



The impact of the luxury influencer's background and story on women's luxury purchase intention and conscientiousness as a moderator

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Abstract

Title: The impact of the luxury influencer's background and story on women's luxury purchase intention and conscientiousness as a moderator.

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The purpose of this thesis is to determine whether the background and story of luxury influencers affect women's luxury items purchase intention, while taking the conscientiousness personality trait into consideration. Conscientiousness is addressed in this thesis since research demonstrates that conscientiousness individuals are self-disciplined and hence less likely to engage with luxury items. The influencer identification, purchase intention, and conscientiousness scale were measured and used to better assess the effect of the background and influencer story on purchase intention. An online survey was conducted to gather information, and 86 valid answers were received. The current research demonstrated no significant impact of the background and stories of luxury influencers on customers' purchasing intentions for luxury items. Besides, results demonstrated that consumer conscientiousness did not moderate the effect between the backgrounds of luxury influencers and their impact on customers' purchase intention for luxury product. By examining a new approach, this thesis contributes to academic knowledge and management decision-making by improving our understanding of the impact of influencers' stories and their ability to engage consumers and influence their purchase intention in the emerging luxury market, as well as by providing a deeper understanding of the role of conscientiousness as a personality trait in the purchase decision.

Keywords: Social media influencers, Luxury, Background and story, Purchase intention, Conscientiousness, Identification with the influencer, Women.

Resumo

Título: O impacto dos antecedentes e da história do influenciador de luxo na intenção de compra de luxo das mulheres e a conscienciosidade como moderador

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O objectivo desta tese é determinar se os antecedentes e a história dos influenciadores de luxo afectam a intenção de compra de artigos de luxo das mulheres, tendo em consideração o traço de personalidade conscienciosidade. A conscienciosidade é abordada nesta tese, uma vez que a investigação demonstra que os indivíduos conscienciosos são autodisciplinados e, por conseguinte, menos susceptíveis de se envolverem com artigos de luxo. A identificação do influenciador, a intenção de compra e a escala de conscienciosidade foram medidas e utilizadas para avaliar melhor o efeito dos antecedentes e da história do influenciador na intenção de compra. Foi realizado um inquérito online para recolher informações, tendo sido recebidas 86 respostas válidas. A presente investigação não demonstrou qualquer impacto significativo dos antecedentes e das histórias dos influenciadores de luxo nas intenções de compra de artigos de luxo por parte dos clientes. Além disso, os resultados demonstraram que a conscienciosidade do consumidor não moderou o efeito entre os antecedentes dos influenciadores de luxo e o seu impacto na intenção de compra de produtos de luxo por parte dos clientes. Ao investigar uma nova abordagem, esta tese contribui para o conhecimento académico e para a tomada de decisões de gestão, melhorando a nossa compreensão do impacto das histórias dos influenciadores e da sua capacidade de envolver os consumidores e influenciar a sua intenção de compra no mercado de luxo emergente, bem como proporcionando uma compreensão mais profunda do papel da conscienciosidade como traço de personalidade na decisão de compra.

Palavras-chave: Influenciadores dos media sociais, Luxo, Antecedentes e história, Intenção de compra, Conscienciosidade, Identificação com o influenciador, Mulheres.

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1. Introduction

“Don't use social media to impress people; use it to impact people.” — (Anonymous.)

Since the 2000s, social networks have had a significant impact on our daily lives, and their applications have shifted from the private to the professional sphere. In January 2023, there will be 4.76 billion active social network users worldwide, compared to 970 million in January 2010 (Statista, 2023). Users utilize social media for a variety of purposes, including socialization, education, and entertainment. The influence of prescriptions and social media on consumers' purchasing decisions is disrupting the traditional multi-step buying process, from identifying needs to making the final purchase decision. Therefore, the virality of social media can have a substantial effect on consumers' final decisions (Yogesh and Yesha, 2014).

In recent years, consumer behavior has changed significantly due to accelerated technological advancements and the emergence of social networks (Keensights, 2022). Today, a growing number of consumers prefer online purchasing to in-store transactions (UNCTAD, 2020). According to GlobalWebIndex, 54% of social network users are searching for products on the platform, and 71% are more likely to make a purchase after viewing a recommendation on social networks (Patron, 2022). Social media platforms have contributed to this shift by providing consumers with simple access to a wide range of products and appealing promotional offers (Doyle, 2016). In addition, social media allows consumers to seek for products, compare prices, and read reviews from other customers before making a purchase (Mangold & Smith, 2012). These advantages have significantly changed the way consumers shop and contributed to the increasing popularity of online purchasing (Mangold & Smith, 2012).

The luxury market was forced to develop an online presence in response to Internet and technological advancements in order to satisfy the requirements of consumers who now tend to access high-end products on the internet, while also providing a more customized and immersive customer experience. (DeAcetis, 2022). Recognizing the significance of maintaining brand image on social networks, luxury brands have begun to invest in influencer marketing strategies, partnering with personalities and influencers to promote their products (Vinerean and Oprea, 2019). The return on investment (ROI) for fashion influencer marketing (FIM) in France's luxury sector is 61.15 percent (Guinebault, 2021). Therefore, luxury brands have increased their expenditure on acquired media, allowing them to market themselves using influencer marketing on social networks, blogs, and through reviews and opinions (Vinerean and Oprea, 2019).

Influencer marketing is the practice of partnering with influential individuals, such as celebrities or social media influencers, to promote products or services to their audience. This strategy has a substantial effect on consumers' purchasing decisions because it provides them with a fresh perspective on a product or service (Lou & Yuan, 2019). In fact, consumers frequently place more trust in the opinions of celebrities they acknowledge or follow-on social media than in traditional marketing (Weinswig, 2016). Influencer marketing has the greatest effect on women (Hashem, 2021). In fact, Digital Marketing Institute (2022) estimates that 86% of women utilize social media for purchasing advice. In contrast, recent research indicates that males tend to follow significantly fewer influencers than women do (Grafström et al., 2018). Influencers often have a better comprehension of their public's needs and expectations due to their frequent contact with them (Croes & Bartels, 2021). This increases the credibility of their recommendations and their ability to influence consumers' purchasing decisions because it enables them to recommend products or services that perfectly match the interests of their target audience (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). As a result, influencer marketing has a significant impact on a customer's purchasing decision because it offers an authentic and credible opinion about a product or service (Elli, 2017).

This thesis focuses on luxury influencers. These influencers are among the most powerful people in the worlds of fashion, lifestyle, and travel. They are frequently connected with luxury brands, and they use their celebrity to market high-end products to their target demographic. Observations have led me to classify luxury influencers into two categories: On the one hand are those who come from a wealthy family and grew up in an environment where luxury was a tradition, and an intrinsic part of their everyday life. They share their knowledge as well as their ideal lifestyle with their audience. On the other hand, some influencers began with limited resources but rose through the ranks of society by hard work, dedication, and tenacity. They have grown in popularity on social media, completely overhauled their lives, and are now sharing their success stories and present ideal luxurious lifestyles with their fans. According to a prior study, internet influencers influence each stage of a consumer's decision-making process when purchasing premium fashion goods (de Oliveira, 2021). This thesis will investigate the impact of an influencer's background and story on consumers' purchase intentions for luxury products, taking the customer's personality into consideration. This thesis focuses specifically on conscientiousness, a personality trait characterized by sustained attentiveness, attention to detail, and a strong sense of organization (Costa & McCrae, 1992). In this study, I will therefore try to answer the following questions:

RSQ1: Does the social media luxury influencer' background and personal story impact consumer attitude toward luxury products?

RSQ2: To what extent does the level of conscientiousness play a role in the relationship between the background of luxury influencers and their impact on consumers' purchase intention towards luxury products?

To accomplish these aims, this study will examine luxury influencers on social networks who share similar content (beauty, fashion, travel, and lifestyle) but have diverse professional backgrounds in the luxury industry. Results regarding purchase intention will be compared between individuals with high and low levels of conscientiousness.

1.1 Academic and managerial relevance

This study addresses a significant gap in the literature by investigating a novel approach: background and story of luxury influencer manipulation, as well as its impact on women's luxury purchase intentions. Additionally, the study took into consideration the moderating effect of conscientiousness. According to my knowledge, this is the first attempt to manipulate the stories and backgrounds of influencers within the context of the luxury sector. By examining the impact of influencer stories on purchase intent, this study provides decision-makers in the luxury industry with valuable information, allowing them to determine whether influencer stories have a significant impact on consumer behavior. In addition, by treating conscientiousness as a moderate personality trait, this study investigates how variations in individuals may influence the relationship between influencer stories and purchase intentions. This study's findings contribute to academic and decision-making by improving our understanding of the impact of influencer stories and their ability to engage consumers. This knowledge can assist decision-makers in developing influencer marketing strategies for luxury brands, alleviating concerns about the impact of influencer platforms and highlighting the potential role of personality characteristics in shaping consumer responses.

On top of that, this research will aid marketing decision-makers in the luxury industry in gaining a deeper understanding of their customers' needs and desires, as well as their responses to various social media influencers, while bearing in mind the level of consumer conscientiousness. Using social media influencers, this research will provide businesses with tools that will enhance their plans and relationships with consumers. This research will assist

luxury content creators in validating or adjusting their techniques based on the level of conscientiousness of their audience.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Luxury products and their particularities

Traditionally, luxury goods, also known as status goods, have been viewed as items that are valued more for the prestige they confer on their owners than for their actual utility (Grossman & Sharpiro, 1988). These items are especially susceptible to social influence and are frequently associated with the demonstration of affluence (Wang, 2021). Clothing, automobiles, stereos, and home furnishings are examples of luxury products. Nevertheless, the definition of luxury differs from person to person and circumstance to circumstance (Husic & Cicic, 2009). Luxury has various connotations in various contexts across time and space; in fact, what one person considers a luxury may be viewed by another as ordinary (Nwankwo et al., 2014). Despite this difference, the literature generally agrees that luxury brands represent the social and cultural meanings that customers employ to accomplish their social objectives (Wilcox et al., 2009). Rarity and exclusivity frequently define and increase the desirability of luxury products, as consumers demand higher quality from them (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016). In addition, luxury brands are frequently perceived as symbols of wealth and social standing, with specificity and rarity serving as the primary distinction between reputable and unreliable brands (Dubois & Czellar, 2002). Luxury brands are associated with exclusivity, strong emotional ties and associations between consumers and brand values, personality and image, a strong brand identity to set them apart from the competition, high perceived quality, and strong consumer loyalty (Prendergast & Phau, 2001).

Despite difficulties such as geopolitical unrest and increasing inflation, the luxury sector continues to thrive: Kering reported sales of 5,1 billion euros during the third quarter of 2022, an increase of 14% year over year at constant exchange rates (Hübscher, 2022). In addition, Yves Saint Laurent posted the most impressive results with a 30% increase in revenues (Hübscher, 2022).

Although the sizeable size of the luxury market, it is understudied at present. To address this issue, researchers have examined the characteristics that stimulate luxury consumption, as described by Deeter-Schmelz et al (2000), such as image, quality, time location, store ambiance, and customer status, to determine which has the greatest impact on luxury consumption.

Consumers are frequently motivated by a desire to impress others with their appearance and fashion sense, and they employ a variety of techniques to obtain the approbation of their peers (Husic & Cicic, 2009). One method for achieving this objective is to purchase high-end products that appeal to various consumer requirements and motivations. For instance, possessing a luxury brand can help convey a desired self-image or signify a particular social class (Nia & Zaichkowsky, 2000). Moreover, the possession of luxury products can serve as a symbol of social class, allowing purchasers to be categorized as upper-class (Truong, 2010). Consumption of luxury goods is frequently motivated by the desire to attain a higher social status and to belong to a more exclusive social class, while the unique nature of luxury goods also appeals to those who value rarity (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Luxury brands have a significant symbolic meaning that responds to consumers' psychological requirements, emphasizing psychological rather than utilitarian benefits (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Thus, social norms and institutional standards influence luxury purchasing behavior, highlighting the significance of social prominence and social identification incentives (Shukla, 2012).

Naumova and colleagues (2019) discovered that cultural elements that influence consumer behavior have an effect on consumers of luxury goods: Prestige and social benefits associated with the ownership of luxury products are significant for Asian and Arab consumers, whereas personal satisfaction and monetary aspirations attract more Americans. Quality and functionality are of the foremost importance to luxury consumers in Europe, Russia, and Ukraine, while affluence is of the utmost significance. Despite these cultural variations, these authors found that digital marketing has become an indispensable tool for luxury goods producers worldwide.

Luxury brands are implementing image- and emotion-based advertising strategies, inspiring dreams with enticing messages and employing gorgeous wordless images in their brand advertising (Amatulli et al., 2018). Marketers can provide guidance to brands on how to influence consumer behavior on multiple levels (Roy et al., 2018; Motta & Barbosa, 2018; Cernikovait, 2015; Tarabasz, 2014): develop appropriate communication to generate positive dynamics and favorable brand associations, carefully monitor the company's influence on consumer behavior (follow social media such as Facebook and Twitter) and consider post-consumer thoughts or feelings as feedback. Social networks are increasingly becoming information vectors for luxury consumers, allowing them to share uncommon feelings, emotions, and aesthetic knowledge (Jahn et al., 2013). Experts advise luxury organizations to invest more time and resources in social media sites and to leverage online comments and

feedback to gain a competitive advantage and strengthen their position (Quach & Thaichon, 2017).

2.2 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is an integrated approach for promoting products or services on the Internet through numerous social media platforms (Yong & Hassan, 2019). Social media channels include instant messaging, text chat, forums, social blogs, and social networking sites (Warr, 2008; Eley & Tilley, 2009). However, it is important to understand that, in addition to technology, social media marketing includes tactical and strategic communications (Plowman & Wilson, 2018). This implies that the success of a social media marketing campaign is determined not only by the technological components of social networks, but also by the campaign's overall conception and execution.

Many businesses have utilized social media to improve their advertising efforts, raise brand recognition, influence purchase choices, and communicate with consumers. (Hutter et al., 2013). Social media marketing has become a must-have for businesses trying to connect with their consumers and reach a larger audience (Quinn, 2016). Social media has transformed how businesses generate, disseminate, and communicate their brand image, allowing manufacturers to engage directly with their consumers (Tsai & Men, 2013). In fact, many customers increasingly use social media sites as their major source of information when making purchase choices (Hinz et al., 2014). Consequently, businesses are using social media to increase brand awareness, sales, and consumer contact (Hutter et al., 2013; Bernstein et al., 2013; Hinz et al., 2014; Godey et al., 2016). Social media marketing has had a major impact on consumer decision-making and the development of close relationships between businesses and their consumers (Gallaughar & Ransbotham, 2010).

As social networks have become a medium of communication between businesses and consumers, the notion of social network marketing strategy has emerged (Larimo & Leonidou, 2021). One key part of this connection is social networking, which feeds user-generated content (Daugherty, Eastin, & Bright, 2008). Customers may utilize social media to share ideas and request assistance (Gallaughar and Ransbotham, 2010; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Marketing activities on social networks are increasingly recognized as a strategic resource that may be transformed into marketing in the context of the emerging model of brand communication (Mangold and Faulds, 2009; Morgan and Hunt, 1999). Unlike conventional tactics, social media marketing strategies place a premium on understanding the several factors that influence

customer involvement, such as intellectual, social, cultural, and other factors (Peters et al., 2013; Venkatesan, 2017). Influencer marketing is one form of social media marketing.

2.3 Social Media Marketing of Luxury Brand

Luxury businesses have recognized the value of social networks in advertising their products and services in the digital era (Kim & Ko, 2010; Okonkwo, 2010). Using social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, luxury fashion companies can communicate with customers, develop brand reputation, and increase consumer desire for luxury products (Kim) & Ko, 2010). In addition, research demonstrates that interaction with social media can boost luxury companies' sales and competitiveness (Choi et al., 2016; Scuotto et al., 2017; Gautam & Sharma, 2017; Kim & Lee, 2017).

To appeal to a younger audience, luxury fashion companies have utilized social media to highlight their PR content and designer lifestyles (Kim and Ko, 2010). Burberry, Louis Vuitton, Gucci, and Chanel are among the brands that have become active social media distributors (Messieh, 2012), with Burberry being an early adopter.

Alternately, luxury brands may target specific audiences via digital influencers who cultivate fan networks to attract luxury brands (Vinerean and Oprea, 2019). Using the perspectives and experiences of commonplace people who aspire to an affluent way of life can influence the purchasing decisions of luxury consumers (Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2019).

2.4 Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is a prominent social media approach in which marketers communicate with influencers to influence the buying decisions of consumers (Zak & Hasprova, 2020). This type of marketing entails a collaboration between the company and influencers who promote the brand's goods or services on several social media platforms (Mathew, 2018). Currently, social media influencers are individuals who has capacity to influence others owing to their frequent communication, personal persuasiveness, or size and reputation on social media (Nonprofit Business Advisor, 2015). These influencers are well-known trend-setters with vast followings in one or more domains (De Veirman et al., 2017).

Influencers are well-known personalities in their fields, and their suggestions create a lot of noise (Arndt, 1967). Marketers may pay for influencers' budgets and provide explicit recommendations on campaign objectives, hashtags to utilize, and how many posts to publish (Haenlein et al., 2020). The engagement rate of an influencer's publications, computed by

dividing the total number of likes and comments by the number of followers, determines the effectiveness of an influencer marketing campaign (Zietek, 2016). Joining social media groups and posting high-quality material on a constant and systematic basis is required to become an influencer (Tuten & Solomon, 2013).

In the era of social media, brands are increasingly resorting to influencer marketing (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). Indeed, social media influencers can share information about new products, establish and promote trends, and drive sales (Dewey, 2014). Because these influencers are perceived to be trustworthy and alluring, the products they endorse become more approachable and desirable (Jin et al., 2019). Consequently, by participating in quasi-promotional activities, many contemporary social media superstars have been able to build value for their own brands (Duffy & Hund, 2015). According to Tapinfluence (2017), influencer marketing has become a popular option for businesses since it provides an 11 times higher return on investment than conventional marketing methods.

Based on research findings, social media influencers have a considerable effect on consumers' purchase choices (Tran & Strutton, 2014). Customers' profound relationship with influencers affects their view of authenticity, which contributes significantly to influencers' impact (Stéfanone et al., 2010). Therefore, customers are more inclined to purchase products recommended by influencers because they identify with them and aspire to be like them (Tran and Strutton, 2014). This research offers support to the notion that customers are affected by their immediate surroundings rather than conventional marketing approaches (Kempe, Kleinberg, Tardos, 2003; Bansal and Voyer, 2000). Furthermore, influencer information is seen as trustworthy and has a considerable effect on consumers' perspectives, beliefs, attitudes, and actions (Lim et al., 2017).

The efficiency of influencer marketing, according to Tran and Strutton (2014), is dependent on consumers' capacity to recognize influencers and their desire to imitate them, making influencers' attributes and goals a key aspect. On top of that, since the majority of people are not affluent, the opportunity to improve one's socioeconomic standing through influencer marketing is considerably larger. Thus, the first hypothesis of the present study is:

H1: Luxury influencers that became rich with effort (i.e., a rag to riches story) will lead to higher purchase intention for luxury product than influencers that were born into affluence.

2.5 Conscientiousness

Piedmont (1998) describes personality as a complicated, diverse entity that has piqued the curiosity of many areas of study. It takes into account the intrinsic structure of a person's mental environment, which is typically stable and constant throughout time and situation. One prominent model for describing personality is the big five model, which identifies five key traits: extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience (McCrae & Costa, 2003; Paunonen, 2003; Meng & Leung, 2021). These characteristics are hypothesized to interact and impact individual behavior in diverse settings.

Conscientiousness is a personality attribute that includes traits like organization, self-control, prudence, tenacity, and dependability (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Highly conscientious people are frequently focused, thorough, dependable, and well-organized, while low conscientious people are impatient, disorganized, and rigid (Migliore, 2011).

Previous study has consistently demonstrated that conscientious persons are self-disciplined and naturally driven to achieve, limiting the possibility of utilizing luxury items, which are seen as distracting and unproductive (Cassidy & Lynn, 1989). According to Joshanloo and colleagues (2011), conscientious people efficiently manage their emotions, postpone satisfaction, and favor utilitarian over hedonic values. As a consequence, highly conscientious people choose purchasing fundamentals over luxuries. Eastman and Eastman (2011) discovered a substantial adverse relationship between conscientiousness and luxury expenditure.

Given the available studies on conscientiousness and its relation to luxury goods purchasing, it is apparent that this personality characteristic has a significant impact on consumer behavior. This thesis predicts that highly conscientious people are less likely to engage in luxury purchases, due to their preference for practical and utilitarian ideals thus :

H2: Individuals high in conscientious will have lower luxury purchase intention than individuals low in conscientiousness.

2.6 Influencer story and background

This literature review explores the significance of influencer narratives and qualities in changing customer perceptions and buy intentions, based on the hypothesis that influencer narratives and attributes in advertising have a significant impact on consumer behavior. Advertisers have long recognized the importance of narrative in capturing the public's attention and communicating the various applications and meanings of their products (Escalas, 2004).

Similarly, influencers utilize storytelling techniques to engage their followers and convey information effectively (Van Laer et al., 2019). The incorporation of narratives by influencers enhances the influence of social identity, interest alignment, and thought leadership on the purchasing decisions of followers (Farivar & Wang, 2022). Due to the diversity of role models available on social media, individuals can identify influencers who share similarities with them, making identification and connection simpler (Van Eldik et al., 2019).

From my personal observations, I have identified a category of influencers who have gone to great lengths to live the life of their dreams, achieve financial success and inspire those who follow them by selling their success stories (i.e., a rags to riches story). Most of their followers identify with them and aspire to achieve the ideal lifestyle they have cultivated. This category of social media influencers comes from humble or even impoverished backgrounds but has gained popularity on social media over time. In accordance with the idea that identification with the influencer is an important mechanism in influencer marketing (Schouten et al., 2020), this thesis expects that a rags to riches story will resonate more with conscientious people, thus:

H3: Purchase intention of conscientious individuals will be higher when the influencer story and background involves effort and personal attainment (i.e., a rags to riches story).

3. Methodology

3.1 Design

The design of the current study is a one-way repeated measures design (influencer story: rags to riches vs. born affluent) with intention to purchase a luxury bag as the dependent variable and conscientiousness as the main covariate of interest. As control variables, this study included the frequency of social media use, most used social media, type of luxury influencer most followed, preferred luxury brand, occupation, country of residence, subscription to a luxury influencer, familiarity with both category of influencer, age, and number of influencers they follow.

3.2 Participants

The primary objective of this study was to assess the impact of luxury influencers' backgrounds and story on women's purchase intention of luxury products. Consequently, the participants recruited for both questionnaires were exclusively women. Using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009) it was found that the study's design required a minimum sample size of 84 participants, calculated for the hypothesis with lowest power (the effect of conscientiousness on purchase

intention, H2, 80% power, $\alpha = .05$, medium effect size of $r = .30$; all other effect sizes involve repeated measures). Regarding participant recruitment, significant social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram were utilized to maximize the procurement of valid responses. The online survey was administered between April 24 and April 27, and the obtained data was then analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software. A total of 98 individuals filled out the questionnaire. However, only fully completed questions were considered valid, reducing the number of valid responses to 92. The questionnaire included an attention control question, and six participants failed to answer it correctly resulting to a final count of 86 valid responses. Considering the valid sample size of 86 respondents, it is noteworthy that 97.7% of them were female, given that the introduction to the questionnaire specified that the survey was predominantly intended for women. In addition, when I disseminated the survey on social media platforms, I specified and requested that respondents be female. Age distribution revealed that 47.5% fell within the 18 to 24-year-old category, 11.4% were aged between 25 and 34 years, only 3.9% fell within 35 to 44 -year-old category, 27.8% fell within 45 to 54 -year-old category, and 10.2% were aged above 54 years. Geographically, a significant proportion of the respondents were Tunisian (41.9%) or French (39.5%) residents and only 18.6 of the participants were residents of other countries. Examining participants' occupation, it was observed that 38.8% were employed either on a full-time or part-time basis, whereas approximately 40% were students. In addition, 14.18% of the participant were self-employed, 2.4% were retired and 4.7% had other occupation.

To gain a deeper understanding of the participants' profiles regarding their relationships with luxury and social media influencers, four specific questions were addressed. All participants use social media. When asked how often they use social media, 50% said always, 33.7% most of the time, 15.1% sometimes, and 1.2% rarely. By order of frequency, participants had accounts on Instagram (93%), Facebook (81.4%), YouTube (67.4%), LinkedIn (59.3%), and TikTok (41.9%).

Furthermore, the findings indicated that 70% of the respondents were subscribed to luxury influencers and the most used social media to subscribe to luxury influencers was Instagram (87.9%), followed by TikTok (6.1%), Facebook (3%), and YouTube (1.5%). Almost half of the sample (46.4%) follows luxury fashion and beauty influencers, and (33.3%) subscribes to luxury lifestyle and travel influencers. Nearly a quarter of the sample (13.1%) follows luxury fitness and wellness influencers and only (7.1%) of the sample subscribes to other types of influencers. As for the purpose of following luxury influencers, (38.1%) of the sample

responded, “to be entertained”, (26.2%) “to follow trends” and (21.4%) “to discover new products”, (8.3%) of the sample follow luxury influencers to get buying advice and (6%) for other reasons. Additionally, notable luxury brands that garnered favorability among the respondents were Chanel, Dior, each receiving 21.4% of the respondents' preference, followed by Hermès (20.2%), Louis Vuitton (8.3%), Dolce & Gabbana (7.1%), Gucci (3.6%) and 17.9% indicated other brands. In terms of luxury-related purchases, participants expressed their willingness to spend an average of 4870.11 euros ($SD= 22841.80$) on a luxury product, and more than a half of the respondent (57.3%) reported a preference for making their luxury purchases in physical stores, while 23.2% preferred online and in physical stores, 11% preferred purchasing online, and 8.5% preferred other methods.

3.3 Materials and Procedure

This study's data collection process began with the development of an English questionnaire. This questionnaire included an informed consent part, with the first section providing participants with a comprehensive understanding of the research's primary topic and related details. Participants were informed that the survey was a "marketing study on the impact of social media influencers on women's intentions to purchase luxury goods." In addition, participants were assured that their responses would be kept strictly confidential and anonymous, and they could disengage from the study at any time. Participants were also informed that there would be no adverse effects from participating in the study.

After that introduction, two different influencers from distinct backgrounds were introduced to the participants. Each participant was randomly introduced to Lena or Karen, an influencer who has strived to become wealthy, and to Chiara or Mathilda, an influencer who was born wealthy. For ease of understanding, a paragraph was dedicated to each influencer, highlighting their biography, personal introduction, and Instagram profile picture. To guarantee authenticity and consistency, the image used for each influencer is a screenshot of their current Instagram profile, which includes several photos of them while information about their profile was gleaned from in-depth internet research.

In this segment, participants were asked to indicate whether they knew the influencer and required to respond to ten statements based on their comprehension of the supplied information and the influencer's Instagram profile. The statements included the extent to which the influencer inspired them such as “This influencer inspires me to discover something new” (Böttger et al., 2017), the attractiveness of their content “The influencer's content is visually

appealing” (Bell et al., 1991), perceived similarity with the influencer “I find this influencer to have a lot in common with me” (Burgoon & Hale, 1987; Feick & Higie, 1992), the influencer’s expertise in the luxury industry “When looking at this influencer's content, I find she is an expert” (Liljander et al., 2015), and overall satisfaction “This influencer makes me feel close to what is important to me in life with her description” (Malär et al., 2011). A seven-point differential semantic scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) was employed for participants to rate their responses.

Following the answer to these statements, participants were presented with a photo of the same female influencer holding a Lady Dior bag. Although the brand remained the same, the color and size of the chosen bag differed from one influencer to another. Participants were asked about their intention to buy a Lady Dior handbag. Factors such as the influencer's background, history and product promotion were considered. The following set of three statements “The likelihood of me purchasing this product is”, “The probability that I would consider buying this product” “My willingness to buy the Lady Dior Bag is” were used to assess purchase intention. This measurement was based on Dodds et al. (1991) and employed a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

After the evaluation of the influencer's identification and the assessment of purchase intention, participants were required to respond to a series of questions regarding their association with social media such as “Do you use social media?”, subscription to luxury influencers “Are you subscribed to any luxury influencers on these platforms?”, social media usage habits “Which type of luxury influencer do you follow the most?” , preferences for luxury brands “What are your favorite luxury brands?”, and luxury product purchasing habits “Where do you mainly purchase luxury products?”. The questions were formulated by myself, based on my personal experience as a social media user and follower of luxury influencers.

The next stage was to assess the main variable conscientiousness; however, the set of questions did not indicate its underlying purpose with the objective to avoid bias. The participants were instructed to respond to nine questions about their personality traits. The conscientiousness dimension was measured using the 44-item Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by John and collaborators (1991). The measurement of conscientiousness comprised nine items, which were rated on a scale from 1 (*Strongly agree*) to 5 (*Strongly disagree*). The items included both positively and negatively worded statements, such as “Does a thorough job” and “Tends to be disorganized”.

The questionnaire ended with a demographic block where participants were asked about their gender, age, occupation, and country of residence. The full questionnaire is available in Appendix A.

4. Results

4.1 Scale assessment

This thesis used three scales: identification with the influencer, purchase intention, and conscientiousness, which were evaluated using Cronbach's α analysis.

As explained by Taber (2018), Cronbach's α is a statistic frequently cited by authors to demonstrate that tests and scales adopted for research projects are appropriate for their intended purpose. This measure will allow the assessment of the internal consistency or reliability of each scale. To begin the analysis, the scales had to be transformed so that Cronbach's α could be calculated. Regarding the conscientiousness scale taken from the 44-item Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by John and collaborators (1991), with a 5-point Likert scale, four of the nine items were presented in the negative form. For appropriate interpretation, the scale of these items needed to be reversed. After reverse-coding all necessary items, a scale evaluation was conducted. According to Vale and collaborators (1997), when comparing groups using Cronbach's α analysis, α values greater than 0.7 are considered satisfactory. The Cronbach's α of the nine items conscientiousness scale is equal to .79 which indicates a satisfactory level of internal consistency for the conscientiousness scale with this specific sample.

Regarding the purchase intention variable for each of the four influencers, the scale had three items measured in 7-point Likert scale. Cronbach's analysis was performed and presented a value of 0.84. This also suggests that the purchase intention scale had a high level of internal reliability with this sample.

Finally, the identification with the influencer variable was measured with 10 items in a 7-point Likert-type scale for each of the four influencers. Cronbach's α analysis was performed and presented a value of 0.94. This demonstrates that the scale maintains an excellent level of internal consistency with the used sample.

After evaluating the reliability of the identification with the influencer, purchase intention, and conscientiousness scales, the average was calculated for each scale.

4.2 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics are numerical and graphical methods for organizing, presenting, and analyzing data (Fisher & Marshall, 2009). See Table 1 for the mean and standard deviation of the variables relative to each influencer. Participants reported $M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.70$ in the conscientiousness scale.

Table 1. Descriptives influencer-specific variables.

	Rags to riches		Born affluent	
	Lena	Karen	Chiara	Mathilde
Identification with influencer	$M = 3.70$ $SD = 1.35$	$M = 3.84$ $SD = 1.55$	$M = 3.80$ $SD = 1.39$	$M = 3.38$ $SD = 1.43$
Knows the influencer	48%	32%	65%	9.5%
Bag purchase intention	$M = 3.07$ $SD = 1.49$	$M = 3.21$ $SD = 1.47$	$M = 3.56$ $SD = 1.81$	$M = 3.27$ $SD = 1.62$

4.3 Bivariate Correlation

Field (2009) describes Pearson correlation as a method for determining the intensity and direction of a positive or negative association between two variables. The Pearson correlation test was conducted in the current study to ascertain the relationship between the story and background of the influencer, purchase intention, and conscientiousness. In addition, control variables were incorporated into this analysis to identify any additional correlations between variables.

As each participant of this study was confronted randomly with only one influencer in each category, several variables were merged into a single variable for analysis. First, we merged the different variables that indicated that the participant knew the influencer into a single dummy variable where 1 indicates that the participant knows the influencer and 0 indicates that the participant does not, doing this separately for the influencers in each influencer category. The same method was used to merge the purchase intention variables.

Some control variables were also considered in this analysis due to their possible relationship with intention to purchase the Lady Dior luxury handbag. Five categories were considered without any change: subscription to a luxury influencer, gender, familiarity with the influencer,

age, and number of influencers they follow. All others were categorical and contained more than two categories, requiring them to be transformed into dummy variables for further analysis. Prior to coding the dummy variables, the descriptive frequencies of each variable were analyzed, and categories with fewer than 10 responses were merged into another category, thereby reducing the number of dummy variables that needed to be generated. When generating the dummy variables, one of the categories should be coded as 0 in each variable. For example, the frequency of social media use variable, which has four categories, three dummy variables were created: always, most of the time, and rarely or sometimes. For the influencer type variable, with four categories, three dummy variables were created, Fashion, Lifestyle and Fitness, and others were merged. For the reason why they follow luxury brands, only four dummy variables of the five categories of the variable were created, to discover new products, to follow trends, to be entertained, to get buying advice and others were merged. For the preferred luxury brand variable, only four dummy variables were created: Chanel, Dior, Hermes, and other brands. In stores" was the control group for location of luxury goods purchase. The "occupation" variable was coded into three dummy variables: student, full-time employee, and other occupation. The country of residence variable was recoded into three dummy variables: Tunisia, France, and other countries.

The correlation analysis (see Appendix B's Table 1 for the bivariate correlations between the main variables of interest and Appendix B's Table 2 for the bivariate correlations between the main variables and control variables) revealed that the purchase intention variable is correlated with influencer identification, with all $r_s > .46$, $p < .01$. In addition, knowing the influencers correlates with higher purchase intention, $r_s > .27$, $p < .05$, as does following luxury influencers on social media, $r_s > .35$, $p < .01$. Considering conscientiousness variable, it is possible to determine that it is positively and significantly correlated with age, $r = .26$, $p < .05$, negatively with being a student, $r = -.35$, $p < .05$, and positively with being employed full-time, $r = .23$, $p < .05$. Conscientiousness was also found to be significantly and negatively correlated with being a "Rags to riches" influencer, $r = -0.25$, $p < .05$, indicating that more conscientious individuals were less aware of influencers with a "rags to riches" background.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

One of the aims of this thesis is to determine if the background and story of luxury influencers on social media impact customers' attitudes toward luxury items by boosting or decreasing their buying intention.

First hypothesis (H1) predicts that luxury influencers with a history of poverty-to-wealth transitions will generate greater purchase intentions for luxury products. The second hypothesis (H2) predicts that individuals with high levels of conscientiousness intend to purchase fewer luxury items. The third hypothesis (H3) predicts that the purchase intention of conscientious individuals increases when the influencer's story and background are associated with personal effort and achievement.

Before testing these hypotheses, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the purchase intentions of the two rag to riches influencers Karen ($n = 44, m = 3.26, sd = 1.90$) with Lena ($n = 36, m = 3.00, sd = 1.45$) and the two born affluent influencers Chiara ($n = 40, m = 3.61, sd = 1.81$) and Mathilde ($n = 40, m = 3.28, sd = 1.67$). No significant differences were found between the purchase intentions of participants exposed to the different influencers, $t(78) = -0.67, p = .504$, for the rag to riches influencers and $t(78) = 0.85, p = .397$, for the born affluent influencers.

Therefore, to investigate further the relationship between influencer type and purchase intention, I classified the influencers into two groups according to their respective backgrounds. Since each participant only saw one influencer of each type, I did not consider differences between individual influencers. A paired samples t-test was conducted to compare the purchase intentions of participants who were exposed to the rag to riches influencers and those who were exposed to the born affluent influencers. Results revealed a significant difference, $t(79) = -2.26, p = .026$, with higher purchase intentions in the born affluent condition ($N=80, M = 3.44, SD = 1.74$) compared to the rag to riches condition ($N=80, M = 3.14, SD = 1.70$), thus supporting H1.

A repeated measures ANCOVA with a single factor of story was conducted, using the rags to riches and born affluent purchase intention as a within-subject variable, and conscientiousness as a covariate.

The within-subject effects test indicated, in contrast to the results of the t-test, that there was no overall difference in purchase intention between the rags to riches and born affluent stories $F(1, 78) = 0.77, p = .392$. Furthermore, there was no interaction between story and conscientiousness, $F(1, 78) = 0.25, p = .620$, indicating that the rags to riches story was not more persuasive for high conscientiousness people than for low conscientiousness individuals. Thus, no support was found for H3.

The between-subject effects test also showed that conscientiousness did not have a significant impact on purchase intention, $F(1, 78) = 0.05, p = .833$. Thus, no support was found for H3 either, in line with the lack of significance in the bivariate correlations.

4.5 Covariates

As more data was collected from respondents, additional analysis was conducted to determine whether other variables influenced the intention to buy. Based on a bivariate correlation analysis, the following control variables were included as covariates in the model : Identification with rag to riches influencer, identification with born to affluent influencer, frequency of social media use, most used social media, type of luxury influencer most followed, reason for following the influencer, preferred luxury brand, where they purchase luxury items, occupation, country of residence, subscription to a luxury influencer, gender, familiarity with both category of influencer, age, and number of influencers they follow.

The results of the study showed that the lack of a significant main effect of story type on purchase intention persisted after the inclusion of control variables., $F(1, 51) = 0.24, p = .626$, thus not supporting H1. In a similar way, there was no relationship between conscientiousness and purchase intention, $F(1, 51) = 0.74, p = .395$, thus not supporting H2. Furthermore, there was no interaction effect between story type and conscientiousness regarding purchase intent, $F(1, 51) = 0.09, p = .768$.

Considering the covariates, it was found that individuals who identified with a rag to riches influencer ($b = 0.46, p = .009$) and those who followed fashion and beauty influencers ($b = 0.87, p = .030$) had a greater intention to purchase the promoted product by the rags to riches influencer. In a similar way, people who associated with the born affluent influencer ($b = 0.64, p = .001$) and those who followed fashion and beauty influencers ($b = 0.91, p = .034$) were more likely to buy the goods advocated by the born affluent influencer. Furthermore, the results indicated that French nationals had a greater intent to purchase the product promoted by the born-affluent influencer than individuals of other nationalities, as measured by a coefficient of ($b = 0.92, p = .039$).

5. Discussion

Due to their ability to affect the relationship between consumers and brands, social media influencers are capturing the attention of corporations (Mathew, 2018). These strategic marketing investments are on the rise, and leaders have to comprehend how to optimize their

spending through strategic marketing measures. As the luxury market continues to expand, social media influencers are focusing more and more on creating content for this segment. This includes the promotion of affluent lifestyles, high-end experiences, and luxury goods, as well as the support of luxury brands. Influencers are viewed as tastemakers and trendsetters by consumers, and their suggestions can have a substantial impact on purchasing decision (De Veirman et al., 2017). Companies in the luxury goods industry are substantially investing in influencer marketing in order to capitalize on this impact and deepen their consumer connections (Quinn, 2016). This thesis aimed to determine if the background and story of luxury influencers on social media platforms result in higher purchase intentions for luxury products and if the conscientiousness of consumers moderated this effect.

Against anticipations, this thesis's hypotheses did not receive support. In a direct test, the background and story of luxury influencers strongly increased purchase intention, although individuals generally preferred the born affluent influencer, and this effect did not withstand more extensive statistical analysis. Consumer conscientiousness had no impact on the degree to which the influencer's story influenced consumers, nor on people's general propensity to acquire luxury products. Thus, all three hypotheses were invalidated. The survey results made it possible to investigate some of the hypotheses' underlying assumptions and acquire a deeper understanding of possible explanations of the results that were observed.

A relationship was found between identification with a particular influencer and the intention to purchase the bag that influencer advertised. This finding is consistent with prior research, since consumers are more interested in information released by influencers with whom they can identify (Schouten et al., 2020). Therefore, the more individuals identify with a certain influencer, the more likely they are to plan to purchase, emphasizing influencer identification as their major impact strategy. In addition, the results of this study demonstrate a positive correlation between influencer knowledge and intention to purchase, suggesting that exposure to luxury influencers may be associated with the propensity to purchase more. Although these results support the notion that luxury influencers are effective, it is not possible to rule out an alternative explanation: in particular, it is possible that individuals who are more interested in luxury products tend to follow luxury influencers more closely and exhibit greater intention to buy, thereby increasing the likelihood of reverse causality. Therefore, it is difficult to establish a causal link between exposure to luxury influencers and intention to purchase based solely on these results.

In accordance with Martins's (2002) definition of conscientiousness, which includes dependability, trustworthiness, assiduity, and perseverance, the investigation's findings lend support to this characterization of conscientiousness. Specifically, the observed positive correlation between conscientiousness, age, and full-time employment is consistent with the notion that individuals with greater stability in their careers and more established occupations are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of conscientiousness. Moreover, the negative correlation between conscientiousness and student status demonstrates that students are less conscientious in general, possibly because they have less responsibility and have not yet entered the labor market, and thus have a lower level of conscientiousness. A significant negative correlation was also found between conscientiousness and knowledge with influencers with a rag to riches story. This result suggests that highly conscientiousness individuals are less likely to encounter or interact with influencers who ascended from limited resources to wealth. This may be due to the absence of results, as it's conceivable that individuals with conscientious personalities prefer influencers with rags-to-riches stories, but they don't identify with them and are more familiar with those who were born wealthy. Therefore, the effect between conscientiousness and familiarity with the influencer in the rags-to-riches story would be negligible. This suggests that marketers should investigate more diverse narratives and collaborate with influencers from various backgrounds so that the audience can learn about a variety of experiences. This observation, however, poses intriguing questions regarding the factors that contribute to exposure to this sort of influencer content. In their marketing campaigns involving influencers from rags-to-riches backgrounds, companies might not be specifically targeting people who are particularly conscientiousness. Importantly, consumer conscientiousness had no effect on the general propensity of individuals to purchase luxury products. This is completely inconsistent with some of the previous literature. For example, Joshanloo and colleagues (2011) found that highly conscientious individuals were more likely to purchase luxury items than necessities. This disparity in outcomes may be attributed to the selection of different samples for the two investigations, as Joshanloo and associates (2011) focused on Iranian university students, whereas the current study focused on women. Yet, the current results are in line with Eastman and Eastman (2011), who found no correlation between conscientiousness and luxury good consumption, which corresponds to my observations.

The final study examined the main and interactive effects of influencer story and background, as well as conscientiousness, on purchase intention. Two control variables were found to be significant predictors for buying intention. Initially, identifying with the rags to riches

influencer and following fashion and beauty influencers resulted in a greater intention to purchase the product promoted by the rags to riches influencer. Second, identifying with the born affluent influencer and following fashion and beauty influencers increased the intention to purchase the product promoted by the born affluent influencer. In addition, French nationals had a higher desire to purchase the product promoted by the born-affluent influencer than non-French nationals. Consequently, it is conceivable that French individuals prefer promotions by born affluent influencers. Curiously, the bivariate correlation between French nationality and familiarity with rags-to-riches influencers was significant, whereas the correlation with familiarity with born affluent influencers was not. This finding suggests that French individuals may be more exposed to influential figures with rags-to-riches backgrounds.

5.1 Implication and further research

The findings of this study have major significance for the area of influencer marketing and indicate opportunities for further research.

Following the lack of impact of luxury influencers' backgrounds and personal stories on consumer purchase intentions, marketers and advertisers have to reconsider the significance of influencer's background in their advertising strategies.

Moreover, the observed positive correlation between consumer identification with influencers and intention to purchase highlights the significance of strengthening this identification. Further studies could investigate the fundamental mechanisms of identification's effect on purchasing decisions. This might involve investigating the roles of perceived authenticity, reliability, and aspirational appeal in influencer-consumer identification. Increased understanding of these mechanisms by marketers would enable them to create more effective influencer marketing campaigns. In addition, the literature indicates that the similarity factor can facilitate identification and connection with the influencer (Van Eldik et al., 2019). Therefore, it is advantageous for the influencer to gain a deeper understanding of their target consumers. Influencers and administrators can collect data about their audience using techniques such as surveys, and analysis of engagement patterns on social media, and then share content that can relate to their audience.

On top of that, the positive correlation between consumers' knowledge of influencers and their intent to purchase emphasizes the importance of their knowledge and recognition of influencers to impact their purchase decisions. This implies that marketers ought to favor approaches that raise customers' knowledge and awareness of influencers. Further studies could examine which

aspects of influencer knowledge, such as credibility, and brand-influencer compatibility, have the greatest impact on intention to buy.

Besides, the reported relationship between conscientiousness and engagement with influencers indicates that conscientiousness-based tailored marketing campaigns are possible. Marketers may adapt influencer engagement tactics to meet the needs of their target audience. Future research could investigate the processes underlying the relationship between conscientiousness and consumer engagement with influencers in greater detail. Furthermore, researching the effect of other personality traits, such as extroversion or openness to experiences, on influencer engagement might lead to a better understanding of the link between personality and consumer behavior in the context of influencer marketing.

5.2 Limitations

When undertaking further studies on related topics, it is important to consider the study's limitations. Initially, a greater number of samples would enhance the results' reliability. Participants were solicited exclusively through social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, which may have decreased the sample size and diversity. Nevertheless, it was essential that the individuals selected for the research had an honest interest in the luxury market. Future researchers should diversify their recruitment strategies with the goal to boost sample size and diversity to circumvent this limitation.

The second limitation pertains to the display of influencers and the selection of images to represent them. The manner of presentation and chosen image were dissimilar, and the written description lacked sufficient story and context. Future research should address this issue by providing a more organized description of the influencer's story and by sharing a collection of images with specific explanations of their evolution, so that participants are sufficiently acquainted with the influencer's background and story.

An additional limitation was the randomness of the influencer order. Indeed, participants were sometimes the first to receive the born affluent influencer and sometimes the rag to riches influencer, meaning that it's possible for one form of influencer to always appear first. Furthermore, given the random nature of the order, some influencers appear more frequently than others in their respective categories. This can distort the study and have an impact on participants' responses. Future research should address this problem by proposing only one influencer in each category, to reduce the potential prejudices that could impact the study results.

A further limitation of the study is the choice of the Lady Dior bag as a subject for the questionnaire. Even though the product has broad appeal and is one of the most famous luxury handbags on the market, it was presumed that participants had a genuine fascination and desire for it. Researchers in the future should inquire about participants' level of engagement with the product to minimize the influence of this assumption and guarantee a more accurate and trustworthy analysis.

Another limitation of the study is that participants are unaware of the existence of the influencer story measure, making the study susceptible to bias. The absence of awareness may have affected the responses of the participants on the Influencer identification and knowledge scale, as well as the findings of the study. In addition, influencer profiles varied in some way, so many individuals were unaffected by whether the story was about a affluent influencer who became wealthy or a affluent influencer who was born wealthy. Future researchers are encouraged to ask participants if they knew the type of story to ensure that the stories were sufficiently obvious on these characteristics. Furthermore, by incorporating the parameter of participants' knowledge of the influencer story measure into the analysis could further enhance the practicality and importance of the findings.

5.3 Conclusions

This thesis investigates the luxury industry and its relationship to the new sector of social media influencer marketing. Despite the particular results, this study emphasizes the significance of ongoing research and development of beneficial to customers techniques. The purpose of this research is to serve as a foundation for improving brand-customer relationship management in this critical market, by giving important information to companies to help them improve their approaches and develop meaningful connection with their target audience. Brands may use the findings of this research to better their knowledge and execution of customer engagement strategies in the changing luxury market.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Thesis Survey

Start of Block: Introduction

Q1 Welcome and thank you for participating in this study.

This investigation is part of my Master's thesis at Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Cristina Mendonça.

This study seeks to collect data for marketing research on the influence of social media influencers on women's intent to purchase luxury products.

Consequently, your participation will contribute to fashion and luxury industry research. We anticipate that completing this investigation will take no longer than 10 minutes.

Please respond as truthfully as possible. All of your responses will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. This means that your responses cannot be linked to your identity. The collected information will only be used for research.

There are no anticipated adverse effects associated with participation in this study. You can terminate the study at any time by dismissing this page.

If you have any inquiries regarding this study, please contact s-souissi@ucp.pt.

You agree to participate in the investigation by continuing.

We appreciate your participation!

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Block 6

Q21 First, you will be introduced to two luxury influencers and the content of their instagram profiles.

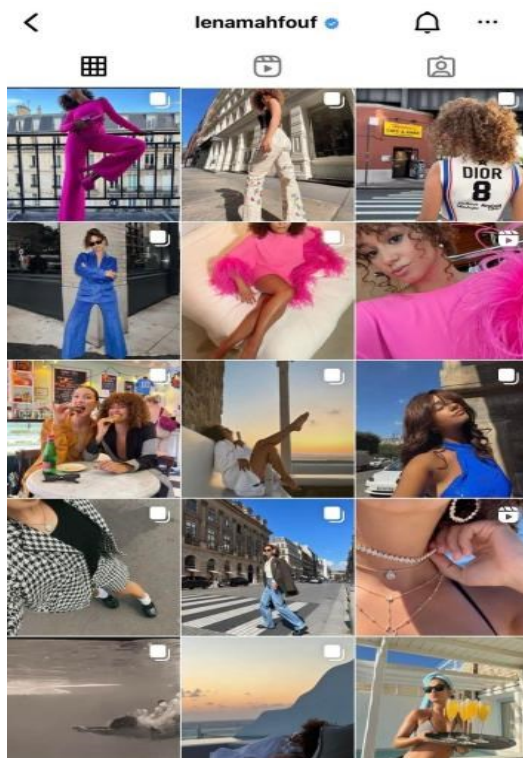
Afterwards, we will ask you a series of questions about about them.

End of Block: Block 6

Start of Block: Lena background and content

Q23 Lena Mahfouf (@Lena Situations)

Lena Mahfouf, known as Lena Situations, is now one of the most powerful fashion influencers in the world. Born in Paris, she grew up in a modest family and quickly found success on the internet thanks to her videos and posts on YouTube and Instagram. In 2012, she began sharing her daily life as well as her passion for fashion and beauty with her community. Very quickly, she became one of the most popular influencers in France, with millions of followers on her various platforms. Whether it's during Fashion Week, while writing her book "Toujours plus" or creating her brand "Hôtel Mahfouf", the 25-year-old woman is everywhere and has become a true icon in her field. She is now highly sought after to collaborate with luxury brands such as Chanel, Dior, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton. Lena is an inspiring example of perseverance and success through her hard work and dedication to her profession. Considered a reliable source of information and an expert in the field of luxury and fashion, she promotes several luxury products.



Q25 Do you know this influencer ?

Yes (1)

No (11)

Q49 On a scale of 1 to 7 (1 means "Strongly disagree" and 7 means "Strongly agree") and based on the image and description you have just read, please answer the following statements:

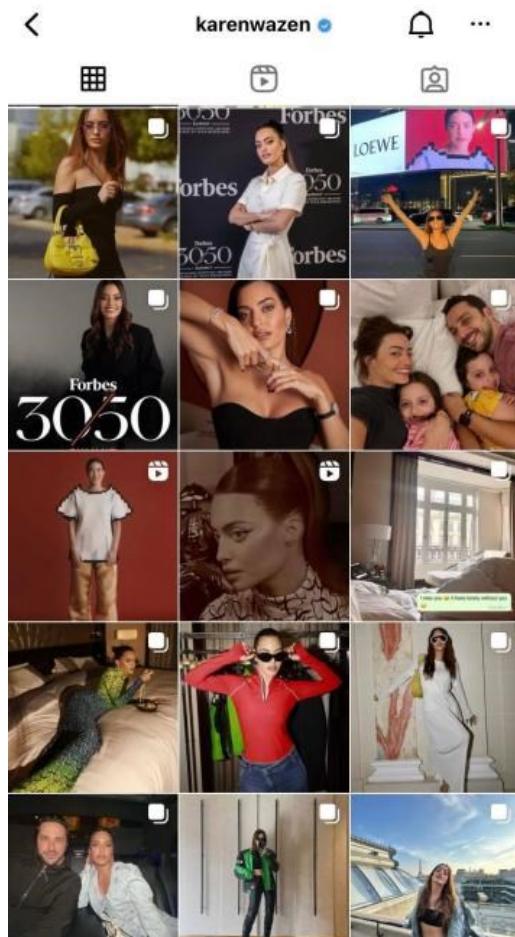
	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Lena inspires me to discover something new (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lena broadens my horizon (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lena's content is attractive (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lena's content is visually appealing (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find Lena to be quite a bit like me (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find Lena to have a lot in common with me (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When looking at Lena's content, I find she is an expert (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When looking at Lena's content, I find she is knowledgeable (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lena makes me feel like a mirror image of the person I would like to be (my ideal self) (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lena makes me feel close to what is important to me in life with her description (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Lena background and content

Start of Block: Karen background and content

Q28 Karen Wazen (@karenwazen)

Karen Wazen is a Lebanese blogger, influencer, and mother. She was born in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1986 and is best known for her fashion and lifestyle blog, Karen Wazen Bakhazi, as well as her Instagram account @karenwazen. After graduating in finance, Karen worked in the banking sector for several years before turning to her passion for fashion and social media. She started posting content on her blog in 2015 and quickly gained a loyal fan base. Since then, she has become a prominent figure in the fashion and beauty industry, working with renowned brands such as Dior, Chanel, Givenchy, and Louis Vuitton. On social media, Karen primarily shares content related to fashion, beauty, family, and travel. She is very active on Instagram, where she has over 4 million followers, and regularly posts photos and videos of her daily life with her family while sharing her passions and expertise in fashion and beauty. Considered a reliable source of information and an expert in the field of luxury and fashion, she promotes several luxury products.



Q51 Do you know this influencer ?

Yes (1)

No (11)

Q26 Chiara Ferragni (@chiaraferragni)

Chiara Ferragni is a 35-year-old Italian entrepreneur, blogger, fashion designer and mom of two. She is best known for her fashion blog, The Blonde Salad, which has become an international success and a major influence in the fashion industry.

Chiara Ferragni grew up in a wealthy family and was exposed to fashion and luxury from a young age. She studied law at Bocconi University in Milan, but eventually dropped out to focus on her career as a fashion blogger. Chiara Ferragni is known for her luxurious lifestyle, her passion for travel, designer clothes and luxury accessories. She was named one of the 30 most influential people under 30 by Forbes magazine in 2015 and was ranked among the 500 richest people in Italy by Il Sole 24 Ore magazine in 2020. Considered a reliable source of information and an expert in the field of luxury and fashion, she promotes several luxury products.



Q50 Do you know this influencer ?

Yes (1)

No (11)

Q27 On a scale of 1 to 7 (1 means "Strongly disagree" and 7 means "Strongly agree") and based on the image and description you have just read, please answer the following statements:

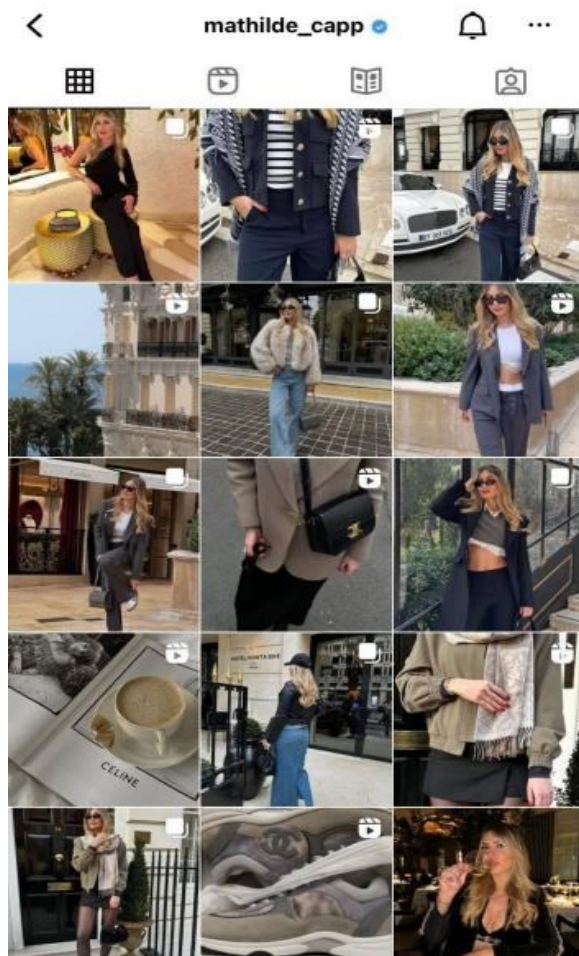
	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Chiara inspires me to discover something new (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chiara broadens my horizon (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chiara content is attractive (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chiara's content is visually appealing (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find Chiara to be quite a bit like me (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find Chiara to have a lot in common with me (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When looking at Chiara's content, I find she is an expert (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When looking at Chiara's content, I find she is knowledgeable (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chiara makes me feel like a mirror image of the person I would like to be (my ideal self) (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chiara makes me feel close to what is important to me in life with her description (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Chiara background and content

Start of Block: Mathilde background and content

Q30 Mathilde Cappelaere (@mathilde_capp)

Mathilde Cappelaere, a 24-year-old French entrepreneur and blogger, comes from a wealthy family and leads a luxurious life that many of her followers dream of. She loves to share her life moments, including her travels on private jets, stays in luxury hotels, dinners at the most prestigious restaurants, as well as shopping sprees in the most famous luxury brand stores. She embodies the lifestyle of a young aristocrat and is known for her love of fashion and luxury. Mathilde owns an impressive collection of brand name handbags and shoes, which she enjoys wearing on her outings in the city. She also attends fashion shows and prestigious events, where she meets influential personalities in the fashion and luxury world. She is a true inspiration to her followers and uses her blogger platform to inspire and motivate young entrepreneurs to achieve their goals. Considered a reliable source of information and an expert in the field of luxury and fashion, she promotes several luxury products.



Q52 Do you know this influencer ?

- Yes (1)
- No (11)

Q31 On a scale of 1 to 7 (1 means "Strongly disagree" and 7 means "Strongly agree") and based on the image and description you have just read, please answer the following statements:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Mathilde inspires me to discover something new (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mathilde broadens my horizon (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mathilde's content is attractive (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mathilde's content is visually appealing (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find Mathilde to be quite a bit like me (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find Mathilde to have a lot in common with me (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When looking at Mathilde's content, I find she is an expert (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When looking at Mathilde's content, I find she is knowledgeable (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mathilde makes me feel like a mirror image of the person I would like to be (my ideal self) (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mathilde makes me feel close to what is important to me in life with her description (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q45 Consider your opinion regarding **Mathilde Cappelaere's** background and her endorsement of a “Lady Dior” Bag, presented in the image below:



Q57 On a scale of 1 to 7 (1 means "Very low" and 7 means "Very high"), please answer the following statements:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
The likelihood of me purchasing this product is: (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The probability that I would consider buying this product is: (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My willingness to buy the Lady Dior Bag is: (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Mathilde background and conten

Start of Block: Psychographic Section:

Q1 Do you use social media?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
-

Q2 Which social networks do you use?

- Instagram (1)
 - Facebook (2)
 - LinkedIn (3)
 - Youtube (4)
 - Tiktok (5)
 - Other (6) _____
-

Q8 How often do you use social networks

- Never (1)
 - Rarely (2)
 - Sometimes (3)
 - Most of the time (4)
 - Always (5)
-

Q9 Are you subscribed to any luxury influencers on these platforms?

- No (1)
- Yes (2)

Q12 If yes, which social media platforms do you use to subscribe to luxury influencers?

- Instagram (1)
 - Facebook (2)
 - LinkedIn (3)
 - Youtube (4)
 - Tiktok (5)
 - Other (6) _____
-

Q58 This is an attention check. To show you are reading the questions carefully. Please select 'Disagree'.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q10 Approximately how many luxury influencers are you subscribed to?

- Less than 5 (1)
- Between 6 and 15 (2)
- Between 16 and 30 (3)
- Between 31 and 45 (4)
- Between 46 and 100 (5)
- More than 100 (6)

Q11 Which type of luxury influencer do you follow the most?

- Fashion and beauty influencers (1)
- Lifestyle and travel influencers (2)
- Fitness and wellness influencers (3)
- Other (4) _____

Q13 Why do you follow influencers of luxury products?

- To discover new products (1)
- To get purchasing advice (2)
- To follow trends (3)
- For entertainment (4)
- Other (5) _____

Q15 What are your favorite luxury brands?

- Louis Vuitton (1)
- Chanel (2)
- Dior (3)
- Hermès (4)
- Dolce & Gabbana (5)
- Gucci (6)
- Other (7) _____



Q59 How much in euro are you willing to spend on a luxury product?

Q18 Where do you mainly purchase luxury products?

- In-store (1)
- Online (2)
- Both (3)
- Other (4) _____

End of Block: Psychographic Section:

Start of Block: Conscientiousness

Q19 Now, we would like to learn a little bit more about yourself.

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 means "Strongly disagree" and 5 means "Strongly agree"), how would you position yourself regarding the following statements?

Q20 I see myself as someone who

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)
Does a thorough job (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can be somewhat careless (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is a reliable worker (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tends to be disorganized (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does things efficiently (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tends to be lazy (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Makes plans and follows through with them (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Perseveres until the task is finished (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is easily distracted (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Conscientiousness

Start of Block: Demographic Section :

Q1 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
 - Female (2)
 - Other (3) _____
 - Prefer not to say (4)
-



Q2 How old are you?

Page Break

Q4 What is your occupation?

- Student (1)
 - Full-time employee (2)
 - Part-time employee (3)
 - Self-employed (4)
 - Retired (5)
 - Other (6) _____
-



Q5 In which country do you reside?

End of Block: Demographic Section :

Appendix B – Bivariate correlations table

Table 1. Bivariate correlations between the study's main variables of interest

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 – ID Rags	1						
2 – ID Born	.60**	1					
3 – PI Rags	.62**	.60**	1				
4 – PI Born	.46**	.64**	.76**	1			
5 – K Rags	.52**	.26*	.30**	.29*	1		
6 – K Born	.25*	.37**	.28*	.29*	.28*	1	
7 – C	-.05	.11	.04	.00	-.25*	-.07	1

Note: ID = Identification with influencer, PI = Purchase intention, K = Knows influencer, C = conscientiousness, rags = rags to riches background, born = born affluent background, * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$.

Table 2. Bivariate correlations between the study's main variables of interest and demographic variables

	ID Rags	ID Born	PI Rags	PI Born	K Rags	K Born	C
Subs	.44**	.57**	.49**	.35**	.37**	.35**	.03
H. Subs	.32**	.30**	.21	.23*	.44**	.29**	-.08
Age	-.26*	-.21	-.18	-.12	-.41**	-.33**	.26*
U: Always	.31**	.10	.10	.03	.33**	.24*	.06
U: Most	-.17	.00	.06	.09	-.11	-.02	-.14
U: Rarely	-.21	-.14	-.22*	-.17	-.30**	-.30**	.09
F: Fashion	.22*	.20	.36**	.34**	.34**	.28*	.10
F: Lifestyle	-.03	.13	-.15	-.07	-.01	-.02	-.11
F: Fitness	-.19	-.32**	-.20	-.29**	-.36**	-.28*	.10
W: New	.11	.18	.09	.16	.00	.29**	.08
W: Advice	-.07	-.30**	-.13	-.18	-.08	-.20	.18
W: Trend	.11	0.11	.18	.07	.29**	-.03	-.08
W: Enter.	-.06	-.00	-.07	-.05	-.21	-.01	-.03
P: Chanel	.08	.08	.00	.03	.17	-.04	-.06
P: Dior	.21	0.16	.34**	.28*	.07	.20	-.15
P: Hermes	-.04	.08	.08	.11	-.02	.08	.09
P: Others	-.13	-.24*	-.29**	-.34**	-.18	-.16	.21
In-store	.16	.03	.06	.06	-.02	-.14	.14
O: Student	.11	.06	.02	.03	.33**	.25*	-.35**
O: Full t.	-.22*	-.15	-.27*	-.20	-.37**	-.31**	.23*
O: Other	.10	.11	.21	.14	-.00	.01	0.18
C: Tunisia	-.13	-.06	-.14	-.11	-.33**	-.26*	.16
C: France	.20	.13	.21	.23*	.38**	.18	-.16
C: Others	-.09	-.08	-.09	-.15	-.06	.08	.00

Note: ID = Identification with influencer, PI = Purchase intention, K = Knows influencer, C = conscientiousness, rags = rags to riches background, born = born affluent background, Subs = subscribes luxury influencers, H. Subs = How many luxury influencers they subscribed, U =

Frequency of use, Most = Most of the time, Rarely = Rarely or sometimes, F = Follows,
Fashion = Fashion and beauty influencer, Lifestyle = lifestyle and travel influencer, Fitness =
Fitness and wellness influencer, W = Why follows, New = to discover new products, Advice
= to get purchase advice and other, Trend = to follow trend, Enter = for entertainment; P =
preferred brand, O = occupation, Full t. = full time, C = country; * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$.