UGT framework.

UGT has also proven useful in analyzing how influencers shape consumer behavior through content strategies tailored to audience needs. Influencers often blend entertainment with a sense of authenticity to meet users' dual needs for escapism and credible advice (Bossen & Kottasz, 2020). Furthermore, they use interactive content to strengthen their connections with audiences, which relates directly to users' social and communication needs (Sharabati et al., 2022). Researchers such as Zhang and Daim (2023) emphasize that influencers' ability to satisfy these diverse needs enhances user engagement, often resulting in increased trust and influence over consumer decisions. While these strategies can effectively align with various motivations, the extent to which influencers consistently fulfill users' evolving expectations remains a subject for further research.

From a psychological perspective, the uses and gratifications theory (UGT) provides insight into the reasons behind an individual's consumption of influencer content. Influencers fulfill users' hedonic needs by creating visually appealing and entertaining content that evokes positive emotional responses (Zhang & Daim, 2023). Simultaneously, they deliver utilitarian gratifications through informative and educational content, such as product recommendations or lifestyle tips that offer practical value (Masciantonio et al., 2021). These emotional responses - ranging from pleasure to excitement - not only enhance user experience but also shape consumer behavior by influencing attitudes and decision-making processes (Cleofas, 2022). As such, the psychological appeal of influencer content contributes meaningfully to the way users engage with and respond to media in digital environments.

In addition to emotional and informational gratifications, influencers also meet users' psychological needs for identity and belonging. By presenting themselves in relatable ways and fostering inclusive digital communities, influencers create spaces where users feel validated and understood (Brailovskaia & Teichert, 2020). This need for social connection became especially prominent during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, when individuals increasingly relied on social media platforms to ease anxiety and access health-related information (Unni & Weinstein, 2021). However, such reliance on social media for emotional support and validation may also result in problematic use, including addictive behaviors and adverse psychological effects like emotional instability, anxiety, and decreased life satisfaction (Chao et al., 2023). These findings highlight the dual nature of influencer content, which can offer meaningful psychological benefits while also posing risks when overused or consumed uncritically.

The gratification mechanisms explored by uses and gratifications theory (UGT) are closely connected to consumer buying behavior, particularly in the context of social media influencers. Emotional gratifications, such as pleasure and a connection with an influencer's narrative, often lead to trust and loyalty, which drive purchasing decisions (Zhang & Daim, 2023). This connection is further strengthened by interactive features on platforms like TikTok, where user feedback, such as likes, comments, and shares, enhances the perceived value of products endorsed by influencers (Xiao & Zhang, 2023). These elements demonstrate how gratification can serve as a psychological foundation for converting engagement into consumer action.

Research has shown that influencers' ability to satisfy users' hedonic (pleasure-seeking) and utilitarian (practical) needs positively correlates with consumers' intent to purchase (Sharabati et al., 2022). Emotional pleasure acts as a mediating factor between the perceived value of content and the likelihood of users taking action on it, highlighting the importance of creating engaging and meaningful content (Brailovskaia et al., 2018). Additionally, the low cost and high interactivity of influencer marketing make it a compelling alternative to traditional advertising, with the potential to attract substantial consumer traffic (Xiao & Zhang, 2023). Together, these factors underscore the commercial strength of gratification-based strategies in influencing digital purchasing decisions.

### 1.2.3 Criticisms and Limitations of UGT

Despite its broad applicability, uses and gratifications theory (UGT) has faced several criticisms. A major limitation is its tendency to concentrate mainly on individual motivations and gratifications, often overlooking the larger sociocultural and structural factors that influence media use (Livingstone, 2019). Researchers have also noted that UGT's reliance on self-reported data can introduce biases, as users may overestimate their intentionality and underestimate external influences (Katz et al., 1973). These critiques highlight concerns about the theory's limited capacity to capture the full complexity of media behavior in socially and technologically mediated contexts.

In the context of social media influencers, UGT has been criticized for not fully accounting for algorithmic dynamics that shape user experiences. Platforms like TikTok and Instagram heavily rely on recommendation algorithms that guide content visibility, raising questions about the extent of user autonomy and intentional choice (Wen & Ji, 2022). Furthermore, the theory has been critiqued for its lack of quantitative tools to assess the relationship between media usage time and user satisfaction (Meng & Leung, 2021). This limitation is particularly evident in research on compulsive or addictive social media use, where

the connection between gratification and problematic behavior remains insufficiently explored (Chao et al., 2023). These limitations suggest that UGT may require adaptation to effectively analyze emerging media environments driven by non-user-controlled factors.

To address these gaps, researchers have proposed integrating UGT with complementary theories, such as parasocial interaction theory or source credibility theory, to offer a more holistic view of social media behavior (Sun et al., 2020; Yang, 2023). Additionally, the predominance of qualitative approaches in UGT research has raised concerns about limited generalizability, prompting calls for more robust, data-driven approaches (Li, 2023). Broadening UGT's theoretical base and adopting interdisciplinary perspectives could greatly enhance its relevance and explanatory strength in today's algorithmic, user-centred media landscape.

#### 1.2.4 Supporting Theories: Parasocial Interaction and Source Credibility

##### *Parasocial interaction theory*

Parasocial interaction theory (PSI), first introduced by Horton and Wohl in 1956, explains the one-sided relationships that audiences develop with media personalities, which closely resemble real-life social interactions. These relationships are characterized by feelings of intimacy, loyalty, and emotional dependence, and have been increasingly adapted to digital contexts, especially in relation to social media influencers (SMIs) (Mu, 2024). Through symbolic interactions - such as liking posts, commenting, and participating in live streams - followers experience a sense of familiarity and connection with influencers (Muna et al., 2022). This perceived intimacy is essential for building trust and loyalty, both of which strongly influence consumer behavior, including brand engagement and purchasing decisions (Hwang & Zhang, 2018). Moreover, PSI emphasizes the role of followers seeing themselves reflected in influencers and resonating with their values and lifestyles (Mu, 2024; Choi & Rifon, 2012). These dynamics position SMIs as influential mediators of consumer attitudes, with their relatability and interactivity reinforcing the parasocial bond and enhancing brand loyalty.

##### *Source credibility theory*

Source credibility theory, introduced by Hovland et al. (1953), emphasizes that a communicator's persuasiveness is shaped by perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Social media influencers (SMIs) often embody these qualities, combining relatability and authenticity to build credibility with their followers (Freberg et al., 2011). Unlike traditional celebrities, influencers create personal connections with their audiences by

sharing relatable content and engaging directly through comments, likes, and live interactions, which enhances perceptions of trust (Muna et al., 2022). The theory further posits that perceived expertise in specific domains - such as fashion, fitness, or technology - boosts an influencer's ability to shape consumer attitudes and behaviors, particularly when the audience sees them as similar or relatable (Hwang & Zhang, 2018). This credibility is further strengthened by the interactive nature of social media, where real-time communication fosters closeness and reinforces perceived authenticity (Muna et al., 2022). In this way, source credibility theory helps explain how influencers successfully convert personal engagement into persuasive influence.

While uses and gratifications theory (UGT) explains how consumers actively seek media to fulfill emotional, social, and informational needs, it often overlooks broader sociocultural and algorithmic influences. These gaps can be addressed by integrating complementary frameworks such as parasocial interaction theory and source credibility theory, which provide deeper insight into trust-building, emotional bonds, and the mechanisms behind media influence. Taken together, these perspectives offer a more comprehensive understanding of how influencers operate within digital environments to shape consumer perceptions and decisions. The following chapter will explore the definition, functions and strategic roles of social media influencers, emphasizing their growing importance in shaping contemporary consumer behavior and marketing practices.

To synthesize the key theoretical insights discussed in this chapter, the table below visually summarizes the core assumptions, dimensions, and implications of the three frameworks guiding this research: uses and gratifications theory (UGT), parasocial interaction theory (PSI), and source credibility theory (SCT).

## Theoretical Frameworks Explaining Influencer Impact on Consumer Behavior

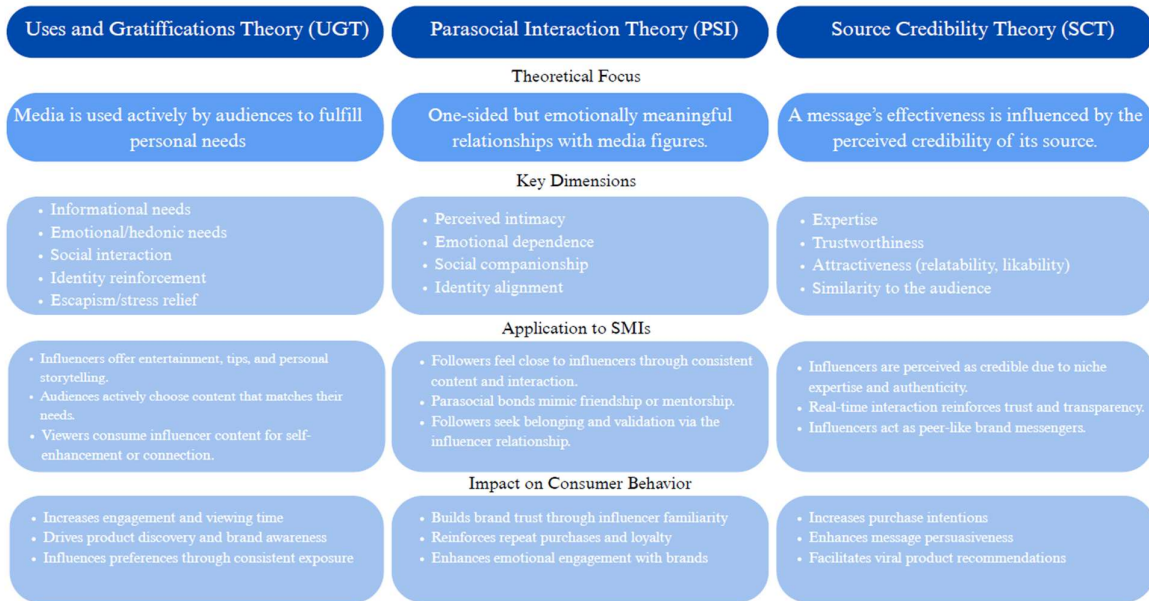


Figure 1. Theoretical Frameworks  
Source: own

## 1.3 Definition and Roles of Social Media Influencers

### 1.3.1 Social Media

Social media is an essential part of modern life, functioning as a platform for communication, content creation, and the global marketplace. With nearly 4.88 billion smartphone users worldwide in 2024, platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube ensure constant connectivity and content exchange (Backlinko, 2024). Originally designed for personal interaction, these platforms have evolved into dynamic ecosystems where individuals, brands, and influencers engage in ways that shape consumer behavior and global market trends (Journal, 2023). One of the defining strengths of social media is its ability to transcend geographic boundaries, enabling brands to reach culturally diverse audiences across continents. Real-time, two-way engagement fosters brand trust and loyalty by encouraging users to interact directly with businesses (Mehmeti-Bajrami et al., 2022). Tools like shoppable posts, livestream sales and user-generated content have transformed social platforms into innovative spaces for product promotion and consumer participation (Journal, 2023). As a result, social media now serves as a global marketing environment that supports both reach and responsiveness.

The integration of smartphones into daily life enhances the accessibility and influence of social media. On average, users spend more than 3 hours and 50 minutes each day on their smartphones, with a large portion of that time dedicated to online activity. This constant access

reinforces social media's role as a primary channel for information, commerce, and communication (Backlinko, 2024). Consumers increasingly use social platforms not only to discover new products but also to validate their purchasing decisions through reviews, recommendations, and influencer endorsements. Social media influencers, in particular, play a pivotal role in shaping consumer preferences and trust, establishing these platforms as central to the digital customer journey (FitzGerald, 2019). The combination of continuous access and high user engagement positions social media as a dominant force in digital consumption and decision-making.

In addition to reach and influence, social media's adaptability plays a crucial role in modern marketing strategies. With advanced tools for precise audience targeting and retargeting, brands can optimize their campaigns to deliver personalized content that resonates with specific consumer segments. Real-time feedback features also enable businesses to respond quickly to consumer reactions, allowing for continuous improvement and alignment with audience expectations. This level of interactivity and customization enhances consumer satisfaction while supporting brand relevance in a competitive digital landscape (Mehmeti-Bajrami et al., 2022). Consequently, social media has evolved from a casual communication tool into a strategic driver of business innovation and long-term customer engagement.

### 1.3.2 Social Media Influencers

In the world of digital marketing, social media influencers (SMIs) have become essential figures in shaping consumer engagement and brand communication. They use platforms like Instagram and TikTok to interact with large and highly engaged audiences. Unlike traditional celebrities, SMIs gain their influence not from mainstream fame but from their authenticity, relatability, and expertise in specific niches such as beauty, fitness, gaming, or technology (Koay & Lee, 2024; Leparoux et al., 2019). Their credibility stems from direct interactions and the creation of personal, unfiltered content, making them more relatable and trustworthy than conventional advertising figures (Journal, 2023). By focusing on niche areas, influencers foster trust and loyalty within their communities and consistently deliver content that aligns with their audience's values and expectations. As a result, they are able to connect brands with consumers in a more targeted and meaningful way. Because influencers tailor their content to match the interests of their audience, they can amplify brand messages more effectively than traditional advertising, ultimately shaping consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior (Koay & Lee, 2024). These characteristics position influencers as powerful intermediaries between brands and consumers in the digital landscape.

In his work, Rahman (2022) identified several types of social media influencers (SMIs), categorizing them according to follower count and domain expertise. These classifiers - mega, macro, micro, and nano influencers - represent different levels of reach and engagement within the influencer marketing landscape. Mega-influencers (MEIs), with over one million followers, are often celebrities or highly recognizable figures capable of commanding substantial fees for brand partnerships. However, due to their large audiences, they may struggle to maintain a personal connection with their followers. Macro-influencers (MAIs), typically with 100,000 to 1 million followers, are more accessible and capable of eliciting positive emotional responses due to a stronger sense of relatability. Micro-influencers (MII), with 10,000 to 100,000 followers, are seen as highly authentic figures; they often engage closely with their audience followers through personalized content, fostering credibility and trust. Their smaller scale also allows for more selective brand collaborations. At the smallest tier, nano-influencers (NAIs) - those with fewer than 10,000 followers - are often deeply rooted in niche communities. Despite their limited reach, they maintain strong engagement and are considered valuable for highly targeted marketing efforts, even though they may engage in fewer paid partnerships. Together, these categories illustrate how influence can be effectively scaled based on audience size and authenticity, offering brands flexible options for reaching consumers in meaningful ways.

Social media influencers (SMIs) play multiple roles across both corporate and consumer worlds, acting as brand ambassadors, content creators, educators and trendsetters. According to Bansal and Saini (2022), influencers function as intermediaries between brands and consumers, using their platforms to promote products and services in an authentic and relatable manner. This ambassadorial role is particularly effective due to the trust and loyalty influencers build with their audiences, enabling them to shape brand perceptions and influence purchasing decisions. One of their most prominent roles is content creation, as influencers develop engaging and personalized narratives that integrate products or services into their everyday lives. This approach contrasts with traditional advertising by offering an emotional connection and authenticity. Additionally, influencers serve as cultural mediators, aligning their messaging with community values to shape public opinion and consumer attitudes (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024). In sectors such as fashion, beauty, and technology, influencers also function as trendsetters, initiating viral phenomena that contribute to widespread product adoption. Their ability to spotlight emerging trends allows brands to remain visible and relevant in highly competitive markets. Furthermore, many influencers act as educators and thought leaders,

especially in specialized domains like fitness, finance, or technology. By sharing their experiences and knowledge, they provide valuable insights that appeal to followers seeking expertise, thereby enhancing their credibility. Lastly, SMIs take on the role of community builders by creating interactive spaces where followers feel connected and valued. This two-way communication strengthens consumer-brand relationships and positions influencers not only as marketers but also as facilitators of long-term engagement (Bansal & Saini, 2022). Collectively, these roles demonstrate the strategic importance of influencers in modern marketing ecosystems, highlighting their capacity to connect brands with consumers in more personalized and impactful ways.

### 1.3.3 The Role of Influencers in Consumer Decision-Making

Social media influencers have become increasingly important in shaping consumer decision-making. They combine authenticity, relatability, and the reach of digital platforms to create a significant marketing impact. Unlike traditional celebrities, who often gain influence through success in fields such as music or sports, influencers build their authority through niche expertise and consistent engagement with their followers, which fosters trust and credibility (Leung et al., 2022; Lou & Yuan, 2019). This relatability allows influencers to act as effective intermediaries between brands and consumers, particularly through personalized and non-intrusive content that seamlessly fits into users' digital environments (Sammis et al., 2015). This shift from traditional celebrity endorsement to influencer-led engagement underscores a transformation in how consumer trust and attention are earned in digital spaces.

Influencers also have a significant impact on purchasing decisions, particularly among younger demographics. Notably, 31% of social media users find new products through influencers, and this figure rises to 43% among Generation Z consumers. This generation often values influencer recommendations over traditional advertisements (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024). Having grown up in a digital-first environment, Gen Z audiences value the authenticity and transparency that influencers frequently provide (Nadanyiova & Sujanska, 2023). Furthermore, influencers possess a unique ability to craft narratives that are both aspirational and relatable. This strengthens their position as cultural trendsetters, influencing not only purchasing decisions but also broader societal norms and values (Leparoux, Minier, & Anand, 2019). As a result, influencers play a pivotal role not only in guiding consumer preferences but also in shaping the cultural expectations that surround purchasing behavior.

Influencers have transformed modern marketing by enabling brands to reach highly specific and engaged audience segments. Research shows a growing preference for nano- and

micro-influencers due to their cost-effectiveness, higher engagement rates, and perceived authenticity within niche communities, especially when compared to macro- and mega-influencers (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024). Targeted collaborations with these smaller influencers often lead to dynamic consumer-brand interactions that strengthen loyalty and visibility (Chodak et al., 2019). In addition, influencer marketing strategies increasingly leverage creative content formats, such as video content, which tend to generate stronger engagement and interaction than static posts (Pick, 2021). These factors collectively highlight why niche-focused influencer strategies have become central to successful digital campaigns.

While influencers offer many advantages, their increasing prominence also brings challenges. Over-commercialization and a perceived lack of authenticity can undermine trust, particularly when content appears overly scripted or disconnected from the influencer's personal brand. This emphasizes the importance of value alignment between influencers and the companies they represent (Jendoubi & Martin, 2020). Despite these challenges, influencer marketing has emerged as one of the fastest-growing and most effective strategies in digital marketing, reflecting a broader shift in consumer behavior toward peer-driven content and authenticity (Nadanyiova & Sujanska, 2023). As a result, brands must balance reach and credibility to maintain trust and engagement in influencer partnerships.

Social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok have become central to global marketing and communication, enabling personalized interaction between consumers and brands. Influencers, by building credibility and maintaining authenticity, now play a decisive role in shaping purchase decisions, particularly among younger demographics. From mega-influencers with massive reach to nano-influencers with deep community engagement, each influencer type contributes to shaping consumer attitudes in distinct ways. By acting as brand ambassadors, content creators, and trusted advisors, influencers bridge the gap between brands and consumers. Their ability to deliver personalized recommendations positions them as key figures in the evolving digital marketplace. The following section will explore the mechanics of influencer marketing in more depth, focusing on the key factors that determine its effectiveness.

## 1.4 Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing has grown as a significant brand engagement tactic, utilizing social media influencers with established credibility and a loyal following. Companies can promote goods in a more organic and trustworthy way by harnessing influencers' reach and authenticity rather than through traditional advertising. This marketing strategy is especially effective for targeting

niche audiences because influencers provide content suited to their followers' interests, resulting in increased engagement and purchase intention. Furthermore, the rise of digital platforms such as Instagram and TikTok has increased the impact of influencer marketing by enabling firms to connect with customers through visually appealing and interactive content. As the market evolves, businesses are increasingly incorporating data-driven tactics to maximize influencer connections and measure campaign effectiveness (McKinsey & Company, 2023). These developments confirm that influencer marketing is no longer a trend, but a central component of digital strategy in a highly personalized marketplace.

The differences between traditional and digital marketing lie in their methods, communication dynamics, and ability to adapt to consumer behavior. Traditional marketing typically employs static, one-way communication channels, such as newspapers, radio and television, aiming to target broad audiences. This approach works in building brand trust and recognition within local markets, but often lacks flexibility and the ability to respond to real-time consumer feedback. In contrast, digital marketing operates through dynamic, two-way communication on platforms like social media, email, and search engines. This method enables businesses to engage directly with consumers, allowing real-time interactions and feedback collection. Such features provide marketers with the ability to adjust campaigns swiftly, optimize strategies, and enhance customer experiences. Digital marketing is also more cost-effective, enabling businesses to achieve global reach and niche targeting with significantly lower expenditures compared to traditional advertising methods (Mehmeti-Bajrami et al., 2022). As digital environments become more responsive, flexible marketing approaches continue to outpace traditional methods in both effectiveness and efficiency.

One of the most significant advantages of digital marketing is the ability to harness data and analytics to gain deeper insights into consumer behavior and preferences. Social media campaigns can track engagement metrics like clicks, shares, and comments, which provide insights into audience response. Moreover, this type of marketing allows businesses to compare products, present reviews, and deliver personalized content, which has been shown to influence buying intentions and brand attitudes effectively (Mehmeti-Bajrami et al., 2022). These data-driven capabilities allow marketers to create more precise, adaptive, and customer-centered strategies that align closely with shifting consumer needs.

#### 1.4.1 Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Influencer Marketing

Credibility and authenticity are essential for successful influencer marketing. Credibility is typically defined by three key dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness

(Ohanian, 1990). Influencers who are perceived as knowledgeable about the products they endorse are more effective at influencing consumer decisions, particularly when they target niche markets with specialized content (Bogoevska-Gavrilova & Ciunova-Shuleska, 2022). Trustworthiness, or the perception that an influencer is honest and reliable, enhances the emotional connection with followers, making them more receptive to recommendations (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Authenticity, often linked to relatability, is crucial for maintaining audience trust. Influencers who transparently disclose partnerships and genuinely endorse products are better equipped to engage their followers (Añaña & Barbosa, 2023). On the other hand, insincere endorsements can damage trust, as audiences may view such promotions as opportunistic or driven purely by commercial interests (Leparoux et al., 2019). Taken together, these credibility-related factors determine whether followers perceive influencer content as trustworthy, which in turn directly impacts its persuasive power.

High engagement between influencers and their audiences enhances the effectiveness of marketing efforts. Social media platforms enable interactions such as commenting, direct messaging, and live streaming, allowing influencers to establish parasocial relationships – one-sided emotional connections that resemble real friendships (Mu, 2024). These relationships create a sense of intimacy and loyalty, making followers more likely to trust an influencer's recommendations (Muna et al., 2022). Relatability is crucial for boosting engagement. Audiences are more inclined to connect with influencers who share similar lifestyles, experiences, or aspirations (Kim & Kim, 2019). This relatability is particularly significant among younger demographics like Generation Z, who prioritize personalized and authentic content over ideals that seem unattainable (Nadanyiova & Sujanska, 2023). Influencers who effectively respond to their audience's needs and preferences through interactive and relatable content are more likely to foster loyalty and drive consumer actions. Ultimately, engagement and relatability work in tandem to strengthen the emotional bond between influencers and followers, increasing the likelihood of marketing success.

The quality and consistency of an influencer's content are crucial for maintaining credibility and keeping the audience engaged. High-quality visuals, engaging storytelling, and well-edited videos contribute to a professional image that resonates with followers (Chodak et al., 2019). Platforms like Instagram and TikTok prioritize visually appealing and dynamic content, with short-form videos often achieving the highest engagement rates because of their accessibility and shareability (Journal, 2023). Consistency in posting schedules is equally important, as regular updates help maintain audience interest and establish the influencer as a

trustworthy source of entertainment or information (Añaña & Barbosa, 2023). Furthermore, maintaining consistent messaging that aligns with the influencer's personal brand strengthens their image, making them more relatable and trustworthy (Bogoevska-Gavrilova & Ciunova-Shuleska, 2022). On the other hand, sporadic or inconsistent content can lead to follower disengagement, reducing the influencer's ability to impact consumer decisions. Ultimately, a steady stream of high-quality content reinforces audience loyalty and enhances the influencer's long-term marketing effectiveness.

Demographic alignment ensures that an influencer's audience matches the brand's target market. Social media platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube cater to distinct user demographics. For example, TikTok tends to attract a younger audience, while Instagram appeals more broadly across age groups (Mehmeti-Bajrami et al., 2022). Brands should carefully choose influencers whose audiences reflect the cultural, social, and behavioral traits of their target consumers (Leparoux et al., 2019). For instance, fashion brands aiming to reach Millennials might collaborate with lifestyle influencers on Instagram, while gaming companies targeting Gen Z may focus on influencers from Twitch or TikTok. Additionally, niche influencers often achieve higher engagement rates than mega-influencers because their followers are more focused and personally invested in the content being shared (Nadanyiova & Sujanska, 2023). By aligning the influencer's platform, audience, and niche with the brand's goals, marketers can maximize relevance and campaign effectiveness.

Social proof, which is based on the idea that people tend to follow the actions of others, plays a crucial role in the success of influencer marketing. Indicators of social proof - such as follower counts, likes, shares, and comments - validate an influencer's credibility and the effectiveness of their recommendations (Añaña & Barbosa, 2023). Consumers often perceive high engagement levels as signs of trustworthiness and expertise (Makgosa, 2010). Social media campaigns that utilize social proof by showcasing user-generated content, such as reviews, testimonials, or unboxing videos, help to create a sense of community around a brand, which in turn encourages purchases (Muna et al., 2022). This effect is further enhanced when influencers offer personalized discount codes or limited-time promotions, motivating consumers to follow the behavior of the majority. Overall, the visibility of peer approval reinforces consumer confidence and encourages participation in trends driven by influencers.

Long-term collaborations between influencers and brands are generally more effective than one-off campaigns. These partnerships allow influencers to authentically integrate a brand into their content, creating a more organic and credible narrative (Añaña & Barbosa, 2023).

Over time, repeated endorsements help build stronger brand associations and increase consumer trust, making audiences more likely to see the product or service as part of their lifestyle (Nadanyiova & Sujanska, 2023). Additionally, long-term relationships enable influencers to offer detailed insights about the brand, fostering a deeper understanding among their followers (Bogoevska-Gavrilova & Ciunova-Shuleska, 2022). In contrast, one-off campaigns often come across as transactional and may not establish the necessary trust or relevance needed to effectively influence purchasing decisions. For this reason, sustained partnerships are more likely to drive meaningful engagement and long-term customer loyalty.

### 1.4.2 Challenges and Considerations in Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing has quickly emerged as a leading strategy in modern advertising, allowing brands to reach highly engaged audiences through individuals who hold influence over consumer opinions. However, the existing literature highlights several challenges and considerations that can affect the success and integrity of influencer marketing campaigns. These challenges include authenticity, ethics, measurement, platform changes, market saturation, and influencer-brand alignment.

A major challenge in influencer marketing is maintaining authenticity and trust. As influencers increasingly endorse multiple products and collaborate with various brands, consumers may begin to question the sincerity of their recommendations, particularly when promotions extend beyond the influencer's established niche (Amjad, Anitsal, & Anitsal, 2024). This concern is especially relevant to micro-influencers, who are typically appreciated for their relatability and authenticity. However, if they become overly commercialized, they risk alienating their audiences and undermining their own credibility (Zhang, 2023). Preserving authenticity is therefore essential to sustaining influence and long-term consumer trust.

Ethics and transparency are particularly significant when influencer marketing targets vulnerable groups such as Generation Z. Many younger consumers may not fully grasp the commercial nature of influencer content or recognize when a post is part of a paid partnership (Nadanyiova & Sujanska, 2023). These concerns have led to growing criticism regarding transparency and the disclosure of paid endorsements. Calls for clearer regulations and disclosure guidelines are increasing, as they are necessary to secure consumer interest and reinforce ethical marketing practices (Leparoux et al., 2019). Addressing these issues is vital to ensuring responsible influencer-brand relationships in digital spaces.

Another critical challenge is evaluating the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns. Brands often rely on surface-level metrics, such as engagement rates, impressions,

and follower counts, to assess success. However, these indicators do not accurately capture deeper outcomes like purchasing behavior, brand loyalty, or customer retention (Zhang, 2023; Amjad, Anitsal, & Anitsal, 2024). For a more comprehensive assessment, marketers must integrate both qualitative insights and quantitative data. This approach will allow them to better understand not just how content performs online, but how it translates into real business value (GetSmart, 2024). Without such strategies, calculating return on investment remains unreliable and incomplete.

The constantly evolving nature of social media algorithms introduces additional complexity to influencer marketing. Changes in how platforms like Instagram or TikTok display content can drastically affect influencers' visibility and engagement rates (Journal, 2023). As a result, brands and influencers must constantly adapt their strategies to maintain audience reach and campaign relevance (Amjad, Anitsal, & Anitsal, 2024). This continual adjustment requires additional time, resources, and flexibility, making long-term planning more difficult in an unpredictable digital environment.

As influencer marketing grows in popularity, saturation within certain industries has emerged as a growing concern. In highly competitive sectors such as beauty and fashion, consumers are frequently exposed to repetitive promotional content, often resulting in fatigue or diminished responsiveness (KnowledgeWorld24, 2024). This oversaturation can reduce the overall effectiveness of influencer efforts and increase skepticism toward promotional content. To counter this, brands must pursue more creative, niche-driven strategies that stand out from mainstream endorsements and retain audience interest.

To overcome these challenges, brands must focus on strategic influencer selection and long-term partnerships. By aligning with influencers whose values and content style resonate with their brand identity, companies can foster greater authenticity and trust with their target audiences. Establishing clear, mutually beneficial agreements allows for more consistent messaging and deeper consumer engagement. Research suggests that long-term collaborations are more effective than one-off partnerships in building sustained trust and marketing impact (Nadanyiova & Sujanska, 2023). Strategic alignment and relationship-building remain essential for creating meaningful influencer marketing outcomes.

Influencer marketing has become a key strategy for reaching niche audiences through credible and relatable figures on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. These channels enable interactive, targeted, and flexible campaigns that contrast sharply with the limitations of traditional one-way marketing. While factors such as influencer credibility, audience

engagement, and content consistency contribute to success, challenges remain in maintaining authenticity, evaluating impact, and responding to algorithmic changes. These factors underscore the importance of understanding how platform-specific features influence influencer marketing effectiveness, which the following section explores.

### 1.5 TikTok and Instagram as Platforms for Influencer Marketing

Social media platforms are essential to influencer marketing, each offering unique features, algorithms, and user demographics that influence how influencers connect with their audiences. Notably, TikTok and Instagram have become two of the most impactful platforms, reshaping digital marketing by allowing brands to harness influencer credibility to boost engagement and increase sales. This section explores the defining attributes of each platform - focusing on content formats, demographic appeal, algorithmic structure, and their strategic use in influencer campaigns.

TikTok has rapidly become one of the most influential platforms in digital marketing, particularly for short-form video content. Originally launched as Douyin in China in 2016 and rebranded as TikTok for the global market, it has experienced exponential growth, surpassing Facebook and Instagram in annual user growth rates (Khairul Nuzuli, 2022). The platform's appeal lies in its brief, engaging videos, enhanced with music, filters, and creative effects, offering an interactive and visually dynamic experience (Al-Zoubi, 2021). TikTok is especially popular among Generation Z, who not only consume but actively create content, making them a key demographic for influencer marketing. The platform's design encourages rapid content dissemination, with 15-second videos optimized for virality - a feature that significantly enhances influencer reach and visibility (Du, Hashim, & Kamarudin, 2023). Marketers increasingly recognize TikTok's high engagement potential and authenticity-driven content culture. Influencers on the platform foster brand awareness by producing organic, relatable material that resonates with their audiences (Zhang & Daim, 2023). This emphasis on user-generated content supports a sense of community and strengthens brand-audience relationships, making TikTok a valuable tool for impactful influencer campaigns.

Instagram, acquired by Facebook in 2012, has developed into a comprehensive platform for visual storytelling and influencer-driven marketing. It supports multiple content formats - including static photos, short videos, stories, and IGTV - allowing influencers to tailor their content to varied audience preferences (Fine et al., 2022). This diversity enables brands to craft more targeted and immersive marketing narratives. The platform's strong visual emphasis is particularly appealing to lifestyle brands seeking to promote aspirational narratives. Research

indicates that Instagram influencers are effective at generating relatable and credible content, often through carefully curated lifestyle portrayals (Fine et al., 2022). Such authenticity enhances consumer trust and reinforces brand loyalty. In addition to content versatility, Instagram has introduced features like shoppable posts and Instagram storefronts, enabling users to make direct purchases without leaving the app (Sovann, 2019). This seamless blend of content and commerce allows influencers to guide consumers from product discovery to transaction. The integration of social commerce into influencer strategies has thus become a core driver of purchasing behavior on the platform (Leparoux et al., 2019). These developments illustrate how Instagram effectively merges visual storytelling with e-commerce functionality, strengthening its role as a powerful tool for both engagement and conversion.

### *Comparison of TikTok and Instagram in Influencer Marketing*

Both TikTok and Instagram offer distinct advantages in influencer marketing, shaped by their user demographics, content formats and platform dynamics. TikTok appeals to a younger, more dynamic audience through short-form video content and a strong focus on viral engagement, whereas Instagram emphasizes visual storytelling and long-term community building. As a result, each platform serves different roles in brand communication and audience connection strategies. TikTok's algorithm emphasizes personalization and user interaction, often giving visibility to new or niche creators (Al-Zoubi, 2021). In contrast, Instagram's algorithm favors accounts with established audiences and high engagement levels, making it particularly effective for campaigns that rely on influencer credibility and audience consistency (Fine et al., 2022). These algorithmic differences influence not only campaign design but also the selection of influencer partners, making it essential for marketers to understand how content is distributed across platforms. Ultimately, platform choice should align with brand objectives and audience segmentation. While TikTok is ideal for viral outreach and engaging younger users, Instagram is more effective for building brand loyalty and fostering long-term consumer relationships. By leveraging the distinct strengths of each platform, marketers can better tailor their strategies to maximize engagement and campaign impact.

Consumer engagement on TikTok and Instagram is shaped by platform-specific features and the dynamics of interaction between influencers and their audiences. On TikTok, high interactivity is a key driver of engagement, as users actively participate in challenges, duets, and trends, fostering a sense of community and belonging (Zhang & Daim, 2023). This participatory culture is particularly advantageous for brands aiming to achieve virality and rapid content dissemination. In contrast, Instagram offers more structured insights into audience

behavior through its Business Profile tools, enabling brands to assess the performance of influencer collaborations, especially in terms of consumer trust and purchase intent (Fine et al., 2022). While TikTok's predominantly younger user base tends to engage in spontaneous and entertainment-driven interactions, Instagram users are more likely to connect with content on a reflective level, contributing to stronger brand loyalty over time (Al-Zoubi, 2021). Together, these differences highlight the importance of platform selection in shaping consumer interaction styles and the long-term effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies.

Despite the success of influencer marketing across both platforms, several challenges persist. On TikTok, platform volatility - driven by frequent algorithm changes and evolving user trends - can make it difficult for marketers to predict audience responses and optimize content strategies. Questions regarding the authenticity of influencer content also arise, especially when promotional posts appear overly commercialized (Khairul Nuzuli, 2022). Instagram presents similar concerns as influencers must carefully balance brand partnerships with the need to maintain authentic, relatable content. Excessive sponsorship can lead to audience scepticism, reduced engagement, and weakened purchasing intent (Fine et al., 2022). Another shared concern is audience saturation: as both platforms become increasingly populated with sponsored content, users may experience fatigue, which diminishes the overall impact of influencer campaigns (Al-Zoubi, 2021). To remain effective, influencers must differentiate their content and preserve trust while aligning with brand goals. These challenges underscore the need for strategic, platform-specific approaches to ensure lasting consumer engagement and campaign success.

For brands, choosing between TikTok and Instagram depends on several factors, including the target audience, campaign objectives, and the type of product being promoted. TikTok is particularly effective for generating viral content, making it well-suited for brand awareness campaigns aimed at younger demographics. The platform's emphasis on interactive and creative formats encourages innovative marketing strategies and spontaneous consumer engagement (Du, Hashim, & Kamarudin, 2023). In contrast, Instagram offers more advanced analytics tools and is designed to support long-term consumer relationships (Fine et al., 2022). Brands that rely on visual appeal and lifestyle narratives can benefit from Instagram's emphasis on aesthetic content and community-building features. While TikTok excels in generating short-term engagement, Instagram provides the tools necessary for sustained brand relationships through influencer partnerships and e-commerce integration features (Sovann, 2019). Therefore, platform selection should be guided not only by functional capabilities but

also by how well each platform supports the brand's broader strategic goals and desired consumer experience.

To conclude, TikTok and Instagram are powerful platforms for influencer marketing, each offering distinct advantages. TikTok's short-form, viral content format appeals primarily to younger audiences, making it well-suited for campaigns focused on rapid engagement and broad visibility. Instagram, known for its emphasis on visual storytelling and community-building, is more effective for fostering long-term brand loyalty and incorporating e-commerce features. Despite their strengths, both platforms face challenges, such as maintaining authenticity and avoiding audience fatigue due to content saturation. Ultimately, platform selection should be informed by a brand's strategic objectives and the behaviors of its target audience to ensure campaign effectiveness.

## 1.6 Summary and Research Gap

The literature highlights the transformative role of social media influencers (SMIs) in shaping consumer behavior and decision-making. Influencer marketing integrates authenticity, relatability, and niche expertise, fostering consumer trust and engagement (Leparoux et al., 2019; Nadanyiova & Sujanska, 2023). Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have become central to these strategies, with dynamic formats like short videos and stories proving particularly effective in driving user interaction (Pick, 2021). While research demonstrates that influencers significantly impact Generation Z's purchasing decisions, concerns regarding over-commercialization and trust persist (Amjad, Anitsal, & Anitsal, 2024). Studies also explore mechanisms such as trust, demographic appeal, and content relatability, highlighting a shift toward using macro- and micro-influencers for more targeted consumer engagement (Jendoubi & Martin, 2020). Taken together, these studies underscore the value of influencers in modern marketing but often treat social media platforms as functionally similar in their impact.

Despite extensive studies on the effects of influencer marketing, a critical research gap remains in understanding how TikTok and Instagram differ in influencing consumer engagement and purchase behaviors. Existing research, including that by FitzGerald (2019) and Nadanyiova and Sujanska (2023), examines the general effectiveness of influencer marketing but does not differentiate how platform-specific characteristics - such as TikTok's algorithmic virality or Instagram's visual storytelling - affect consumer trust and authenticity. Similarly, while Pick (2021) and Leparoux, Minier, and Anand (2019) highlight the role of content formats in boosting engagement, they do so without addressing how these features function differently

across platforms. Additionally, concerns such as over-commercialization and declining trust, as discussed by Amjad, Anitsal, and Anitsal (2024) and Jendoubi and Martin (2020), are not fully explored in relation to the differing content ecosystems of TikTok and Instagram. Addressing this gap is essential for advancing a platform-specific understanding of influencer marketing, enabling brands to tailor their strategies more effectively to the unique affordances and user expectations of each platform.

## 2. Research Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research approach to test the hypotheses and validate the conceptual model. Creswell (2014) defines quantitative research as “the systematic empirical investigation of observable phenomena via statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques.” A quantitative approach is appropriate because it allows for statistical analysis of relationships between consumer motivations, trust, authenticity, and purchasing behavior on TikTok and Instagram.

A survey-based methodology was selected to collect standardized responses from a broad sample of social media users actively engaging with influencers on TikTok and Instagram. This method enables the measurement of influencer engagement, trust perceptions, and purchasing behavior in a structured manner, ensuring generalizable findings (Lou & Yuan, 2019). A qualitative approach, such as interviews or focus groups, was considered but found unsuitable due to the study’s focus on statistical validation rather than in-depth consumer narratives.

Since the study examines consumer behavior at a single point in time, a non-experimental, cross-sectional research design was used. This approach ensures that the relationships between motivations, trust, authenticity, and purchasing behavior are assessed without manipulating consumer interactions with influencers. All respondents received the same standardized questionnaire, ensuring consistency in data collection.

To align with the study’s hypotheses and research questions, the survey was structured into four primary sections:

1. Demographics and Social Media Usage Patterns - capturing key characteristics such as age, gender, platform usage, and influencer engagement levels.
2. Consumer Motivations for Following Influencers - evaluating entertainment, information-seeking, and social identity motivations using Likert-scale statements.
3. Trust and Perceived Authenticity of Influencers - measuring trust levels and perceived credibility of influencers.
4. Consumer Purchasing Behavior and Platform Differences - examining how engagement on TikTok and Instagram influences purchase decisions and brand loyalty.

To ensure clarity and minimize response bias, the questionnaire was designed following best practices for survey construction and item sequencing (Parasuraman, Grewal, & Krishnan, 2004). The complete survey structure and response scales are included in Appendix 1.

## 2.2 Data Collection and Sample Selection

The research utilized a non-probability convenience sampling technique, focusing on individuals who are active users of at least one platform - either TikTok or Instagram - and who follow at least one social media influencer. Participants were gathered through Instagram and TikTok by sharing the survey link on posts and stories related to influencer content. The survey was also shared with the researcher's colleagues and friends, as well as in online forums and Facebook groups focused on social media and marketing topics. The survey consisted of multiple-choice questions, Likert-scale items, and categorical variables assessing consumer motivations, trust, authenticity, purchase behavior, and platform preferences. A pre-test was conducted with a small sample of 5 participants over two days in late February 2025 to refine question clarity and structure before full data collection began.

After data collection, responses were cleaned and analyzed statistically. Cases with missing or incomplete responses were excluded, ensuring that all analyses were based on valid data points. The final dataset was used to examine trends in consumer behavior and relationships between influencer engagement and purchasing decisions.

This study employs a combination of descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and multiple regression analysis to examine the relationships between consumer motivations, trust, authenticity, and purchasing behavior on TikTok and Instagram. The selected methods align with best practices in quantitative research, ensuring robust statistical inference and validity (Pallant, 2020).

Descriptive statistics are used to summarize respondent demographics, platform usage, and general attitudes toward influencers. Descriptive analysis provides an overview of data distributions, measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode), and variability (standard deviation), enabling a foundational understanding of consumer engagement patterns (Field, 2018). Descriptive statistics are particularly useful for categorizing consumer motivations, purchasing behavior, trust and authenticity perceptions, and platform engagement preferences. This method facilitates the identification of trends and general patterns before conducting inferential statistical analyses (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

To assess the internal consistency of composite motivational indices, Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis is conducted. Cronbach's Alpha measures the extent to which multiple

survey items intended to assess the same construct are correlated, providing a reliability coefficient between 0 and 1 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). A threshold value of  $\alpha \geq 0.7$  is considered acceptable for reliability, with higher values indicating stronger internal consistency (DeVellis, 2016). This method is applied to motivation-related variables, ensuring that the subcomponents of entertainment, information-seeking, and social interaction motivations are statistically valid composite indices. By confirming reliability, this study ensures that the measured constructs are consistent and replicable across different consumer segments.

Multiple regression analysis is used to assess how independent variables (consumer motivations, trust, authenticity, and platform preference) influence dependent variables (purchase behavior and platform engagement). Regression analysis is a widely used method in consumer research to determine predictive relationships between variables, accounting for potential confounding effects (Hair et al., 2019). The study applies ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models, which estimate the strength and direction of associations between explanatory factors (motivation, trust, and platform usage) and outcome variables (purchase likelihood, product research behavior, and impulse buying).

Regression models were structured to test individual hypotheses separately, assessing the unique effects of motivations, trust, and platform preference on different aspects of purchasing behavior, while some models included multiple independent variables.

Before conducting regression analysis, standard assumption checks are performed to ensure the validity of the results. These include linearity tests (verifying that the relationship between independent and dependent variables follows a straight-line function), multicollinearity diagnostics (ensuring that independent variables are not excessively correlated, using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) thresholds below 10), homoscedasticity tests (confirming that the variance of residuals is constant across different levels of independent variables), and normality checks (verifying that residuals are normally distributed, typically through histogram and Q-Q plots) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019; Field, 2018; Hair et al., 2019). Meeting these assumptions ensures that the regression models provide reliable and unbiased estimates of the relationships between influencer marketing engagement and consumer behavior.

This study follows best practices in survey-based statistical analysis, using established techniques to ensure data accuracy and methodological rigor. All analyses are conducted using SPSS, allowing for precise calculations and reproducibility (Pallant, 2020). By integrating descriptive statistics, reliability testing, and multiple regression analysis, this study provides a

comprehensive evaluation of how influencer engagement shapes consumer purchasing behavior in a digital environment.

### 2.3 Sample Characteristics

The study analyzed the responses of 150 participants, with a valid response rate of 83.3% (n = 125) after accounting for missing data. The survey collected data on demographic characteristics, social media platform usage, and engagement with social media influencers.

In terms of platform usage, 65% of respondents reported actively using TikTok, while 84% indicated active use of Instagram. A small percentage, 6%, reported not actively using either platform (see Chart 1).

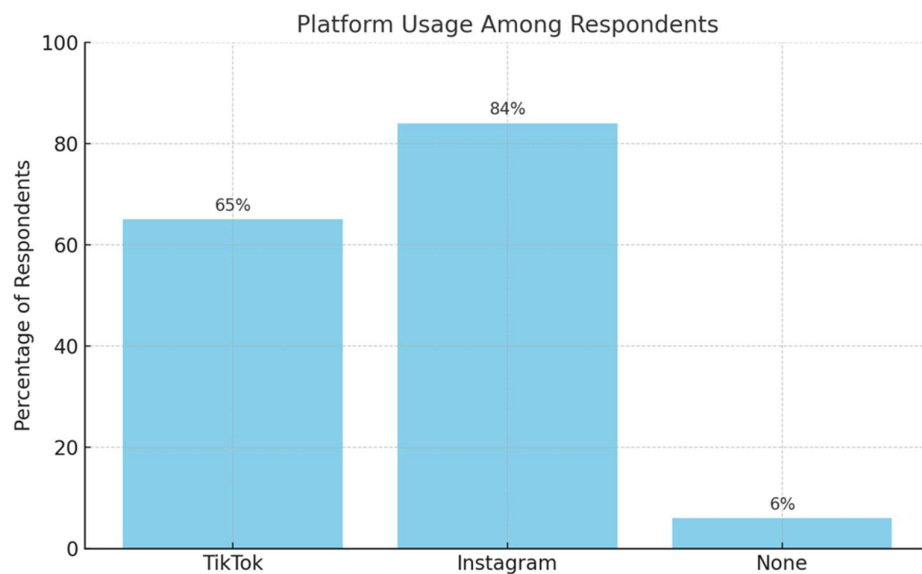
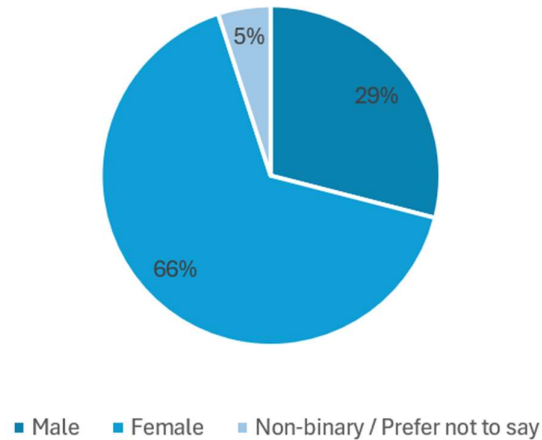


Chart 1. Platform Usage Among Respondents  
Source: own

This suggests that Instagram remains the more widely used platform among respondents, but TikTok also maintains a strong presence. When asked whether they follow at least one social media influencer on these platforms, 90% confirmed they do, whereas 10% stated they do not follow influencers (*Appendix 2, Table 1*). This high percentage of influencer engagement suggests that influencers play a significant role in the digital experiences of users on both platforms.

The gender distribution within the sample was skewed towards female participants, who made up 66% of the respondents. Male respondents comprised 29%, and 5% identified as non-binary or preferred not to disclose their gender (see Chart 2).

## Gender Distribution Among Respondents

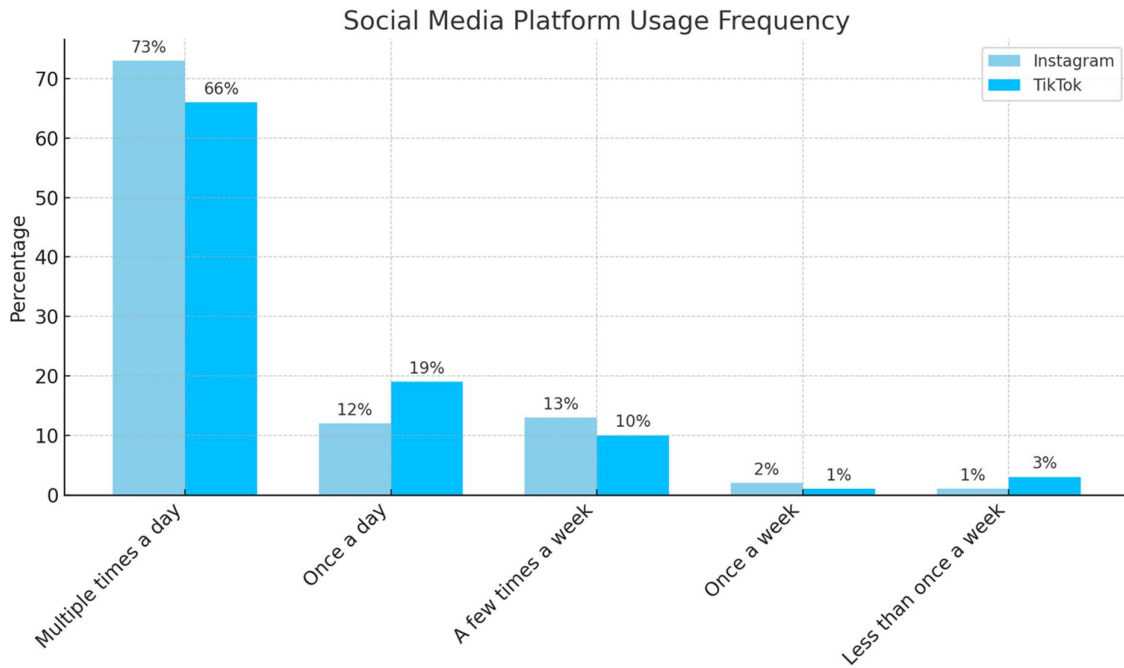


*Chart 2. Gender Distribution Among Respondents*  
*Source: own*

The predominance of female respondents aligns with prior research indicating that women are generally more engaged with social media influencers and digital communities compared to men.

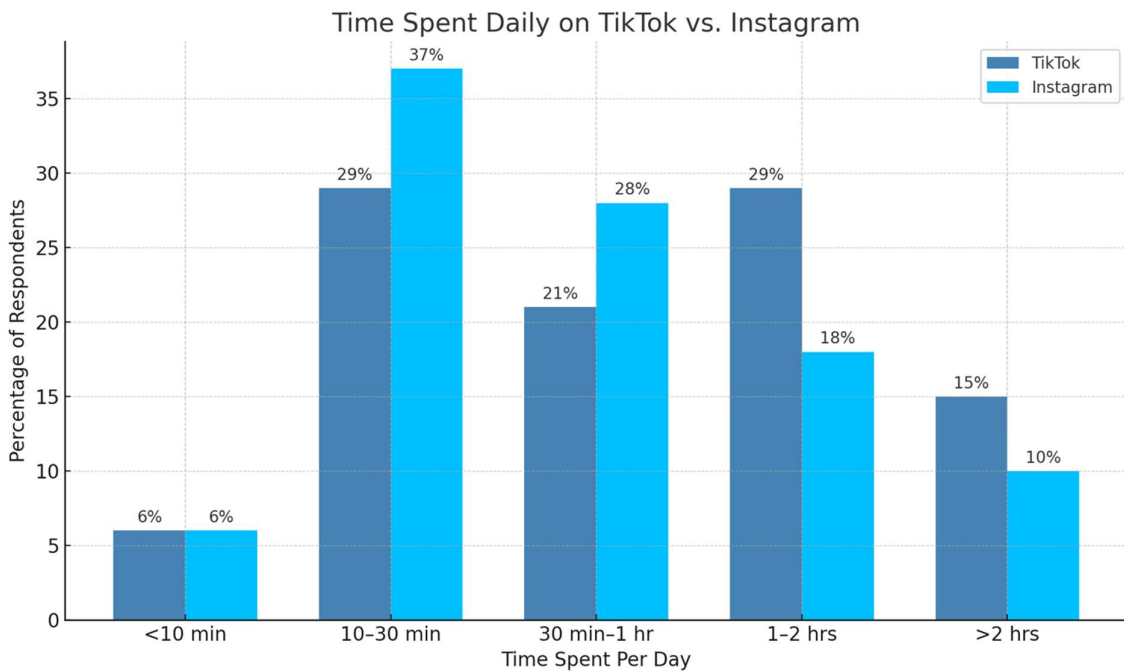
Geographically, the majority of respondents were from Poland (68%), followed by Portugal (15%) and Germany (6%). Other nationalities, including France, South Korea, and the United Kingdom, each represented only 1–3% of the total sample (*Appendix 2, Table 2*). The dominant representation of Polish respondents may indicate a regional bias in the sample, potentially influencing findings related to cultural differences in social media engagement.

Regarding social media engagement frequency, 66% of TikTok users reported using the app multiple times a day, with an additional 19% using it daily. In contrast, 73% of Instagram users reported using the platform multiple times daily, making Instagram the most frequently accessed platform (see Chart 3).



*Chart 3. Frequency of Instagram and TikTok Use Among Respondents  
Source: own*

The time spent on each platform varied, with 29% of TikTok users spending between 1–2 hours per day and a similar 29% spending 10–30 minutes per day. For Instagram, the most common usage time was 10–30 minutes per day (37%), suggesting that although Instagram is used more frequently, engagement sessions might be shorter compared to TikTok (*see Chart 4*).



*Chart 4. Time Spent Daily on TikTok vs. Instagram  
Source: own*

Overall, the results indicate that social media influencers have a strong presence within the digital habits of the sample. The prevalence of Instagram and TikTok usage supports the idea that these platforms are central to content consumption and engagement. Moreover, the high levels of daily engagement suggest that influencer marketing strategies on these platforms have significant reach and potential for impact. The demographic skew towards Polish and female respondents highlights a need for careful consideration when generalizing these findings to broader populations.

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1 Influence of Influencers on Consumer Preferences

A central assumption in influencer marketing is that influencers have the power to shape not only what consumers notice but also what they consider purchasing (Freberg et al., 2011; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). Given their perceived authenticity and relevance, influencers are believed to guide follower interests, create product awareness, and influence both planned and unplanned buying decisions. This idea forms the basis of Hypothesis 1 (H1), which proposes that the marketing influence of influencers effectively shapes and changes their followers' preferences and purchasing behavior.

To examine this hypothesis, a descriptive analysis was conducted on Q12-Q14, which assesses how frequently consumers engage with products based on influencer recommendations. The analysis included measures of central tendency (mean, mode) and distribution (standard deviation, frequency counts) to comprehensively understand how influencer marketing impacts consumer purchase behavior. The full frequency distributions for these variables are provided in Appendix 3.

The results indicate that influencers play a significant role in shaping consumer purchase behavior. When asked, "How often do you purchase products recommended by influencers?", the mean response was 3.05 (on a 5-point scale), with a mode of 3, indicating that most respondents reported sometimes purchasing products recommended by influencers. The distribution further reveals that 41.6% of respondents stated they sometimes purchase products due to influencer recommendations, while 22.4% reported doing so often, and 8.8% very often. However, a smaller percentage (8.0% never and 19.2% rarely) indicated that influencers do not significantly impact their purchasing decisions. These findings suggest that influencer recommendations do not always lead directly to purchases, but they have a notable influence on a large proportion of consumers who regularly engage with their content.

Beyond direct purchases, influencer marketing appears to be highly effective in driving product awareness and consumer curiosity. In response to "How often do you look up products after seeing them in influencer content?", the mean response was 3.68, with a mode of 3, suggesting that most respondents look up products at least sometimes after seeing an influencer mention them. A substantial proportion of participants (32.8% sometimes, 28.8% often, and 27.2% very often) actively search for products based on influencer exposure.

This indicates that while consumers may not immediately purchase an item, influencers significantly contribute to brand awareness and product discovery, positioning themselves as trusted sources of information in digital marketing strategies.

A key aspect of influencer marketing effectiveness is its ability to encourage unplanned purchasing behavior. In response to "How often do you buy a product even if you hadn't planned to, after seeing an influencer promote it?", the mean response was 2.61, with a mode of 3, suggesting that impulsive purchases occur less frequently than general product interest. However, 39.2% of respondents sometimes make unplanned purchases due to influencer promotions, while 12.0% do so often and 4.8% very often. In contrast, 16.8% never and 27.2% rarely make impulse purchases.

These results highlight that although influencers successfully drive product awareness and interest, their direct impact on impulse buying is somewhat lower. This suggests that while influencers increase the visibility of products, purchasing decisions may still depend on additional factors such as price, need, or trust in the brand.

### *Summary of Findings*

The findings strongly support H1, indicating that influencers effectively shape consumer preferences and purchasing behavior, although the impact may vary in intensity. While not all consumers purchase directly due to influencer recommendations, a significant proportion exhibit increased product interest and consideration, which are critical steps in the consumer decision-making process.

Furthermore, influencer marketing is particularly powerful in generating awareness and fostering long-term brand engagement rather than simply driving immediate, impulse purchases. These insights are valuable for brands looking to leverage influencers for sustained consumer influence rather than relying solely on direct conversion rates.

Following this analysis, it is also important to consider why consumers follow influencers in the first place, as these underlying motivations likely influence how they engage with influencer content. This leads to Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are the primary motivations for consumers to follow social media influencers?

To answer this research question, a descriptive analysis was conducted on Q7, Q8, and Q9, which explore the main motivations for following social media influencers. These motivations were categorized into three key dimensions: entertainment, information-seeking, and social interaction & identity alignment. The analysis included descriptive statistics (means,

standard deviations, frequency distributions) and composite indices for each motivation category, calculated as the average score of detailed indicators. To assess the reliability of these composite measures, Cronbach's Alpha was computed for each dimension. The full descriptive statistics and reliability results are provided in Appendix 4.

#### *Motivation 1: Entertainment*

One of the primary reasons consumers follow influencers is for entertainment purposes. The mean scores for entertainment-related motivations were relatively high, with a value of 6.79 on a 10-point scale. Specifically:

- 37.6% of respondents strongly agreed that they follow influencers because their content is entertaining, with an additional 46.4% somewhat agreeing.
- 52.8% of respondents strongly agreed that influencer content helps them pass the time.
- 57.6% stated they enjoy influencer content more than traditional advertisements.

These results indicate that influencers play an important role as digital entertainers, providing engaging and enjoyable content. The Cronbach's Alpha for the entertainment index was 0.796, suggesting a high level of internal consistency among the entertainment-related items.

#### *Motivation 2: Information-Seeking*

A second key motivation is the search for information and knowledge about new products, trends, and brands. The mean score for information-seeking was 7.21. The frequency distribution showed:

- 43.2% of respondents strongly agreed that they follow influencers to stay informed about trends, while 32.8% somewhat agreed.
- 57.6% of participants agreed that influencers provide useful product recommendations.
- 54.4% trusted influencers to introduce them to new brands.

This suggests that social media influencers act as informational intermediaries, guiding consumers towards new market trends and products. The Cronbach's Alpha for the information-seeking index was 0.869, indicating strong reliability.

#### *Motivation 3: Social Interaction and Identity Alignment*

The final category of motivation relates to social connection and identity expression. The mean scores for social interaction motivations were the highest among the three categories, with a value of 7.49. Specifically:

- 36% of respondents strongly agreed that influencers help them feel part of an online community.

- 39.2% strongly agreed that they follow influencers who align with their values and interests.
- 24.8% neither agreed nor disagreed about feeling personally connected to influencers.

These results highlight that influencers are more than just content creators; they serve as community builders and identity markers, helping consumers connect with like-minded individuals. The Cronbach's Alpha for this dimension was 0.748, confirming an acceptable level of reliability.

### *Summary of Findings*

The findings reveal that consumers follow influencers for a combination of entertainment, information-seeking, and social connection. The highest-rated motivation was social interaction and identity alignment, followed closely by information-seeking, and finally, entertainment. These insights align with previous research suggesting that influencers serve both hedonic and utilitarian roles in digital consumer behavior.

The analysis of Cronbach's Alpha values confirms the internal consistency of the motivational indices, validating the categorization into three primary motivations. This reinforces the idea that influencer marketing strategies should leverage multiple engagement drivers, not only focusing on entertainment value but also delivering authentic connections and valuable information.

Regarding RQ1 (What are the primary motivations for consumers to follow social media influencers?), the data strongly supports the premise that influencers play a multifaceted role in digital engagement. Consumers follow influencers not only for entertainment but also to gain information about trends and products and to establish a sense of community and identity alignment.

## 3.2 Motivational Factors and Purchasing Outcomes

While identifying consumer motivations for following influencers is essential, it is equally important to understand how these motivations translate into actual purchasing behavior. The extent to which entertainment, information-seeking, and social interaction drive consumer decisions forms the focus of this section. Addressing this relationship, Research Question 2 (RQ2) asks: How do these motivations (entertainment, information-seeking, and social interaction) influence consumers' purchasing decisions? Building on this question, Hypothesis 2 (H2) proposes that the motivation to follow influencers impacts the effectiveness of their marketing influence and their ability to shape consumers' purchasing decisions.

To examine these relationships, a multiple regression analysis was conducted using Q12-Q14 as dependent variables, representing different aspects of consumer purchasing behaviors, and Q7, Q8, and Q9 as independent variables, representing motivations for following influencers. These motivation factors were analyzed as composite indices rather than individual responses. Separate regression models were estimated for each dependent variable to provide a more detailed understanding of the relationships.

*The Relationship Between Motivations and Purchases Based on Influencer Recommendations*

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,517 <sup>a</sup>	,267	,249	,907

a. Predictors: (Constant), SocialInteraction\_Score, Entertainment\_Score, InfoSeeking\_Score

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	36,204	3	12,068	14,675	<,001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	99,508	121	,822		
	Total	135,712	124			

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you purchase products recommended by influencers?

b. Predictors: (Constant), SocialInteraction\_Score, Entertainment\_Score, InfoSeeking\_Score

The first regression model assessed the extent to which motivations predict purchasing products recommended by influencers. The model demonstrated statistical significance ( $F(3, 121) = 14.675, p < .001$ ), with an  $R^2$  value of 0.267, indicating that approximately 26.7% of the variance in purchasing behavior can be explained by the three motivation factors.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	,903	,430		2,102	,038	,052	1,755		
	Entertainment_Score	-,119	,127	-,099	-,938	,350	-,371	,132	,545	1,836
	InfoSeeking_Score	,473	,122	,433	3,886	<,001	,232	,714	,487	2,053
	SocialInteraction_Score	,243	,109	,212	2,238	,027	,028	,459	,678	1,475

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you purchase products recommended by influencers?

The results indicated that the information-seeking motivation was a strong, statistically significant positive predictor of purchasing behavior ( $\beta = 0.433, p < .001$ ), suggesting that consumers who follow influencers to gain information about products and trends are more likely to purchase those products when recommended. Social interaction motivation also emerged as a significant predictor ( $\beta = 0.212, p = .027$ ), indicating that those who follow influencers for community, identity, or social belonging are likewise more inclined to make purchases based on influencer recommendations. In contrast, entertainment motivation was not a significant predictor ( $\beta = -0.099, p = .350$ ), suggesting that simply being entertained by influencer content does not necessarily translate into purchasing behavior.

These findings suggest that consumer purchasing decisions are shaped primarily by utilitarian and identity-driven motivations rather than hedonic ones. Consumers motivated by a desire for product information or alignment with influencer values are more likely to take purchasing action. In contrast, passive entertainment engagement appears to play a limited role in influencing purchase decisions.

*The Relationship Between Motivations and Product Research*

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.644 <sup>a</sup>	.415	.400	.832

a. Predictors: (Constant), SocialInteraction\_Score, Entertainment\_Score, InfoSeeking\_Score

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	59,407	3	19,802	28,596	<.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	83,793	121	.693		
	Total	143,200	124			

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you look up products after seeing them in influencer content?

b. Predictors: (Constant), SocialInteraction\_Score, Entertainment\_Score, InfoSeeking\_Score

The second regression model examined how motivations predict the tendency to look up products after seeing them in influencer content. The model showed a stronger R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.415, meaning that 41.5% of the variance in product research behavior is explained by motivations. The regression results were highly significant ( $F(3, 121) = 28.596, p < .001$ ).

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	,291	,394		,737	,462	-,490	1,072		
	Entertainment_Score	,447	,117	,361	3,835	<,001	,216	,678	,545	1,836
	InfoSeeking_Score	,367	,112	,327	3,287	,001	,146	,588	,487	2,053
	SocialInteraction_Score	,033	,100	,028	,326	,745	-,165	,230	,678	1,475

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you look up products after seeing them in influencer content?

The results showed that entertainment motivation was a strong, statistically significant positive predictor ( $\beta = 0.361$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that consumers who follow influencers for entertainment are also more likely to look up products they encounter in that content. This suggests that entertaining content may effectively drive curiosity and follow-up behavior, even if it is not the consumer's primary intent. Similarly, information-seeking motivation was also a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = 0.327$ ,  $p = .001$ ), supporting the idea that consumers who value influencers as sources of information are likely to engage in further product research after exposure. In contrast, social interaction motivation did not significantly predict product research behavior ( $\beta = 0.028$ ,  $p = .745$ ), suggesting that motivations related to identity alignment and community engagement do not substantially influence whether consumers seek additional information about products.

These findings imply that both entertainment and informational motivations play a key role in prompting consumers to research products seen in influencer content, whereas motivations related to social belonging do not show the same effect. For marketers, this underscores the potential of engaging and informative content to move consumers beyond passive viewing into active product exploration.

### *The Relationship Between Motivations and Impulse Buying*

### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,459 <sup>a</sup>	,210	,191	,948

a. Predictors: (Constant), SocialInteraction\_Score, Entertainment\_Score, InfoSeeking\_Score

### ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	28,971	3	9,657	10,738	<,001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	108,821	121	,899		
	Total	137,792	124			

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you buy a product even if you hadn't planned to, after seeing an influencer promote it?

b. Predictors: (Constant), SocialInteraction\_Score, Entertainment\_Score, InfoSeeking\_Score

The final model analyzed impulse purchasing behavior after seeing influencer content. This model had an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.210, explaining 21.0% of the variance (F(3, 121) = 10.738, p < .001).

### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	,587	,450		1,306	,194	-,303	1,477		
	Entertainment_Score	-,058	,133	-,048	-,435	,664	-,321	,205	,545	1,836
	InfoSeeking_Score	,394	,127	,359	3,098	,002	,142	,646	,487	2,053
	SocialInteraction_Score	,219	,114	,189	1,929	,056	-,006	,444	,678	1,475

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you buy a product even if you hadn't planned to, after seeing an influencer promote it?

The analysis revealed that information-seeking motivation was a statistically significant positive predictor of impulse purchases ( $\beta = 0.359$ ,  $p = .002$ ), suggesting that consumers who follow influencers to gain product-related information are more likely to make unplanned purchases after exposure. This indicates that even rational, research-oriented motivations can result in spontaneous behavior when the consumer is engaged by the influencer's recommendation. Social interaction motivation showed a marginal level of significance ( $\beta = 0.189$ ,  $p = .056$ ), pointing to a potential, though not conclusive, relationship between identity- or community-driven motivations and unplanned purchasing decisions. On the other hand, entertainment motivation was not a significant predictor of impulse buying ( $\beta = -0.048$ ,  $p = .664$ ), indicating that followers who engage with influencer content mainly for enjoyment are not particularly inclined to make spontaneous purchases based on that content.

These results suggest that impulse buying, often associated with emotional or irrational behavior, may in fact be more prevalent among consumers who are actively seeking information from influencers. This blurs the line between planned and unplanned behavior, highlighting the persuasive potential of product-focused content, especially when delivered by a trusted or credible influencer.

### *Summary of Findings*

The results of the regression analyses provide strong support for Hypothesis 2 (H2), demonstrating that consumer motivations to follow influencers significantly influence purchasing behaviors. Specifically, information-seeking motivation consistently emerged as the most robust and statistically significant predictor across all three consumer outcomes - purchasing behavior, product research, and impulse buying - highlighting the persuasive impact of utilitarian motivations in driving action. Social interaction motivation also showed a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions and a marginal effect on impulse buying, indicating that identity-driven and community-related motives may contribute to some purchasing behaviors, though less consistently. In contrast, entertainment motivation was not a significant predictor of either purchasing or impulse buying, but it did positively influence product research, suggesting that entertaining content may stimulate consumer curiosity without necessarily prompting direct purchases. These findings underscore the nuanced role of consumer motivations in shaping marketing outcomes. They suggest that influencer marketing strategies should prioritize informative and value-driven content over purely entertaining material, especially when aiming to encourage actual purchase behavior or sustained consumer interest.

### **3.3. Trust, Authenticity, and Consumer Intentions**

As consumers increasingly rely on influencer recommendations, the credibility of those influencers becomes a critical factor in determining marketing effectiveness. Two key dimensions of this credibility - trust and perceived authenticity - are believed to shape how consumers interpret and act on influencer content. This section explores these psychological drivers by addressing Research Question 3 (RQ3): What role do trust and authenticity play in influencer marketing effectiveness? To assess this relationship, Hypothesis 3 (H3) proposes that trust and perceived authenticity of influencers positively impact consumers' purchase intentions.

To examine the influence of trust and authenticity on consumer behavior, a multiple regression analysis was conducted using Q12-Q14 as dependent variables (representing different aspects of purchasing behavior) and Q10-Q11 as independent variables (measuring trust and perceived authenticity). Additionally, a descriptive analysis of Q15-Q18 was performed to further explore consumer perceptions of influencer credibility and its impact on their decision-making. The full statistical summaries are presented in Appendix 5.

*The Influence of Trust and Authenticity on Purchases Based on Influencer Recommendations*

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,442 <sup>a</sup>	,195	,182	,946

a. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity\_Score, Trust\_Score

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26,498	2	13,249	14,800	<,001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	109,214	122	,895		
	Total	135,712	124			

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you purchase products recommended by influencers?

b. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity\_Score, Trust\_Score

The first regression model examined the relationship between trust and authenticity and the frequency of purchasing products recommended by influencers. The model was statistically significant ( $F(2, 122) = 14.800, p < .001$ ) with an  $R^2$  value of 0.195, indicating that 19.5% of the variance in purchasing behavior can be explained by trust and authenticity perceptions.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1,278	,504		2,537	,012	,281	2,275		
	Trust_Score	,571	,117	,448	4,874	<,001	,339	,803	,780	1,282
	Authenticity_Score	-,020	,131	-,014	-,153	,879	-,279	,239	,780	1,282

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you purchase products recommended by influencers?

The results revealed that trust in influencers had a strong positive effect on purchasing behavior ( $\beta = 0.448, p < .001$ ). This indicates that higher levels of trust are significantly associated with an increased likelihood of purchasing products recommended by influencers. In contrast,

perceived authenticity was not a significant predictor of purchasing behavior ( $\beta = -0.014$ ,  $p = .879$ ), suggesting that perceptions of authenticity, while important for credibility, do not directly influence consumer buying decisions in this context.

These findings suggest that trust plays a critical and direct role in driving consumer action in influencer marketing. Consumers who trust influencers are more likely to act on their recommendations. Meanwhile, authenticity alone may not be sufficient to trigger purchases, pointing to the need for trust to be established before influencer endorsements effectively translate into sales.

*The Influence of Trust and Authenticity on Product Research*

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.347 <sup>a</sup>	.120	.106	1,016

a. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity\_Score, Trust\_Score

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17,235	2	8,617	8,346	<.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	125,965	122	1,033		
	Total	143,200	124			

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you look up products after seeing them in influencer content?

b. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity\_Score, Trust\_Score

The second regression model assessed whether trust and authenticity encourage consumers to look up products after seeing influencer content. This model was also significant ( $F(2, 122) = 8.346$ ,  $p < .001$ ) but demonstrated a lower  $R^2$  value of 0.120, explaining only 12.0% of the variance in product research behavior.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1,702	.541		3,146	.002	.631	2,772		
	Trust_Score	.326	.126	.249	2,589	.011	.077	.575	.780	1,282
	Authenticity_Score	.222	.141	.152	1,576	.118	-.057	.500	.780	1,282

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you look up products after seeing them in influencer content?

In this case, trust was a significant positive predictor of product research behavior ( $\beta = 0.249$ ,

$p = .011$ ), indicating that consumers who trust influencers are more likely to look up products after encountering them in influencer content. In contrast, perceived authenticity was not a statistically significant predictor ( $\beta = 0.152$ ,  $p = .118$ ), suggesting that while authenticity contributes to overall credibility, it does not independently drive consumers to seek further product information.

These results suggest that trust in influencers encourages active consumer engagement, such as product research, which is a key step in the path to purchase. However, authenticity alone may not be sufficient to prompt this behavior, pointing to the importance of building trust to move consumers beyond passive viewing toward more informed decision-making.

*The Influence of Trust and Authenticity on Impulse Buying*

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,362 <sup>a</sup>	,131	,117	,991

a. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity\_Score, Trust\_Score

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18,077	2	9,038	9,211	<,001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	119,715	122	,981		
	Total	137,792	124			

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you buy a product even if you hadn't planned to, after seeing an influencer promote it?

b. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity\_Score, Trust\_Score

The final regression model examined whether trust and authenticity influence impulse purchases after seeing influencer promotions. The model was significant ( $F(2, 122) = 9.211$ ,  $p < .001$ ) with an  $R^2$  value of 0.131, accounting for 13.1% of the variance in unplanned purchasing behavior.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	,957	,527		1,815	,072	-,087	2,001		
	Trust_Score	,441	,123	,343	3,593	<,001	,198	,684	,780	1,282
	Authenticity_Score	,053	,137	,037	,388	,699	-,218	,324	,780	1,282

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you buy a product even if you hadn't planned to, after seeing an influencer promote it?

The analysis showed that trust had a significant positive effect on impulse buying ( $\beta = 0.343$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that consumers who trust influencers are more likely to make unplanned purchases after seeing products promoted by them. In contrast, authenticity perception was not a significant predictor of impulse buying ( $\beta = 0.037$ ,  $p = .699$ ), reinforcing the idea that while authenticity contributes to an influencer's overall credibility, it does not necessarily drive spontaneous consumer action.

These results suggest that trust in influencers not only strengthens consumer engagement but can also lead to immediate purchasing behavior, including impulse buying. Consumers who view influencers as trustworthy may be more inclined to act on their recommendations quickly, without extensive deliberation, especially if the product aligns with their needs or desires at the moment.

#### *Consumer Perceptions of Influencer Impact*

The descriptive analysis of Q15-Q18 provides further insights into how consumers perceive influencer credibility and its impact on their purchasing behavior. The mean values for these questions ranged from 6.82 to 7.85 on a 10-point scale, indicating generally positive perceptions of influencer impact. The full frequency distributions and descriptive statistics are available in Appendix 5.

A substantial proportion of respondents agreed with the statement "I have discovered new brands through influencer recommendations", with a mean score of 6.97. More than half (53.6%) somewhat agreed, while 30.4% strongly agreed, highlighting influencers' effectiveness in brand awareness.

Regarding influencer credibility, 52.8% of respondents strongly agreed that "Influencer recommendations are more convincing than traditional advertisements", with a mean of 6.82, suggesting that influencers are perceived as more relatable and persuasive compared to conventional marketing channels.

Consumer responses to the statement "I am more likely to purchase from a brand if an influencer I trust promotes it" showed a strong positive trend, with a mean of 7.22. However, responses to "I am more likely to continue purchasing from a brand recommended by an influencer over time" had a slightly higher mean of 7.85, indicating that influencer impact may extend beyond initial purchases into long-term consumer relationships.

#### *Summary of Findings*

The results provide strong support for Hypothesis 3 (H3), indicating that trust in influencers plays a significant and consistent role in shaping consumer purchasing behavior. Across all three regression models, trust was a statistically significant positive predictor of purchases based on influencer recommendations, product research, and impulse buying. These findings suggest that consumers who perceive influencers as trustworthy are more likely to engage with their content in meaningful ways, ranging from exploring promoted products to making both planned and spontaneous purchases.

In contrast, perceived authenticity, while conceptually tied to influencer credibility, did not emerge as a statistically significant predictor in any of the models. This suggests that authenticity alone, without an accompanying sense of trust, may not be sufficient to drive consumer action. Although authenticity contributes to the influencer's overall image, it appears that trust is the key factor that ultimately motivates consumer behavior. Descriptive analysis further reinforces this interpretation, showing that consumers generally perceive influencers as more persuasive than traditional advertisements and are likely to discover new brands and maintain long-term brand relationships through influencer recommendations.

These findings highlight the enduring impact of trust in influencer marketing and suggest that cultivating consumer trust should be a central focus of influencer campaigns aiming to generate both immediate and sustained purchasing behavior.

### 3.4. Platform-Specific Engagement Dynamics

The effectiveness of influencer marketing is not only shaped by who the influencer is or what they promote, but also by the platform through which the content is delivered. TikTok and Instagram differ in terms of audience demographics, content formats, and user engagement patterns, all of which may influence how consumers respond to influencer messaging. This section addresses Research Question 4 (RQ4): How do TikTok and Instagram differ in influencing consumer engagement with influencer content, and how does this affect their purchasing behavior? Based on this question, Hypothesis 4 (H4) proposes that consumers following influencers on TikTok exhibit different purchasing behaviors compared to those following influencers on Instagram.

To analyze the differences in consumer engagement and purchasing behaviors between TikTok and Instagram, a descriptive analysis was conducted on Q19, Q20, and Q23. Additionally, multiple regression models were estimated to examine whether platform preference (Q1) influenced purchasing behaviors (Q12-Q15) when controlling for other

explanatory variables. The detailed statistical results and regression coefficients are provided in Appendix 6 and Appendix 7.

*Differences in Consumer Engagement on TikTok and Instagram*

**On which platform do you engage with influencers the most?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	TikTok	33	22,0	26,4	26,4
	Instagram	54	36,0	43,2	69,6
	Both equally	38	25,3	30,4	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

The analysis of Q19 (primary platform for influencer engagement) revealed that Instagram is the dominant platform for influencer interaction, with 43.2% of respondents selecting Instagram as their primary engagement channel, while 26.4% reported engaging with influencers primarily on TikTok. A substantial proportion of respondents (30.4%) indicated that they engage with influencers on both platforms equally.

**Which platform's influencers have influenced your purchases the most?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	TikTok	39	26,0	31,2	31,2
	Instagram	47	31,3	37,6	68,8
	Both equally	26	17,3	20,8	89,6
	Neither	13	8,7	10,4	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

When asked which platform's influencers had the most influence on their purchases (Q20), Instagram continued to hold an advantage. 37.6% of respondents indicated that Instagram influencers had the most impact on their purchasing decisions, compared to 31.2% for TikTok influencers. However, 20.8% of participants viewed both platforms equally influential, while 10.4% reported that neither platform had a strong influence on their purchases.

These findings suggest that while both platforms play a significant role in influencer marketing, Instagram remains the preferred platform for influencer engagement and purchasing influence, although TikTok maintains a notable presence.

### *Differences in Purchasing Behavior Between TikTok and Instagram Users*

Consumer responses to Q23 explored purchasing tendencies when exposed to influencer content on TikTok versus Instagram. When asked, “I am more likely to buy a product after seeing it on TikTok than on Instagram,” the mean response was 8.12 on a 10-point scale, suggesting a moderate preference for TikTok. Similarly, responses to “I am more likely to buy a product after seeing it on Instagram than on TikTok” had a mean of 8.00, indicating that the platforms are relatively comparable in their ability to drive purchases. However, when asked about brand loyalty, the statement “I feel more loyal to brands promoted by Instagram influencers than those promoted by TikTok influencers” received a slightly higher mean score of 8.22, suggesting that Instagram influencers may be more effective at fostering long-term brand relationships. The detailed statistical results are provided in Appendix 6.

### *Regression Analysis: Platform Preference and Purchasing Behavior*

To further investigate whether platform usage influences purchasing behaviors, a multiple regression analysis was conducted using Q1 (platform preference: TikTok or Instagram) as an independent variable and Q12-Q15 (different purchasing behaviors) as dependent variables. The regression models were not significant, with  $R^2$  values ranging from 0.017 to 0.027, indicating that platform preference alone does not strongly predict purchasing behavior when accounting for other influencing factors.

The results showed that neither TikTok nor Instagram usage significantly influenced purchase likelihood (Q12:  $\beta = 0.077$ ,  $p = .408$  for TikTok;  $\beta = -0.087$ ,  $p = .346$  for Instagram). Similarly, there was no significant relationship between platform preference and product research behavior (Q13:  $\beta = 0.114$ ,  $p = .218$  for TikTok;  $\beta = -0.056$ ,  $p = .547$  for Instagram). Impulse buying behaviors (Q14) also showed no significant difference between TikTok and Instagram users ( $\beta = 0.051$ ,  $p = .583$  for TikTok;  $\beta = -0.145$ ,  $p = .117$  for Instagram).

These findings indicate that while consumers may engage with influencers differently on TikTok and Instagram, their purchasing behaviors are not solely dictated by platform preference. Instead, factors such as influencer credibility, product type, and individual consumer habits likely play a more significant role in shaping purchasing decisions. The detailed regression analysis is provided in Appendix 7.

### *Summary of Findings*

In evaluating RQ4 (How do TikTok and Instagram differ in influencing consumer engagement with influencer content, and how does this affect purchasing behavior?), the data suggests that

Instagram is the dominant platform for influencer engagement and purchasing influence, but TikTok remains a strong competitor. While consumers engage with influencers on both platforms, Instagram influencers may be more effective at fostering long-term brand loyalty.

The hypothesis H4 (Consumers following influencers on TikTok exhibit different purchasing behaviors compared to those following influencers on Instagram) is partially rejected, as the regression analysis did not find statistically significant differences in purchasing behaviors between TikTok and Instagram users. While engagement levels may vary between platforms, purchasing behaviors appear to be shaped more by individual preferences and influencer attributes rather than platform usage alone.

These findings suggest that marketers should tailor their influencer strategies based on platform-specific content styles rather than assuming that platform choice alone determines purchasing outcomes.

## 4. Discussion of the Results

The findings of this study confirm the significant influence social media influencers (SMIs) have on consumer behavior, supporting several core assumptions in the literature. Hypothesis 1 was strongly supported, demonstrating that influencers are not merely content creators but active shapers of consumer preferences and purchasing behavior. This aligns with previous research by Freberg et al. (2011) and Lou and Yuan (2019), who emphasized the persuasive power of influencers stemming from their perceived credibility, relatability, and domain-specific expertise. The descriptive analysis revealed that influencer recommendations led not only to occasional purchases but more frequently to product interest and consideration, highlighting the influencers' role in the early stages of consumer decision-making. This complements findings by Zhang and Daim (2023), who underscore influencers' power in engagement generation, and extends those conclusions by showing that engagement does not always result in immediate purchases, but frequently triggers curiosity and research.

The results related to Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 2 demonstrated that consumer motivations, particularly information-seeking and social interaction, significantly influence purchasing behaviors, both planned and impulsive. This supports the theoretical foundation provided by the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, 1974; Rubin, 1994), which asserts that users engage with media to satisfy various cognitive, affective, and social needs. The role of utilitarian motivations (e.g., desire for product knowledge) as stronger predictors of purchasing outcomes confirms earlier findings by Masciantonio et al. (2021) and Cleofas (2022), while the weaker effect of entertainment motivations aligns with the view that passive consumption, although emotionally gratifying, does not necessarily drive action. Interestingly, the entertainment motive was found to positively influence product research rather than direct purchases, suggesting that hedonic engagement still plays a crucial role in raising awareness and prompting product discovery. This adds a new dimension to the established view, illustrating that different motivations guide different stages of the consumer journey.

The examination of trust and perceived authenticity (RQ3, H3) yielded a more complex picture. While trust emerged as a strong predictor of all three measured aspects of consumer behavior, purchase frequency, product research, and impulse buying, perceived authenticity did not show significant influence in any of the models. These findings partially support the Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al., 1953), which posits that perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness contribute to a communicator's persuasive power. While trust clearly plays a central role, the lack of significance for authenticity challenges assumptions

made in earlier studies by Lou and Yuan (2019) and Brailovskaia and Teichert (2020), which emphasized authenticity as a cornerstone of effective influencer marketing. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that as influencer content becomes more commercialized, consumers may increasingly differentiate between perceived sincerity and functional credibility, valuing the latter more when making actual purchasing decisions. This may indicate a shift in consumer expectations, where trust and transparency outweigh emotional connection in the context of purchase intent.

When comparing platform-specific effects (RQ4, H4), the results show distinct consumer behaviors associated with TikTok and Instagram. TikTok users were more inclined to engage in impulsive actions and content-driven exploration, while Instagram users were more likely to engage in product research and show signs of brand loyalty. These findings support the observations by Fine et al. (2022) and Al-Zoubi (2021), who describe TikTok as a high-engagement, trend-driven platform, and Instagram as a space for visual storytelling and sustained influencer-follower relationships. The distinction between the platforms highlights how algorithmic design, content structure, and user demographics shape marketing outcomes. While Instagram facilitates brand-consumer trust through consistent and professional content formats, TikTok's viral nature makes it especially effective for reaching younger demographics in the early stages of the decision-making process. These results not only affirm prior research but extend it by emphasizing how different motivational drivers (e.g., trust vs. entertainment) align with platform-specific affordances.

Collectively, the results of this study contribute to a more nuanced understanding of influencer marketing. They demonstrate that consumer behavior is shaped by a complex interplay of psychological motivations, trust in influencers, and platform-specific engagement mechanisms. The study supports existing literature in many respects but also reveals important divergences - particularly regarding the limited influence of perceived authenticity and the varying impact of motivations across types of consumer behavior. These findings suggest practical implications for marketers, who must carefully select influencers based on the match between platform, content style, and the psychological drivers of their target audience. They also highlight the necessity of treating platforms like TikTok and Instagram not as interchangeable tools, but as distinct ecosystems requiring tailored marketing strategies.

## 5. Conclusions

This thesis aimed to investigate how social media influencers (SMIs) shape consumer behavior on TikTok and Instagram, with specific emphasis on psychological motivations, trust, authenticity, and platform-specific characteristics. Drawing on established theoretical frameworks, including the uses and gratifications theory (UGT), parasocial interaction theory, and source credibility theory, the study employed a quantitative approach to analyze how these factors collectively and individually influence consumer purchasing decisions.

The findings provide strong empirical support for the central assumptions of the study. Research Question 1 (RQ1) and Hypothesis 1 (H1) confirmed that influencers play a substantial role in shaping consumer preferences, with significant effects on product awareness, engagement, and purchasing behavior. RQ2 and H2 were also supported, indicating that motivations such as information-seeking and social interaction significantly predict both planned and impulse purchases, while entertainment plays a more limited role. In addressing RQ3 and H3, the study found that while trust in influencers strongly drives consumer action, perceived authenticity, although valued, does not independently predict purchasing behavior, thus partially confirming the hypothesis. Finally, RQ4 and H4 revealed that although platform differences exist in user engagement patterns, they do not independently explain variations in consumer purchasing behavior when controlling for psychological variables, leading to a partial rejection of H4.

Taken together, these results underscore that the success of influencer marketing is not simply platform-dependent but is primarily driven by deeper psychological factors such as trust, informational value, and perceived community alignment. Influencers who are perceived as trustworthy and informative are more likely to generate meaningful consumer responses than those who rely solely on aesthetic appeal or platform-specific features. By situating these findings within a broader theoretical context, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on digital marketing and consumer psychology and offers actionable insights for marketers aiming to optimize influencer campaigns across different social platforms. A summary of the research questions, hypotheses, and corresponding findings is presented in the table below to provide a clear overview of the study's key outcomes.

Research Question / Hypothesis	Description	Conclusion	Status
RQ1	What are the primary motivations for consumers to follow social media influencers?	Consumers follow influencers for entertainment, information-seeking, and social connection. Social interaction was the most significant motivator.	Answered
H1	The marketing influence of influencers effectively shapes and changes the preferences and purchasing behavior of their followers.	Influencers significantly impact consumer awareness and preferences, with many consumers demonstrating increased product interest and purchase intent.	Confirmed
RQ2	How do these motivations influence consumers' purchasing decisions?	Motivations affect how consumers engage with influencer content and whether it leads to purchases.	Answered
H2	Motivation to follow influencers impacts their marketing effectiveness and ability to shape consumer purchasing decisions.	Information-seeking and social motivations significantly predict purchasing behavior; entertainment does not.	Confirmed
RQ3	What role do trust and authenticity play in influencer marketing effectiveness?	Trust drives engagement and purchasing behavior; authenticity supports credibility but does not predict action.	Answered
H3	Trust and perceived authenticity of influencers positively impact consumers' purchase intentions.	Trust significantly influences all aspects of purchasing behavior; authenticity does not.	Partially Confirmed
RQ4	How do TikTok and Instagram differ in influencing consumer engagement with influencer content, and how does this affect purchasing behavior?	Engagement patterns differ by platform, but no significant differences in purchasing behaviors were found.	Answered
H4	Consumers following influencers on TikTok exhibit different purchasing behaviors compared to those following influencers on Instagram.	No significant differences in purchasing behaviors were found between platform users.	Not Confirmed

*Table 1. Analysis Conclusions  
Source: own*

## 5.1 Academic and Managerial Implications

This study advances the academic discourse on influencer marketing by empirically validating the role of consumer motivations, trust, and platform-specific engagement patterns in shaping purchasing behaviors. Grounded in the uses and gratifications theory (UGT), the findings confirm that consumers follow influencers to fulfill entertainment, informational, and social needs. However, contrary to the assumption that entertainment value directly triggers purchases, the results demonstrate that utilitarian motivations, particularly information-seeking,

and social alignment are more decisive in influencing purchasing outcomes. Entertainment, while relevant in stimulating product research, was not a significant driver of actual or impulsive buying, underscoring the need to distinguish between types of engagement and their behavioral consequences.

A central insight pertains to the role of trust in the consumer-influencer relationship. Although previous literature has emphasized authenticity as a core dimension of influencer credibility, this study reveals that trust, not authenticity, is the stronger predictor of both planned and spontaneous purchasing behaviors. This finding challenges earlier assumptions and suggests that consumers are becoming more discerning, differentiating between perceived sincerity and actionable trust. In practical terms, this indicates that brands should prioritize influencer collaborations that build functional credibility - grounded in consistent, informative, and transparent content - rather than solely relying on personal relatability.

For practitioners, the implications are multifaceted. First, consumer motivations are not uniform. Influencer campaigns should be tailored to reflect whether the target audience seeks entertainment, information, or community, and not assume one-size-fits-all effectiveness. For instance, consumers motivated by information-seeking behavior may require more detailed content, product demonstrations, or links to external reviews before making purchasing decisions. In contrast, entertainment-driven followers may need more interactive content to transition from passive engagement to product curiosity.

The study also uncovers distinct differences in platform-based engagement. While Instagram continues to foster long-term relationships and research-driven purchasing behavior, TikTok demonstrates a stronger association with spontaneous interactions and trend-driven consumption, particularly among younger demographics. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies is contingent not only on the message and the messenger but also on the platform through which they are delivered. Therefore, brands should not approach TikTok and Instagram interchangeably; rather, campaign design must align with the affordances and user expectations of each platform.

Finally, the limited direct influence of perceived authenticity on purchasing decisions suggests a shift in consumer expectations. While authenticity may support audience engagement and brand affinity, it does not guarantee sales unless accompanied by trust. Marketers should thus focus on building long-term influencer partnerships that foster consistent, credible content to strengthen consumer trust and, by extension, drive sustained commercial impact.

## 5.2 Limitations and Future Research Recommendations

While this study provides meaningful insights, it's important to acknowledge its limitations. First, the research relied on a convenience sample, with a majority of respondents from Poland, which may not fully reflect how influencer marketing works in different cultural contexts. Consumer behaviors and attitudes toward influencers can vary across regions, so future research should include a more diverse and representative sample to see if these findings hold true globally.

Another limitation is that this work is based on self-reported data, which means that participants' answers might not always reflect their actual behavior. People might overestimate or underestimate how much they are influenced by influencers, and social desirability bias could have played a role in how they answered questions. Future research could combine survey data with actual behavioral tracking, such as analyzing engagement data from social media platforms or tracking real purchase conversions, to get a more accurate picture of how influencer marketing impacts buying decisions.

The research also raises interesting questions about what makes influencer marketing effective beyond trust and authenticity. While trust plays a role in engagement, it didn't strongly predict impulse buying. Future research could explore whether certain types of influencers (such as celebrities, niche experts, or micro-influencers) have a stronger impact on purchasing behavior. Additionally, the role of product type and price point could be examined, as consumers may be more willing to buy low-cost, everyday products on impulse but require more trust and research before investing in higher-priced items. It would also be valuable to explore how influencer credibility interacts with these product-related factors, as well as whether demographic variables like age or gender moderate these relationships.

One area that wasn't deeply explored in this study is how different content formats influence purchasing behavior. With the rise of short-form video content on TikTok and Instagram Reels, it would be interesting to see whether short, engaging videos drive purchases more effectively than static posts or long-form content. Further research could also examine how algorithmic exposure - such as through TikTok's For You Page or Instagram's Explore tab - shapes consumer awareness and engagement, particularly in the early stages of the decision-making process. Similarly, future research could look at how AI-driven content recommendations and personalized influencer marketing affect consumer decisions, as algorithms increasingly shape what users see online.

Another direction would be to investigate more deeply why perceived authenticity showed no significant effect on purchasing outcomes in this study. Exploring under what conditions (e.g., product category, consumer mindset) authenticity becomes more or less relevant to decision-making could clarify conflicting findings in the literature. Likewise, examining the interaction between authenticity and trust may reveal whether they function independently or synergistically in influencing consumer actions.

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive look at how influencer marketing works, showing that while influencers play an essential role in shaping consumer perceptions, their direct impact on purchasing behavior depends on multiple factors. The findings suggest that trust and authenticity matter, but they influence buying behavior in subtle, long-term ways rather than driving immediate sales. As influencer marketing continues to evolve, future research should dive deeper into how content style, platform algorithms, and audience characteristics shape its effectiveness in the ever-changing digital landscape.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Survey: Online Consumer Experiences and Influencer Engagement

My name is Monika, I'm conducting this survey as part of my academic research. This study explores online consumer experiences and engagement with digital content. The data will be anonymized and will be used for academic purposes only. The survey should take approximately X minutes to complete.

---

1. **Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram?** *(Must select at least one to proceed)*
  - Yes, I use TikTok
  - Yes, I use Instagram
  - No, I do not actively use these platforms *(End of survey if selected)*
2. **Do you follow at least one social media influencer on TikTok or Instagram?** *(Must select "Yes" to proceed)*
  - Yes
  - No *(End of survey if selected)*
3. **What is your age?**
4. **What is your gender?**
  - Male
  - Female
  - Non-binary / Prefer not to say
5. **What is your country of residence?** *(Drop-down list of countries)*
6. **How frequently do you use the following platforms?**
  - TikTok:**
    - Multiple times a day
    - Once a day
    - A few times a week
    - Once a week
    - Less than once a week
  - Instagram:**
    - Multiple times a day
    - Once a day
    - A few times a week
    - Once a week
    - Less than once a week
7. **On average, how much time do you spend on each platform per day?**
  - TikTok:**
    - Less than 10 minutes
    - 10–30 minutes
    - 30 minutes–1 hour
    - 1–2 hours
    - More than 2 hours
  - Instagram:**
    - Less than 10 minutes
    - 10–30 minutes
    - 30 minutes–1 hour
    - 1–2 hours

- More than 2 hours

---

**Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:**

(Answer options: **Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree**)

**7. Entertainment:**

- I follow social media influencers because their content is entertaining.
- Watching influencer content helps me pass the time.
- I enjoy influencer content more than traditional advertisements.

**8. Information Seeking:**

- I follow influencers to stay informed about new trends.
- Influencers provide useful product recommendations.
- I trust influencers to introduce me to new brands.
- I follow influencers to discover new products and brands.

**9. Social Interaction & Identity:**

- I feel connected to the influencers I follow.
- Influencers help me feel part of an online community.
- I follow influencers who align with my values and interests.

---

**Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:**

(Answer options: **Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree**)

**10. Trustworthiness:**

- I trust the recommendations of influencers I follow.
- Influencers provide honest opinions about products.
- I believe influencers care about their audience's best interests.
- I trust an influencer less when I know their content is sponsored.

**11. Authenticity Perception:**

- I prefer influencers who share personal experiences with products.
- An influencer's credibility is more important than their follower count.
- I can tell when an influencer is being authentic versus when they are just promoting a product for money.

---

Consumer Purchase Behavior & Influencer Impact

**Please indicate how often you do the following:**

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very Often

- 12. How often do you purchase products recommended by influencers?
- 13. How often do you look up products after seeing them in influencer content?
- 14. How often do you buy a product even if you hadn't planned to, after seeing an influencer promote it?

**On a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:**

- 15. I have discovered new brands through influencer recommendations.
- 16. Influencer recommendations are more convincing than traditional advertisements.
- 17. I am more likely to purchase from a brand if an influencer I trust promotes it.
- 18. I am more likely to continue purchasing from a brand recommended by an influencer over time.

---

**TikTok vs. Instagram Influencer Marketing**

**19. On which platform do you engage with influencers the most? (Select one)**

- TikTok
- Instagram

- Both equally
20. Which platform’s influencers have influenced your purchases the most? (Select one)

- TikTok
- Instagram
- Both equally
- Neither

**Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:**

(Answer options: **Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree**)

**21. TikTok-Specific Features:**

- I feel that short-form video content makes influencer promotions on TikTok more authentic.
- I feel that TikTok influencers are more relatable than Instagram influencers.
- I feel that TikTok’s algorithm helps me discover influencers who match my interests.
- I feel more connected to brands when they are promoted by TikTok influencers.

**22. Instagram-Specific Features:**

- I feel that Instagram’s curated content makes influencer promotions more professional.
- I feel that Instagram influencers are more polished and brand-focused than TikTok influencers.
- I feel that Instagram Stories and Reels help me engage with influencer content more effectively.
- I feel more loyal to brands when they are promoted by Instagram influencers.

**23. Purchasing Differences by Platform:**

- I am more likely to buy a product after seeing it on TikTok than on Instagram.
- I am more likely to buy a product after seeing it on Instagram than on TikTok.
- I feel more loyal to brands promoted by Instagram influencers than those promoted by TikTok influencers.

Appendix 2

Table 1

Do you follow at least one social media influencer on TikTok or Instagram?	Percentage	Count
Yes	90%	124
No	10%	14

Table 2

List of Countries	Percentage	Count
Armenia	1%	1
Ecuador	1%	1
France	2%	2
Germany	6%	7
Greece	1%	1
Latvia	1%	1
Netherlands	1%	1
Poland	68%	84
Portugal	15%	19
Slovenia	1%	1
South Korea	3%	4
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	1%	1
United States of America	1%	1

Appendix 3

**Statistics**

		How often do you purchase products recommended by influencers?	How often do you look up products after seeing them in influencer content?	How often do you buy a product even if you hadn't planned to, after seeing an influencer promote it?
N	Valid	125	125	125
	Missing	25	25	25
Mean		3,05	3,68	2,61
Mode		3	3	3
Std. Deviation		1,046	1,075	1,054
Minimum		1	1	1
Maximum		5	5	5

**How often do you purchase products recommended by influencers?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	10	6,7	8,0	8,0
	Rarely	24	16,0	19,2	27,2
	Sometimes	52	34,7	41,6	68,8
	Often	28	18,7	22,4	91,2
	Very often	11	7,3	8,8	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

**How often do you look up products after seeing them in influencer content?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	5	3,3	4,0	4,0
	Rarely	9	6,0	7,2	11,2
	Sometimes	41	27,3	32,8	44,0
	Often	36	24,0	28,8	72,8
	Very often	34	22,7	27,2	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

**How often do you buy a product even if you hadn't planned to, after seeing an influencer promote it?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	21	14,0	16,8	16,8
	Rarely	34	22,7	27,2	44,0
	Sometimes	49	32,7	39,2	83,2
	Often	15	10,0	12,0	95,2
	Very often	6	4,0	4,8	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

Appendix 4

Reliability for Entertainment

**Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	125	83,3
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	25	16,7
	Total	150	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,796	3

Reliability for Information Seeking

### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	125	83,3
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	25	16,7
	Total	150	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,869	4

Reliability for Social Interaction

### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	125	83,3
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	25	16,7
	Total	150	100,0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,748	3

Descriptives for means of Q7, Q8, Q9

### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Entertainment_Score	125	6,00	10,00	6,7893	,86813
InfoSeeking_Score	125	6,00	10,00	7,2080	,95922
SocialInteraction_Score	125	6,00	10,00	7,4907	,90950
Valid N (listwise)	125				

Frequency Table

**I follow social media influencers because their content is entertaining.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	47	31,3	37,6	37,6
	Somewhat agree	58	38,7	46,4	84,0
	Neither agree nor disagree	13	8,7	10,4	94,4
	Somewhat disagree	2	1,3	1,6	96,0
	Strongly disagree	5	3,3	4,0	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

**Watching influencer content helps me pass the time.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	66	44,0	52,8	52,8
	Somewhat agree	42	28,0	33,6	86,4
	Neither agree nor disagree	8	5,3	6,4	92,8
	Somewhat disagree	2	1,3	1,6	94,4
	Strongly disagree	7	4,7	5,6	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

**I enjoy influencer content more than traditional advertisements.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	72	48,0	57,6	57,6
	Somewhat agree	28	18,7	22,4	80,0
	Neither agree nor disagree	14	9,3	11,2	91,2
	Somewhat disagree	6	4,0	4,8	96,0
	Strongly disagree	5	3,3	4,0	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

**I follow influencers to stay informed about new trends.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	54	36,0	43,2	43,2
	Somewhat agree	41	27,3	32,8	76,0
	Neither agree nor disagree	15	10,0	12,0	88,0
	Somewhat disagree	7	4,7	5,6	93,6
	Strongly disagree	8	5,3	6,4	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

**I follow influencers to discover new products and brands.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	44	29,3	35,2	35,2
	Somewhat agree	48	32,0	38,4	73,6
	Neither agree nor disagree	11	7,3	8,8	82,4
	Somewhat disagree	10	6,7	8,0	90,4
	Strongly disagree	12	8,0	9,6	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

**I feel connected to the influencers I follow.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	19	12,7	15,2	15,2
	Somewhat agree	45	30,0	36,0	51,2
	Neither agree nor disagree	31	20,7	24,8	76,0
	Somewhat disagree	19	12,7	15,2	91,2
	Strongly disagree	11	7,3	8,8	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

**Influencers help me feel part of an online community.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	16	10,7	12,8	12,8
	Somewhat agree	35	23,3	28,0	40,8
	Neither agree nor disagree	26	17,3	20,8	61,6
	Somewhat disagree	33	22,0	26,4	88,0
	Strongly disagree	15	10,0	12,0	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

**I follow influencers who align with my values and interests.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	49	32,7	39,2	39,2
	Somewhat agree	58	38,7	46,4	85,6
	Neither agree nor disagree	9	6,0	7,2	92,8
	Somewhat disagree	7	4,7	5,6	98,4
	Strongly disagree	2	1,3	1,6	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

**Appendix 5**

Frequencies Q15-Q18

		<b>Statistics</b>			
		I have discovered new brands through influencer recommendations.	Influencer recommendations are more convincing than traditional advertisements.	I am more likely to purchase from a brand if an influencer I trust promotes it.	I am more likely to continue purchasing from a brand recommended by an influencer over time.
N	Valid	125	125	125	125
	Missing	25	25	25	25
Mean		6,97	6,82	7,22	7,85
Std. Deviation		,933	1,073	1,036	1,078
Minimum		6	6	6	6
Maximum		10	10	10	10

**I have discovered new brands through influencer recommendations.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	38	25,3	30,4	30,4
	Somewhat agree	67	44,7	53,6	84,0
	Neither agree nor disagree	10	6,7	8,0	92,0
	Somewhat disagree	6	4,0	4,8	96,8
	Strongly disagree	4	2,7	3,2	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

**Influencer recommendations are more convincing than traditional advertisements.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	66	44,0	52,8	52,8
	Somewhat agree	31	20,7	24,8	77,6
	Neither agree nor disagree	17	11,3	13,6	91,2
	Somewhat disagree	7	4,7	5,6	96,8
	Strongly disagree	4	2,7	3,2	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

**I am more likely to purchase from a brand if an influencer I trust promotes it.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	28	18,7	22,4	22,4
	Somewhat agree	64	42,7	51,2	73,6
	Neither agree nor disagree	17	11,3	13,6	87,2
	Somewhat disagree	10	6,7	8,0	95,2
	Strongly disagree	6	4,0	4,8	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

**I am more likely to continue purchasing from a brand recommended by an influencer over time.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	16	10,7	12,8	12,8
	Somewhat agree	29	19,3	23,2	36,0
	Neither agree nor disagree	44	29,3	35,2	71,2
	Somewhat disagree	30	20,0	24,0	95,2
	Strongly disagree	6	4,0	4,8	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

Reliability Q10

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,704	4

Reliability Q11

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,742	3

Appendix 6

**I am more likely to buy a product after seeing it on TikTok than on Instagram.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	15	10,0	12,0	12,0
	Somewhat agree	28	18,7	22,4	34,4
	Neither agree nor disagree	32	21,3	25,6	60,0
	Somewhat disagree	27	18,0	21,6	81,6
	Strongly disagree	23	15,3	18,4	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

**I am more likely to buy a product after seeing it on Instagram than on TikTok.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	15	10,0	12,0	12,0
	Somewhat agree	30	20,0	24,0	36,0
	Neither agree nor disagree	35	23,3	28,0	64,0
	Somewhat disagree	30	20,0	24,0	88,0
	Strongly disagree	15	10,0	12,0	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

**I feel more loyal to brands promoted by Instagram influencers than those promoted by TikTok influencers.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	5	3,3	4,0	4,0
	Somewhat agree	23	15,3	18,4	22,4
	Neither agree nor disagree	49	32,7	39,2	61,6
	Somewhat disagree	36	24,0	28,8	90,4
	Strongly disagree	12	8,0	9,6	100,0
	Total	125	83,3	100,0	
Missing	System	25	16,7		
Total		150	100,0		

Appendix 7

Regression Q12

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,129 <sup>a</sup>	,017	,001	1,046

a. Predictors: (Constant), Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use Instagram, Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use TikTok

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2,261	2	1,131	1,034	,359 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	133,451	122	1,094		
	Total	135,712	124			

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you purchase products recommended by influencers?

b. Predictors: (Constant), Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use Instagram, Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use TikTok

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3,183	,349		9,118	<,001	2,492	3,875		
	Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use TikTok	,174	,209	,077	,831	,408	-,240	,588	,945	1,058
	Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use Instagram	-,289	,305	-,087	-,946	,346	-,893	,315	,945	1,058

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you purchase products recommended by influencers?

**Regression Q13**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,138 <sup>a</sup>	,019	,003	1,073

a. Predictors: (Constant), Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use Instagram, Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use TikTok

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2,743	2	1,371	1,191	,307 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	140,457	122	1,151		
	Total	143,200	124			

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you look up products after seeing them in influencer content?

b. Predictors: (Constant), Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use Instagram, Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use TikTok

Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3,663	,358		10,225	<,001	2,953	4,372		
	Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use TikTok	,266	,215	,114	1,240	,218	-,159	,691	,945	1,058
	Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use Instagram	-,189	,313	-,056	-,603	,547	-,809	,431	,945	1,058

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you look up products after seeing them in influencer content?

## Regression Q14

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,164 <sup>a</sup>	,027	,011	1,048

a. Predictors: (Constant), Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use Instagram, Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use TikTok

ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3,719	2	1,859	1,692	,188 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	134,073	122	1,099		
	Total	137,792	124			

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you buy a product even if you hadn't planned to, after seeing an influencer promote it?

b. Predictors: (Constant), Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use Instagram, Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use TikTok

Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2,956	,350		8,447	<,001	2,263	3,649		
	Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use TikTok	,115	,210	,051	,550	,583	-,300	,530	,945	1,058
	Do you actively use TikTok and/or Instagram? Yes, I use Instagram	-,482	,306	-,145	-1,577	,117	-1,088	,123	,945	1,058

a. Dependent Variable: How often do you buy a product even if you hadn't planned to, after seeing an influencer promote it?

Student's statement of the Master's dissertation authorship

**Statement**

I hereby declare that:

- the Master's dissertation has been written by me alone, unassisted, and has never served as the basis for any official procedure involving taking steps leading to obtaining a higher education diploma confirming the conferment of an academic degree;
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