



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

*Influencer Tiers: How different categories  
of influencers impact the attitude of  
young Portuguese women*

Sofia Correia de Sousa

Católica Porto Business School  
Julho de 2020



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*Influencer Tiers: How different categories  
of influencers impact the attitude of  
young Portuguese women*

Master's final assignment in the form of Internship  
presented to Católica Porto Business School  
to obtain the degree of Master in Marketing

by

Sofia Alexandra Lindqvist Correia de Sousa

under the supervision of  
Prof. Doutora Ana Côrte-Real

Católica Porto Business School  
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*To my grandfather,  
António Correia de Sousa.  
Wish you were here.*





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"You have to trust that the dots will  
somehow connect in your future."

Steve Jobs



# Abstract

We are currently experiencing a digital setting that has progressed immensely in the last ten years. Social media has become one of the most important disseminators of information, influence and entertainment. With the increase of social media, influencer marketing has further benefitted and become the powerhouse it is today. Influencer is a rather interesting term that keeps evolving at a steady pace, consequently re-organising the existing influencer tier categories. This master's thesis aims to study the impact influencer have on young Portuguese women's attitude and which of the influencer tier categories has the biggest impact. It additionally wishes to understand if people do trust influencers, if people consider influencer a negative term, their preference between online and offline purchases and also to comprehend their daily consumer behaviour and patterns. The following major topics, Social Media, Social Media Marketing, Social Media Influencers, Influencer Marketing and Tier Categories of Influencers, are also addressed thoroughly in the literature review.

The methodology used was the mixed methods, more specifically an exploratory sequential mixed method, with an initial qualitative study that gave insight to the following quantitative study. For the qualitative phase the focus group technique was chosen to collect information, whilst for the quantitative phase a questionnaire was chosen. The results clearly show that due to the extremely intrusive marketing techniques women show aversiveness towards the idea of influencers, specifically when promoting products. They also believe that social media, are instigators of consumers impulsive buying and that this leads to a higher disinclination to influencers. Summing up, people are indeed influenced by influencers, specifically the most influential category: Mid-Tier-Influencers. This contradicts the encountered literature stating that nano -influencers and micro-influencers are rather more influential.

Keywords: Influencer Categories, Influencer Marketing, Social Media, Social Media Marketing, Social Media Influencers, Impact on Attitude

## Resumo

Vivemos atualmente num cenário digital que tem vindo a progredir consideravelmente nos últimos dez anos. As redes sociais tornaram-se numa das mais importantes disseminadoras de informação, influência e entretenimento, crescendo e beneficiando o *influencer* marketing. *Influencer* é um termo que continua a evoluir num ritmo constante, conseqüentemente reorganizando as existentes categorias de *influencers*. Esta tese de mestrado tem como objetivo estudar o impacto que os *influencers* têm na atitude das jovens portuguesas e qual das categorias de *influencers* detêm maior impacto. Adicionalmente, o ensaio académico procura compreender se as pessoas confiam em *influencers*, se as pessoas consideram *influencers* um termo negativo, as preferências dos consumidores entre compras online e offline e também compreender os seus comportamentos e padrões diários de consumo. Os seguintes principais tópicos, Redes Sociais, Marketing de Redes Sociais, *Influencers* de Redes Sociais, Marketing de *Influencers* e Categorias de *Influencers*, também foram aprofundados na revisão de literatura. A metodologia utilizada no estudo académico foi a de métodos mistos, mais concretamente o método exploratório sequencial misto, com um estudo inicial qualitativo e um estudo secundário quantitativo. Para a fase quantitativa, a técnica de recolha de informação Grupos de Foco foi selecionada, com resultados que claramente indicam que as mulheres, devido às práticas de marketing intrusivas, mostram aversão perante a ideia de *influencers*, especialmente quando estas promovem produtos. Existem também fortes indícios que as pessoas acreditam que as redes sociais são instigadoras de comportamentos impulsivos, que levam a uma maior aversão relativamente às *influencers*. Em suma, as pessoas são influenciadas por *influencers*, mais especificamente pela categoria de *Influencers* de nível Intermédio. Esta informação contradiz o

conhecimento encontrado na literatura acadêmica, que afirma que as categorias *Nano-Influencers* e *Micro-Influencers* são bastante mais influentes.

**Palavras-chave:** Categorias de Influencers, Marketing de Influencers, Redes Sociais, Marketing de Redes Sociais, Social Media Influencers, Impacto na Atitude

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# Acronym Index

IM - Influencer Marketing

SMIs - Social Media Influencers

SM - Social Media

UGC - User Generated Content

SMM - Social Media Marketing

OLs - Opinion Leaders

CCs - Content Creators

CE - Celebrity Endorsment

eWOM - Electronic Word-of-Mouth

WOM - Word-of-Mouth

# Introduction

During the last decade, Influencer Marketing (IM) has grown and become the powerhouse and strong marketing strategy we know today (Zhang, 2017, Ngai, 2015). Nevertheless, there is a lot of debate on the fact that influencers have indeed existed for several hundreds of years and thus abolishing the new coming suggestions that influencers are a passing-by trend (Brooks, 2019, Leadem, 2017, Bernstein, 2019 and Scott, 2019). The concept of an influencer itself still holds today a lack of consensus, as it is in constant evolution. Sadly, in spite of the numerous benefits influencers and influencer marketing contribute to companies and brands, the contrary impediments still have emerged (Casaló, 2018 and Audrezet, 2018). One of the strongest negative views on current Social Media Influencers (SMIs) is the idea that none of their efforts and work displays are truly existent. Consumers have become more aware about intrusive marketing tactics, leading to a depreciation of unauthentic and protruding messages certain influencers may unawaresly exercise.

This negative aspect regarding unauthenticity, has thus caused a re-organisation of the influencer tier categories, their impact and their famous status. Several authors have begun to explore and understand the existing concept of Micro-Influencers, and the new category, Nano-Influencers (Maheshwari, 2018 and Talbot, 2018). Both these influencer categories have shown large amounts of engagement, due to the association made by consumers that they are rather more authentic (Kay, 2020, Göretz, 2019 and Oliveira, 2019). The idea that an influencer can be considered anyone that influences other people's purchasing behaviours led to the belief that anyone can be an influencer (Khamis, 2016 and Yang, 2017). This concept is further detailed during the literature review and later on identified during the author's study.

This academic thesis was developed during a six-month Internship in the creative agency Mojobrands Lifestyle, Lda. The internship occurred in the firm's headquarters in the city centre of Porto, Portugal where their main business focus was brands and creativity. Since the firm also believes that innovation is aligned with their main focus, the company often concentrates on trends and newness, making their main objective to study and comprehend the new category of influencers: nano-influencers. After further study and in-depth reading, the author came to understand several other important topics and information that might be relevant for the company, leading to a slightly profounder academic proposition. Thus, the author proposed to analyse how the different categories of influencers impact people.

This thesis is divided into six chapters: In Chapter 1, the Company Presentation is detailed with a strong brand analysis regarding the company where the internship took place: Mojobrands. Chapter 2 consists of the extensive literature review about the most pertinent topics for this academic study. The chapter begins with a perspective on Social Media, its emergence, the definition of the concept and the inherent marketing: Social Media Marketing. This first section led to existence of the main focus, Social Media Influencers, where the history, the disagreements on the definition, the associated marketing and the classification were further studied. Lastly, the Consumer Profiles section presents a small review on the two generational cohorts, the social media's impact on young people and specifically how Instagram impacts young people. Chapter 3 focuses on the whole methodological description that include the research question, the conceptual model and the research approach used, while Chapter 4 presents the data analysis and the results of the both qualitative and quantitative data. Chapter 5 displays the discussion and conclusions regarding the whole academic thesis and research. Finally, Chapter 6 presents the study's limitations and future research suggestions.

# Chapter 1

## Company Presentation

### 1.1 Organisational Internship

In order to fully complete the master's Thesis in Marketing for the Catholic University of Porto in Portugal, an organisational component had to be fulfilled: an internship for a company. After completing all the necessary steps and interviews, I was accepted to complete an internship at Mojobrands Lifestyle, Lda for 6 months.

"Mojobrands" is a creative agency located in Porto, Portugal that offers several consulting services specifically aimed at developing a brand lifestyle. Founded on the 2nd of February 2010, the firm currently employs about 10 people and has assembled a strong list of clients such as: Parfois, Banco Carregosa, Ana Aeroportos, As Portuguesas, Samsung, Salsa, Saint Pirate, CUF Hospitals, among others.

In order to fully comprehend the company, the services offered and the brand's identity, a deep brand analysis was conducted and presented in the following section. Additionally, a thorough description of the tasks developed during the course of six months is available in the third section.

### 1.2 Mojobrands Analysis

"(...) a brand is a shared desirable and exclusive idea embodied in products, services, places and/or experiences." (Kapferer, 2008 p.13)

The concept, idea or definition of a brand is far from being agreed upon, in fact, several experts come up with their own definition on the matter (Kapferer, 2008). However, there seems to be a slight agreement on the fact that a brand is a concept and idea created by several deeper understandings. Taking into consideration the depth of the triadic pillar fundamentals, the model defined in Lencastre (2010) will be taken into consideration to analyse Mojobrands.

This model, as seen in Figure 1, proposes that a brand is defined by three base pillars, the Identity pillar, the Marketing pillar and the Response pillar.

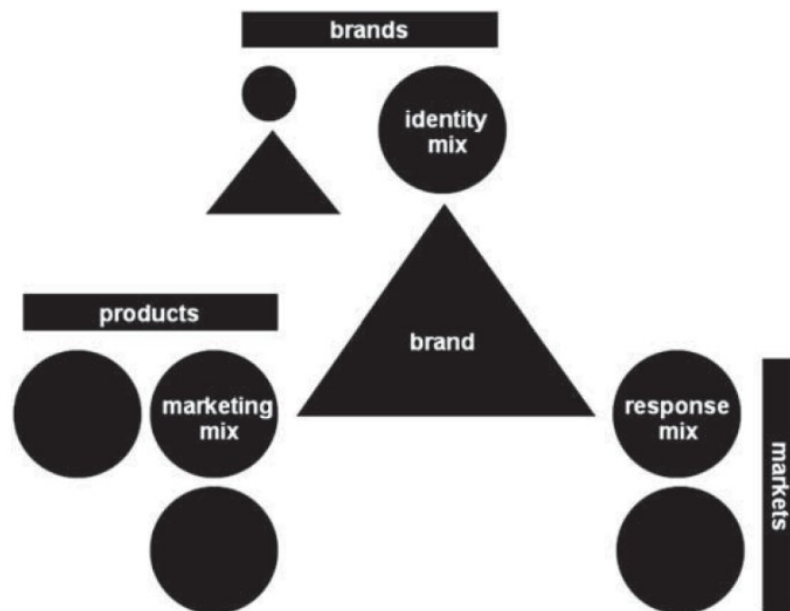


Figure 1 - Brand Triangle taken from Lencastre (2010)

### 1.2.1 Brand Identity

The Brand Identity is comprised by a brand's identity mix, which is a set of signs represented by several elements. It is the representamen - a physical or non-physical representation of an object - of the brand itself. Taking into consideration the author's model, there are three identity levels to be analysed: the core identity, the actual identity and the augmented identity.

The *core identity* is the element a brand mainly uses to represent itself: the brand name. Chronologically, it is usually the first association towards a brand, an element that can be vocalised. In this case, the company's branded name is "Mojobrands". The name is composed by two words articulated as one: "Mojo" that means a person's influence, confidence, personal charisma and style, and the word "brands", the main aspect the company focuses on when offering their services. Together, the word "Mojobrands" wishes to focus on the style, influence, confidence and charisma brands should be exerting. According to the founder, Tiago Barquinha, this focus is shown through their work ideology: creating lifestyles for brands. The company fully believes that a brand cannot thrive in the competitive world that exists nowadays, without creating and establishing a strong lifestyle for brands. This can furthermore be recognised by the brand's slogan "Brand Lifestyle".

The *actual identity* is achieved by the visual and graphic elements that align with and represent the core identity. A brand mark or logo is the part of the brand that cannot be vocalised and is represented by a specific symbol. In this case, as seen in Figure 2, Mojobrands expresses their visual identity through their two logo variants.



*Figure 2 - Mojibrands Two Logo Variants*

The logo is composed by two variants: the one on the left, which is considered the main variant and the one on the right, which is considered the secondary variant. The main logo variant is comprised by the name “Mojibrands” in either black or white, with a black or white background, the unique typography utilised, and the brand’s slogan “Brand Lifestyle”. The white version of variant one can be found in Appendix Section 1. The slogan within the logo is merely used as representation and reinforcement of the firm’s idea and promise. The secondary logo variant is comprised by several visual elements that include different visual representations of textures, strokes and colours. Although the logo has a specific basis and symbology, as seen in Figure 3, this variant is in constant change. The transformation is symbolising one of the most important values the company shares: adaptability. It seeks to communicate its adaptability to clients, through the visual adaptability of its logo. This second variant, as shown in the Appendix Section 2, holds more versions that can be used in different visually aesthetically pleasing situations.



Figure 3 - Mojobrands Secondary Logo Variant in Change

The creative designer Valdemar Lamego, that created and conceptualised the logo, is an old acquaintance and partner of the company. The strategic concept used in the design derived from the idea that the logo should represent the ability Mojobrands has to adapt to different situations, companies and clients. The logo was also designed to be able to maintain its structure for a long time and grow simultaneously with the company. The designer created several other elements, as seen in Appendix Section 3 and 4, that the brand still uses today and derived from the secondary logo variant. Another *actual identity* layer of a brand is the *trademark*. A section of a brand that is protected by legal grounds and unique usage rights. In this case the company has registered the brand in INPI, the Portuguese institute of industrial property, where they periodically renew the usage rights.

Finally, the augmented identity comprises all other related and identifiable signs a brand might have protected by law. In this case, "Mojobrands" has a slogan "Brand Lifestyle" that is included in the logo design and wishes to reinforce the brand's ideology.

## 1.2.2 Brand Marketing

The second pillar, Marketing, is considered the object in reference to the representamen, and should be able to be represented by the identity mix's elements. It is comprised by what the company offers, the benefits proposed and the set of marketing actions that make the benefits tangible. The Identity pillar should create the brand's identity mix elements according to the Marketing pillar's description. In order to conceptualise the second pillar, the author proposes three levels of analysis: the core product, the actual product and the augmented product.

The brand's *core product* should be the part of the object firstly presented that covers the ideology, mission and entire offering of the company. The main focus here should be on the core of the business and the main objective of its whole activity. In this case, "Mojobrands" mission, according to Tiago Barquinha, essentially consists on creating brand lifestyles that strongly connect with people. This mission is sturdily correlated to the main business service offer, since the company's strategic main objective is to create strong brands for their clients. Additionally, the company heavily focus on certain values that they follow on a daily basis: creativity, innovation, quality, expertise and adaptability.

Regarding the *actual product* of a brand, according to Lencastre (2010) it corresponds to the first P of the traditional Marketing Mix: Product. Taking into consideration that "Mojobrands" is a company that operates in the services sector, they developed a "Brand Lifestyle Formula" to follow as a fully integrated concept they wish to offer. This formula fundamentally describes the whole process the company believes a brand must pass through in order to become complete. "Mojobrands" constantly reminds their customers that this formula is a circular never-ending process that needs constant revision and care. Inevitably, their services are reflections of this circular formula that they follow, and thus a small revision shall be made.

As seen in Figure 4 below, the formula is divided into three sections: Understand, Create and Give Life. Each one of these sections is further divided into more parts. In the case of Understand, "Mojobrand" believes that they should be able to comprehend the following three segments, that are the basis for a creative and consistent concept. Firstly, the Market is of extreme importance in order to fully grasp its functioning, the factors affecting it and also maintaining awareness of its oscillations. Secondly, the Public must be understood in order to profoundly study the target, its behaviours, wants, needs, desires, likes and dislikes, to craft and mould the perfect offer. And thirdly, the Brand, needs to be studied, analysed and assimilated to fully convey and communicate the correct message.



Figure 4 - Mojobrand Brand Formula

The second section, to Create is also divided into three segments: Strategy, Identity and Innovation. After gathering the information from the section above, a Strategy is outlined across the whole understanding, in order to begin thinking creatively and developing the following segment. Within the Identity segment, these creative outlined strategies are put into action in order to develop all the necessary material and elements

of a brand's identity. Finally, the Innovation segment kicks-in to maintain the awareness of the constant market mutation and oscillations, in order to enhance the development needed to stay in the lead.

The last section, the Give Life section, consists on the last four segments: Internal, Marketing, Experiences and Digital. The first segment, Internal should be the basis for the section, since the values and ideologies internally shared by the clients' firm must become tangible. These values and ideologies are expressed and shared with consumers through the use of the second segment, Marketing. This is where the message is delivered in the most different and innovative way. The two last segments complement the Marketing, by offering profound Experiences and relationships. With the extreme importance of the Digital world, these experiences and relationships are enhanced in a different manner.

The following services offered by "Mojobrands" can easily be aligned with the process described above:

- Brand Identity: Conceptualise and create a visual identity, style, personality, design, merchandise and identity manual.
- Marketing: all types of possible marketing actions to complement what a brand needs, from design, to events and even advertising.
- Activation: creation of experiences and interactive practices to relate customers to brands
- Brand Audits: in-depth analysis of a brands pros and cons, positioning, market, concept, trends, etc. and proposing future and possible solutions
- Events: development and management of bigger events that conceptualise and showcase a brands' ideology and lifestyle
- Naming: creation and conceptualisation of a name, sub-brands and brand extensions for a company

- Digital Services: social media, website creation and management are some examples of digital services offered

Regarding the third analysis of Lencastre's (2010) theory, the *augmented product* consists of all the supporting marketing actions of the traditional marketing mix: Place, Price, Promotion and People. The Processes part of the marketing mix is in this case left out, because the service (product) is comprised by the brand's process.

The augmented product is thus analysed by the following characteristics:

- Place: "Mojobrands" is a Portuguese creative agency with its headquarters located in the city of Porto, Portugal and two subsidiaries in Lisbon, Portugal and Madrid, Spain. The Place of the marketing mix can be described by the company's location of production, decision-making and distribution. Since "Mojobrands" is a service company, its distribution is null, but its production and decision-making area is the same. Their offices show the creativity the brand exerts by using DIY (Do-It-Yourself) crafted furniture, decorated with their own merchandising and stationery, several inspirational messages and graphic elements on walls and also all the trophies and awards won by the agency. They also have a website and social media pages such as Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, Behance, Vimeo, and YouTube, where they show their brand's ideology, projects and information. All their client's proposals, newsletters and contact cards are also designed with the brand's identity concept.

- Price: Since "Mojobrands" operates in the service sector, there are no defined prices for each of their offered services. The brand wishes to propose the price of a project or service according to the challenges, client's size, relationship with the customer, the markets' situation and available time. This is the exact definition of a tailormade pricing strategy, which is to adapt or suit the price to a particular purpose or individual.

- Promotion: The brand's promotional activities consist on the B2B (business-to-business) strategies focused on other companies as possible clients. These strategies might

be natural, such as Word-of-Mouth of an old or current client to other potential clients, referrals to other clients seeking specific services or media releases where specific marketing or business journals and magazines refer and write about "Mojobrands". Other promotional activities, such as their website display, constant website content update and their promotion on all social media platforms, are also heavily used. Furthermore, Tiago Barquinha is constantly invited to attend or participate in important fairs, conferences and even articles that give out some sort of important brand awareness.

- People: Currently, the team has grown and consists of a CEO/Executive Partner, a brand consultant that also manages projects, a project manager, two project assistants, an art director, a copywriter and three designers. The working environment within the company is quite informal in the sense that people have a more flexible time-schedule and no need for strict appearance rules, as long as respect and mutual acceptance is experienced throughout the company and between employees.

### 1.2.3 Brand Response

Lastly, the Response pillar comprehends the effects and responses a brand evokes from a receiver. Essentially, the third pillar tries to understand, study and manage the interpretations made by both viewers and followers about a brand. There are three analytical aspects of the third pillar to be taken into consideration: the core response, the actual response and the augmented response. Since the company hasn't invested in formal brand research, the CEO's perception, the natural qualitative feedback and the authors' perception have been taken into consideration for this section.

The first aspect, *core response* is the first and immediate reaction an individual has when exposed to a brand's identity, this is the top-of-mind brand association used within marketing research. Due to the lack of existing studies gathered by "Mojobrands" there is

no certainty on the exact associations made by the brand's clients. However, due to the contact the thesis' author had with "Mojobrands" clients during the internship, some words used to describe the brand were: creative, innovative, different, experienced and young, in the sense of being modern and up to date.

The *actual response* is the understanding of the common associations between the brand "Mojobrands" and their rival competitors. In this case, there is once again a difficulty in presenting existing studies gathered by the company, since the company has never conducted such researches. However, during the author's six-month internship some learning and research about competitor agencies was held. Both the author and the founder, Tiago Barquinha, agreed that at a national level "Mojobrands" is a very unique company that has a strong positioning as a creative agency, rather than being a communication or design agency. Once again, the association of other brands is difference, since "Mojobrands" is still the only agency focusing on creativity.

Lastly, the *augmented response*, includes all the possible reactions, responses and associations an individual may have towards a brand. These responses are studied and gathered using quantitative studies but, unfortunately the company "Mojobrands" has not conducted such market researches, to the best of the author's knowledge

### 1.3 Internship Tasks Description

During the 6-month internship period at "Mojobrands", the author worked as a Project Assistant. Essentially, the performed tasks consisted in managing and assisting in the management of several projects. Some of the tasks completed were elaborating copywrite material, participating in brainstorming, writing creative briefings and debriefings, presenting several solutions to clients, assisting in events' management,

analysing brands, businesses and markets, contributing creatively and strategically, directly contacting clients and suppliers, and managing social media.

Regarding the copywrite material, the author was presented with the opportunity to help the copywriter in creatively and strategically propose a slogan to a client. Several small two-person brainstorming sessions were made, until three suggestions were left to present. Furthermore, the group brainstorming sessions in which the author participated consisted in gathering creative and strategic ideas for several projects. Mostly, the brainstorming sessions began by writing down all group ideas, vote and pick the best concepts out of those ideas and lastly to develop the top voted concepts into deeper ideas.

Writing briefs and debriefs mostly occurred after a client meeting or client phone call/videocall in order to summarise the creative, strategic and objective guides a client wishes "Mojobrand" to follow throughout the entire project. These briefs and debriefs were also constantly used in order to elaborate and develop a more complete and resourceful proposal and to communicate information to other colleagues. Briefs could sometimes be written and presented by a client, thus a debrief would be written and presented to colleagues in order to further analyse, question and make the above brainstorming session easier.

Several presentations were developed during the course of the internship, either to clients or colleagues. Most client presentations were constructed as a team effort and presented likewise. Presentations for colleagues frequently consisted in creative suggestions or even market, brand and competitor analysis. These latter examples could also be subsequently implemented into client presentations.

Concerning social media management, the author was responsible for suggesting creative and strategic short-term plans for both "Mojobrand" social media and also

client's social media. This task consisted in defining the main timeline of strategic ideas and then further dive into the creative concepts to be developed in each strategic input. Each concept was further analysed and sometimes even used as a brainstorm activity.

Lastly, regarding the event's management assistance, the author participated in two larger scale events: Parfois' "Here & Now" and Tiffosi's event "Tiffosi Square". The Here & Now event occurred during a two-day schedule, the first focused and directed at influencers, press and media, and the second day aimed at the general public. The concept was simple, to gather fashion, art, music, cinema and education as a reflection of the true and real Parfois woman, essentially projecting her unique and sophisticated lifestyle. The second assistance was for an internal evening event aimed at Tiffosi's international and national agents and intermediaries. The concept derived from the idea of an urbanistic modern square as centrepiece, from where all city corners flourished. In this case a massive artistic jeans sculpture was positioned in the middle of the event and all other sections - each one attributed to the brands segments Man, Woman, Girl and Boy - with a particular theme. Woman focused on the enormous iconic city squares such as Piccadilly Circus or Times Square. Men inspired by the concrete city basketball courts. Girl and Boy were joined as a skate park decorated with vinyl drawings on the floor.

For both events the author participated as a strategic, logistic and creative assistant where tasks such as contacting suppliers, partners, clients, gathering information, locating important props and decoration, brainstorming further detailed ideas and also managing and participating in the event itself as a staff member. Since both these events consisted in higher and more difficult management, a greater effort was done by the whole company in participating, aiding and managing, resulting in the whole team being present at the scene.

# Chapter 2

## Literature Review

### 2.1 Social Media

Over the past decades, the interactive revolution called internet and the digital technologies have impacted people's daily lives (Duffet, 2016). Due to the rapid spread of

information through the internet (Osatuyi 2013, Audrezet 2018), Social Media (SM) has become ever more important for individuals and firms' daily programs (Zhang, 2017, Ngai, 2015). In fact, SM is a complex term that seems to hold slight disagreement amongst people as to what it should include (Kaplan, 2009). Since its emergence and due to its contribution to both the academic and business activities, an insight about its origins should firstly be discussed.

According to Bolton (2009), there are essentially two concepts consistently and foremost associated to the term Social Media: Web 2.0 and User Generated Content (UGC). Kaplan (2009), also states that the term SM is built on the foundations of the term Web 2.0 and its correspondence to UGC. In the past, most sites were personal, stagnant and managed by the owner, meaning that all content was published and created by the owner (Chan 2011), however, there has been an evolution. Opresnik (2019), discusses that websites have developed from a one-way Web 1.0 collaboration to a multi-way Web 2.0 collaboration. The term Web 1.0 is used to describe how individuals referred to a one-way control on the creation and publishing of websites onto the World Wide Web, meaning that individuals were simultaneously developing and introducing the content into the web (Kaplan 2009). With the emergence of the Web 2.0, individuals created websites where both users and developers are continuously and simultaneously able to modify the website and create content in a collaborative fashion (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2019, Kaplan, 2009). This collaborative content referred within the Web 2.0 has thus been coined as UGC, a publicly available form of media content created by an end-user, individually or collaboratively (Smith 2012, Duffet 2016, Kaplan 2009, Audrezet 2018), that are "the means through which consumers express themselves and communicate with others online" and can be considered a form of consumer engagement (Smith, 2012).

Taking into consideration that the terms Web 2.0 and UGC go hand in hand and are the basis of SM, we can now further explore the definition.

Bolton (2013), considers SM to be any online service where users are able to create and share a large variety of content, where the consumer can produce, design, publish or edit this said content. Any new media technology that allows for an easier execution of co-creation interactivity and sharing of UGC between organisations and individuals, can also be considered social media (Filo, 2015). Osatuyi (2013) adds that SM is any computer-mediated communication that focuses on connecting people by creating and sharing UGC. For the purpose of this academic thesis the definition proposed by Alves (2016) will be taken into consideration: the author strongly believes that any internet-based technological application that takes into consideration and is in accordance with the Web 2.0 principles, whilst contributing to the creation and exchange of UGC, can be considered social media.

Currently, there is a broad and growing array of social media sites (Smith 2012). Kaplan (2009), adds an even more enriched understanding by arguing that nowadays there are various types of SM and that they can be classified into further groupings. The author suggests that there are two main dimensions that lead to the classification of the various types of social media: the concept of self-presentation or self-disclosure and the concept of social presence or media richness. As can be seen below, the table showcases the different spectrums of each dimension, where the self-presentation or self-disclosure can either be high or low depending on how a user decides to share their private information, and where the social presence or media richness can be low, medium or high, depending on the lavishness of the actual content that is shared.

		Social presence/ Media richness		
		Low	Medium	High
Self-presentation/ Self-disclosure	High	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)	Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g., YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)

Table 1 - Classification of Social Media Types taken from Kaplan (2009)

Chan (2011), describes SM as any internet-based application that exist on the Web 2.0 foundations and that encourages interaction, communication and collaboration of UGC. Furthermore, the author bases and enhances Kaplan’s (2019) study, by defining and exploring six different types of social media: Blogs and Micro-Blogs, Social Networking Sites, Virtual Worlds, Collaborative Projects, Content Community Sites and Sites Dedicated for Feedback. As can be confirmed in the table down below, the author suggests the following understanding of the classification:

Blogs & Micro-blogs	A website that allows to keep logs of content, which can either be by text, images or videos, with the purpose of sharing experiences or insight in a particular area, whilst interacting with viewers through posting comments. Micro-blogs mainly consist of a more bounded version of blogs, in the sense
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	that the amount of content shared is limited.
Social Networking Sites	A website where users create a personal profile to use as a virtual meeting either through connecting, communicating or developing relationships with other known or unknown users. These sites may also partake in sharing of text, image or video content.
Virtual Worlds	An online website that resemble the real world through 3D environment imagery represented by human-like characters that any user can customise to their own liking. Each user's character can interact and socialise with other user's characters.

Collaborative Projects	Two types of websites are considered: wikis and bookmarking sites. Wikis, essentially consist of sites that are open to a continuous editing and modifying by all users, whilst contacting and communicating with each other to deliver the best content. Bookmarking sites, however, allow for the management, storage and collection of content such as links, to be stored and bookmarked for future revisit, review and interaction.
Content Community Sites	Sites where users share content that has been modified from or based on pre-existing pieces of content. The content may vary from text, images, videos to presentation slides.
Feedback Sites	Websites where users are able to post, read, review, respond, discuss and share information such as opinions, experiences or thoughts on certain matters, with the purpose of transferring knowledge and receiving feedback.

Table 2 - Types of Social Media adapted from Chan (2011)

Both Tuten & Solomon (2015) and Opresnik (2019) complement the types of SM by referring that there are essentially four zones of social media that focus on the most important functional aspects: Social Community, Social Publishing, Social Entertainment and Social Commerce. Tuten & Solomon (2015) state that due to the new social media channels constantly arising, it might be easier to compare and contrast them, if they are grouped together according to similarities. The author consequently adds, that some types of SM may even overlap two or more zones, due to their flexible nature and specifically because the concept, ideology and understanding is still evolving. Since Opresnik (2019)'s four zones are based on Tuten & Solomon (2015)'s understanding, we will consider the latter. Firstly, the authors present the *Social Community Zone*: social media channels that focus on relationships where activities, communications, collaborations and sharing of experiences occur. This collaboration is either two-way or multi-way, whilst taking into consideration that the main purpose is the interaction and maintenance of relationships. Secondly, the *Social Publishing Zone*, where social media channels are described as platforms that allow for the production and creation of content for audiences to view, share and participate in. This zone specifically allows for UGC to be published and distributed throughout the platform, whilst taking into consideration its primary purpose: to share knowledge. The third zone, *Social Entertainment*, includes social media channels whose purpose is to entertain its audience by sharing any event, performance or activity. Lastly, the *Social Commerce Zone*, is any social media channel within the online shopping, buying or selling of products and services, that allows and focuses on the audiences purchasing decision.

As mentioned before, there is still quite a lot of debate as to what the term social media should include, such as its definition, how to classify it by types and how to group them. Most likely, these will be further discussed and studied as SM evolves. Nonetheless,

most authors confidently base their definitions and findings on the foundations of both the Web 2.0 and UGC, since both these terminologies are consistently discussed throughout the whole concept and ideology of social media.

### 2.1.1 Social Media Marketing

Currently, traditional media has slowly been replaced by social media's powerful grip on younger consumers, leading to a progressive implementation of marketing techniques and strategies onto this new market (Duffet 2016). These marketing techniques applied to social media are referred to as Social Media Marketing (SMM).

According to Alalwan (2017) SMM, has been defined as an interaction between consumers or audiences with a business, a product or a service through SM that eventually or consequently impacts and benefits all involved parties. The author also adds that the definition involves a strategy where SM technologies create, communicate, deliver and exchange value offerings to all involved stakeholders. Chan (2011), adds that the managerial process used on social media to obtain the needs and wants of individuals and communities can be defined as SMM. Other authors, such as Alves (2016), define SMM as the traditional marketing concept applied and transposed onto SM. Tuten and Solomon (2018) share Alves' (2018) ideology, adding that to accomplish typical marketing goals one should use the traditional 4Ps of the marketing mix (product, place price and promotion), whilst for marketing applied to SM, one should add a 5th P: Participation. The authors explain that social media has evolved the way brands, organisations and businesses interact with consumers and focus on a participative and social context. Opresnik (2019), reinforces that with the 5th P, SMM allows for an extensive feedback received and/or given between the consumer and/or audience and the

brand/company/organisation, noting that the former choose to actively take part in the consumers/audience discussion.

Nowadays, it is neither enough nor acceptable as a company to only rely on traditional media and marketing techniques (Chan, 2011) and enterprises must organise their marketing activities according to different users' needs (Chen, 2019). In fact, companies should pay more attention to their customers' behaviour and attitude towards social media (Bolton, 2011), since it has shown to be a more cost-effective communication channel in comparison to traditional media (Leeflang, 2014). Taking into consideration the fact that innovativeness has shown to have an impact on a company's adoption of social media (Siamagka 2015), it might be time for firms to begin exploring, investing and using this new communication channel to interact with their audiences.

Using SM brings strategic and operational benefits to companies (Chan 2011), however, social media marketing strategies should extend beyond maintaining an online presence on the platforms, since it now holds the capacity to impact a company's market value (Alves, 2016). SM provides an opportunity for companies to engage, interact and build a relationship with their consumers and potential consumers (Wang, 2012). Consumers who become loyal to certain brands, also become fans of the brands social media pages, becoming more open to receive information and interacting immensely with the brand (De Vries, 2012). Furthermore, firms are able to enhance customer's knowledge (Alalwan 2017), can even comprehend target consumers preferences, behaviours and attitudes due to the possible analysis on audiences interaction and communication, and also, solve problems or handle negative situations in a more intimate manner due to the customers engagement of written messages (Wang, 2012). SMM can have a dramatic impact on a company or brand's reputation, since nowadays communication and interaction with consumers should be made through social media and the value of

customers' must be maintained carefully, as it is seen as a company's intangible asset (Kim, 2012). One of the most common forms of SMM is influencer marketing, which will be further discussed in the following sections.

## 2.2 Social Media Influencers

According to the Cambridge dictionary the word *Influence* means "to affect or change how someone or something develops, behaves, or thinks", and thus an *Influencer* is "Someone who affects or changes the way that other people think or behave". Some authors have declared that the term Influencer has existed for several centuries and can date back to the 1700s (Brooks, 2019, Leadem, 2017), it can even go as far back as to the Medieval Ages (Bernstein, 2019) and has been referenced by William Shakespeare himself (Scott, 2019). Brown (2008), similarly defines *Influence* as "(...) the power to affect a person, thing or course of events." (p.6), stating that it can be manifested in several ways, and that in the case of the business world an *Influencer* is "A third-party who significantly shapes the customer's purchasing decision, but may ever be accountable for it." (p.50). Due to the increase of communication technology such as social media, social influencers, that are consumers with a predisposition to influence other consumers (Langner 2013, Goldsmith 2008), partake in the dispersion of social influence. Therefore, social influence is the process by which any individual due to social interactions adapts their opinions, changes behaviour or revises their beliefs, (Moussaid, 2013, Langner 2013) leading to the spread of ideas, congregate of cultural beliefs and, unfortunately, sometimes to the amplification of negative phenomena, such as fears during epidemics (Moussaid 2013), xenophobia and gender issues.

Inevitably, the term has evolved and has even been transposed onto specific areas, such as influencers in reference to social media: social media influencers. According to

Audrezet (2018) and De Veirman (2017), SMIs are online users that operate as content contributors and gain an increasing number of engaged followers through SM. Other authors consider influencers to be people with a high social media or online status (Liu, 2015) or consider them as Opinion Leaders (OLs) (Casaló 2018, Tuten & Solomon 2018 and Opresnik 2019) that proactively engage and diffuse content with other online users (Opresnik 2019). Freberg (2011) refers to SMIs as a new-coming autonomous third-party endorser that are able to shape audiences' attitudes throughout social media. In addition, they are seen as trusted tastemakers in several niches (De Veirman 2017). Khamis (2016) states that SMIs are ordinary people that with the use of SM gained popularity or fame by practicing self-branding strategies and techniques. Archer (2019) and Van Driel (2020), defines SMIs as ordinary, every-day users that contribute on social media and thus accumulate a large following, furthermore, these SMIs utilise paid advertorials to promote products and services on their platforms. Influencer Marketing Hub (2020), considers SMIs any person that has built a reputation and gained some kind of following through social media, similarly, Kramer (2013) discusses the possibility that through SM, any acquainted person in one's immediate surroundings that inevitably influences opinions and consumption, to be an influencer. The author also discusses the ethics of endorsing and utilising paid advertising through the so called SMIs, and that in truth the opinions on the ethics largely differ.

At the moment, and to the author's knowledge, although the fundamentals of SMIs imply consistency, there seems to be a lack of agreement about the definition of social media influencers. Since SMIs are now commonly referred to as simply Influencers, and as a consequence, the term should be applied to any person that operates on SM, contributes with UGC, that has some sort of following, whose online opinion matters to others and whose opinion can alter consumers and followers' behaviour patterns, opinions, ideas and consumption of goods or services.

In fact, the concept and ideology of an influencer holds an extremely close proximity to opinion leaders, however, the latter may be slightly different. Lin (2018), introduces the term OLs as an individual that most likely has some sort of influence on the people in its immediate surrounding environment, ranging from friends, family and co-workers to celebrities and experts, who are present on both the offline and online communities. The author as well as Goldsmith (2008) adds that the main difference between influencers and OLs, is that the latter tends to be more informed than the average person, are able to influence a purchase decision and have an increased connection with consumers. Casaló (2018), builds on this concept by stating that OLs are individuals who exert influence on the decision making of others, can be perceived as a role model and have shown to be a source of advice. Tuten & Solomon (2018) share the ideology since they commented "Opinion Leaders (...) are people that others view as knowledgeable sources of information. They have a strong communication network that gives them the ability to affect purchase decisions for a number of other consumers, directly or indirectly." (p. 154). Additionally, OLs function as people that connect and create a bridge between different cultures and networks, eventually facilitating the immediate transmission of content to a vast number of people (Opresnik, 2019). The idea of an Opinion Leader as a person who may exert a certain amount of influence over others, has existed for several decades (De Veirman 2017, Goldsmith 2008, and Influencer Marketing Hub 2020) but with social media some opinion leaders have gone digital (De Veirman 2017, Casaló 2018). According to Influencer Marketing Hub (2020), SMIs can be an OLs and OLs can be SMIs. In fact, the two roles do not need to overlap each other, however, the main difference is that OLs stand out for having gained specific and expert knowledge in a topic or field, either offline or online, and SMIs stand out for influencing others through the use of Social Media. Furthermore, and in terms of OLs going digital, De Veirman (2017) discusses the possibility that the increase in number of followers contributes to the status of Opinion Leader.

Similarly, some celebrities began to be confused with influencers, however and according to previous literature, there is a specific difference. According to Kurzman (2007) celebrities are people who are known for being well-known and are linked to fame status. Kaminis (1989) defines a celebrity as an individual who is known to the public, such as actors, sports figure or entertainers. Media Kix, adds that a celebrity receives their fame from traditional media, while a social media influencer achieves their popularity mostly from social media platforms. With the increase of influencer marketing and the growth of social media, several celebrities began to use SM platforms as another source of communication (Kowalczyk 2016), in fact, this usage resulted in the 2016 Top 10 most followed accounts on Instagram to be all from celebrities (McAlone, 2016). Nowadays and according to the social media statistics platform Social Blade, the top 10 most followed accounts on Instagram are still led by celebrities.

Recently a new term has begun to arise around the Social Media community: Content Creators (CCs). Bump (2019), defines a content creator as a person that produces entertaining or educational material to challenge and indulge their target audience's interests and may be presented in the following forms: blog posts, videos, e-books, books, images, and infographics. Stasik (2018) adds that CCs are individuals responsible for the contribution of information and entertainment through any form of digital media. Similarly, Brake (2013) states that online content creation is when a person uses online spaces to create and share their own content, such as images and videos. The term content creator started creating quite a lot of buzz around social media, since consumers quickly began associating negative connotations to the term Influencer, resorting to the preference of the term digital content creators. In fact, one of the first social media platforms to use the term was YouTube (Lorenz, 2019). Additionally, influencers themselves prefer the term content creator (Schieber, 2020) as the term influencer has become a platform-agnostic word (Lorenz, 2019). Contrary to SMIs who usually have no interest in the brands

and products they promote, CCs genuinely care about the content they share and have a larger level of authenticity and brand affinity (Bakhtiari, 2020). Moreover, younger generations prefer and view content creators as more trustworthy than celebrities or influencers, since they search for quality content that showcases expertise and information in a specific topic (Schieber, 2020).

With the emergence of social media, new types of fame and popularity have been acquired, causing the categorisation and definition of whom is a celebrity or an influencer to need further study and research. This categorisation will be later explored in this academic thesis.

SIMs became extremely attractive for brands, companies and marketers (Audrezet, 2018) leading to their increasing use in SMM techniques and strategies such as IM. Since the efficacy of traditional advertising is questioned (Prothero 2016), IM is considered a very effective advertising channel (Casaló, 2018) that seeks to promote brands through the use of SIMs (Audrezet, 2018), since marketers seek them to capitalise and benefit from their trustworthy relationships (Khamis, 2016). Such marketing practices, which are considered the second most effective promotional strategy, include using SIMs to express their opinions, offer tips on the usage and posting content regarding products and services (Audrezet, 2018). IM considers IM to be a form of marketing that involves a brand collaboration with an online influencer and is expected to reach 9.7 billion dollars by the end of 2020. According to Group High, the three industries benefiting the most from IM are: Healthcare, Fashion & Beauty and Travel & Lifestyle, and Influencer (2018) adds the sectors of Technology, Toys and Healthy Eating & Sporting Goods. Nonetheless, the Gaming sector is becoming extremely important and is projected to be worth 300 million dollars by 2025 (I Am Agency, 2019). Furthermore, due to influencer marketing's relative newness and due to customer's inexperienced knowledge about IM strategies, it is much more likely for influencers to persuade consumers (De Veirman, 2017).

Kay (2020), Audrezet (2018) and Freberg (2011), state that influencers can be considered endorsers, acting as a form of IM. According to The Economic Times, endorsement is a form of advertising that uses endorsers (celebrities, public figures or famous personalities) to promote a product or service by using their name and famous status. Celebrity endorsers have been operating since the nineteenth century and are considered individuals who enjoy and use public recognition to appear with a product or service in the form of advertisement (Erdogan, 1989). Winterich (2018) defines celebrity endorsement (CE) as a form of advertising strategy in which famous or well-known people use their social status to promote, goods, services or ideas. In the past, CE positively impacted consumers purchase intentions and improved company's financial returns (Amos, 2008), since endorsers acted as spokespersons and gave a sense of meaning towards brands (Yang, 2017). In fact, literature shows that around 25% of advertisements used CE as an advertising strategy (Amos, 2008), however, social media and electronic-word-of-mouth (eWOM) has changed endorsement by allowing other types of endorsers to emerge (Kapitan, 2015), these will later be discussed as will word-of-mouth (WOM).

When a celebrity mentions a brand or product through social media, they eventually become formal endorsers as it is broadcasted to millions of people (Jin, 2015). Nonetheless, celebrities are believed to be less accessible, believable and intimate, meaning that it is harder for a consumer to relate to their daily and personal lives (De Vierman, 2017 and Casaló, 2018). Contrarily, SMIs can complement endorsement by presenting their personal tastes and choices (Audrezet, 2018), since their messages are perceived as truly personal, unbiased opinions and narrations of their personal lives, resulting in a massive relevant persuasive power (De Veirman, 2017), and willingness from consumers to replicate their buying patterns and behaviours (Audrezet, 2018). This online endorsement made both by SMIs or celebrities can be considered eWOM because

the message is perceived as more authentic and credible when communicated by fellow consumers (De Vierman, 2017). eWOM is a positive or negative statement made by customers about a product or brand via the internet (Jin, 2015), which now represents an ideal tool to be used through social media (De Vierman 2017). Studies have shown that both WOM and eWOM, if retrieved from family, friends or fellow consumers, is consistently the most trusted source of information (Haenlein 2017). Considering that SMIs are increasingly contemplated as fellow consumers, this may result in parasocial interaction, an illusion that people are creating a face-to-face relationship with a media performer (De Veirman, 2017). Audrezet (2018) comments that "In the context of social media, product placement may be particularly persuasive because followers tend to develop an impression of friendship with the influencers they admire, albeit often a one-sided "relationship," due to the possibility of direct interactions also referred to as "parasocial interaction". As such, followers trust influencers and are willing to replicate their behaviours and adopt their choices of products.". More and more, audiences desire authenticity from influencers, products, brands and companies, especially because many SMIs began their careers by focusing on self-expression and love for a certain topic or activity (Prothero, 2016), leading followers to accompany their growth.

Unsurprisingly, literature now shows that both celebrities and SMIs have a negative impact on the purchasing power of users (Casaló 2018), and those who do not follow passion or transparency rules regarding their content, will fail in the long-run due to lack of resonance with followers. Unfortunately, due to brand encroachment, consumers views on SMIs authenticity have become compromised. Product placement is heavily criticised because the possible underlying promotional motives, such as hiding advertisements is considered deceptive communication practices (Audrezet, 2018). Customers are nowadays even more confused as to which messages and content are actually promotions and which ones are truly authentic (Audrezet 2018). Commonly,

consumers recognise or note that many big SMIs use paid advertisement on their social media (Casaló, 2018). Similarly, as a SMI gains a greater number of followers, they get more attention from marketers and begin to use paid advertisement, which therefore is perceived as less unique by consumers (De Vierman 2017). Since 2018 most social media platforms began to integrate within their privacy policies the need for any promotional activity to be disclosed for all audiences (Hosie, 2018), such as in Instagram where, nowadays, a small label saying “promotion” is shown on any promotional posted content. This, however, does not resolve any issues with possible deceptive promotional activities within social media, since followers expect influencers to express unbiased, original and trustable content (Audrezet, 2018). Since the public requests’ authenticity and promotional disclosure, customers now prefer opinions from fellow consumers than from people they view as mostly advertisers. As a consequence of the parasocial interaction referred above, followers view smaller SMIs as fellow consumers they can relate to.

### 2.2.1 Classification of Social Media Influencers

Today, with the increase in popularity of social media channels and with what are considered ordinary people gaining fast recognition, the term Celebrity has been redefined (Yang, 2017) and has even been associated to SMIs. Moreover, as there seems to be a lack of agreement of the meaning of SMIs, there also seems to be a lack of agreement on the number of followers a Social Media Influencer should have to be put into different categories and different terms be considered.

Stories about regular people that attained fame using social media are everywhere (Van Driel, 2020). Preferably, influencers are Bloggers, Instagrammers, Youtubers, and even Stars, but the idea that an influencer needs to obtain fame, or a high social status is not quite linear (Göretz, 2019). It is far more important that an influencer can pass on a

message to people they will impact efficiently, rather than simply being reachable to millions (Göretz,2019), especially since the online platforms are increasingly becoming professionalised (Van Driel 2020).

Recently, a new type of influencer category has been introduced: the nano-influencer. One of the earliest mentions of this category was in a New York Times article by Sapna Maheshwari on November the 11th, 2018. The author defined nano-influencers as people who have as few as 1000 followers and are willing to advertise products or services on their social media accounts. Other articles such as the one from Kate Talbot on Forbes described them as a day-to-day consumer with about 1000 to 5000 followers. There is still very little research or literature regarding the exact definition of nano-influencers, but some authors began to classify and categorize SMIs into groupings according to their number of followers.

As it can be seen in the table below, there is no true agreement on the exact number of followers an influencer must have to pertain to one of the categories. However, these categories began to emerge, as celebrity's engagement, efficacy and trustworthiness began to diminish. For the purpose of this academic study the classification made by Media Kix will be taken into consideration, since they seem to be the industry's established tiers.

Type / Author	Kramer (2013)	Media Kix	Influencer Marketing Hub	Gorëtz (2019)	Opresnik (2019)
Nano-influencer	1k to 10k	1k to 10k	About 1k	Up to 1k	-
Micro-influencer	10k to 50k	10k to 50k	1k to 40k	Four to five digit range	50 to 25k
Mid-Tier-influencer	--	50k to 100k	--	--	--
Macro-influencer	50k to 1M	100k to 1M	40k to 1M	Six and seven digit range	25k to 100k
Mega-influencers	More than 1M	More than 1M	More than 1M	7 or more digit range	100k to 500k
Celebrity-influencers	-	-	-	-	More than 500k

*Table 3 – Tier Categories of Influencers*

Although categories of SMIs have emerged, there is still very little information and insight whether an influencer with more followers exceeds the impact of an influencer with less followers (Kay, 2020). Influencer Marketing Hub (2020) mentions in one of their articles that commonly an influencer can seem more influential and impactful in a lower category depending on the niche, target audience or situation, the same way a celebrity may seem less influential depending on the same factors. According to Media Kix, many Marketeers are now creating campaigns that work with larger numbers of nano-influencers, since you can obtain more diversity, reach more and different target groups, allow customers to view different perspectives about the product or service and also allow customers to view influencers reviews on the products and services. Kramer (2013) adds that more often than not, larger brands are choosing micro-influencers instead of macro-influencers due to the reduction of costs and increase in engagement rates. In fact, consumer purchase intention is higher when a product or service is disclosed by a micro-influencer than by a macro-influencer (Kay, 2020), however, both nano and micro influencers are more authentic. With smaller SMIs, campaigns seem to be easier to execute, cost less and are more authentic in the way that influencers seem more interested

in the product or service (Media Kix, Kramer, 2013 and Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020). Nano-influencers differ from micro-influencers in the sense that the former has a higher level of authority and commitment to their followers which are usually acquaintances, friends or family, whilst the latter, are characterised by their higher credibility and relevance within their social group. Contrarily, both macro-influencers and mega-influencers have much lower engagement rates and their content is considered more artificial (Göretz, 2019 and Oliveira, 2019).

Taking into consideration that celebrities are no longer viewed as credible and relatable, considering the new types of SMIs and the positive aspects regarding both nano-influencers and micro-influencers in comparison to macro-influencers and mega-influencers, there seems to be an enormous lack of comprehension in the differences between the categories' impact on consumers and thus this should be further studied and analysed.

## 2.3 Consumers Profiles

For a better understanding of the impact Social Media has on people, a small review on the generations that grew up amidst these platforms might be more insightful. Most of the academic research about SMIs has focused either on adults or on younger adults (Duffett, 2016). However, with the ever lack of agreement on the exact age group that fit within each generation, some young adults are consistently trying to understand if they are considered the younger members of Generation Y or if they are considered the oldest members of Generation Z. Thus, for the purpose of this academic study, a revision of both generations shall be made, followed by the impact Social Media has on these two generations.

### 2.3.1 Generation Z and Generation Y

Generation Y or The Millennials, have for several years now been accused for being too lazy and too self-involved for growing up with technology, and for not being able to go on their daily lives without a smartphone or gadget (Lyons, 2016), but, they have also been considered a creative, flexible, open-minded and environmentally friendly generation (Lyons, 2016, Brosdahl and Carpenter, 2011) that wishes to have a stable and efficient work-life balance whilst being able to contribute to the society and the environment (Bolton, 2013). According to Williams (2015) anyone born between 1980 and 1995, is considered being part of Generation Y, which Lyons (2016), similarly views as someone born between 1980 and 1994. However, other authors, such as Brosdahl and Carpenter (2011) and Bolton (2013) that categorise the Millennials as someone born between 1982 and until the end of the millennial - the year 2000.

Generation Z, on the other hand, grew up with social media and during the aftermaths of the Great Recession of 2009 (Williams, 2015). They are considered youngsters that lack attention and are addicted to their phones (Finch, 2015) but in fact are very adaptable, diverse, plan-oriented and highly informed people (Duffett, 2016). According to Turner (2015), these teenagers and young adults are extremely diverse, since they accept biracial and multiracial communities, are a growing percentage within the LGBTQ+ community, do not view sexual orientation the same way former generations do, have a greater global awareness and most importantly, are digital natives born within technology, internet and social media. This generation is anyone born after 1996 (Williams, 2015) or after 1997 (Duffett, 2016) or born between the late 1990s through the late 2010s (Turner, 2015).

With over a decade of experience in generations, Dimock (2019) states that due to the conflicting agreements on the exact end of Generation Y and beginning of Generation Z, the Pew Research Centre has decided to declare an official time span for the Millennial's generation of 16 years. This time span is the same as its predecessor, Generation X and smaller than the Baby Boomers of 19 years. The author announces that the official Millennial's timespan is between 1981 and 1996, meaning that Generation Z began in 1997. For the purpose of this academic study, the categorisation made by Dimock (2019) will be considered.

### 2.3.2 Social Media's Impact on Young People

With over 3.8 billion users (Kemp, 2020) Social Media has become a fundamental part of everyone's daily lives, especially impacting the younger generations (Duffett, 2016).

One of the most common aspects, is the fact that many Generation Z members had social media profiles created for them since birth or at a very young age (Duffett, 2016). These consumers grew up within these social media platforms communities and have gained the ability to quickly filter out boring or unimportant messages, such as promotional activities, in order to focus their attention on more creative matters, such as unique and different brand messages (Duffett, 2016). These teenagers and young adults, have been considered the most authentic generation, since they do not wish to buy products or services that are popular or trendy, but rather express their individual identity and only buy products if they are aligned to their values and beliefs (Kemp, 2020).

They are more likely to shop online or through their mobiles and might spend more time on social media but use and prefer different platforms, such as Tik Tok (Bump, 2019).

Generation Y, however, grew up with the internet and computers, only initiating their interaction with Social Media around their teenage years or young adulthood (Bolton, 2013). According to Loeb (2020), Millennials discover fashion trends through the use of social media, are influenced by online advertisement, are very politically oriented through the platforms and are far more sustainably acquainted towards purchasing than their former generations. Bolton (2013), adds that Generation Y's use of social media has shown to affect a rather large portion of their everyday lives, such as the formation of an identity, their expectations about a product or service, their daily lives habits and their participation with either brands or communities through UGC. However, and according to Bump (2020), this generation is known for buying products or experiences that give them a positive experience, rather than focusing on savings and practical investments.

Furthermore, both Generation Z and Generation Y have become quite resistant to traditional marketing activities, resorting to the digital interactive marketing activities, especially through Social Media (Duffett, 2016). Unfortunately, to the author's knowledge, there are none or very few studies that focus on Social Media's impact on young adults, more precisely, young adults that might be considered either from Generation Y or from Generation Z. Thus, it would be rather interesting to understand the differences between these young adults that are not far apart in age but might be considered part of two different generations.

According to the MediaKix Influencer Marketing 2019 Report, nearly two thirds of marketers will increase their influencer marketing budgets for 2019 and 80% feel confident about influencer marketing since they have classified this as an effective

marketing tactic. As mentioned before, there are currently about 3.8 billion Social Media users worldwide - an increase of 5.8% for Europe - and about seven million in Portugal (Kemp, 2020), which amounts to about 69% of the country's population. Of these Portuguese SM users, about 86% use Facebook - which is 4% less than the year before - 93% use YouTube - which increased by 3% and is now the most used SM - 68% use Instagram - an increase of 7% - and 12% use TikTok.

At a global level, the 25-34 age group remains the biggest audience to use social media (19% male and 13% female). Together, the three youngest age groups 13-17, 18-24 and 25-34 make up 39% for male and 27% for female, while the older age groups 35-44, 45- 54, 55-65 and 65+ make up 19% for male and 17% for female (Kemp, 2020). This means that worldwide most social media users are part of the Millennial and Generation Z cohorts, and that there are more men than women using Social Media.

In Portugal, about 51% of social media users are women (Kemp, 2020). Furthermore, in June 2020 Statista released information regarding the gender distribution of Instagram, concluding that 56.4% were female. Seligson (2016), writes in her article that Instagram users tend to follow aesthetically pleasing content linked to either fashion, design or beauty, that often target women through the share of visually enjoyable photos and videos. Of these women, the largest age group in Portugal is no longer the 18-24 but rather the 35-44 (Kemp, 2020). However, and according to Marktest Group, there has been a migration from Facebook to Instagram by young adults aged 18-24, as Instagram increased from 0% in 2013 to 44,6% in 2018 while Facebook decreased from 90% in 2013 to 37,7% in 2018. The MediaKix Influencer Marketing 2019 Report stated that at a global perspective, Instagram was ranked the most strategically important social media for Influencer Marketing.

After a thorough review the author found several studies regarding the categorisation of social media influencers. Several literature reviews were found about IM, SMM and SM. Studies focusing on how influencers impact products, platforms, age cohorts, etc. have also been found. However, no relevant studies seem to exist regarding specifically how categories of SMIs affect one or more similar age cohorts, specifically in an age group that currently is divided into two age cohorts. Additionally, the author is aware that there is currently no ongoing research on how categories of influencers affect people throughout Instagram, in regard to one or more generations. There are also very few studies in Portugal about young women and how social media impacts their lives. Since in Portugal most social media users are women and the largest age cohort specifically for Portuguese Instagram users is 18-24, this is a specific target that should be studied.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Question

“Textbooks and successful researchers will tell you that the selection and formulation of a good research question is important, if not the most important, part of research.” Lipowski, E.E. (2008). Additionally, Bryman (2012), stated that a research question forces one to understand the issue to be found in a more precise and effective manner. According to Meadows (2003), and much like this academic thesis, most research questions arise from a problem identified after a thorough literature review or from the experiences of the research.

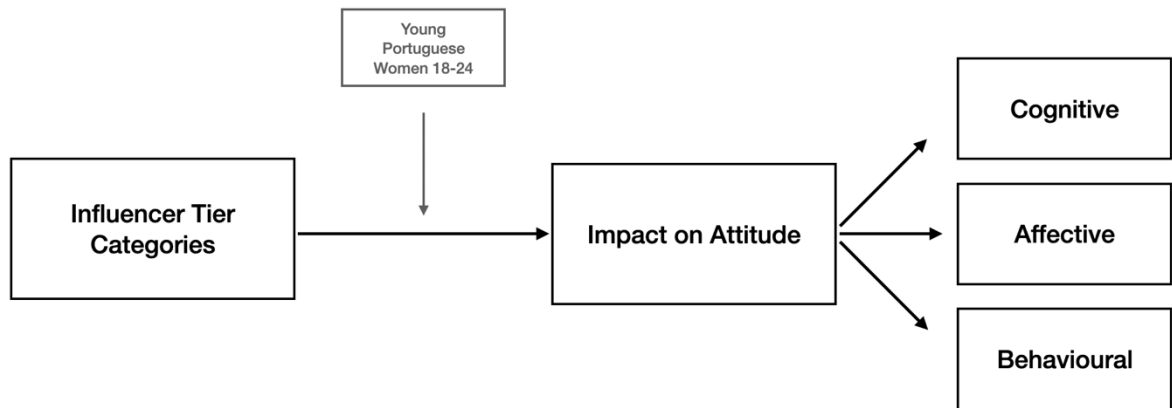
Since influencer marketing has seen an enormous increase in the latest years, since most social media users in Portugal are woman and since the influencer’s presence is growing amongst social media, the following research questions have been generated:

Q1: Do influencers impact the attitude of young Portuguese women aged 18-24?

Q2: Which Influencer Tier Category mostly impacts the cognitive, affective and behavioural attitude of young Portuguese women aged 18-24?

Additionally, and whilst understanding the above main research questions, this thesis may also give an insight into the trust given to influencers by people, if people perceive influencers as a negative term, young women’s typical consumer behaviour and their preference between offline and online shopping.

## 3.2 Research Model



*Figure 5 - Research Model for the Academic Thesis*

As can be seen above, the research model is presented in order to better conceptualise the study and research aimed to be conducted during this academic thesis.

The independent variable is the existing Influencer Tiers earlier presented in the literature review. The impact is evaluated through a fixed point, the fact that they shall only measure Young Portuguese Woman aged 18-24. In this case, the author wishes to study the Influencers Tier Categories impact on consumers attitude through three dependent variables:

- a. Cognitive Attitude
- b. Affective Attitude
- c. Behavioural Attitude.

The relationships this research model aims to interpret are based on the research question asked in Section 1 of Chapter 4. How young Portuguese woman aged 18-24, can be impacted on their, cognitive, affective and behavioural attitude by the different influencer categories.

### 3.3 Research Approach

The main factors regarding research approach are that it involves making assumptions, it involves choosing methods and procedures to conduct research (Creswell, 2014). For this thesis, the methods chosen consist essentially on combining qualitative and quantitative research data. In general terms, this combination is widely and popularly known as a mixed methods research (Johnson, 2007).

Mixed methods research became recognised as one of the three most dominant research approaches (Johnson, 2007) in social sciences. For the past 30 years, a substantial increase has occurred in theses and dissertations using the word “mixed methods” (McKim 2015), showcasing an evident interest in this research approach. Both qualitative and quantitative research have recently been heavily criticised by several authors. Qualitative research for lacking objectivity (Nagel as cited by McKim, 2015) and generalisability (Gelo, Braakmann & Benetka as cited by McKim 2015). Quantitative has been criticised for a lack of deeper and meaningful interpretation and diminished participants’ voice (Toomela as cited by McKim, 2015). These critiques have caused many researchers to instead choose mixed methods’ research (McKim, 2015).

According to Creswell (2014), mixed methods is an approach that involves collecting and integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to approach a more appropriate and rich understanding of a research problem. Bryman (2012), defined mixed methods as an approach that combines quantitative and qualitative research within a project, and insists on the fact that this approach must combine and cross both research strategies. Johnson (2007) thoroughly studied and compiled a complete review of 19 definitions from several authors who studied the method for several years. The study found that most authors agree that mixed method research involves both quantitative and

qualitative research. For the purpose of this thesis, we will consider the general definition given by Johnson (2007) (p. 123):

“Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration.”

A more in-depth review of mixed methods approach is made by Johnson (2007), where three types of mixed methods across a spectrum are discussed: qualitative dominant, equal status and quantitative dominant.

- *Equal status* suggests that the researcher uses both qualitative and quantitative research simultaneously.
- *Qualitative dominant* suggests that a researcher focuses on the qualitative data and consequently builds the research with a quantitative data.
- *Quantitative dominant* suggests that the focus begins with quantitative data and thereupon builds the research with qualitative data.

Other authors, such as Creswell (2014), have also deepened the full understanding of mixed methods approach. These designs essentially provide a specific direction for the procedures to be taken, and thus considers mixed methods to be the combination or integration of qualitative and quantitative research and data, within a research study. Although there are several models of study found within the mixed methods design, the author only focuses on the three main models found in social sciences:

- *Convergent parallel mixed methods*, where the researcher merges both quantitative

and qualitative data by collecting them at approximately the same time, and interpreting the information according to the overall results.

- *Explanatory sequential mixed methods*, where the researcher first conducts the quantitative research, by collecting and analysing the data to gather some initial insights. Then the researcher conducts the qualitative research, collects and analysis it to build onto the initial insights. It is considered sequential because there is a first phase followed by a secondary one.

- *Exploratory sequential mixed methods*, where the researcher first conducts the qualitative research, by collecting and analysing the data to gather some initial insights. Then the researcher conducts the quantitative research, collects and analysis it to build onto the initial insights.

For the purpose of this academic thesis, the exploratory sequential mixed methods in depth review and understanding given by Creswell (2014) will be used.

A quantitative research - where the methods used to inquire and analyse are numeric (Yoshikawa, 2008) - is commonly used when the social research problem calls for identification of influential factors, understanding the utility of interventions, understanding and predicting specific outcomes or to test a research theory (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research - where the methods of inquiry and analysis are non-numerical and derive from words, explanations, etc. (Yoshikawa, 2008) - is commonly used to understand phenomena that have had little exploration or when the researcher is unaware which variables should be examined (Creswell, 2014).

Several authors state that there are rather positive aspects of utilising the mixed methods approach, since it combines the strengths and minimises the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Creswell, 2014). Other authors, such as Schulze (2003), have found that the mixed methods approach provides a more in depth and rich

outcome in comparison to using either quantitative or qualitative methods alone. McKim (2015), also describes that specifically in the field of business and in comparison, to quantitative and qualitative approaches, mixed methods have added more value as it increases the findings validity, by using secondary data sources and by gaining a deeper and broader understanding of studies. However, some negative aspects must be considered about the approach. Mixed methods research might be extremely time consuming due to the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, 2014). It may also require an extensive and deep amount of knowledge regarding both quantitative and qualitative methods (McKim 2015).

Since the topic being researched has had little exploration and the variables to be examined are not entirely clear, a qualitative approach would be appropriate. However, the researcher also believes that the variables should be tested in order to fully comprehend the research question, using a quantitative approach. Taking into consideration the fact that the researcher favours the blending of both approaches and taking into consideration all the positive aspects of the combination, the most adequate approach for this thesis is the mixed methods. In this case, the researcher should firstly understand the broader and general picture, and subsequently learn what variables should be studied and tested on a larger population, favouring an exploratory sequential mixed method with a primary qualitative stage and a secondary quantitative stage (Creswell 2014).

### 3.3.1 Qualitative Study: Focus Group

For the mixed methods primary qualitative phase, the data inquiry technique used was the focus group, an in-depth group interview where participants are selected as a representation of a population sample (Rabiee, 2004). According to Asbury (1995), the interviewees of a focus group come together to discuss an issue and provide the

researcher with a richer and more detailed perspective. This method of data analysis is most advantageous for this academic research, because the findings from large amounts of generated data are used to pave the way for quantitative methods (Rabiee, 2004).

### 3.3.1.1 Focus Group Sample

According to Krueger and Casey (2015), a focus group with six to eight participants is potentially better, as there are fewer people interacting and leading to disorder. However, and according to Rabiee (2004), the number of participants mostly agreed upon, is between six and ten, a large enough group to gain different perspectives, and a small enough group to not lose focus and become unorganised. Hence, the number of participants chosen for this academic research followed Rabiee's theory.

For this academic study three focus groups were conducted separately and independently, each one composed by voluntary participants. The investigator combined sampling methods to conduct this focus group, by initiating with purposive sampling and subsequently utilising snowball sampling. Purposive sampling, according to Lopez, V and Whitehead, D. (2018), is selecting participants through relevant criteria for a particular research question. Snowball sampling, also known as chain-referral sampling or networking sampling, is a method that relies on the initially selected participants to put the investigator in touch with other acquainted participants (Noy, 2008). The researcher began by contacting acquaintances that were appropriate for the study, to participate in the focus groups, hence utilising the purposive method. And formerly asked them to bring a friend or acquaintance, resulting in a snowball method usage. All participants were sampled according to the research question inclusion and exclusion criteria, meaning that they were Portuguese young women aged 18-24.

### 3.3.1.2 Focus Group Procedure

As mentioned above, three focus groups were conducted throughout this academic study. In order to obtain better results and to try to follow the different funnelled questions, a script was outlined to be used during each session. In all three focus groups, the investigator acted as a moderator that guided the sessions without being too intrusive and participative. The moderator also asked for oral permission from the participants to record each session, from which relevant insights and important information were taken.

The three focus groups were organised with as short time distance as possible in order to minimise observer's bias. The first focus group was conducted on the 30th November 2019, with seven female participants aged 21-24. The second focus group was held later that day - the 30th of November 2019 - with ten female participants aged 18-22. Lastly, the third focus group has held on the 7th of December 2019, with seven female participants aged 19-24.

### 3.3.2 Quantitative Study: Questionnaire

For the mixed methods of the second phase, the quantitative data inquiry technique used was a survey with a self-administered questionnaire in several forms such as postal, mail questionnaire and nowadays online (Bryman, 2012). According to Hulland (2017), it is a rather important technique to follow, because demanding guidelines ensure gathering appropriate and meaningful insights that will later be statistically analysed. These rigorous demands in the marketing context are needed, because the area is in constant evolution, and the contribution must be meaningful for both academic theory and non-academic in-work practices (Geuens, 2017). Furthermore, these data inquiries are

less expensive and far quicker to administer than other quantitative techniques (Bryman, 2012).

### 3.3.2.1 Questionnaire Sample

According to Geuens (2017), a questionnaires' sample should be of an adequate size, meaning it should not be large enough to make a non-significant action relevant, nor small enough to make it statistically significant. Other authors, such as Creswell (2014) do not focus on the size of the sample, but rather on the theory behind the chosen sample: identifying the population, if it is single stage or multistage, if it is random or systematic and if it can confirm stratification.

Taking into consideration Creswell (2014) theory behind quantitative sampling, the population was identified according to the research questions motives discussed in Section 1 of Chapter 3, meaning that it was limited to Portuguese women aged 18-24. The population should be considered a multistage, since it was impractical for the author to compile a single list of respondents, relying on the selected people to pass the questionnaire onto other acquaintances. Also, the sample can confirm stratification, since the two filter questions ensured the correct representation. The sample was composed by 175 respondents, from which 162 answers were considered valid. The 13 invalid answers were either from men or from women of a different age group.

### 3.3.2.2 Questionnaire Procedure

The questionnaire was administrated online through Google Forms without the guidance of an interviewer, between the 30th of March 2020 and the 6th of April 2020. The questions (Appendix Section 5), were constructed according to the two data collections: the secondary data collected from the literature review and the primary data from the

focus group mentioned above. The usage of the literature review data consisted on the relevant information about the population in question, while the focus group's data focused mostly on gaining deeper knowledge on the possible factors that impact the population and using this knowledge to construct a more adequate questionnaire.

Some questions were chosen to be open-ended as to allow respondents to freely answer their preferences and top-of-mind recall. Also, these types of questions are more pertinent when there may be a large variety of answers the researcher might not be aware of. However, most questions were created taking into consideration a 5-point Likert-scale, since it is considered more adequate for the general populations' cognitive abilities and skills (Geuens, 2017). These Likert-scale questions had the following scale:

- 1: Completely Disagree
- 2: Disagree
- 3: Neutral Opinion
- 4: Agree
- 5: Completely Agree

After collecting the participants answers and structuring them for analysis, the results were analysed using the IBM SPSS STATISTICS and the JASP programmes. The JASP program was mostly used for the Confirmatory Factorial Analysis whilst the SPSS was used for all other types of analysis. Firstly, a descriptive analysis was made in order to fully grasp the relevant Information regarding the sample, their behaviours and beliefs. Consequently, a factorial analysis, CFA in JASP, to confirm the conceptual model was conducted in order to finally analyse the model using the SPSS MANOVA test.

## Chapter 4

# Data Analysis and Results

As mentioned above, there are two parts to the data analysis chapter, the qualitative and the quantitative analysis. The first part consisted in a focus group analysis while the second part consisted in a full questionnaire statistical analysis.

## 4.1 Qualitative Analysis

This qualitative data analysis consists in the comparison between all three focus groups concerning each question asked, in order to find patterns and possible relationships of certain relevant topics. The focus groups were held at the end of the year 2019, meaning that the participants were at the time 18-24 years old and born between 1995 and 2001. According to Dimock (2019)'s generation definition in Chapter 2, Generation Y is anyone born between 1981-1996 and Generation Z is anyone born from 1997 onwards. This focus group thus studies two generational cohorts that may have slight differences in their social media usage, interaction and interpretation. The questions' analysis is presented below:

### **Do you use social media, which ones and why?**

The most common social media platforms, such as "Instagram", "Facebook", "Pinterest", "WhatsApp", "Facebook Messenger", "Twitter", "YouTube" and "LinkedIn" were mentioned during all three sessions. However, the participant's usage for each platform was quite distinct, especially considering the age differences.

Facebook was mainly referred by older participants, that began using the platform during their teenage years and still use the platform today. However, their Facebook usage rate has diminished quite a lot with time, also due to the fact that they have migrated to Instagram. Furthermore, only three younger participants between the ages of 18-19 have a Facebook active account, but explained they hardly ever use it. One younger participant mentioned that she sometimes used the platform to “watch topics related to politics and news, since it is a social media platform mostly used by older generations”. This shows that most of the younger participants, part of Generation Z, do not use Facebook. Another younger participant confirmed the existing tendency of younger generations moving away from Facebook, by mentioning that “I feel like it is a platform for older people, for my parents, and that it is being used less and less”.

When asked about the participants Facebook usage motives, most participants mentioned that they used Facebook for academic purposes, such as creating project groups for university to share information between colleagues. Other usages, such as keeping up with news channels, reading about politics, staying in contact with other people and sometimes getting to know what is going on in the older generation's lives, were also mentioned.

Twitter was the platform mostly mentioned by the younger participants as active users. Most of them use this platform to stay in touch with local or global news and relevant information, however they also track some of their favourite influencers throughout this platform. Although not so common, two older participants said that they sometimes used Twitter for the same reasons and added that "We older girls don't use Twitter anymore, we've used it a lot in the past, but not anymore.". YouTube had a similar relationship, since five younger participants and two older participants actively view YouTube on a daily basis, once again confirming that this is a platform commonly used to follow their favourite YouTube influencers or commonly known as Youtubers.

A participant added that “It is (YouTube) a way to nowadays spend your time, as TV was in the past”. LinkedIn was only mentioned by one older participant, that most likely has already begun working.

Pinterest, WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger were all mentioned by both younger and older participants, accounting for quite similar usage between participants. Pinterest is mostly used for inspiration purposes and for ideas. WhatsApp is mostly used for group chats either with friends and family or for university and work. Facebook Messenger essentially serves the same purpose as WhatsApp and is used for the same reasons, however some girls mentioned they mostly use it to stay in touch with older generations. Instagram was mentioned by every single participant, meaning that they all actively use this social media platform. It was also consistently referred as the most used social media, except for one older participant that admitted using Facebook more than Instagram.

### **What kind of a consumer do you consider yourself to be?**

In all three sessions there is a good variety of the existing types of consumers. Most women stated that their consumption depended on certain phases or seasons and mentioned that they buy out of necessity, but that it seems to be a matter of their mind-set at the moment. Since most girls are still financially depend on their parents, they try to be stricter about their purchasing habits even stating that "I won't simply buy things because I feel like it, especially as it is my parent's money." Other girls were fully conscious that their phases depended on promotional and sales activities, such as Christmas time or Black Friday, were they tend to buy more products at once and spend more money. However, in order to do so, they would save money received as gifts from relatives or from their monthly allowance.

Furthermore, two women mentioned that they were extremely tempted by Instagram and that it did in fact influence and incite certain buying behaviours they wished to avoid. One girl even mentioned that "Shopping is a therapy to me! Of course, I don't buy a car, it's more of a therapy in the sense of buying something little for me, like a top or a small clothing piece. It makes me feel a bit better whenever I'm feeling down." adding that in order to avoid these types of practices, she even deleted Instagram's application for a while, since it was constantly filled with products and promotions that were tempting her. A few girls mentioned that they didn't consider themselves to be a consumerist person, since they hardly ever want to buy things and only ever buy whenever they really need something, with one girl even stating that "I only buy things that I really need. And in order to save money, I only buy what I need when they are on sale."

Another point of view would be of a new ideology: conscience purchases. According to one of the participants "I try to save money and be a conscious buyer, but I'm still working on the second part. I've always saved money but being a conscious buyer to me means that you know what you are buying and know the use you will give it. I even prefer to spend some more cash on a product if I know it will be worthwhile. Also, this includes buying products that are socially and environmentally conscious." This rather different point of view is commonly associated to both generations, since they are rather conscious buyers compared to older generations.

**What are your opinions on Impulsive buying? Do you consider yourself to be Impulsive buyers?**

For this question, the answers still seem to be quite diverse. Generally, most participants state that they are not impulsive, with one saying that "I am not at all impulsive, I am very careful with my money. I may even be able to afford It, but I rather

have that money in my bank account for more important things in the future.". However, other participants admit that they may sometimes be impulsive during specific times of the year or during sales, but that they believe that less impulsiveness comes with maturity.

Other participants added that they are Impulsive if a product's price is extremely low, such as "(...) during flea markets I often find things and clothes costing 1€, and then I can be very impulsive.", or if something they would like to have has a large promotion, they can also be quite impulsive. One participant even admits that they rather buy gifts for others and that "Sometimes I don't even think twice about It, because I know the person will enjoy the present."

Nonetheless, even if sometimes some participants seem to be a bit more impulsive, they all clearly state that their impulsivity is not that common and that they tend to be more conscious about it.

### **Do you buy online or offline? And which one do you prefer?**

All three groups are quite divided according to this matter, since more or less half seem to prefer offline buying and the other part prefer online buying. In fact, most participants state that it mainly depends on the product, but that even if they try the products in physical stores, they might end up ordering it online, either to avoid long queues, to receive a clothing piece that has not been worn by anyone else, or simply because sometimes it is more convenient. Even the participants who do prefer to buy offline in-store, admit that sometimes they do not mind and eventually even buy products online. One participant even mentions that "Some physical stores tend to be very boring, I usually go shopping during sales seasons, so there tends to be a lot of people. I get quickly fed-up and return home to buy the products online.". Contrarily,

another participant stated that "I hate buying online because I don't like to wait for the clothing to arrive."

### **What about loyalty towards brands? Are you loyal to any specific brands?**

Initially participants were not so aware of their loyalty towards brands, but eventually after some discussion, they realised that some were in fact loyal. One participant simplified this matter by referring about Apple that "(...) I began by using their computers and now use almost all of their products. I am no longer able to use technology from Windows or Android." another participant added that "(...) why buy Android or Windows or Samsung? When all Apple products satisfy my needs and wants!". Others began to follow by realising that they do in fact recurrently buy from the same brands and that they do have preferences for those brands. Some participants even began to give examples of common goods such as shampoo's or fruit. However, not all girls agreed that they were entirely loyal to brands. Some participants stated than they enjoyed varying between brands in order to vary between products, referring that "(...) I enjoy the act of shopping and end up trying different brands (...)."

### **What Is the first thing to come to your mind regarding Influencers?**

The top-of-mind associations mentioned by the participants varied from either referencing directly the name of an Influencer, such as "Joana Vaz", platforms where they see most of Influencers, such as "Instagram" and "YouTube", or words that they felt like associated to an Influencer, such as "Stupid", "Clothing", "Liars", "Marketing", "Fashion", "Giveaway", "Advertising". In fact, most girls from all three groups agreed that unfortunately, the world of influencers is becoming a very negative one, which they associate as very misleading and only to as a means to gain money. This description of

influencers as a negative ideology is covered in all three groups and mentioned throughout the remaining focus groups' questions.

### **Who is the first influencer that comes to your mind?**

In this case, most top-of-mind associations were not at all agreed upon, since each Individual had their own recall. However, most remembered national Influencers rather than International ones. Names such as "Alice Trewinnard", "Mariana Machado", "Carolina Patrocínio", "Isabel Silva", "Mafalda Sampaio, aka. A Maria Vaidosa", "Sofia B Beauty", "Helena Coelho", "Inês Rochinha", "Catarina Filipe", or even "Cristina Ferreira". Which accounts for some of the most well-known macro-influencers in Portugal, and hardly any mentions of micro or nano Influencers. Some International names such as "Kathleen Lights", "Camila Coelho" and "Zoella" also popped-up during the discussion, although their follower reach is much larger than the largest Portuguese Influencers.

### **And are these influencers you mentioned your favourite?**

The groups come into consensus with this question since most of the Influencers they mentioned were not their favourite, however, they did eventually add the names of their favourite Influencers. Other participants stated that they did not at all have any favourite Influencer, since they did not feel the need to follow them to such an extent. They also mentioned that "(...) I don't really focus on that world and I don't really know her work that well. You could say she is my favourite, because I began to follow her and I actually nowadays view her work, but I don't really care about Influencers. I don't know many of them, and still understand little about this." or even showcasing the fact that influencers are heavily associated to Instagram, referring that "Most of my favourite

Influencers are not even from Instagram, they came from YouTube, and now I do follow them on Instagram."

Contrarily, other participants clearly have some favourite Influencers, naming them Immediately or even stating that "Mine Is Tess Christine, an American YouTuber and Influencer that lives In New York. I've been following her on social media for about 5 or 6 years, as she still maintains the same tone of voice and genuine way of acting and speaking." or "Yes, she is the only influencer I actually follow and care about!".

**If you see an influencer using a certain brand or product, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? And do you feel involved with these posts in any way?**

Generally, most participants admit that they do feel quite aversive towards this type of product or brand placement, however their credibility will depend on the influencer's influence on people and the person's involvement with the influencer. Furthermore, the type of product may also impact the way people view the placement, especially depending on the common theme. For example, if an influencer mostly works with beauty and fashion, and suddenly begins to promote technology products that are non-related to their area, consumers will notice and think negatively about this matter.

They even mentioned that they will only buy products that are interesting or relevant for themselves, and that after viewing it through an Instagrammer they immediately seek to get informed about the product. However, there are still some negative views on this matter. A participant even referred that "(...) influencers sometimes speak and promote very content-lacking matters, just to get paid for it." and "(...) I won't buy or use the products just because they (Influencers) use them. I think they don't even use the brands and products they promote, I don't trust them."

Other participants added that if the products or brands promoted are not in an intrusive manner, that they might become more interested in it, because it feels more genuine. Others admitted that they simply pass through all the product and brand placement and don't even notice it. Nonetheless, it is important to note that to one extent or the other, most participants feel involved with the posts, either through a negative manner or a positive manner. Some girls even stated that they become compelled to buy a piece of clothing or to use a certain service such as going to the movies, if they see a friend or acquaintance doing the same on social media. This can either happen with influencers they do not personally know, or people they do know, showcasing that inevitably consumers do become Involved with these types of posts.

**What if an Influencer recommends a product or a brand, do you feel more inclined to buy it? Do these recommendations feel like those made by your friends?**

In all three sessions the conflicts of ideas were quite similar, some believe that recommendations felt more genuine whilst others still felt like they could not trust the person. In fact, one participant even mentioned that "(...) If I see her (Influencer) mention a topic or product from time to time, I tend to trust more her Intentions. I don't even think that It Is about money because It Is constantly mentioned out of enjoyment.". Other participants even mentioned that "I only listen to recommendations made from influencers that I follow and trust. For example, Tess Christine, I've known her work for several years and have followed her for a long time. She has always maintained the same tone of voice and manner of communication, so I still trust and believe she is truly genuine.". If an influencers' tones of voice, way of speaking and communicating skills were more laid back and similar to the participants friends, they admitted that it might seem more authentic. The participants would feel more at ease and even consider trusting their opinions and recommendations without thinking negatively about the

matter. One girl even mentioned "(...) when the Influencers curse, then I really believe their communication is genuine, and everything else follows. Because they are speaking to us the same way they would."

Contrarily, other girls mentioned that they did indeed feel that way, but due to their consciousness about advertising they nowadays believe that "(...) I have this strong feeling in the back of my mind, that this is not a genuine post, that they (influencers) are only mentioning the product because they are getting paid, and that it is not an authentic review or recommendation.". Additionally, there were still some very negative strong opinions that "I never believe their intentions are genuine, they only want to sell. That's their goal.", showcasing the strong and increasing aversion some consumers have towards influencers.

**And If an Influencer Is constantly talking and mentioning a product or a brand? Do you want to know more about the matter? What If these posts are known to be advertising?**

It can be observed that most participants become more intrigued and interested in a brand or product when an influencer constantly mentions it. Either because they are using the product or brand for a long period of time, and thus feel more genuine, or because consumers become curious about the matter, especially if many people begin to mention and talk a lot about the product or brand. Others, believe that it is purely marketing and advertising tactics and feel complete aversion towards these kinds of posts, resulting in a negative ideology towards influencer marketing. One participant even mentioned that "They (product or brand placement posts) seem like a subliminal message. We remain with an idea in our head that one day we wish to try because we've heard about it so much." with another one adding "Sometimes it is even about the simplest things. I see a lot of people going to the same cute café, and then I want to visit

the same one!". However, when these posts are known to have promotional activities, the aversion is even greater. One participant, which other agree with, recognises that "When they (Influencers) show that it is paid advertisement, I turn away.". As mentioned before, this negative view remains a constant throughout all three focus groups. The main point being that influencer marketing is a strategy used to wield people. A participant even mentions that "(...) advertisement Is made to manipulate, and now even common people use advertising to manipulate. People on Instagram live to sell brands, and these brands continue to trick us.". This further shows that consumers are becoming more aware and conscious about the existing negative promotional activities in the business world, recognising that they do not enjoy it and would rather stay away from it.

**Do you feel like the matters discussed above, can be considered excessive advertising? How so and why?**

During all three sessions most participants agreed that unfortunately, many of the topics discussed above could be considered excessive advertising. In fact, this seems to be a recurrent idea throughout all three focus groups, since most participants feel that they are bombarded with advertising constantly throughout their daily lives. One girl even mentioned that "(...) I think that everyone is taking advantage of this medium.", once again confirming the existing tendency to become more aversive towards influencers. However, there was still quite a lot of debate on the fact that the problem may not entirely be the excessiveness of advertising, but rather the way publicity is being used and which strategies are being used, especially that they are not aligned with peoples' belief, needs and wants. Regarding the last statement, a participant added "When the advertising is done right, you won't feel aversiveness and negativism."

**Do you consider yourself to be Impacted by Influencers?**

Lastly, when looking back at the focus group discussions, most girls throughout all three focus groups, eventually admitted and testified to the fact that they are influenced by influencers. They furthermore commented that this influence is not really viewed as something positive, but rather something negative. Most girls stated that their view on Influencers are extremely scarred by the intrusive marketing activities.

A summary of the main qualitative results is presented below in bullet points:

- Most girls believe that they are commonly non-impulsive buyers, but that it might unconsciously happen from time to time. They also believe that less impulsivity comes with maturity.
- Instagram is the most used social media that was mentioned by every single participant. The platform was also severely criticised for tempting participants towards consumerist buying behaviours.
- Initially participants stated that they were not loyal to brands, but after some discussion realised that they are loyal to several brands, ranging from simple things such as the brand of rice or spaghetti at the supermarket, to the more complex brands such as Apple, Zara or Nike.
- Participants do not like and are quite against influencers promoting products that do not fit in with their typical content or common lifestyle.
- If a product is promoted in a non-intrusive manner, participants tend to be more open and receptive to it, meaning that products recommended by an influencer seem to feel more genuine. Similarly, if an influencers tone of voice is similar to the participants friends'

tone of voice, they believe that the influencer is more authentic. Additionally, they feel that they can trust the influencer more.

- Unfortunately, due to the enormous amount of influencer marketing and advertising, most participants also state that even if the influencer might be authentic and trusted, they do know the truth behind some of the marketing tactics and strategies. The term “influencer” has more than once shown negative associations, untrusting ideologies and aversion towards their shown authenticity by participants. These negative opinions are completely removed from a participant’s mind, if the marketing is done correctly.

## 4.2 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data analysis concerns the data gathered by the questionnaire mentioned in Chapter 4. Firstly, a descriptive analysis shall be presented, secondly, a scale validation and total scores validation shall be made, and lastly the conceptual model testing shall be presented.

### 4.2.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

In order to fully analyse the conceptual model, an initial descriptive analysis should be made. Primarily an analysis was conducted on the sample socio-demographic information. Following, a descriptive analysis on the respondents buying behaviour was conducted. Resulting in a deeper analysis of the types of Influencers chosen by respondents as their preference or top-of-mind recall. Lastly, a comparison between some rather specific questions were further presented.

### 4.2.1.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis on the Sample

Firstly, it is of extreme importance to note that 13 questions were left out from the questionnaire analysis due to the exclusion criterium: gender and age. The first one being gender, meaning that only female respondents were allowed to continue. The second one being age, since respondents were only allowed to further proceed if selecting the age group 18-24. The analysis is henceforth conducted on a sample of 162 answers.

Of the 162 respondents, 66% were students, 16% were working students, 13.6% were employed by others, 3.1% were self-employed and 1.2% were unemployed.

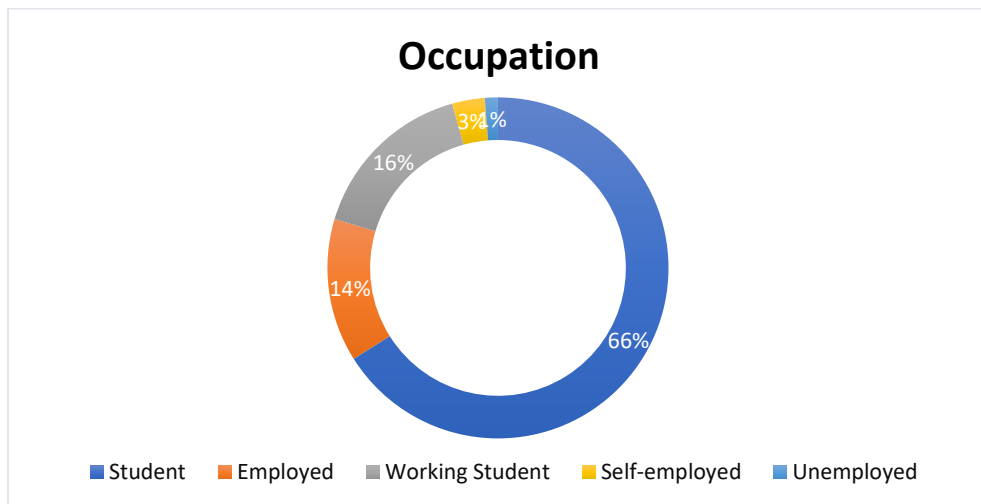


Figure 6 - Participant's Occupation: Descriptive Frequencies

Professional or Study Area		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Business and Economics	46	28.4
	Health	29	17.9
	Law	17	10.5
	Engineering	11	6.8
	Marketing	11	6.8
	Design	10	6.2
	Sciences	6	3.7
	Information and Communication	6	3.7
	Psychology	6	3.7
	Education	5	3.1
	Tourism	5	3.1
	Criminology	2	1.2
	Medicine and Dentistry	2	1.2
	Animation	1	.6
	Arts	1	.6
	IT Consulting	1	.6
	Logistics	1	.6
	Museology	1	.6
	Sports	1	.6
	Total	162	100.0

Figure 7 - Participant's Area of Work: Descriptive Frequencies

Regarding their professional or study area, 28.4% belong to Business and Economics, 17.9% to Health, 10.5% to Law, 6.8% to Engineering, 6.8% to Marketing, 6.2% to Design and the following 23.4% include Sciences, Information and Communication, Psychology, Education, Tourism, Criminology, Medicine and Dentistry, Animation, Arts, IT Consulting, Logistics Museology and Sports. This evidently shows that the questionnaire comprised of a large variety of respondents.

#### 4.2.1.2 Descriptive Statistical Analysis on Behaviour

An additional descriptive analysis concerning the participants behaviours was conducted. Primarily, a multiple response set was created and then analysed by frequencies. Respondents were asked to choose the Social Media used more frequently,

and of the 162 answers, only one individual didn't choose Instagram. Evidently and confirming the beforehand research, Instagram remains as the most used social media for younger generations. For the 162 Individuals 27.9% most frequently use Instagram, 22.5% use WhatsApp, 16.6% use Facebook, 12.8% use Facebook Messenger and the following 20.2% consist of Tik Tok, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Reddit, Pinterest and Tumblr (Figure 8).

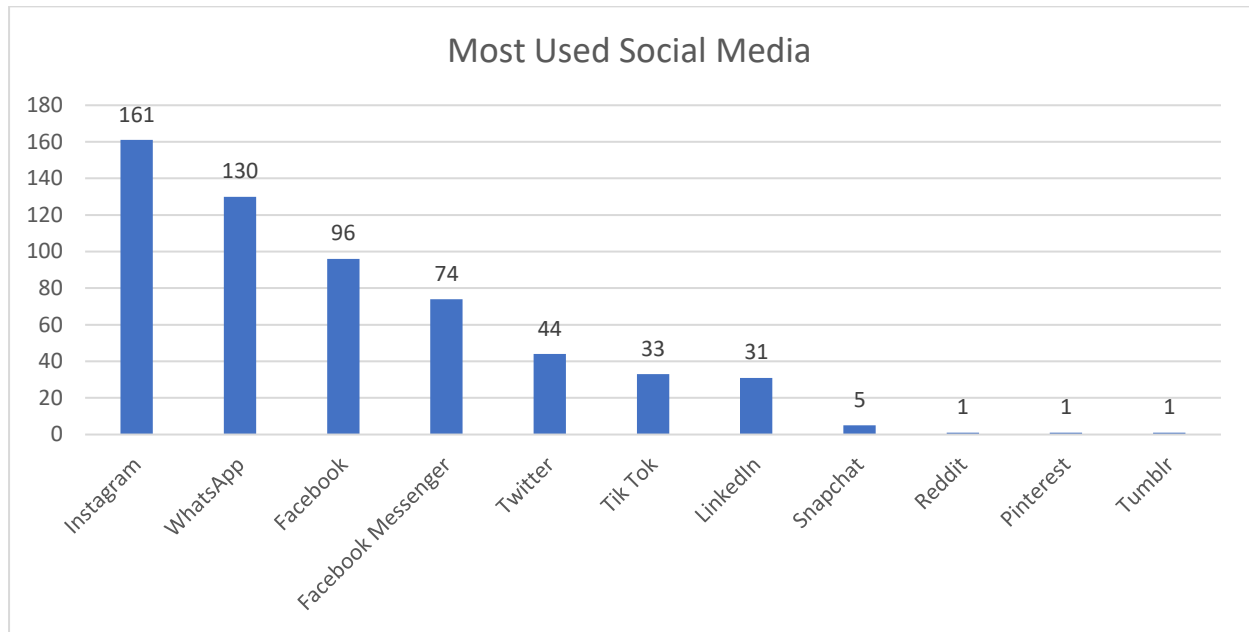


Figure 8 - Participant's Most Used Social Media: Descriptive Frequencies

Since the three most mentioned social media during the qualitative research phase were Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp, the following three questions were introduced in the questionnaire. To further understand each social media association, participants were asked for what motives they used each social media (Figure 9, 10 and 11).

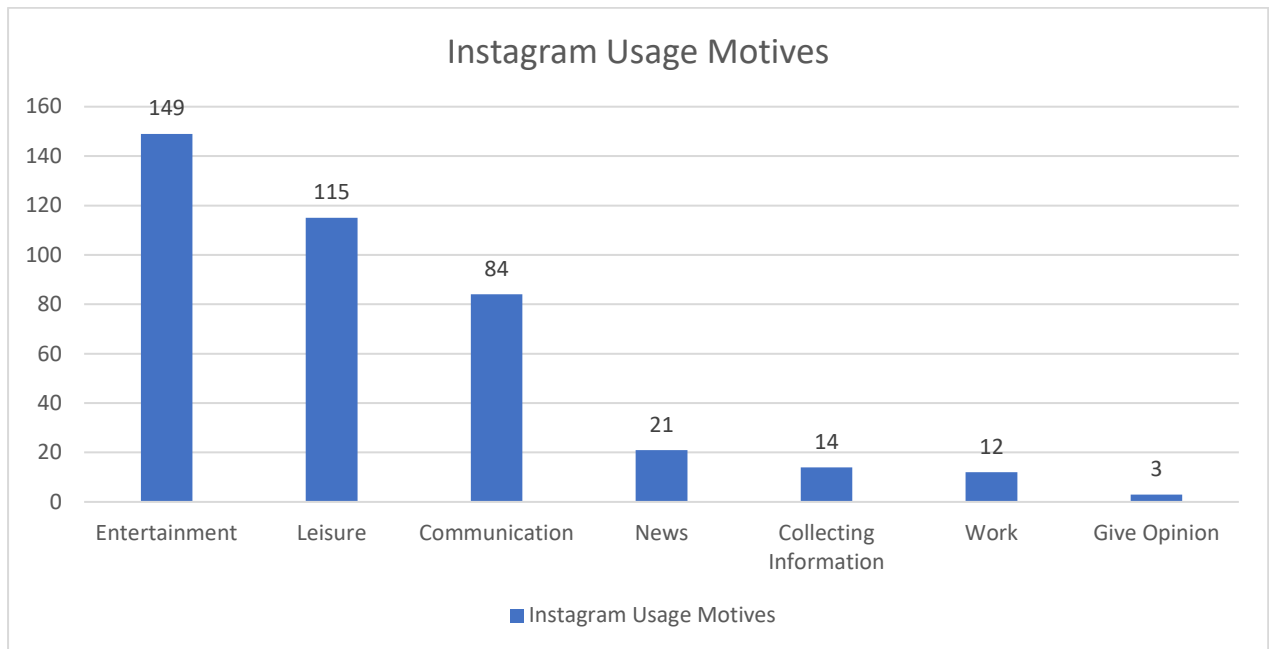


Figure 9 - Instagram's Motives of Usage: Descriptive Frequencies

In favour of Instagram, clearly the platform is mostly used for Entertainment and Leisure with 37.4% and 28.9% respectively. Communication scored quite high as a motive for use with 21.1%, most likely due to the direct messages. All other motives, News, Collecting Information, Work and to Give Opinion correspond to 12.6%.

Taking Into consideration Twitter, the values differ slightly since both News with 17% and Give Opinion with 11.2% increase in comparison to Instagram. Nonetheless, Entertainment with 31.1% and Leisure with 21.8% still maintain the main motives for the social media's usage. Communication with 12.6% still scores a high value, probably due to the direct message functionality. Collecting Information and Work score very low values of 5.3% and 1% respectively.

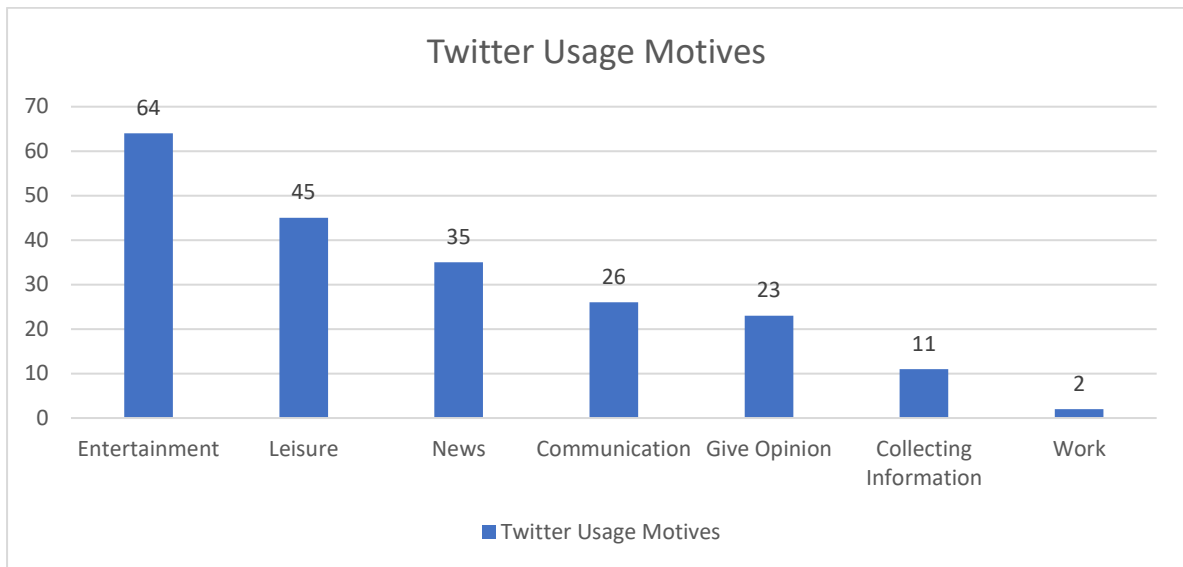


Figure 10 - Twitter's Motives of Usage: Descriptive Frequencies

As confirmed by the table below, WhatsApp is certainly mostly used for Communications with 52.9% followed by Work purposes with 21.5%. These two types of usages were constantly referenced throughout each Focus Group, specifically since there is the possibility to integrate the application with your computer and share files. The other 25.6% correspond to Entertainment, News, Collecting Information and Giving Opinion.

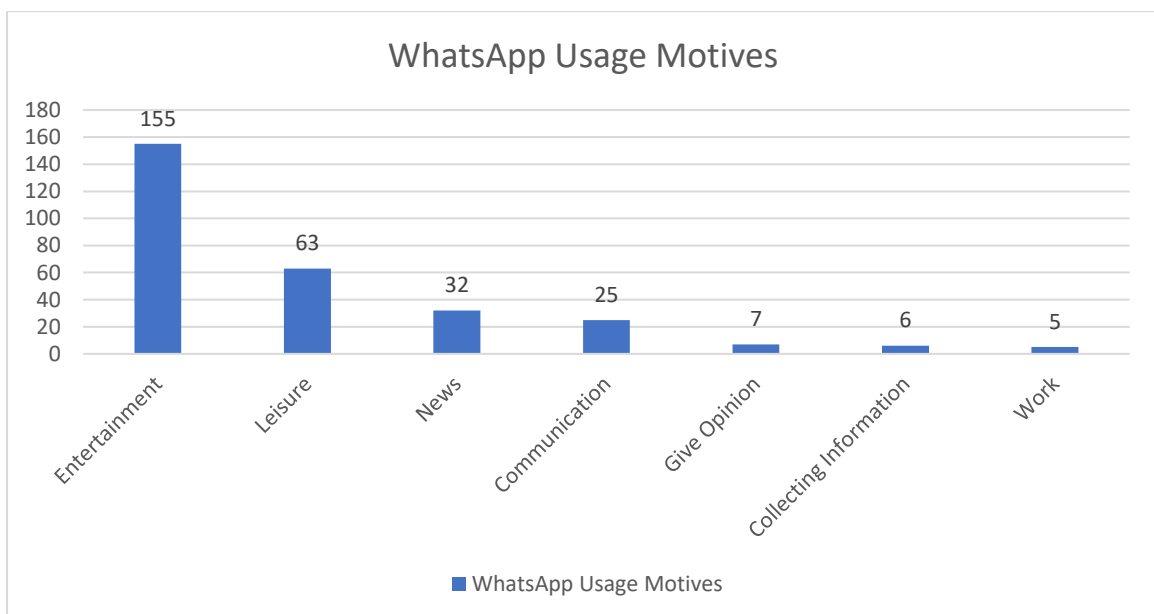


Figure 11 – WhatsApp Motives of Usage: Descriptive Frequencies

Furthermore, it is rather important to comprehend the participants purchasing habits, since it was a constant topic discussed during the qualitative research phase. Using a 5-point Likert scale, respondents were asked to rate their agreement regarding specific situations. The scale was as follows:

1 = "Completely Disagree"

2 = "Disagree"

3 = "Neutral Opinion"

4 = "Agree"

5 = "Completely Agree"

The first statement, "I am an impulsive buyer" (Appendix Section 6) clearly showed that most respondents do not believe they are impulsive buyers, since the values reported a mean value of 2.14, and 36.4% answered that they "Disagree" with the statement

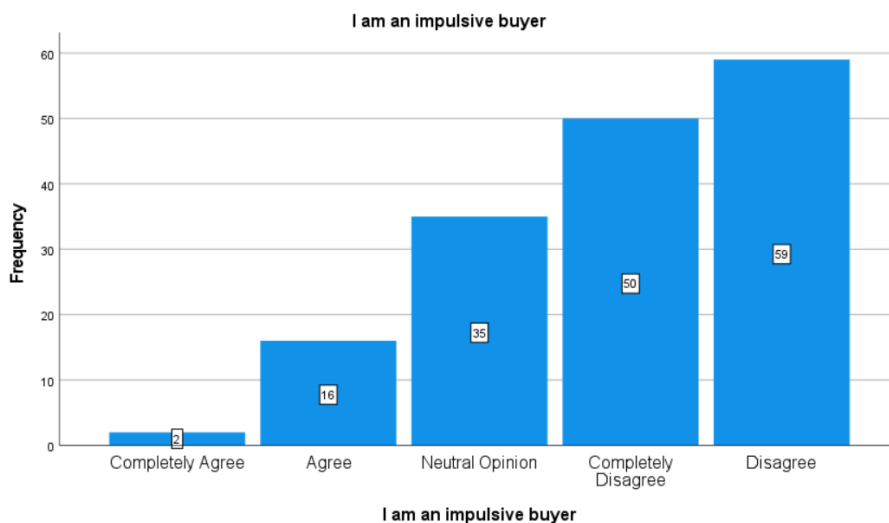


Figure 12 – Descriptive Frequencies: "I am an impulsive buyer"

Followed by the statement "Social media stimulates impulsive buying" (Appendix Section 7), most respondents firmly agree with the statement. However, the mean value of 3.26 confirms that the opinion might not be one-sided. 38.9% of participants responded that they "Agree" with the statement whilst 22.2% stated that they had a "Neutral Opinion" on the matter.

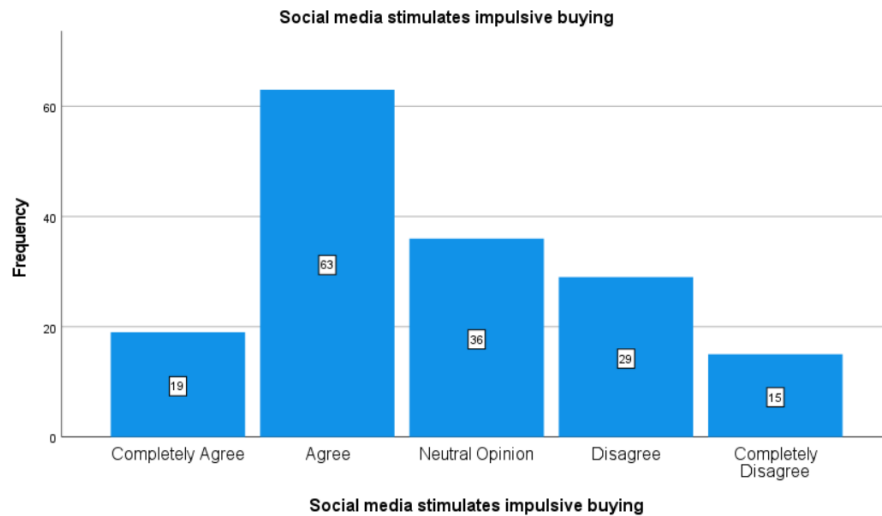


Figure 13 – Descriptive Frequencies: "Social media stimulates impulsive buying"

Still regarding impulsivity statements, "Social media stimulates impulsive buying" (Appendix Section 8) where the mean results were 3.07, once again show that the opinions are not entirely one-sided. As can be seen by 29.6% and 22.2% of respondents, which respectively account for the answers of "Agree" and "Disagree".

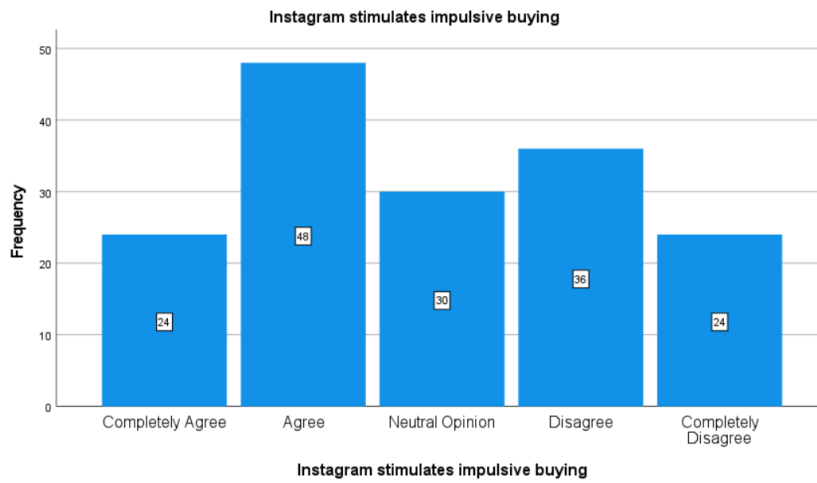


Figure 14 – Descriptive Frequencies: “Instagram stimulates impulsive buying”

A statement to further understand the respondent’s habits regarding online shopping was made, it was as follows "I usually buy more online" (Appendix Section 9). The results' mean value of 2.05 shows that most people do not buy online, since 43.2% of the participants answered that they “Completely Disagree” and 28.4% answered that they “Disagree” with the statement.

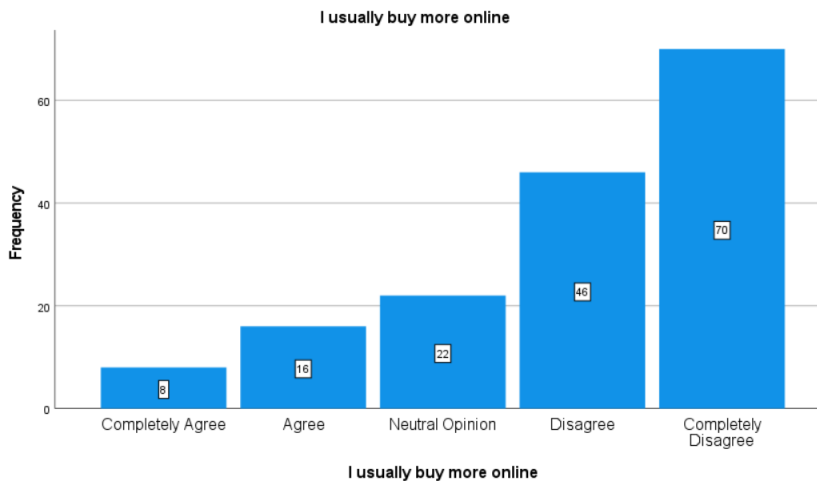


Figure 15 – Descriptive Frequencies: “I usually buy more online”

All mean values, from 2.05 to 3.26 (Appendix Section 10) were either more towards the disagreement side rather than the agreement side or approaching the neutral opinion. There were no missing answers since the scores were conducted taking into consideration 162 answers for each statement.

An additional question was asked separately with a quite distinct scale. The question was as follows "Have you bought products recommended by Influencers?" (Appendix Section 11) with a scale of three points (1 = "Never", 2 = "Rarely" and 3 = "Very Frequently"). The graph down below shows that most respondents have rarely or never bought any products recommended by influencers, with 48.5% stating "Rarely" and 43.6% stating "Never".

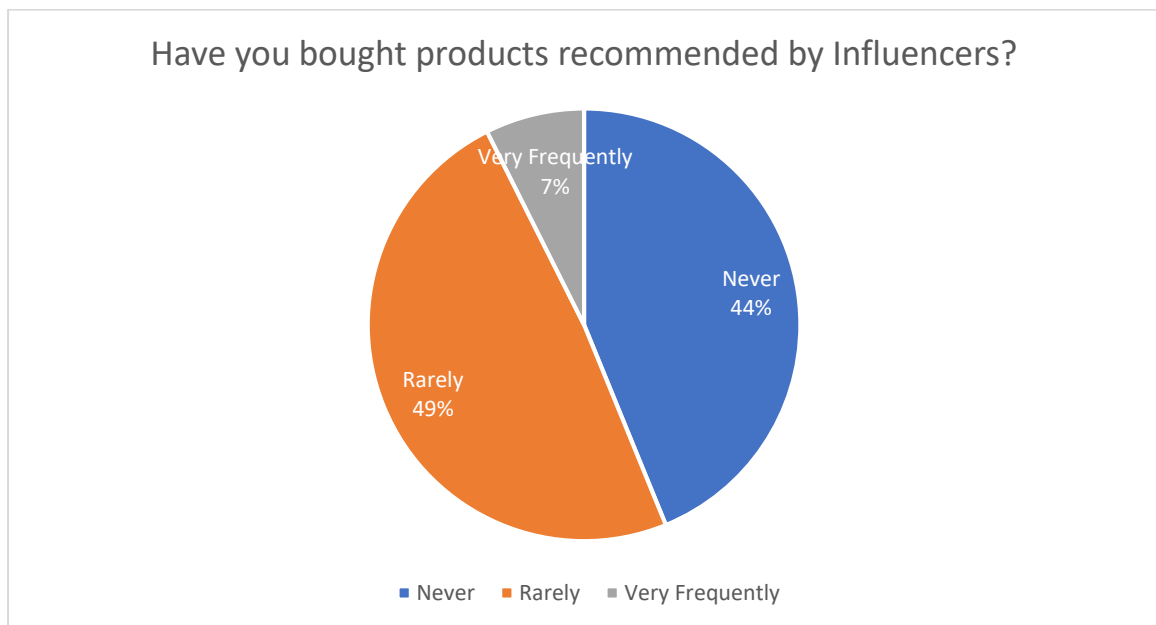


Figure 16 – Descriptive Frequencies: "Have you bought products recommended by influencers?"

### 4.2.1.3 Descriptive Statistical Analysis on Influencers

Regarding the two open-response questions, there were very Interesting results. Firstly, an attempt was made to understand the most common Influencer Tiers of each influencer that respondents had a top-of-mind recall on: "Which influencers do you know?". From the total 683 answers, there were 230 different influencers mentioned (Appendix Section 12). Of the 162 respondents, 19 responded with Invalid answers such as "Many" or "A lot" and thus were further excluded from analysis, however, 9 respondents answered that they didn't know any Influencers and thus were also excluded from further analysis. Of the 230 total influencers mentioned, 110 were Portuguese whilst 120 were international. Yet, there were more Portuguese influencer mentioned recurrently than International ones, showing that the respondents are more aware of the Portuguese influencers. Also, the greatest number of Influencers mentioned was 23. This information can be confirmed in Appendix Sections 13, 14 and 15.

Influencer Tiers Colour Codes	
Mega-Influencers	1M or more
Macro-Influencers	100k to 1M
Mid-Tier-Influencers	50k to 100k
Micro-Influencers	10k to 50k
Nano-Influencers	1k to 10k

*Table 4 - Influencer Tier Scale and Colour Code*

<b>International</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Category</b>
Camila Coelho	6	Mega-Influencer
Chiara Ferragni	5	Mega-Influencer
Nikkie Tutorials	4	Mega-Influencer
Maria Pombo	4	Mega-Influencer
Bestdressed	3	Mega-Influencer
Gabriela Pugliesi	3	Micro-Influencer
James Charles	3	Mega-Influencer
Nuria Blanco	3	Macro-Influencer
Danielle Bernstein	2	Mega-Influencer
Franciny Ehlke	2	Mega-Influencer
Josefine H.J	2	Macro-Influencer
Thassia Naves	2	Mega-Influencer
Zoella	2	Mega-Influencer
Others	104	--

*Table 5 - Influencer Tiers for International Influencers*

Taking into consideration the Influencer Tiers each mentioned influencer belonged to, the following tables show that for International Influencers, Mega-Influencers were mostly mentioned. However, for the Portuguese Influencers, mostly Macro-Influencers were mentioned.

Portuguese	Count	Category
Helena Coelho	60	Macro-Influencer
Mafalda Sampaio	56	Macro-Influencer
Bárbara Corby	30	Macro-Influencer
Sofia Barbosa	27	Macro-Influencer
Adri da Silva	23	Macro-Influencer
Inês Rochinha	22	Macro-Influencer
Inês Mocho	18	Macro-Influencer
Alice Trewinnard	17	Macro-Influencer
Angela Costa	17	Macro-Influencer
Anita da Costa	16	Macro-Influencer
Catarina Filipe	16	Macro-Influencer
Joana Vaz	15	Macro-Influencer
Mariana Machado	11	Macro-Influencer
Catarina Gouveia	9	Macro-Influencer
Mafalda Castro	8	Macro-Influencer
Bumba na Fofinha	7	Macro-Influencer
Inês Ribeiro	5	Macro-Influencer
Joana Sequeira	5	Mid-Tier-Influencers
Pipoca Mais Doce	5	Macro-Influencer
Rita Pereira	5	Mega-Influencer
Vanessa Martins	5	Macro-Influencer
Madalena Abecasis	4	Macro-Influencer
Maria Rodrigues	4	Mid-Tier-Influencers
Mia Rose	4	Macro-Influencer
Rita Serrano	4	Macro-Influencer
Others	122	--

*Table 6 - Influencer Tiers for Portuguese Influencers*

For the second question mentioned, "Please mention your favourite Influencer?" the results were studied and analysed slightly differently. In the program SPSS the question was classified according to which tier each influencer belonged to. As seen In Appendix Section 16, all 162 participants answered the question. Most participants (64.2%) answered that their favourite influencer was indeed part of the Macro-Influencer Tier Category.

Additionally, a question to understand how much the respondents trust Influencers recommendations was separately asked. The scale (1 = "Completely Distrust", 2 = "Distrust", 3 = "Neutral Opinion", 4 = "Trust" and 5 = "Completely Trust") for the question "To what extent do you trust influencers recommendations?" had a mean value

of 3.09 (Appendix Section 17), meaning that the respondents trust seems to be close to a neutral stand.

The two last questions can be confirmed by the following two descriptive graphs:

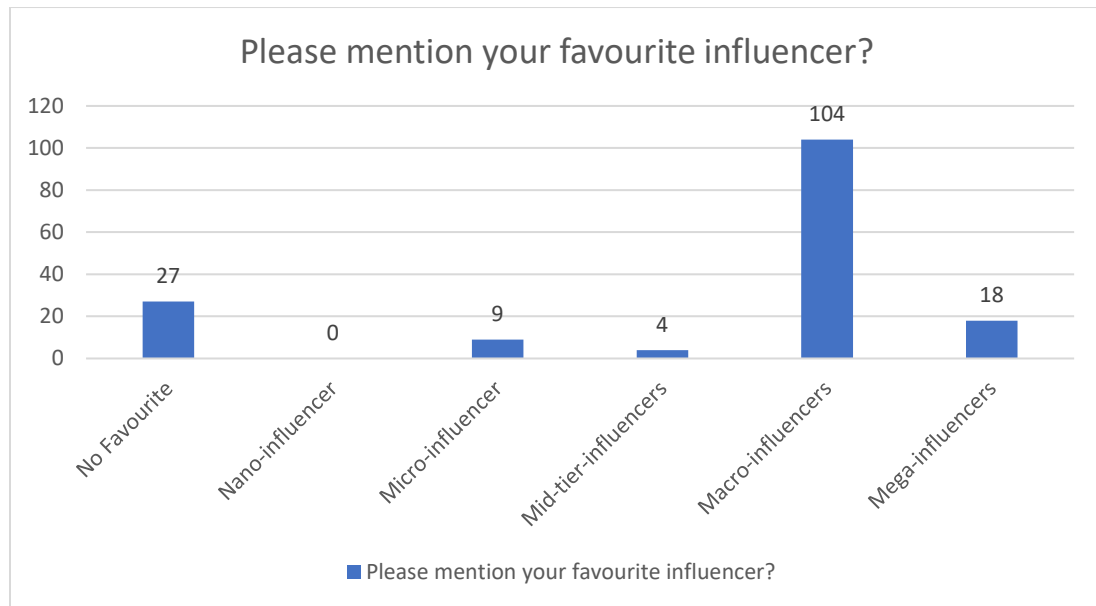


Figure 17 – Descriptive Frequencies: “Please mention your favourite influencer”

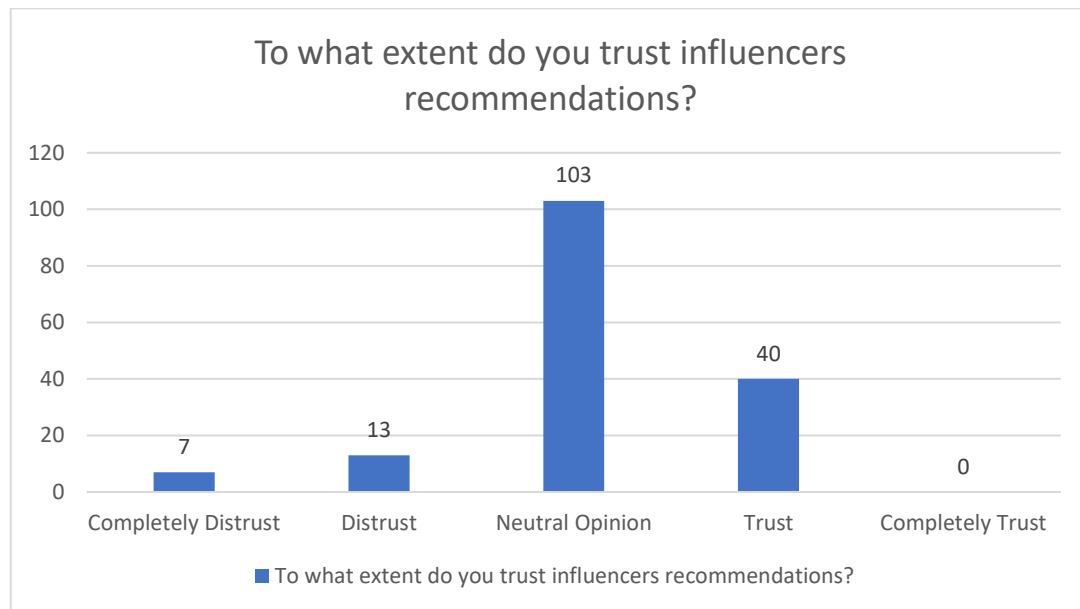


Figure 18 – Descriptive Frequencies: “To what extent do you trust influencers recommendations?”

Further analysis regarding the Influencers impact was conducted by comparing the participants behaviour when buying products either recommended or sponsored by an influencer.

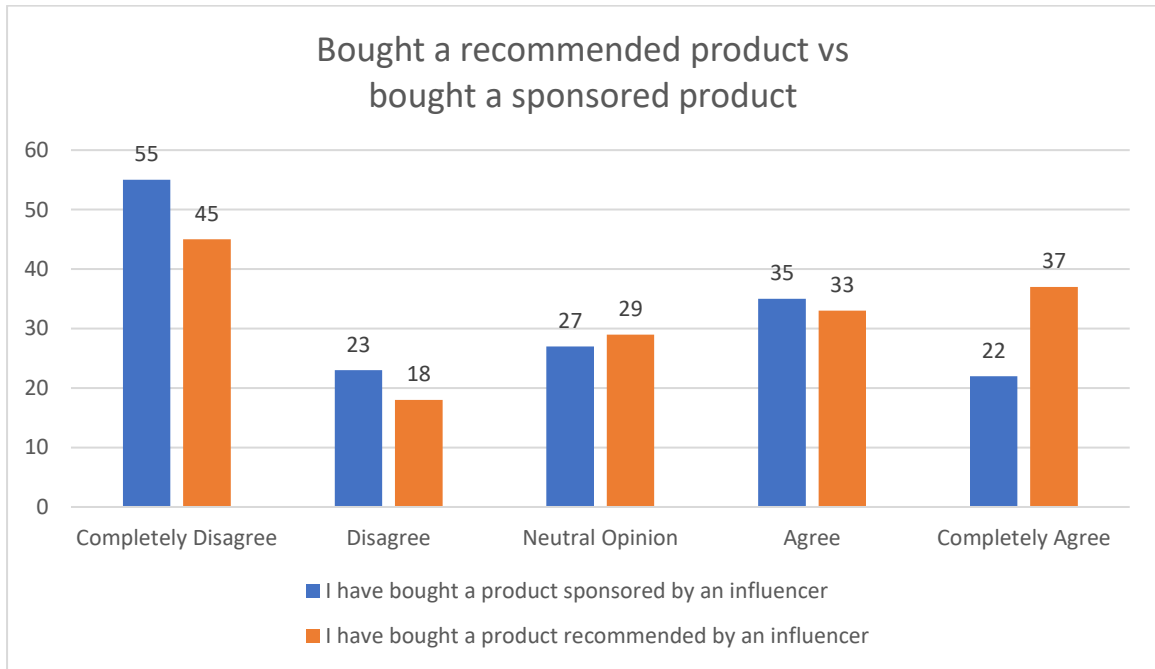


Figure 19 – Respondent’s that bought a recommended product vs respondent’s that bought a sponsored product

As confirmed by the graph above, the results show that more people have bought products recommended by an influencer rather than sponsored by an influencer.

#### 4.2.1.4 Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Model Questions

Taking Into consideration the same Likert scale as mentioned before in section 3.3.2.2 from Chapter 3, the following questions were developed in order to

study the conceptual model. From the several evaluated questions, the full information can be reviewed in the Appendix Section 19, however a small descriptive analysis shall be made:

- "I have bought a product recommended by an influencer" scored mostly with a negative agreement on the matter with 55 people (34%) stating they "Completely Disagree" with the statement.
- "I have bought a product sponsored by an influencer" also mostly scored with a negative agreement with 45 people (27.8%) stating that they "Completely Disagree" with the statement.
- "I can understand when an Influencer Is using paid advertisement" scored mostly positively with 63 people (38.9%) stating that they "Completely Agree" with the statement
- "I can understand when an Influencer Is being sponsored by a brand" with 60 people (37%) stating that they "Agree" with the statement
- "I trust recommendations from Influencers more than I trust paid promotion" scored mostly neutral since 49 people (30.2%) state that they have a "Neutral Opinion"
- "Globally I value the Influencers role" show that most people, 55 respondents (34%) responded "Agree" with the statement

#### 4.2.2 Exploratory Factorial Statistical Analysis

The following section intends to analyse the four components presented in Chapter 3 and to further understand the models' correlations. A confirmatory factor

analysis (CFA) was conducted for the conceptual model in order to comprehend if the hypothetical constructs are related to the observations made. The following Image represents the plot model for the CFA analysis.

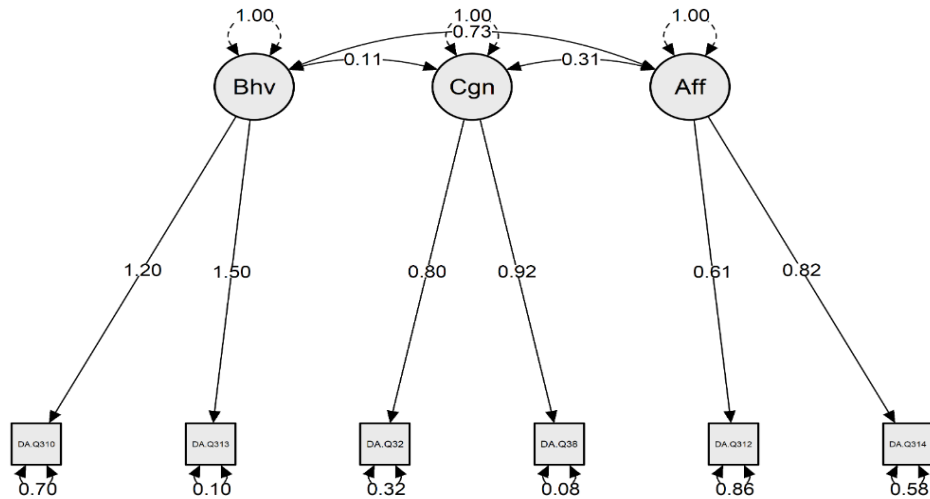


Figure 20 - Confirmatory Factorial Analysis Plot

The model has three dependant hypothetical constructs that are each explained by a set of questions. Behavioural Attitude is explained by the questions "I have bought a product recommended by an influencer" and "I have bought a product sponsored by an influencer". Cognitive Attitude is thus explained by the questions " I can understand when an Influencer is using paid advertisement" and "I can understand when an influencer is being sponsored by a brand". Affective Attitude is explained by " Globally I value the influencers role" and "I trust recommendations from influencers more than I trust paid promotion".

Furthermore, the following fit measures are included in the CFA analysis. To understand if the predicted model and the observed data are equal, we use the Chi-Square Test. For this model the p-value result for the Chi-Square Test corresponds to 0.034, meaning that since the p-value is below 0.05 the variables are dependant of each other

and that there is a statistical relationship between the variables (Appendix Section 20). However, this measure of fit is no longer enough, there is a need to further study the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) values. The analysis is as follows:

- CFI values range between 0 and 1 but should be above 0.9 in order to be considered fit. As confirmed in the Appendix Section 21, the value for this model is 0.982 which clearly indicates an acceptable model fit.
- The RMSEA values are used to calculate the probability of a close fit if the value is below 0.1, as confirmed in Appendix Section 22 since the value is of 0.089 there is a probability of close fit.
- Lastly, the TLI values indicate the variables are a good fit if above 0.95, since the model shows a value of 0.954 the variables are considered a good fit (Appendix Section 23).

In order to further comprehend each constructs reliability, a Cronbach Alpha test was conducted (Appendix Section 24, 25 and 26). The closest the value is to 1 the more reliable, however low scores do not necessarily mean a component should be discarded, it might only mean that one must add more pertinent questions. All four components had different values as results. Behavioural Attitude stands with a score of 0.890, meaning that it may be considered "Good" reliability. Following, we have Affective Attitude with a score of 0.576, which may be considered "Questionable" reliability. Lastly, we have Cognitive Attitude with 0.876, which may be considered "Good" reliability.

Using the SPSS program, the four latent variables were computed with each pertinent question and called "Behavioural", "Affective" and "Cognitive". The independent variable used was the "Favourite Influencer Tier" that corresponded to

which tier the respondents' favourite influencer belonged to. A MANOVA test was then conducted to test hypotheses and compare independent groups.

Firstly, an Interpretation on the p-value of the Box's Test of Equality of Covariances Matrices (Appendix Section 27) was held, which presented a value of 0.169. Since it is above 0.05 the assumptions of homogeneity of covariance are met resulting in the possibility of continuing the research. Regarding the Multivariate Test (Appendix Section 28), since the p-value is above 0.05 with a score of 0.133, this shows that there is no significant difference between the influencer tiers influence on consumers.

However, when further analysing the data, a separate ANOVA test was conducted for each dependant variable and evaluated with an alpha level of 0.025 (Appendix Section 29, 30 and 31). The results clearly show that Buying Behaviour has a p-value of 0.008, which is lower than the alpha level, meaning that there is in fact a significant difference between the different influencer tiers impact on consumers behavioural attitude. Although the "Affective" attitude variable shows a p-value of 0.057, it can be considered almost significant. However, the last dependant variables "Cognitive" attitude shows no significant difference on the different influencer tiers impact on consumers cognitive attitude.

Furthermore, when analysing the Estimated Marginal Means, by analysing the mean differences in the dependant variable "Behavioural" attitude, the section with an evident higher mean value of 7.250 suggest that the respondents whose favourite Influencer is a Mid-Tier Influencer (with around 50k to 100k followers), have a larger influence on consumers' behavioural attitude than any other tier level of influencers. Both "Affective" attitude and "Cognitive" attitude have no evident differences between the mean values compared to each tier of influencers. A clear demonstration that the several

influencer tiers do not impact consumers differently within the Affective or Cognitive attitude.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion and Conclusions

#### 5.1 Results Discussion

As revealed before, this academic thesis' focus is to understand how influencers impact young women aged 18-24 and how the impact may differ with the existing influencer tiers. Taking into consideration the academic literature but also our daily surroundings, the fact that social media is a part of our daily lives is intrinsically known (Zhang, 2017 and Ngai, 2015). This has led to further research regarding social media and its associations, such as trying to understand newer and more complex items: viral marketing, parasocial interactions, influencers, amongst others.

Seeing that social media daily usage is inherently known, results in both the qualitative and quantitative phases show that Instagram is without a doubt the social media mostly used by young Portuguese women aged 18-24. Furthermore, when asked for the participants motives of Instagram's usage a clear distinction on leisure and entertainment were made.

Other results gathered during the whole academic study allow to comprehend the participants habits regarding purchases, impulsivity and behaviour. Most girls consider themselves non impulsive, however after some discussion they realised that this indeed happens and admitted they might simply be unconsciously impulsive buyers. However, the quantitative results somewhat contradict this idea, since most respondents answered that they were not at all impulsive buyers. Nonetheless, since there is no further research after a questionnaire's inquiry, the realisation mentioned before might not have occurred and thus respondents simply consider themselves non impulsive buyers. Moreover, both social media and Instagram were considered as stimulus to impulsive buying. In the questionnaire, social media scored higher values than Instagram on the stimulation of impulsivity, but during the focus groups respondents focused heavily on the fact that Instagram itself is the biggest stimulator. Some participants even commented on deleting the application in order to stay away from these impulsive stimuli. The fact that in the questionnaire, most respondents have rarely bought any products recommended by influencers, might also add onto the reasons why impulsivity have scored lower values.

Taking into consideration the influencers mentioned by the respondents, at a national level, most Portuguese influencers mentioned were either mid-tier-influencers or macro-influencers, contradicting some statements made by participants during the focus group, where they consider smaller influencers to have a bigger impact due to their higher authenticity. The international influencers mentioned were greatly mega-influencers, most likely due to the fact that many of them were the influencer market

advocates. The fact that the Portuguese market is substantially smaller than the international market, might also show some reason as to why most Portuguese influencers mentioned are from a lower tier than international influencers. Also, international influencers mostly speak English to their public and thus can approach more consumers, whilst Portuguese influencers speak their mother-tongue. When analysing the participants favourite influencer, which was used in the conceptual models' analysis, most participants named macro-influencers. This understandably does not mean that the respondents are only influenced by macro tier levelled influencers, it does however mean that the most influential influencer for that specific person is located at that specific tier level. Additionally, regarding consumers attitude when buying a product sponsored by an influencer versus buying a product recommended by an influencer, clearly show that people have preferred to buy products when they are recommended.

Lastly, regarding the conceptual model's analysis and the results from the three attitude variables analysed, show that the different influencer tier levels have a significant impact on consumers. However, both "Cognitive" and "Affective" attitude didn't show any significant difference, even if the affective variable almost showed some significant data. The only observed variable that clearly suggests great distinction, is the "Behavioural" attitude variable, as it shows that Mid-Tier influencers have a larger impact on consumers behavioural attitude than any other tier level. Furthermore, the lower tier influencers were hardly even mentioned throughout the whole academic study, whilst middle and upper tier influencers were constantly spoken about.

## 5.2 Conclusions

According to the opinions and ideas expressed by the participants in the studies included in this thesis, there seems to be a clear distinction in the way people use different

social media platforms. Instagram was mentioned as the mostly used platform and also the one more often mentioned when referring to influencers. Instagram users often spend their free time browsing through aesthetically pleasing images, a pattern that seems to occur when deciding on which friends and influencers to follow. Mostly, people wish to know about their friends, acquaintances and influencers' daily lives and be aware of any interesting matter they might be supporting or mentioning. Furthermore, still regarding this social media platform, in many cases it seems to be the most consumerist inciting platform, due to all the excessive advertising and marketing promotions and activities used both on the platform and by influencers.

Though there seems to be a lot of negative opinions on influencers, if a certain product is recommended by an influencer, viewers might be more inclined into believing and perceiving the content as authentic and thus trustworthy. Likewise, if an influencer's tone of voice is similar to their followers' usual tone of voice, they will be perceived as more authentic and genuine, thus followers might eventually trust that particular influencer more.

The participants consider that these promotional activities can actually be viewed as a negative aspect of the influencer world since most women do not like when an influencer promotes a product in an intrusive manner. The consumers have in fact stated that even if the influencers seem to be trustworthy, authentic and not as participative in marketing activities, they do not entirely know if this is real or if there are hidden marketing objectives.

The term influencer has more than once shown to be a word with a negative association. Most women associate the word to untrustworthiness, unauthenticity, marketing techniques, selling power and other aversive opinions. These negative

ideologies might change the opinion of some consumers, if the marketing techniques are used correctly and adapted to the correct target.

The studies allowed some conclusions regarding loyalty towards brands and buying impulsiveness. Most women consider themselves as non-impulsive buyers in a general manner, however, some marketing activities (such as influencer marketing and Instagram) and specific times of the year, might enhance their impulsivity and clearly means that no one is immune to impulsive behaviour. Loyalty towards a brand can also slightly increase this impulsivity, however, the main conclusion is that people are not entirely aware of the degree of their loyalty towards brands. Most women firmly stated that they were not at all loyal to any brands, but after further discussion realised that they were in fact very loyal. Additionally, people tend to prefer offline buying than online buying.

The main conclusion throughout this academic study is that people are in fact influenced by influencers. More specifically, the most influential Influencer Tier Category is the mid-tier-influencer, with about 50.000 to 100.000 followers, these influencers are large enough to incite some sort of trust and reliability, but small enough to understand that they have not yet become overly used for advertising motives. This information, however, contradicts the gathered evidence in the literature review that stated how lower tier influencers have a larger impact on consumers due to the authenticity they exert and due to their diminished contact with advertising and marketing activities.

# Chapter 6

## Limitations and Future Suggestions

First and foremost, one of the biggest limitations was the quantitative phases' sample. The ideal situation would have been to receive more responses and to have increased the age group to be analysed, suggesting that for further research it would be rather interesting to study the different influencer tiers impact on two different generational cohorts and compare the results. Additionally, it would also be interesting to study and compare the impact different Influencer tiers have on female respondents versus male respondents. A third suggestion in reference to the sample, would be to study Individuals from at least two different regions or countries and understand If the different Influencer tiers Impact the respondents differently.

A second limitation was in regards to the focus group in the qualitative phase. Since the focus group is conducted within a group ambience, the probability of people being swayed into believing and opinionizing differently is quite high. There is no guarantee that consciously or unconsciously the participants were converted into another opinion than their own. Additionally, when focus groups show a large variety of differing views it might be extremely difficult to pinpoint the exact factors that might be of relevance and can also be harder to analyse. In order to move away from these limitations, the possibility of conducting a mock focus group - with different people - before conducting the several intended focus groups can be considered. This way the researcher is able to understand the limitations of the focus group script and increase its future accuracy.

Lastly, concerning the quantitative phase, the questionnaire should have been more meticulous on the exact questions asked. For example, only two questions were asked per dependent variable, meaning that the Information statistically analysed was rather diminished. Future suggestions would be to Include several questions per variable analysed. Also, the study assumed that the largest impact on an individual would come from their favourite influencer, and in order to analyse the conceptual model the favourite influencer answer was transformed into the influencer tier level that each favourite influencer belonged to. However, this excludes the possibility of understanding if the favourite influencer is just an exception or if it does in fact demonstrate their influencer tier level preference. In order to move away from this limitation, a future suggestion would be to analyse actual examples of different tier influencers and ask the participants to state their opinion on each influencer. Also, in order to understand the influencers true impact, a distinction should be made between respondents stating their opinion on influencers they already know versus influencers they do not know. Additionally, it would be of enormous interest to comprehend if there are other factors that might implicate the consumers attitude, such as trust and authenticity. Without further due, the last suggestion would be to specifically analyse if in fact the Nano and Macro influencers have a larger impact on consumers, than Mid-Tier, Macro and Mega influencers.

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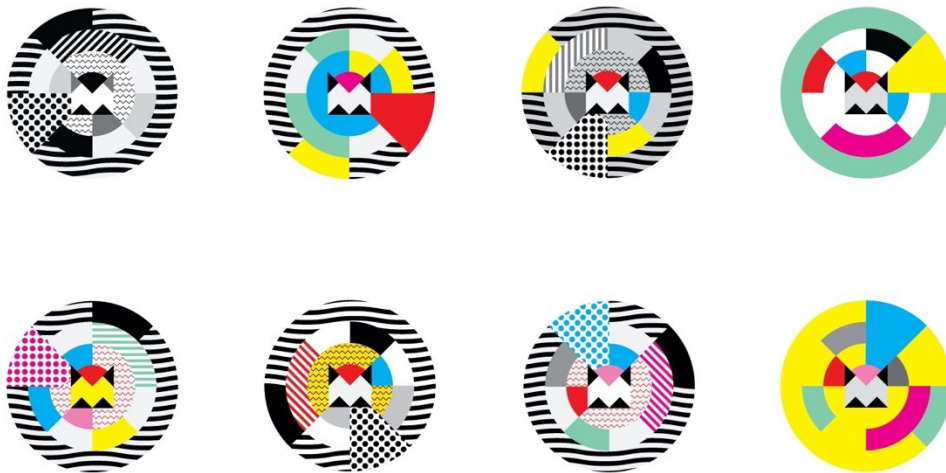
## Appendix

Appendix Section 1 – Mojobrands Main Logo: White Variant

# MOJOBRANDS®

BRAND LIFESTYLE

## Appendix Section 2 – Mojobrands Secondary Variant: Several Versions



## Appendix Section 3 – Mojobrands Elements: Coloured Version



Appendix Section 4 – Mojobrands Elements: Black & White Version



Appendix Section 5 – Questionnaire Questions

## Estudo de Marketing de Influencers

Este questionário foi desenvolvido no âmbito de uma Tese Académica para o Mestrado em Marketing da Universidade Católica Portuguesa, e tem como objetivo compreender o impacto das Influencers nas mulheres portuguesas entre os 18 e os 24 anos.

O preenchimento do questionário tem a duração aproximada de 5 minutos. Todos os dados obtidos serão confidenciais e para uso exclusivo deste estudo académico.

Agradeço desde já a sua disponibilidade.

### Secção sem título

Género \*

- Mulher
- Homem

### Secção sem título

Idade \*

- Menos de 18
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- Mais de 55

Secção sem título

Que Influencers CONHECE? \*

A sua resposta \_\_\_\_\_

Por favor Indique a sua influencer PREFERIDA? \*

A sua resposta \_\_\_\_\_

Secção sem título

Que redes sociais utiliza com mais frequência? \*

Instagram

Facebook

Facebook Messenger

Whatsapp

Snapchat

Tik Tok

LinkedIn

Twitter

YouTube

Outra: \_\_\_\_\_

Por favor indique o tipo de uso associado ao Instagram:

- Entretenimento
- Notícias
- Comunicação
- Trabalho
- Lazer
- Recolha de Informação
- Dar Opinião

Por favor indique o tipo de uso associado ao Twitter:

- Entretenimento
- Notícias
- Comunicação
- Trabalho
- Lazer
- Recolha de Informação
- Dar Opinião

Por favor indique o tipo de uso associado ao Whatsapp:

- Entretenimento
- Notícias
- Comunicação
- Trabalho
- Lazer
- Recolha de Informação
- Dar Opinião

Por favor indique o seu grau de concordância relativamente às seguintes questões: \*

Sendo que a escala referente é a seguinte: 1 - Discordo Totalmente, 2 - Não Concordo, 3 - Opinião Neutra, 4 - Concordo, 5 - Concordo Totalmente

	1	2	3	4	5
Eu sou uma compradora impulsiva	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As redes sociais estimulam compras de impulso	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eu faço as minhas compras maioritariamente online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O instagram estimula compras de impulso	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Não me considero leal às marcas, gosto de experimentar novas ofertas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Há marcas a que sou completamente leal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Por favor Indique o seu grau de concordância com as seguintes frases: \*

Sendo que a escala referente é a seguinte: 1 - Discordo Totalmente, 2 - Não Concordo, 3 - Opinião Neutra, 4 - Concordo, 5 - Concordo Totalmente

	1	2	3	4	5
Como as influencers são pagas, não me deixo influenciar na compra	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eu consigo perceber quando uma Influencer está a utilizar publicidade paga	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eu só me deixo influenciar quando me identifico com o estilo de vida da influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Existem categorias de produto em que sou mais influenciável do que outras	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Por serem pagas, as influencers não me transmitem confiança	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

As influencers não são genuínas, porque promovem os produtos que lhes pagam	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As influencers que se mantêm com o mesmo estilo são mais genuínas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eu consigo perceber quando uma Influencer está a ser patrocinada por uma marca	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As influencers promovem produtos porque acreditam neles, e não porque lhes são pagos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eu já comprei um produto patrocinado por uma influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As influencers que fazem recomendações são genuínas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Eu confio mais em recomendações do que em publicações pagas

Eu já comprei um produto recomendado por uma influencer

Globalmente valorizo o papel das influencers

Já comprou produtos recomendados por Influencers? \*

- Nunca comprei
- Raramente
- Muito frequentemente

Em que medida confia na recomendação das influencers? \*

- Confio Totalmente
- Confio
- Opinião Neutra
- Não Confio
- Desconfio Totalmente

## Secção sem título

### Ocupação \*

- Estudante
- Trabalhador-Estudante
- Trabalho por conta própria
- Trabalho por conta de outrem
- Desempregado

### Área de Profissão ou Estudo \*

- Economia e Gestão
- Educação
- Engenharia
- Design
- Saúde
- Direito
- Turismo
- Informação e Comunicação
- Outra: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix Section 6 – IBM SPSS Frequencies Analysis: “I am an impulsive buyer”

**I am an impulsive buyer**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely Agree	2	1.2	1.2	1.2
	Agree	16	9.9	9.9	11.1
	Neutral Opinion	35	21.6	21.6	32.7
	Disagree	59	36.4	36.4	69.1
	Completely Disagree	50	30.9	30.9	100.0
	Total	162	100.0	100.0	

Appendix Section 7 – IBM SPSS Frequencies Analysis: “Social media stimulates impulsive buying”

**Social media stimulates impulsive buying**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely Agree	19	11.7	11.7	11.7
	Agree	63	38.9	38.9	50.6
	Neutral Opinion	36	22.2	22.2	72.8
	Disagree	29	17.9	17.9	90.7
	Completely Disagree	15	9.3	9.3	100.0
	Total	162	100.0	100.0	

Appendix Section 8 – IBM SPSS Frequencies Analysis: "Instagram stimulates Impulsive buying"

**Instagram stimulates impulsive buying**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely Agree	24	14.8	14.8	14.8
	Agree	48	29.6	29.6	44.4
	Neutral Opinion	30	18.5	18.5	63.0
	Disagree	36	22.2	22.2	85.2
	Completely Disagree	24	14.8	14.8	100.0
	Total	162	100.0	100.0	

Appendix Section 9 – IBM SPSS Frequencies Analysis: "I usually buy more online"

**I usually buy more online**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely Agree	8	4.9	4.9	4.9
	Agree	16	9.9	9.9	14.8
	Neutral Opinion	22	13.6	13.6	28.4
	Disagree	46	28.4	28.4	56.8
	Completely Disagree	70	43.2	43.2	100.0
	Total	162	100.0	100.0	

Appendix Section 10 – IBM SPSS Mean Values Analysis

**Report**

	I am an impulsive buyer	Social media stimulates impulsive buying	I usually buy more online	Instagram stimulates impulsive buying
Mean	2.14	3.26	2.05	3.07
N	162	162	162	162
Std. Deviation	1.008	1.161	1.189	1.307
% of Total N	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Appendix Section 11 – IBM SPSS Frequencies and Mean Value Analysis: “Have you bought products recommended by Influencers?”

**Report**

Have you bought products recommended by Influencers?

Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1.64	162	.618

## Have you bought products recommended by influencers?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	71	43.8	43.8	43.8
	Rarely	79	48.8	48.8	92.6
	Very Frequently	12	7.4	7.4	100.0
	Total	162	100.0	100.0	

### Appendix Section 12 – “Which influencers do you know?” Results

Answers	Count
Total Portuguese Mentions	510
Total International Mentions	145
How Many Portuguese Influencers Were Mentioned	110
How Many International Influencers Were Mentioned	120
Doesn't Know	9
Invalid Answer	19
Total Answers	683
Total Mentions	230

### Appendix Section 13 – “Which influencers do you know?” Quantity of Answers

Quantity of Answers per Person	
Answers	People
23	1
18	2
17	2
14	1
13	1
12	1
11	2
9	4
8	0
7	2
6	0
5	0
4	0
3	18
2	12
1	14

Appendix Section 14 - "Which influencers do you know?" Portuguese Influencers

Portuguese 1	Count	Portuguese 2	Count	Portuguese 3	Count
Helena Coelho	60	Mafalda Creative	2	Nika Teixeira Lopes	1
Mafalda Sampaio	53	Mafalda Patrício	2	Nuno Agonia	1
Bárbara Corby	30	Margarida Corceiro	2	Nuno Markl	1
Sofia Barbosa	25	Mariana Bossy	2	Oksana Zagoruy	1
Adri da Silva	23	Mariana Gomes	2	Olivia Ortiz	1
Inês Rochinha	22	Marta Melo	2	Paulo Sousa	1
Inês Mocho	18	Raquel Strada	2	Paulo Teixeira	1
Alice Trewinnard	17	Sara Rocha	2	Peggy Heart	1
Angela Costa	17	Bárbara Cardoso	1	Raminhos	1
Anita da Costa	16	Bárbara Marques	1	Raquel Antunes	1
Catarina Filipe	16	Beu Lopes	1	Rita Dobrões	1
Joana Vaz	15	Bruna Corby	1	Rui Maria Pego	1
Mariana Machado	11	Bruna Marquezzine	1	Sandra Rodrigues Pinto	1
Catarina Gouveia	9	Carolina Deslandes	1	Sara Sampaio	1
Mafalda Castro	8	Carolina Flores	1	Sofia Coelho	1
Bumba na Fofinha	7	Catarina Fernandes	1	Sofia Oliveira	1
Inês Ribeiro	5	Catarina Maia	1	Sofia Reis	1
Joana Sequeira	5	Catarina Nunes	1	Vegan Portuguesa	1
Pipoca Mais Doce	5	Cátia Rodrigues	1	Viih Rocha	1
Rita Pereira	5	Conguito	1	Wandson	1
Vanessa Martins	5	Débora Monteiro	1		
Madalena Abecasis	4	Explorerssaurus	1		
Maria Pombo	4	Inês Brusselmans	1		
Maria Rodrigues	4	Inês Pais	1		
Mia Rose	4	Inês Patrocínio	1		
Rita Serrano	4	Inês Silva	1		
Carolina Nashtai	3	Inês Sofia Monteiro	1		
Carolina Patrício	3	Jael Correia	1		
Catarina Barreiros	3	Joana Duarte	1		
Mariana Rocha (MissFit)	3	Luís Borges	1		
Owhana	3	Mafalda Almeida	1		
Sara Vicário	3	Mafalda Nunes	1		
Vanessa Alfaro	3	Margarida Santos	1		
Ana Garcia Martins	2	Maria Alcalade	1		
Ana Gomes	2	Maria João Cardoso	1		
Bárbara Inês	2	Mariana Castro	1		
Catarina Mira	2	Mariana de Castro Moreira	1		
Catarina Miranda	2	Mariana Gemelgo	1		
Catarina Pereira	2	Mariana Soares	1		
Debora Rosa	2	Marta Cyne Carvalho	1		
Glória Dias	2	Marta Vieira	1		
Inês Faria	2	Melanie Jordão	1		
Isabel Silva	2	Mexiquer	1		
Joana Gentil	2	Miguel Luz	1		
Liliana Filipa	2	Nicole Ariana	1		

Appendix Section 15 – “Which influencers do you know?” International Influencers

International 1	Count	International 2	Count	International 3	Count
Camila Coelho	6	Elsa Hosk	1	Micarah Tewers	1
Chiara Ferragni	5	Emelie	1	Michelle Phan	1
Nikkie Tutorials	4	Emma Rose	1	Midesimone	1
Bestdressed	3	Freddy My Love	1	Molly Blutstein	1
Gabriela Pugliesi	3	Frejawewer	1	Mr.Kate	1
James Charles	3	Gabi Demartino	1	Mykie	1
Nuria Blanco	3	Gabriele Caunesil	1	Natacha Oceane	1
Danielle Bernstein	2	Griffin Amlund	1	Natalie Mariduena	1
Franciny Ehke	2	Huda Beauty	1	Negin Mirsalehi	1
Josefine H.J	2	Hiram	1	Niki Demartino	1
Thassia Naves	2	Jeanne Damas	1	Nikita Dragun	1
Zoella	2	Jeffree Star	1	Orion Carloto	1
Abbey Sharpe	1	Jeltie O'connor	1	PewDiePie	1
Aimee Song	1	Jenn Im	1	Pink Lemonade	1
Aina Simon	1	Jenn Muchelas	1	Plumbella	1
Alexa Chung	1	Jenna Moreci	1	Remi Ashten	1
Alexis Ren	1	Joan Keem	1	Romee Strijd	1
Alisha Marie	1	Kaesha Ann Graaug	1	Sadie Aldis	1
Alissa Violet	1	Katy Hodges	1	Safiya Nygaard	1
Amie Song	1	Kayla Itsines	1	Shakira	1
Amparo Angonoso	1	Kelly Baron	1	Shane Dawson	1
Arden Rose	1	Kelsey Simone	1	Sheng Vang	1
Ares Aixala	1	Kicki Yang Zhang	1	Simon and Martina	1
Bernardette Banner	1	Korina Kopf	1	Sivan Ayla	1
Bethany Mota	1	Kylie Jenner	1	Tati Westbrook	1
Beyoncé	1	Lara Nesteruk	1	Teresa Gonzalvo	1
Blair Eadie	1	Laurdiy	1	Tess Christine	1
Blanca Miró Scrimieri	1	Layla Monteiro	1	Valeria Lipovetsky	1
Bretman Rock	1	Leandra Cohen	1	Veronika Heilbrunner	1
Brittany Xavier	1	Leonie Hanne	1	Xenia Adonts	1
Brooklyn & Bailey	1	Lilly Singh	1		
Caro Daur	1	Lilsimsie	1		
Carol Curry	1	Liza Koshy	1		
Cassie Ho	1	Logan Paul	1		
Chriselle Lim	1	Loma Luxe	1		
Claire Rose	1	Luísa Accorsi	1		
Clancy Burke	1	Lydia Millen	1		
Clara Kong Vila	1	Lydia Rose	1		
Colleen Ballinger	1	MadeByChoices	1		
Danielle Bregoli	1	Mari Maria	1		
David Dobrik	1	Maria Bernard	1		
Dr Pimple Popper	1	Maria Frubies	1		
Dr Shereen Idriss	1	Marla Catherine	1		
Dr. Mike	1	Marta Lozano	1		
Earthling Ed	1	Meredith Foster	1		

Appendix Section 16 – IBM SPSS Frequencies Analysis: "Please mention your favourite Influencer?"

**Favourite Influencer Tier**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Favourite	27	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Micro	9	5.6	5.6	22.2
	Mid	4	2.5	2.5	24.7
	Macro	104	64.2	64.2	88.9
	Mega	18	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	162	100.0	100.0	

Appendix Section 17 – IBM SPSS Mean Values Analysis: "To what extent do you trust influencers recommendations?"

**Report**

To what extent do you trust in influencers recommendations?

Mean	N	Std. Deviation	% of Total N
3.09	162	.685	100.0%

Appendix Section 18 – IBM SPSS Frequencies Analysis: "To what extent do you trust influencers recommendations?"

**To what extent do you trust in influencers recommendations?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely Distrust	6	3.7	3.7	3.7
	Distrust	13	8.0	8.0	11.7
	Neutral Opinion	103	63.6	63.6	75.3
	Trust	40	24.7	24.7	100.0
	Total	162	100.0	100.0	

Appendix Section 19 – IBM SPSS Frequencies Analysis: Model Questions

**I have bought a product recommended by an influencer**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely Disagree	45	27.8	27.8	27.8
	Disagree	18	11.1	11.1	38.9
	Neutral Opinion	29	17.9	17.9	56.8
	Agree	33	20.4	20.4	77.2
	Completely Agree	37	22.8	22.8	100.0
	Total	162	100.0	100.0	

**I have bought a product sponsored by an influencer**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely Disagree	55	34.0	34.0	34.0
	Disagree	23	14.2	14.2	48.1
	Neutral Opinion	27	16.7	16.7	64.8
	Agree	35	21.6	21.6	86.4
	Completely Agree	22	13.6	13.6	100.0
	Total	162	100.0	100.0	

**I can understand when an Influencer is using paid advertisement**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely Disagree	3	1.9	1.9	1.9
	Disagree	10	6.2	6.2	8.0
	Neutral Opinion	25	15.4	15.4	23.5
	Agree	61	37.7	37.7	61.1
	Completely Agree	63	38.9	38.9	100.0
	Total	162	100.0	100.0	

**I can understand when an influencer is being sponsored by a brand**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely Disagree	1	.6	.6	.6
	Disagree	13	8.0	8.0	8.6
	Neutral Opinion	32	19.8	19.8	28.4
	Agree	60	37.0	37.0	65.4
	Completely Agree	56	34.6	34.6	100.0
	Total	162	100.0	100.0	

**I trust recommendations from influencers more than I trust paid promotion**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely Disagree	9	5.6	5.6	5.6
	Disagree	10	6.2	6.2	11.7
	Neutral Opinion	49	30.2	30.2	42.0
	Agree	48	29.6	29.6	71.6
	Completely Agree	46	28.4	28.4	100.0
	Total	162	100.0	100.0	

**Globally I value the influencers role**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely Disagree	17	10.5	10.5	10.5
	Disagree	22	13.6	13.6	24.1
	Neutral Opinion	52	32.1	32.1	56.2
	Agree	55	34.0	34.0	90.1
	Completely Agree	16	9.9	9.9	100.0
	Total	162	100.0	100.0	

Appendix Section 20 – JASP Confirmatory Factorial Analysis: Chi-Square Test

**Model fit**

Chi-square test

Model	X <sup>2</sup>	df	p
Baseline model	433.233	15	
Factor model	13.631	6	0.034

## Appendix Section 21 – JASP Confirmatory Factorial Analysis: Comparative Fit Index

### Additional fit measures

Fit indices

Index	Value
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.982
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.954
Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.954
Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.969
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.387
Bollen's Relative Fit Index (RFI)	0.921
Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.982
Relative Noncentrality Index (RNI)	0.982

## Appendix Section 22 – JASP Confirmatory Factorial Analysis: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

Other fit measures

Metric	Value
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.089
RMSEA 90% CI lower bound	0.023
RMSEA 90% CI upper bound	0.152
RMSEA p-value	0.132
Standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)	0.045
Hoelter's critical N ( $\alpha = .05$ )	150.651
Hoelter's critical N ( $\alpha = .01$ )	200.809
Goodness of fit index (GFI)	0.973
McDonald fit index (MFI)	0.977
Expected cross validation index (ECVI)	0.269

## Appendix Section 23 – JASP Confirmatory Factorial Analysis: Tucker-Lewis Index

### Additional fit measures

Fit indices

Index	Value
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.982
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.954
Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.954
Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.969
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.387
Bollen's Relative Fit Index (RFI)	0.921
Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.982
Relative Noncentrality Index (RNI)	0.982

## Appendix Section 24 – IBM SPSS Cronbach Alpha: Behavioural

### Reliability

#### Scale: Behavioural

##### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	162	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	162	100.0

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

##### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.890	2

## Appendix Section 25 – IBM SPSS Cronbach Alpha: Cognitive

## Reliability

### Scale: Cognitive

#### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	162	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	162	100.0

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

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.876	2

Appendix Section 26 – IBM SPSS Cronbach Alpha: Affective

## Reliability

### Scale: Affective

#### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	162	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	162	100.0

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

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.576	2

Appendix Section 27 – IBM SPSS MANOVA: Box's Test of Equality of Covariances Matrices

**Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices<sup>a</sup>**

Box's M	25.813
F	1.311
df1	18
df2	4147.047
Sig.	.169

Tests the null hypothesis that the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables are equal across groups.

a. Design:  
Intercept +  
Fav\_Infl\_Tier

Appendix Section 28 – IBM SPSS MANOVA: Multivariate Test

**Multivariate Tests<sup>a</sup>**

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.902	475.420 <sup>b</sup>	3.000	155.000	.000	.902
	Wilks' Lambda	.098	475.420 <sup>b</sup>	3.000	155.000	.000	.902
	Hotelling's Trace	9.202	475.420 <sup>b</sup>	3.000	155.000	.000	.902
	Roy's Largest Root	9.202	475.420 <sup>b</sup>	3.000	155.000	.000	.902
Fav_Infl_Tier	Pillai's Trace	.108	1.467	12.000	471.000	.133	.036
	Wilks' Lambda	.893	1.492	12.000	410.383	.124	.037
	Hotelling's Trace	.118	1.514	12.000	461.000	.115	.038
	Roy's Largest Root	.105	4.129 <sup>c</sup>	4.000	157.000	.003	.095

a. Design: Intercept + Fav\_Infl\_Tier

b. Exact statistic

c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Appendix Section 29 – IBM SPSS MANOVA: Between Subjects Effects

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	Behavioural	108.961 <sup>a</sup>	4	27.240	3.560	.008	.083
	Affective	32.013 <sup>b</sup>	4	8.003	2.350	.057	.056
	Cognitive	10.680 <sup>c</sup>	4	2.670	.792	.532	.020
Intercept	Behavioural	1861.237	1	1861.237	243.235	.000	.608
	Affective	2569.017	1	2569.017	754.238	.000	.828
	Cognitive	3439.522	1	3439.522	1020.377	.000	.867
Fav_Infl_Tier	Behavioural	108.961	4	27.240	3.560	.008	.083
	Affective	32.013	4	8.003	2.350	.057	.056
	Cognitive	10.680	4	2.670	.792	.532	.020
Error	Behavioural	1201.366	157	7.652			
	Affective	534.759	157	3.406			
	Cognitive	529.221	157	3.371			
Total	Behavioural	6501.000	162				
	Affective	8241.000	162				
	Cognitive	10972.000	162				
Corrected Total	Behavioural	1310.327	161				
	Affective	566.772	161				
	Cognitive	539.901	161				

a. R Squared = .083 (Adjusted R Squared = .060)

b. R Squared = .056 (Adjusted R Squared = .032)

c. R Squared = .020 (Adjusted R Squared = -.005)

Appendix Section 30 – IBM SPSS MANOVA: Levene’s Test of Equality

**Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances<sup>a</sup>**

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Behavioural	Based on Mean	1.579	4	157	.182
	Based on Median	1.136	4	157	.342
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.136	4	113.742	.343
	Based on trimmed mean	1.495	4	157	.206
Affective	Based on Mean	2.366	4	157	.055
	Based on Median	2.358	4	157	.056
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.358	4	146.989	.056
	Based on trimmed mean	2.408	4	157	.052
Cognitive	Based on Mean	1.186	4	157	.319
	Based on Median	.709	4	157	.587
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.709	4	146.278	.587
	Based on trimmed mean	1.071	4	157	.373

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + Fav\_Infl\_Tier

Appendix Section 31 – IBM SPSS MANOVA: Estimated Marginal Means

## Estimated Marginal Means

### Favourite Influencer Tier

Dependent Variable	Favourite Influencer Tier	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Behavioural	No Favourite	3.963	.532	2.911	5.014
	Micro	5.667	.922	3.845	7.488
	Mid	7.250	1.383	4.518	9.982
	Macro	5.875	.271	5.339	6.411
	Mega	6.611	.652	5.323	7.899
Affective	No Favourite	5.963	.355	5.261	6.665
	Micro	6.778	.615	5.563	7.993
	Mid	7.250	.923	5.427	9.073
	Macro	7.010	.181	6.652	7.367
	Mega	7.500	.435	6.641	8.359
Cognitive	No Favourite	7.556	.353	6.858	8.253
	Micro	8.556	.612	7.347	9.764
	Mid	7.500	.918	5.687	9.313
	Macro	8.087	.180	7.731	8.442
	Mega	8.222	.433	7.367	9.077

Appendix Section 32 – IBM SPSS MANOVA: Descriptive Statistics

### Between-Subjects Factors

	Value	Label	N
Favourite Influencer Tier	.00	No Favourite	27
	2.00	Micro	9
	3.00	Mid	4
	4.00	Macro	104
	5.00	Mega	18

### Descriptive Statistics

	Favourite Influencer Tier	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Behavioural	No Favourite	3.9630	2.78017	27
	Micro	5.6667	2.44949	9
	Mid	7.2500	.95743	4
	Macro	5.8750	2.78236	104
	Mega	6.6111	2.99291	18
	Total	5.6605	2.85284	162
Affective	No Favourite	5.9630	1.67519	27
	Micro	6.7778	1.48137	9
	Mid	7.2500	2.06155	4
	Macro	7.0096	1.99268	104
	Mega	7.5000	1.15045	18
	Total	6.8827	1.87625	162
Cognitive	No Favourite	7.5556	1.86740	27
	Micro	8.5556	1.23603	9
	Mid	7.5000	1.91485	4
	Macro	8.0865	1.81210	104
	Mega	8.2222	2.12978	18
	Total	8.0247	1.83124	162

## Appendix Section 33 – Focus Group Script

### 0- Introduction to Focus Group

Welcome to this Focus Group. I would like to begin by thanking you for your participation and for taking your time to be here today. This focus group is fundamental for the research and study I am conducting for my master's thesis, and will last for about 60min (maximum 90min). The theme is about Social Media Influencer's Impact on Portuguese Young Women. During this focus group, I shall ask different questions, they will begin on a more broader aspect and go more in depth accordingly.

All questions shall be asked in a manner that will incite debate in order to obtain your opinion and feedback on the matter. I'd also like to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers, all are extremely relevant and that I only wish for you to answer what you believe is appropriate. As a first step,

I'd like to ask your permission to voice record this session for research purposes. Your answers will be confidential and your identity will not be revealed.

We shall now proceed with the questions.

**1- Opening Question:**

- 1.1 Please tell us your name and your age.
- 1.2 Do you use Social Media? Which ones and why?

**2- Introductory Questions:**

- 2.1 What kind of a consumer do you consider yourself to be?
- 2.2 What do you think about impulsive shopping? Do you consider yourself to be an impulsive shopper?
- 2.3 Do you buy online, offline or both? And which one do you prefer?
- 2.4 What is your opinion on loyalty towards a brand? Are you loyal to specific brands?

**3- Transition Questions:**

- 3.1 What is the first thing that comes to mind when talking about Influencers? And why?
- 3.2 Who is the Influencer that first comes to your mind?
- 3.3 What strikes your attention the most regarding that Influencer?
- 3.4 Is she/he your favourite Influencer? Why?

**4- Key Questions:**

- 4.1 If you view an Influencer using a specific item or a specific brand, on a post or a story, what is the first thing that comes to your mind?
- 4.2 Do you feel involved with these items or brands in any way? How do you feel involved?
- 4.3 Do you feel more involved with the item or with the brand? Please explain
- 4.4 And if a specific Influencer that you follow on a daily basis constantly uses the same brand, or the same item? Do you feel like you wish to know more about that item or brand? Explain why
- 4.5 Have you ever wished or bought a product or service because you have seen an Influencer use it? What lead you to buy or not the product or service?
- 4.6 So if you see an Influencer recommending a product, service or brand, do you feel more inclined to buy that product? Please explain why.
- 4.7 Do you feel like these influencers recommendations are similar to your friends recommendations? How similar and why?
- 4.8 And if these recommendations made by Influencers are identified as advertising? What is your opinion?
- 4.9 Do you think that this can be excessive form advertising? How so and why?

**5- Closing Questions:**

- 5.1 So what are your conclusions regarding this matter? Are you indeed influenced by Influencers? How influenced and why? Please explain.

The moderator summarises the answers and conclusions and asks if all participants agree or have anything else to add.

## Appendix Section 34 – Focus Group 1: Transcript

SCS: First I would like to say thank you, for participating and for being here today. This focus group is fundamental for my research and for my thesis, without this I would not be able to better understand the opinion of consumers. It will approximately take 60 min, and although I have already explained to some of you, the theme is about influencers. During this time, I will ask you some simple questions to get your opinion and receive your feedback. There are no wrong answers.

So, let's get started! First, I would like you to tell me your name and age.

FP: 21

LP: 21

IT: 23

PF: 24

MS: 23

CS: 22

ZB: 21

SCS: Okay! Thanks. I would like to know if you use social networks, which ones and why?

FP: I use Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest and WhatsApp. These are the ones I mostly use. For more functional and academic questions, it is Facebook and Messenger, they are easier to use to communicate. Instagram, I use because I like the social network itself, sharing photos and keeping me up to date with trends.

LP: Ok, I use Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook and Messenger. Messenger and Facebook for academic purposes, for group and college work. However, I sometimes use Facebook to share information, for example, I love dogs and sometimes I share abandoned dogs to help. Instagram, I use for social purposes only and sometimes to post photos.

IT: I also use Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Messenger. Facebook to share and to collecting information. In my case I mostly use it for sports because it is connected to my group of athletes, I don't necessarily contact people. Instagram, I use both for work and for personal motives. I usually post my images, but I also look for work inspiration, sometimes I get some ideas from architectural firms. WhatsApp is basically used for group conversations, contacting people and sending images. And I also use Pinterest to collect academic and work information due to my creative area.

PF: Since my field of work is the same as IT, in the area of the arts, and more specifically in architecture, my social networks are exactly the same: used for work but also for personal reasons. Instagram I mostly use for to socialise, but I also use it to search for jobs, inspirational research and to see architecture agencies. WhatsApp I only use for social reasons, and Messenger too, although the type of groups changes a little from one to the other. WhatsApp is more for my groups of friends while Facebook Messenger is more for work or family groups. And that's basically it.

MS: I use Facebook, mostly for college groups, but I am also included in some hosting events groups to see small job posts that might be available. Otherwise, I honestly wouldn't even use that platform anymore. Instagram, unlike most people, I use a lot more to talk to people than WhatsApp. Also, to see memes, because our generation is completely dependent on them, and the social network itself, actually. WhatsApp I only use to send audios, because I don't feel like writing and to talk to my mom that doesn't have Instagram.

CS: I use Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and Messenger. Instagram is purely for social reasons, to view and share photos. Facebook, I use a lot to communicate with college groups, groups of friends and also to see the news. WhatsApp I only use to talk to people and groups of friends and family, in fact, I also use Messenger to do the same.

ZB: I also use Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp. WhatsApp Just to talk to friends, especially those from Erasmus, and because of the working groups. Instagram more than anything to talk to friends by video, because it is easier and there is more proximity. I don't use it so much to see photos and post photos because I'm completely sick of it. And Facebook honestly, I spend a month without going there, when I go there, I only see the feed, read the news and that's it.

SCS: So basically, you use the most common social media and use all of them. Is there any other less common social media that you would like to mention?

MS: I mean, LinkedIn is also a social network, for work, but it is, and I use it.

All: Yes, exactly! We also use it.

SCS: So, you can confirm that the social media platform you use most is Instagram?

All: Yes!

SCS: We will now proceed to the next phase. We now try to deepen the knowledge a bit further. What kind of consumer do you consider yourself to be?

IT: In terms of the product?

SCS: No, the type of consumer. If you consider yourself to be an avid consumer, if you are not, if you save more, if you only buy at certain times. It's a bit of a difficult question to answer but try to be objective.

IT: Yes, it is a bit difficult!

FP: I don't know, I don't see myself as an avid consumer at all, because I still depend a little on my parents' money. When I see something I really like, I only buy it if I really like it, otherwise I have a thousand parameters in my head to alert me if I need it or not. I always think about the need, if I need it or if it is just me trying to buy something cute, because I like it and because I feel like I want it. I don't think I'm an avid consumer, but I'm not the most careful with my money.

SCS: So, you're in the middle!

FP: Yes, exactly!

LP: I think that's exactly the same with me, I won't simply buy things because I feel like it, especially as it is my parent's money. The money is theirs. If it were mine and I was earning money, maybe I wouldn't think about it so much and spend quite more. I tend to go a long time without buying things, I buy out of necessity and rarely because I want to. If I really like a coat, I may not even need it and buy it, but it's only sometimes. The more trivial things, like a cell phone, I spend a lot of time without buying a new one. I had one for many years and I just bought a new one now because the older one was kind of broken. I don't think I'm a consumerist person, but out of necessity I have to be.

IT: In my case, I end up being a little careful with my money and my consumption. I mostly buy depending on the seasons or times of the year. Therefore, the money that I receive as gifts or allowances, I end up saving so that at certain times I can buy as many things as I like. Technology is usually where I spend the most money, but it's really only when I really need it. Rarely because I like it or want it. With clothes for example, it definitely depends on the season. Logically, during the Christmas season and sales my consumerist side peaks, but the truth is I also buy outside those seasons. I try to take advantage of the discounts to better manage my money and save as much as possible. I only buy things that I really need. And in order to save money, I only buy what I need when they are on sale.

PF: I don't consider myself a consumerist at all, but I tend, mostly due to Instagram, to have an enormous desire to buy. I don't buy everything, as I ponder a lot, and there are certain times, for example birthdays or Christmases that I receive some money for savings. The truth is, since I had access to Instagram, the desire to buy has increased. They know how to sell very well, and we have access to so much more information. I used to go to the mall a lot more than I do now, because of that too.

MS: I went to Black Friday yesterday!

All: (Laughter)

MS: I am a bit of a consumerist, I change my smartphone every three years, of course I won't buy a new iPhone as soon as it comes out. And since I am no longer very dependent on my parents, they actually only pay for college, but clothes and cell phones I have to buy with my money. And as I have to work to get money, spending it is quite painful, I now value it much more. When I go shopping, I buy a lot of things at once and it actually only happens every three months. I'm not really going to buy a winter coat every year, for example, I want things to last.

CS: I am also there in the middle as my shopping is very phased. Sometimes I go to the mall and buy a lot of things, and other times when I enter the mall and just want to get out of there because I can't find anything I like, and it irritates me that the stores are full of people. I also don't have a job yet and that's why I can't always buy things. I'm still dependent on my parents.

ZB: I'm also still completely dependent on my parents, I wouldn't be able to afford living alone. So, my buying habits are still very much by phases, which can even be related to birthdays. Not really my birthdays, but for more emotional reasons since I always buy gifts for the ones I love. I'm able to do this because I keep all the money I receive. Shopping is a therapy to me! Of course, I don't buy a car, it's more of a therapy in the sense of buying something little for me, like a top or a small clothing piece. It makes me feel a bit better whenever I'm feeling down. I think my mother's consumerism is something that ended up being transmitted to me. I do most of the shopping for her, the money isn't directly mine, but when she needs anything, I'm the one buying things.

To conclude, there are times when I am very consumerist, but as a general rule I am thoughtful, I buy mostly due to necessity or depending on the seasons.

SCS: You are in the middle then!

ZB: Yes, exactly! But I agree that Instagram was a big driver for my consumption. When I began using the application, I bought a lot of the products displayed, then I realised this and decided to delete the application. I understood that products were everywhere, And I love makeup, so all the new things that came out every week I wanted to buy immediately. There was a time when I bought a lot and buying was my escape, the moment I realised it, my solution was to delete the application.

SCS: And what is your opinion about impulsive shopping? Do you consider yourself to be impulsive, or have you already been? Tell me a little bit about that, please.

FP: I am very impulsive, very impulsive. Especially when I'm with my mom. The first thing I do when I'm shopping with her, is to start picking up clothes to ask my mother to buy it. Especially when it comes to promotions, I'm very sensitive to promotions. If there is a sale going on, I can even buy without thinking, and it didn't even make sense to be buy that piece. At 23h50 on Black Friday, I was on Zara's website to see all their sales and promotions.

LP: I've been way worse. I now do something that has saved me a lot of money. For example, I see a piece of clothing and think about how many times I will wear it. Then I try to find out if the price makes up for all the times, I'm going to use the piece. I may even like a piece very much, but if I'm only able to put it together with certain things in my closet, then maybe I'll only use it three or four times, and It's not worth buying. However, if it's something I know I'm going to use a lot, I buy it. Before, I didn't do this, I would buy a product and then wonder if it makes sense. Of course, from time to time I am still impulsive, for example, with gummy bears. I see them and buy them immediately! I still do this quite often. But I am proud of myself because I have been able to control myself much more.

SCS: So, you don't consider yourself such an impulsive person.

LP: No, not anymore, not at all!

IT: I've been much more impulsive, but right now I don't really consider myself impulsive at all. Before during Black Fridays, I would buy everything or anything, but in reality, I never really ended up using it much.

SCS: So, you mean, you used to buy products because they were on sale and maybe they weren't even such a good buy.

IT: Exactly, I don't really do this anymore. Now during Black Friday, I do all my Christmas shopping, and sometimes I also buy something little for me. However, there are times when I am more impulsive, for example, when I discover that the things I've wanted for a long time are cheaper or if I find out that I can buy something cheaper by ordering them from China, I instantly buy them, don't even think twice. Or when I go clothes shopping and I've tried the pieces in stores, and then later on I find the same piece online on sale, then I'm a little bit more impulsive. I usually actually regret it.

PF: I consider myself very impulsive with the basic clothing such as white and black and beige pieces, I think I always need a white shirt, a black jacket or a white blouse. And that's when I can be a little impulsive, otherwise the promotions don't really mean anything to me. Well, that's when I don't buy online. I'm actually only impulsive during all the online promotions, because if I'm offline I don't have the patience.

MS: I have kind of a rule, it is to only buy one product if you have the money to buy four of the same products I am not at all impulsive, I am very careful with my money. I may even be able to afford it, but I rather have that money in my bank account for more important things in the future.

CS: I also think I used to be more impulsive than I am now. I used to go to Zara and grab a thousand things that I didn't need. Now I stop and think if I really need them. I've become more thoughtful. Now I only go to the mall when I need something specific, and if I can't find it, I won't buy it.

ZB: I also think that I was much more impulsive. Some days I can be more impulsive, but generally not that much. Maybe I'm not that impulsive anymore because I've become extremely indecisive. Sometimes I'll take half an hour to decide which of the rice packages I should take, and then I end up not taking any because I can't decide which one to take. Of course, there are times when I am more impulsive, like those days when I feel more self-conscious. I think I'm only really impulsive when it comes to buying gifts for others. Sometimes I don't even think twice about it, because I know the person will enjoy the present.

SCS: I think that some of you have already talked about this matter a little bit, but I was wondering if you buy more online or offline? And which one you prefer?

FP: Online, no doubt. I rarely go to the mall. I only go when my mom asks me to go with her. I never really liked shopping malls, it makes me very confused and tired and I can't take it, especially during these times of the year. Either I go in the morning or I go at night, in the afternoon it's filled with people. I definitely buy online much more. It has become a refuge for me. When I'm not doing anything special, or when I need to unwind, I pick up the phone and go to the clothing brand apps to see what's going on. But yes, I buy more online, whatever the product.

LP: I can't buy online. I need to go to the store, see and try it to see if it suits me. I often see something online, then I get to the store and it fits really badly. So, I really need to try on clothes and physically see them. The problem is that I don't like shopping malls because they are always full, so I try to go in the morning when there are fewer people. To order online and return the products, I don't like so much because I don't entirely trust them. No, for me it has to be offline and physical.

IT: I do almost all my shopping online. The only thing I don't buy online is shoes because I really like to wear them and see if they are comfortable or not. My online shopping is divided into two: those products that I have already tried in store and I prefer to order online to come nice and unworn. It can also be because I didn't feel like buying them then, to stand in line at the time to buy, but kept the references to be able to buy later. Or the second thing are the products that I only buy online, because it's the sales time of the year and I don't want to go to the stores. Then if I don't like the things I bought, I'll return them

PF: I kind of already answered this a bit in the before questions, but I prefer everything online. Sometimes I like to go to the mall just to stroll around, see clothes and get some ideas for gifts. I like the walk around, but I don't

like to try clothes and stand in line to buy it. If I ever go to the store, it's because I already have all the prints of the things, I have seen online that I want to buy. Even so, this rarely happens.

MS: eBay's bikinis are very cheap! I don't care if they even arrive or if they do and don't fit. Since they are cheap anyway, it is ok. Everything from Prozis, I order online. Clothes, no, I really need to go to the stores to try them out and see if they look good. Sneakers, strange as it may seem, I order online. But there it is, nowadays the return policies are much more pleasant, so I don't mind.

CS: I always shop offline. I think I only ever bought online once. Often what I do is at home I go to all applications, see everything and save the pages and then go to the store just to try what I selected earlier. Eventually I buy some.

ZB: I also don't shop online, I usually see everything on the apps, and then I'll go try on and see the products at the store. I like to see the quality and feel the materials, so online I couldn't do that.

SCS: And what is your opinion regarding brand loyalty. Do you consider yourself loyal to any brand?

FP: I don't think so, there is no brand that I am entirely loyal to. I think the brands that I could be close to are sports brands, because of the sport I practice. I play handball so I end up walking a lot in sports clothes and I choose to use the best brands, Nike and Adidas. I end up being more loyal to those two, but I actually think it's due to the lack of supply here in Portugal. Besides, normal clothes or shoes, there is nothing that I am loyal to.

LP: I think there are stores in which I buy more than any other, but I don't consider myself loyal. Due to my area of study, like FP, I walk a lot in training clothes. But just because Adidas does something bad, that's not why I'm going to stop using it. It will depend on the product itself and not the brand.

IT: I honestly don't think there is any brand that I am loyal to. There are brands that I tend to be more and those are the ones that I use the most, but if I like something from another brand, I will easily buy it. Clothes I tend to go to Zara, wallets I tend to go to Guess, mobile phones I buy from Huawei. I got used to these brands so I

know that the products are and will be good, but if another product from another brand appears that is better, I am able to buy it.

PF: I think there is no brand that I am loyal to, but I always look for trends. I always go to Zara to see which are the trends, it doesn't mean I go shopping there, it's more for matters of gaining inspiration.

MS: I can't go back to an Android.

SCS: In other words, you are loyal to Apple.

MS: You could say whatever you want, I wouldn't go back to an Android. Nor did I trade Prozis for MyProtein, which is their main competitor. I haven't worn Nike for years, but I think it also has to do with the fact that my sister has worked in an Adidas store for many years and I get a discount. I honestly don't even know what the trendy products are at Nike, I only know Adidas. I always use Zara and Stradivarius, I'm not a big fan of Mango or Springfield either.

CS: I'm very loyal to Apple, which I wouldn't exchange for anything. Besides, in terms of clothes I am not. A few years ago, I only used All Star, but in the meantime this fashion trend has passed and if I don't like it or find it comfortable, I don't buy it.

ZB: That's right! I think the only brand I'm loyal to is Apple. Since I started using iPhone, I don't want any other phone brand. Everything is so simplified, and I never had a problem with the phone, and it lasts a long time. Even Apple computers last longer, I had other computers that didn't last and easily broke, but then, as I already trusted and knew Apple, I decided to bet on their computers and it sure was a good bet. I do not consider myself loyal to brands but to products, if I like a product, I will buy it, however if I know that a particular product of a brand is good, I will buy more products of that brand.

IT: I remembered a brand that I am really loyal to, and in basketball I only use Nike, I never used any other brand.

MS: I also remembered another one, sunglasses ...

PF: Ray Ban!

MS: There was no need to say anything! But there it is, I only use Ray Ban's.

SCS: I will then move on to the third section of the questions. Now my question is: What is the first thing that comes to your mind when talking about influencers?

FP: Instagram. It is the first thing that comes to mind, because it is where they have the greatest interaction and impact on people. Although not at all something I like to follow.

LP: I think it's Instagram and YouTube. I like to interact with YouTube and watch the videos, so I know that Influencers are connected to this medium.

IT: Fashion. I see a huge tendency that everyone tries to follow the trends influencers use. The way they dress and demonstrate products is almost always within that area.

PF: I think it's Instagram, because It basically summarises all the things we're talking about. Not only in fashion but in any area, they are there to sell. And due to the desire they create, we buy without thinking.

MS: Giveaway. I remember when they all started doing it. I constantly see giveaways and it has started to bother me and become annoying. I think the only one I really follow is Carolina Patrocínio, that I don't know if it counts as an influencer ...

SCS: Yes, it does.

MS: I usually don't have the patience to follow influencers, but she is the only one I really do, she talks about health and well-being. Normally they use their influence to talk about things of lesser value, Carolina doesn't, so I think influencers could use their influencer to talk about current and important issues.

CS: Although I think they are everywhere, the word is Instagram. It is the most instantaneous and spontaneous medium. It's always accessible, at any time, on most platforms.

ZB: In my case, it reminds me more about YouTube, because I use it more. I almost don't even follow anyone on Instagram, I don't have patience at all. It bothers me because I'm on Instagram and suddenly someone I know has become an influencer and starts to sell products.

SCS: Who is the first influencer that comes to your minds?

FP: Joana Serqueira, because she is the one that I started following recently, and the only one I actually now follow. I only pay attention to her posts, I like her because of her cute dogs, her personality and the fact that she says jokes all the time. Sometimes I accompany other influencers just to get some inspiration for my outfits, but the one I really follow is Joana.

LP: I think the only ones I follow are Joana, as well as FP, and also Alice ... the last name I can't say.

SCS: Alice Costa?

LP: Trew ...

SCS: Trewinnard?

LP: Yes! I like her because of the content she talks about. She studied nutrition, has knowledge in the area and that's why I trust her word.

IT: For me it is Mariana Machado, she is the only one I really follow. From her day-to-day activities to the fashion she wears. Truth is, what really captures me is her photography skills, the pictures are very good and since I'm in the arts, I like to follow those details.

PF: I follow her best friend, Carol Curry, a Brazilian who started singing and releasing songs. I like to accompany her because of her Brazilian lifestyle. It is a more relaxed and fun style that she aligns to sports. She is very healthy and cares about her well-being.

MS: So, if Carolina Patrocínio counts, my influencer is her. I don't remember the name of that TVI presenter who was very funny with her Porto accent.

FP: Isabel Silva?

MS: Yes! Isabel Silva. I like the content she shares, because she shares a lot of physical exercise and health, just like Carolina. Sometimes I also like to see some profiles of the Spanish influencers more connected to fashion.

CS: I really like Mafalda Sampaio, who is also known as Maria Vaidosa. I think she is an entrepreneur and a businesswoman who inspires me a lot. And her daughter is very cute!

ZB: I don't see or follow Portuguese influencers, nor do I know them. Only on YouTube and mostly foreign ones, American, Kathleen Lights for example. I follow everything she does because she talks about the make-up area, and as I have skin similar to hers, it influences me immensely. My tastes are similar to hers. I love the personality that she conveys through the videos and then the products I try out that she recommended have always been great and work with me.

SCS: So, you follow people that you identify with their lifestyle.

All: Yes!

MS: I mean, Carolina Patrocínio is a little futile.

SCS: But in her case, you follow her healthier and fitness lifestyle more. Perhaps you focus more on that level than on her personal life.

MS: Yes, exactly!

SCS: Are they your favourites influencers?

FP: Yes, I think she is the only one I really follow. I don't enjoy following other people at all. There it is, I think the other influencers could use the means to communicate matters much more important than they communicate.

LP: I don't know, I don't think I have any favourites. But both girls I mentioned I like a lot. And I very much agree with what FP said, I like Alice precisely because she talks about important subjects: food and health.

IT: I don't have any favourites, this was the first one that came to my mind because I have seen more of her lately.

PF: I don't think I have any favourites, I think I identify most with Carol.

MS: I don't think I have any favourites either, I don't particularly like influencers.

CS: I also don't have any favourites, I follow several for different reasons. Either fashion or make-up, photography or family.

ZB: The one I mentioned, is my favourite. I just follow her work all the time.

SCS: Now we move on to the last round of questions. If you see an influencer using a particular product or brand, what is the first thing you think about?

FP: That they must be making a lot of money!

All: (Laughter)

FP: I think that I'm not the only one. I ignore most of their contentless speeches, but truth is there is money involved behind all that.

LP: I agree, influencers sometimes speak and promote very trivial and content-lacking matters, just to get paid for it.

IT: I don't think I'm very influenced by them, I tend to look more at their photography and less at what they are using or promoting.

PF: I think it depends on the product, if a product interests me, I immediately want to know more. I go to the website, find out about the product and become very interested. If the product doesn't matter to me, it usually just goes under the radar. The products must jump to my eye and seek attention, otherwise I don't even notice.

MS: There are products that the influencers are paid to promote that I don't care at all. I wouldn't buy or use them just because influencers are mentioning or showing them. I actually think that they don't even use the brands and still promote them anyways, I don't really trust influencers.

CS: Yeah, I agree. Usually when I see that they are sponsored publications, I ignore them immediately. I know that most of them may even have used the product once or twice, but they only say those things because they are being paid.

ZB: I agree. I also don't care about the content they are promoting. I think they are only showing it because they are paid for it. And then you notice a very uncomfortable pattern, everyone starts promoting a product and then says exactly the same thing. It has an opposite effect on me, I stop trusting. I am more influenced if someone promotes a product when they are not being paid. As it is mandatory by law to state when they are paid to promote something, if that information does not appear, I know that they are not being paid, and that is why when they do it willingly, I trust more.

SCS: I think you've already answered this question a little, but I want to know if you feel involved with these products or brands that influencers are promoting? Because you said that only if you are interested, you will then research more about the product or brand.

MS: I didn't get to say this before. There are a lot of people advertising that device to whiten their teeth, it has become quite suspicious, since so many people were simultaneously talking about it and it was even advertised content.

IT: I got to try that product, because everyone was talking about it, and yes, it worked. But unfortunately, it made my teeth more fragile and sensitive.

SCS: Did you see the product so many times that you started wanting to know more?

All: Yes!

PF: I studied the subject, bought it and used it. But there it is, it didn't seem to be very healthy. I went to the dentist and realized that the product was not at all healthy. But the truth is that I bought it, I wanted to try it because it was always showing up.

SCS: So, when you come to see a pattern of many people using a product, you begin to want to know more about it and try it out to see if you like it or not.

FP: And at first, we may not even like it, but because we see it so often, I start to find it funny.

All: Yes, it happened to me too.

SCS: Have you ever wanted to buy or bought something because you saw an influencer using or promoting it?

FP: I don't.

LP: I also don't think so

IT and PF: We have!

IT: As we explained earlier...

PF: In my case there was no influencer involved, because it was the brand advertising directly on Instagram.

IT: In my case it was bought in the showroom, it had no connection with the influencer itself.

SCS: So, there was no product that you saw once, twice, three times and in the beginning it didn't interest you very much, but later, you wanted to buy?

MS: I didn't like golden accessories at first and now I do.

LP: I once bought a jacket, because I saw someone wearing it and I liked it and wanted to go buy it too.

FP: Okay, maybe already. But I haven't bought it yet, I'm still figuring out whether to buy it or not. It's a Zara coat that I saw an Influencer wearing it, and I really liked it. Actually, I want to buy it, but I haven't bought it yet!

ZB: Yes, already. If you really like the person, as I like Kathleen, yes. But it has to be a product that I already had a previous interest in, then when they start talking about it, I want it even more.

SCS: If it is a product that you see that does not have advertising, because today it is mandatory to identify that. Even if it is being spoken by a friend, because it is considered an influence. Especially when someone comes to talk about it, do you feel influenced to buy the product?

All: Yes!

SCS: When publications are not advertised, because I already realized that advertised publications you do not trust and do not like, and if you are approached in a similar manner to the tone of voice of your friends, do you trust more?

FP: Yes, I think that words that are more adapted to what my friends say and used to I enjoy more. The less informal it is, I tend to drift away and like it less.

LP: Yes, I trust them more and I feel like they are speaking directly to me. The more adapted to me, the better.

IT: Yes, I also agree.

PF: I feel that we have become more loyal to these people, because if we like the way our friends talk and the influencers' tone of voice is similar, it becomes more credible. It does not mean that you will trust 100%, but it becomes more credible.

MS: Not me, I think their way of speaking seems very false.

CS: I also think that the way they communicate does not influence me much, even if it is close to my friends' way of communicating.

ZB: Except for certain exceptions, from people I have been following for a long time, I also do not feel that their form of communication influences me, even though it is close to those of my friends.

SCS: So you do not consider the recommendations of influencers to be similar to the recommendations of friends?

All: No!

SCS: Do you think there has been too much and too much advertising lately?

All: Yes!

SCS: What if those recommendations that are not advertised, do you consider it to be excessive advertising?

FP: It is also their role to talk about some issues. They often have highlights just for advice depending on the area they are aware of, which is not advertised. I think this is healthy and good. There is no harm in that. However, the advertised ones are very manipulated.

CS: I think it is a way of informing us, on the things that are now available on the market or for sale.

SCS: If it is not advertised, it is not considered excessive advertising, but if it is advertised it is excessive.

All: Yes!

LP: When it is not advertised, they speak because they want to and on their own initiative. When it is advertised, it is forced and only due to money.

SCS: So, you don't consider it excessive, right?

ZB: In my case, it creates a certain closeness and trust in the person, because it is not advertised, it is genuine and voluntarily.

SCS: What if the person talked about the subject on his own free will before and later on in his career starts to be promoted? Will you distance yourself from the person?

FP: To me it causes distrust and discomfort.

LP: I don't think so, because they gained my trust earlier. They did so by their own merit, and eventually were able to get these advertisements.

IT, PF and MS: Exactly!

PF: I don't really know. I feel like some influencers have lost their credibility. They became famous and advertise so much and so many products, that I no longer know which product they really like.

ZB: If I see her mention a topic or product from time to time, I tend to trust more her Intentions. I don't even think that It Is about money because It Is constantly mentioned out of enjoyment. But if you're talking about a product, then again, and again, and never stop, it starts to get tiring and I already know the opinion, so I tend to become suspicious. Sometimes they exaggerate too much.

IT: If there is too much advertising I will stop following.

SCS: So, from this conversation that we had today, I can conclude that you actually, despite not considering yourself overly influenced, are in fact influenced, correct?

All: Yes!

FP: I think it is unconsciously.

LP: I agree, and they are able to manipulate with us.

IT: I'm 50-50, they influence me because I research the product but then I end up not buying anything. They just influence me because they talk about the market and I get to know more about more products.

PF: They end up influencing me because, I then want to know which piece of clothing they used and what lotion they are using. I become interested, and that is influence.

LP: It shows what's interesting at the moment by most, what's trendy, but I don't feel obliged to buy those things

CS: In my case, I don't think they have much influence at the moment. But in the past, for example, I didn't like leather pants and then everyone wore them, and I started to like the pants.

MS: It was the same with me!

IT: With me too!

PF: And me! Sometimes the fact that I even just considered trying something new.

ZB: And that is also an influence.

All: Exactly!

SCS: Another conclusion that we can draw is that you feel some negative opinions about the advertising done by influencers.

All: Yes!

LP: It's not a negative opinion, but we feel suspicious and we don't believe it.

SCS: You associate influencers with more negative things, like advertising, just doing things for money.

All: Yes! Exact!

SCS: That was really interesting! Thank you so much for being here today, for helping me and responding to everything. If you want access to the results of this study later on, please tell me and I am will gladly share with you.

## Appendix Section 35 – Focus Group 2: Transcript

SCS: First I would like to thank you for being here today and for participating in one of my focus groups. This focus group is fundamental to my academic thesis, without it I would not be able to better understand the opinion of consumers. We will take approximately 60 minutes, where I will ask you a series of questions that will be narrowed and deepened. There are no right or wrong answers, I just want to hear your opinion. Does anyone have any questions?

All: No!

SCS: Good! So, I would like you to start by you telling me your name and age.

MP: 22

MO: 19

LAI: 19

IO: 19

MF: 19

AS: 18

MB: 19

JM: 19

FP: 22

LAm: 22, we're the oldest!

All: (Laughter)

SCS: My first question is if you use social media, which ones and why?

MP: The social media that I use the most is Instagram and Pinterest, the others I don't use because they don't interest me anymore.

MO: The social media I use the most are Instagram and Twitter. I spend a lot of time there. Mostly to see memes. On Instagram I usually see more photos, socialize with other people and also post images. Does WhatsApp count?

SCS: Yes!

MO: Okay, I also use WhatsApp and it is very handy for college work and to communicate with my family. Basically, I use those three.

LAI: I've tried almost all social media platforms, the most popular ones at least, but I always end up using Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook the most. Although I hardly ever use Facebook anymore.

IO: In my case, I'm also a little bit like Lal. Instagram, mainly to communicate, to see photographs and sometimes to gain inspiration. Pinterest for ideas, clothing outfits or room decoration ideas. Snapchat I've used a lot, but now it's almost extinct. And WhatsApp and Facebook I only use to communicate with college colleagues, family and friends.

MF: I use Instagram more, to see photos and post them. Pinterest more to get ideas for college work, WhatsApp and Messenger to communicate with friends and family, and also for some college group work. And I think that's it!

AS: I follow up with Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp. Not so much Messenger anymore, but for college and to talk to colleagues I sometimes still use it.

MB: Instagram mainly, to talk to friends, WhatsApp to talk to family, Facebook from time to time I watch topics related to politics and news, since it is a social media platform mostly used by older generations. Pinterest I also use for inspiration, whatever the subject may be and Snapchat, because in other countries they still use it a lot, so I can talk to friends from abroad.

JM: I basically use Twitter and Instagram the most. Twitter, to be more aware of the news and global situations that might be happening. Instagram, for the photography and to post pictures. The rest, I only use Messenger and WhatsApp to talk with family or friends, and also to communicate with work groups for college.

FP: Instagram, exactly as mentioned, photos and so on. Pinterest, for inspiration. WhatsApp for friend groups or work. Facebook, I use a lot for college groups, but I don't use it that much anymore. And now I also use LinkedIn, which is also a social media network.

SCS: And so is YouTube, in case anyone doesn't know.

All: Ah!

LAI: In that case I use it too!

MO, IO, MF and AS: Me too!

LAm: We older girls don't use Twitter anymore, we've used it a lot in the past, but not anymore. Unfortunately, I use Instagram all the time. Pinterest I use for ideas and inspiration, from all kinds of subjects: from clothing outfits to food recipes. And Facebook because the profile is already created, otherwise I wouldn't even use it. YouTube, not that much. WhatsApp, to communicate with family and friends.

SCS: Thank you, so let's start to narrow the questions down a little. I would like to know what kind of consumer you consider yourself to be?

LA: Consumer in general?

SCS: Yes, in general. If you consume more in stages, if you save more, if you are an extreme consumer...

MP: I think I'm so and so, not too much, not too little. I don't consume much, I buy more out of necessity, but sometimes when I do like something very much and want to pamper myself, I buy it.

MO: If we are talking about consuming digital content, I watch YouTube for hours and hours. I don't watch TV at all, I just watch Netflix or YouTube. As for the rest, non-digital consumption, I only buy during sales and black friday, so I don't consider myself a big consumer.

LAI: Yes, I would also say that I am the same. In terms of digital content, I go through phases in the type of content I consume, but I end up spending many hours on YouTube. In terms of consumption of material goods, I can consider that I'm moderate.

IO: In terms of digital consumption, I consume a lot of YouTube, I don't even use television anymore. I even feel like I've become a little sloppy because I spend a lot of time on social media. As for material goods, I am a moderate consumer, because I only buy what I need.

MF: In terms of material goods, I think I can say that I am in between, I only buy when I need to and not because I want to.

AS: I think I'm moderate, I take advantage of Black Friday and sales, besides that, I only buy when I need to.

MB: I usually consume more when I need to, but when I do, I end up exaggerating a little and buying more stuff.

JM: I take advantage of sales a lot. I only buy what I need, and I only buy it during the sales season. For example, this Black Friday I didn't buy anything but plane flights. I don't consider myself a consumerist, because I don't buy things just because they're on sale, I buy because I need to. But I only buy what I need during sales.

LA: It'll be the complete opposite with us now!

All: (Laughter)

FP: No, I do consume, I do consume a lot. But whatever I buy I know that I will use it for a long time. Sometimes I find myself going home full of shopping bags, but I do my best to use everything.

LA: I actually think I am much more balanced now, but in the past, I was very out of control. I went shopping just because I felt like it, and I always bought something that I ended up not using at all. Nowadays I buy more in stages, I go months without spending a lot of money, but I still buy a lot when I do go.

SCS: Now, I would like to know what you think of impulsive shopping, and whether you consider it to be impulsive?

LA: I would only like to add one thing, I don't know if it can be useful. I will speak for myself and FP, we consume a lot because we also see it on social media, and we end up buying what we see.

SCS: Of course, it is useful information! Thanks. MP, do you want to answer?

MP: It depends, if it is very cheap, like during during flea markets I often find things and clothes costing 1€, and then I can be very impulsive. Then I can be very impulsive because things are cheaper than a coffee or a croissant, and I end up not even using these things that much. When things are more expensive, I end up pondering more and sometimes I don't even buy because I'm so indecisive.

MO: I think I am the same in that sense, I only shop during sales. I've bought so many things that I ended up not using, and that I only bought because it was cheap. I'm a little impulsive, but I'm trying to improve.

LAI: I was definitely a lot more impulsive than I am now. Nowadays I think a lot more before I buy anything, and I only buy if I actually believe it is worthwhile. I think this is something that comes with maturity. But every now and then I still have very impulsive moments.

IO: I was always very careful, so when buying things, I am very doubtful and think twice about everything. Of course, I've been impulsive. I've seen people use something, and just because it was fashionable, I bought it. Truth is, I ended up regretting the buy because I don't use it at all.

MF: I think I've always had a good knack for fair prices and to understand whether the product will be worthwhile or not, so that I don't spend that much money. If I like something very much, I usually try to wait for the sales. I don't think I'm very impulsive.

AS: I think I was more impulsive when I was younger, and like LAI said, non-impulsivity it comes with maturity. When something was in fashion, I would buy it as soon as I could, but now I am quite thoughtful.

MB: As I usually only buy things when I need them, I am not very impulsive, however there are always times when I can be a bit.

JM: I think I am impulsive if things are really cheap, but even so, as I am very thoughtful, it ends up working in my favor. I always end up buying things during sales, because I always want to wait for the prices to drop.

FP: I already answered a little bit before, I don't consider myself impulsive in the sense that I buy things that I won't use. But if I see something I like and I know I will use it, I buy it right away and I don't think twice.

LA: Yes, I was wondering why I feel that I became more impulsive when I had economic independence. In the beginning it was the immaturity I had, because I thought that since it was my own money, I could spend it as I pleased, until I realized that I had to balance things and be more controlled.

MB: Actually, now that I think about it, I already made a lot of impulse purchases, but it was in really small things, like when I went to the supermarket full of hunger. I knew I had food at home and could wait a while to eat, but as the food was there right in front of me, I bought it right away and didn't wait. It's a little impulsive.

SCS: Do you buy more online or offline? What is your preference?

MP: Before going to a store, I always check everything online, because the pieces are not always in stores, and also because it makes no sense to go to a store if there is nothing there that I like. I actually like both, buying

online and offline. Online, I can nowadays check measurements of pieces easily. But I also like to go to stores, it really depends on the product.

MO: I never bought things online, only if I go online and then go to the store to try it out. I even prefer physical stores.

LAI: I also almost never buy online. I must have done just one or two purchases. In terms of clothes, it is much more fun to go to the store. Of course, I consult the websites online and see them in the applications to later go to the store. Only if there is something exclusive online that is not sold in stores, I buy it.

IO: Just a question, is this just related to clothing?

SCS: No, it's about any product.

IO: Ok, thanks! If it is something that does not exist here in Portugal, it will have to buy online. Some physical stores tend to be very boring, I usually go shopping during sales seasons, so there tends to be a lot of people. I get quickly fed-up and return home to buy the products online. But when there are exclusive pieces only for sale online, I have no choice. Shoes no, never, I can never get the right size. I think it depends on the product. I even order a lot of books online. In conclusion, I prefer offline, but I also buy online.

MF: I definitely prefer offline, to feel things and see them live. But I also buy online, for example at La Redoute, I trust the company and I buy a lot from them.

AS: I use AliExpress a lot to buy cheaper phone cases and small technologies. As for physical stores, it can become quite boring, as I usually go to the mall only during sales, it is always full of people, so I lose my patience and end up buying online.

MB: I definitely prefer to buy in stores, I hate to buy online because I don't like to wait for the clothes to arrive. Or any other product actually.

JM: I am 50-50, clothes I rarely buy online, not even in stores I sometimes find clothes for my height. Besides, I buy a lot of stuff online, and the waiting time is a bit boring, but I prefer not to go to stores full of people.

MB: Yeah, I think the boring part for me is the waiting time. I even forget that I ordered something, when it takes a month to arrive.

MO: Some earrings arrived a year after I ordered, which I thought I would never see again.

All: (Laughter)

JM: Yes, and online is cheaper, and so I prefer to save money.

FP: I prefer offline and buy more offline. But I end up using online a lot more than I realised. The point is that I study the product very well offline and then buy online if necessary, I don't like the waiting time.

LAm: I never buy online, nor do I have that possibility on my card on purpose.

All (Laughter)

LAm: It is really necessary because of what I explained earlier, I am quite impulsive. However, I check all the products online, and then I go to the store to buy.

SCS: What about loyalty? Do you feel that you are loyal to some brand?

MP: I really am very loyal to brands. First the clothes, I already know what my size is, so I always go to the same stores. And in terms of preferences and qualities too, when I trust a brand, I always buy from them again.

MO: I think so. I am too! the clothing brands always end up being the same: Pull and Bear, Bershka, Zara and Mango. As for other things it depends a lot on the price and quality ratio. If we are talking about mobile phones, there are better and cheaper Androids than some iPhones, but I can only use iPhones. So, I consider myself loyal to some brands.

LAl: I wouldn't say that I am loyal to any brand. As I mentioned earlier, I like shopping and I end up trying different brands. So, I don't always stick to the same ones. I try to never give preference to brands, but sometimes I end up noticing that I already know them and thus prefer them. I enjoy the act of shopping and end up trying different brands For example, I almost always go to Zara because I often like the collections they present, but the other day I went to the Norteshopping store and I was not interested at all. So, I went looking for other stores.

IO: In terms of loyalty, I don't know if I am, because I like to try different things. However, I always end up going to the same stores. But I'm not sure if that is loyalty.

SCS: You can try to think more about the example of Apple, I am using this example because it is recurrent. Many people start using Apple and at least for a few years, and then they only use and buy products from Apple due to preference or taste. This is loyalty.

MF: I must be the only person here who has never used Apple.

IO: In that case, I think I am loyal, but I never called it that. I never realized that there is such loyalty. For example, sneakers, I just buy All Stars or Adidas. Nike or Reebok, I don't at all, because they are less comfortable and because they do not fit my style. As for Apple, I'm the same, I began by using their computers and now use almost all of their products. I am no longer able to use technology from Windows or Android.

MF: I'm just the opposite, I tried to use Apple and I didn't know how to use it, so I just use Windows. In terms of clothes, I am very loyal to Zara and maybe to Springfield, I always go back there to buy clothes and I often like the collections. As for essential goods, I am loyal to some brands because I prefer them, and I got used to it. Others for the price and quality ratio. But yes, I am loyal to brands.

AS: I am loyal to certain brands for sure. 90% of my sneakers are Adidas. Apple, I only use their products. And clothes I always go to the same stores.

MB: First, I'm loyal to Apple, because I had a lot of Androids and I still prefer iPhones. With 32 GB on an iPhone you can do anything, in the Androids I filled the phone. As for clothes, I am very loyal to Zara, because I know that I tend to like their collections and although the price is now a little higher, the price and quality ratio still convinces me.

JM: I am not loyal to any brand, I choose products due to their quality and easily trade it for another brand if it has the same qualities and is cheaper. I chose Huawei not due to the brand, but because of the camera. And as I am quite tall, when I find clothes that suit me and that I like, I buy them straight away, no matter the brand.

FP: I am not loyal to any brand other than Apple and the Dama de Copas, which is a lingerie store where I buy all my bras. Nowhere else!

MB: Oh, with underwear I am also very loyal, I only buy at Intimissimi, they are the only ones who are good enough.

LAm: Yes, I am loyal. The same shampoo has been used by me for years. Fruit, I prefer to buy in certain stores. Underwear, I always go to the same ones. I always go to the same places!

SCS: And now let's move on to another more funneled question phase. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when it comes to influencers and why?

MO: YouTube, Instagram and Advertising. Ugly things that I wouldn't use. Types of people and attitude I don't like. I move away from these matters a bit.

MP: Instagram and Brand Advertising. Constantly and always the same topics. A bit boring.

LAm: Yeah, it's really bad. I have a negative idea about them. There are some who are talking about the products in a subtle and non-intrusive way, that is no harm. Others who want to sell as much as they can and put the products right in front of you, its awful.

MB: And maybe they didn't even try or use the products.

LAm: And then they post information and talk about things that have no place at all and do not fit in with their lifestyle. I prefer to see things that are worthwhile, someone who does sports and talks about health and sport related matters, for me it is ideal. Or someone who constantly travels, and talks about new places I haven't visited yet, it's interesting, it feels correct.

LAl: It is known that influencers just want to make money without even trying the products. They are not concerned with the associated consequences. If someone wants to buy a product and then something bad happens, for some reason, they say they are not to blame because the person was willing to buy and try it.

LAm: And the products are sometimes absurd. I've been seeing a lot of wines being advertised on Instagram and it doesn't make any sense, because that person doesn't fit at all with what they advertise

AS: Exactly! Fashion influencers will talk about a product or subject that has nothing to do with fashion.

LAm: And then there are waves, suddenly we go to the feed and we have 5 influencers advertising the same product.

AS: Daniel Wellington is very annoying right now. There are a lot of influencers advertising the watches at the same time, it is so intrusive.

JM: Daniel Wellington this Black Friday advertised the same thing everywhere, in America, in France, Spain, England. Everything was at the same time and not at all adapted.

FP: I actually like their products. I like when people admit they are advertising, but at least show products that they identify with. Otherwise, advertising will not make sense. I think that being exposed as being an advertisement is not bad, it should be identified and I think thath by law it is even mandatory.

JM: Yeah, it appears on top of posts saying “advertising”.

LAm: But you know what I don't agree with? When brands put forced and ungenue phrases in their descriptions.

MF: Brands already have a script and ask influencers to be robots that communicate in the same way.

LAl: It is worse when influencers do not negotiate and try to write the script itself. I think they are a bit at fault because they do not stand up for themselves, and they accept the scripts for the money. But it's also the brands' fault because they create unrealistic and standardized things just to look good.

IO: I think this is a risk for the brand, not trying to guide the influencer.

MO: I think it is also a risk for the influencer, because it can run their content. If someone is 20 years old and doing a daily makeup routine for school just because they are paid for advertising, it makes no sense. They are no longer in school, they are in university!

MB: Yes, I admire a person a lot, and then they make a meaningless ad, and I instantly stop trusting the person.

MF: I saw a presentation at university by a girl who is an influencer. She was there to explain a little bit more about the world of influencers and how their job works. Basically, there are many brands that send text messages, and even to copy and paste the exact same one to several girls. Other times, brands send some keywords, influencers write a text, send it to the brand and wait for approval. And she says she does not agree with this method, of telling influencers what to write, they lose credibility because it is not in line with their style. Both influencers and the brands lose credibility.

MB: Their influences are not always bad, sometimes they influence us to be healthier or to have a better sense of humor.

JM: The problem, I think, is that nowadays when you hear the word influencer, you immediately think of the people who are making false ads and not at all aligned with their style. That's why I don't follow influencers.

LAl: When I also think about influencers, I think about consumption and the influence of consumption patterns. They even influence behaviors and practices. I really make a distinction, between content creators and influencers. Content creators are people who express themselves in social media in creative ways, while influencers are just there to influence.

SCS: You have already entered this subject a little, but in the meantime, I would like to ask other questions: What is the first influencer that comes to mind.

IO: Sofia B Beauty

LAI: Helena Coelho

MO: Inês Rochinha

IO: Helena Coelho she promotes something and it sells out immediately!

MP: Cristina Ferreira. She is Portugal's biggest influence! She sold out her mother's special powder in supermarkets.

LAI: Even in international terms, when we thought about the beginning of this explosion, which was when I started watching YouTube. Zoella, one of the biggest influencers, sold out everything too and now I'm not sure what she is doing.

LAm: Nowadays, there are agencies that manage their Instagram, the content they will publish and even partnerships with brands. I guess the person gets lost in the middle of it all.

MB: Exactly, I don't see a person there anymore.

MB: Most of them are Helena Coelho or Inês Rochinha.

LAm: Anita da Costa, I also follow a lot.

SCS: If the person you mentioned is your favorite?

All: No!

SCS: Do you have any?

JM: Yes, but I think I can speak for majority that the influencers we follow did not come from Instagram. Most of my favourite Influencers are not even from Instagram, they came from YouTube, and now I do follow them on Instagram.

MO, LAI, IO, MF, AS and MB: Yes!

MP: I follow Romee Stridj and some Nordic Influencers a lot that I don't remember the name.

LAm and FP: Ah! Yes!

SCS: If any influencer uses a product or brand, do you feel the need to buy?

LAm: When it's not sudden, when it's something they're using on a daily basis, I end up liking it and wanting it. For example, the other day I saw a girl wearing a sweater that I liked and wanted to buy, and she identified the product in a subtle way, so I knew where to buy it. It was neither blatant nor intrusive, which I liked.

MB: I really like an influencer that I follow, and she doesn't even advertise, she just wears the clothes she likes and shows her style on Instagram. And then someone created a page that identified the pieces of clothing that she and other influencers wore and started to advertise there.

LAI: If something is not sudden, then it convinces me more. Now if it's too intrusive, I don't want it because it annoys me.

SCS: So, do you feel that you would even like to buy something, even if it is advertised or not, when influencers use it?

All: Yes!

MO: Yes, often yes!

LAm: There are times when I see people going to the movies, they're not even influencers, they're friends or acquaintances. And then I feel like going to the cinema.

SCS: So, if you see a friend of yours publishing something about nails? I went to this place to do my nails. So, you want to go too?

All: Yes!

LAI: Even about art exhibitions it happens.

SCS: But do these situations also happen when influencers advertise?

All: Yes!

AS: But when they're being advertised, I don't like it, I don't trust it so much.

All: Yes!

AS: I feel that I no longer know the person. The relationship created makes me want to buy something they are using, it seems like a friend of mine, it is trustworthy. And I stop trusting it if it gets a lot of publicity.

JM: I think the problem here is the excessive and out of context advertising.

SCS: Ok, thanks! So, if you see a product being repeatedly advertised by several people, do you feel intrigued and would like to try or buy it?

LAI: At a conscious level I don't think it will happen, but in the subconscious level it does. That becomes a subliminal message. They (product or brand placement posts) seem like a subliminal message. We remain with an Idea In our head that one day we wish to try because we've heard about It so much. Of course, there are some products like this that are more doubtful, and in those cases, you always have to consider more. But others are more easily experienced.

AS: Yes, sometimes It Is even about the simplest things. I see a lot of people going to the same cute café, and then I want to visit the same one!

MB: Yes, or everyone with the same piece of clothing, from Zara most likely, I end up not even wanting to wear it. But here it affects me in a negative way, I don't want to use it.

SCS: What about the others, would you like to add something?

MO: If it is recommended it seems that I trust more.

LAI: But I'm still a bit dubious, because nowadays it seems that they feel compelled to talk about it because they were offered the product. They are not being paid, but they received free products. That is, we do not know when these situations are and when they are not. Then I do trust more, but I am always in doubt about their credibility.

MO: Something it is more believable when I have been following someone for many years and the influencers does not change that much their way of advertising, in the way of talking about products. They remain genuine throughout their careers, and this makes it more trustable.

AS: I think that things that are not advertised and paid for are more interesting than those that are. When they show its advertising, I walk away.

LAm: Sometimes when someone asks influencers, and they respond genuinely. Like, for example, what they usually eat for breakfast, and it is clear that they are telling the truth, that clearly influences me. If they give me new tips on what to eat for breakfast, I gladly take them.

LAI: So far, I doubt it a little. Because their lives revolve around paid advertising and we don't know their real intentions. I'm always a little dubious, but it's more credible.

SCS: MB recently talked about the issue that influencers sometimes seem to be your friends. The ones you trust most. Do you feel that too?

All: Yes!

LAm: Yes, more so with podcasts. Not so much on Instagram.

MO: I feel that influencers on Instagram are not real. When the Influencers curse, then I really believe their communication is genuine, and everything else follows. Because they are speaking to us the same way they would to their friends. It is necessary that they speak openly and at ease, and that they show their personalities. The podcasts seem to bring this more at ease sense.

MB: Especially because nowadays, and more and more, we already see people completely changing their personality just to be someone on social media. They are not being genuine, and they do not show reality. It's all false and we never know who these people are.

LAI: Advertising has always been like this, it has always served to conceal and manipulate. And influencers enter this medium and use the same techniques. If someone is not genuine, they will do everything and use all techniques to become genuine, they will manipulate. But yes, the more genuine, the more likely I will believe and trust. And buy.

MB: Yes, advertising is meant to manipulate, and now even people use it to manipulate. People on Instagram live to sell brands, and brands continue to cheat. I do not trust them.

MO: Even employers of influencers do business, when influencers are minors, they use their own children to earn money. We know that all of this exists, so it's understandable that we do not always trust influencers. That is my perception.

LAI: Everything seems forced, very fake.

MB: Nowadays anyone is a showcase.

FP: I think it is a new communication channel, and as always, it is being misused.

AS: I feel that brands at the moment, in addition to advertising and communicating what they sell, also go through the media and classic advertising. But almost all brands today think of influencers.

JM: Especially because, as we said in the beginning, almost none of us watch television. How will they reach us? Through the influencers.

FP: Exactly, it has become a new means of communication.

LAm: But you can distinguish the brands that use and do not use. There are brands that do not need influencers.

All: Yes!

LAm: There are brands that don't even use it and that makes sense.

LAL: Since it's a new medium, people think it's cheaper to pay an influencer than to put an ad on TV. I think this is because the medium of influencers is new.

FP: It depends a little bit because paying a Cristiano Ronaldo to post on social media, is practically the same price as putting a TV ad.

LAm: I think what influences us most are influencers with less followers, not so much a celebrity. Because they are more "Down to earth" and identify more with ordinary people.

All: Yes!

MB: It doesn't make sense for me to buy the shampoo Ronaldo use. Not even his football shoes.

FP: But I think his publicity is celebrity-wise and it all seems on purpose. I can't identify at all.

MF: I feel that Kylie Jenner is another world. It doesn't influence me at all, her life is too different from mine.

FP: But those who buy these products do so to belong to a certain group and to create status. I think it depends on the type of person.

SCS: To conclude this conversation then, is it if you think you are really influenced?

All: Yes!

SCS: Even if it is negative?

All: Yes!

SCS: Do you end up feeling that you are influenced to buy things because you see influencers?

All: Yes!

MB: Even if it's the negative!

LAm: Easier not to buy than buy, but I ended up buying too many times.

MB: I have a sweater that I still wear today, that Sofia B Beauty wore and I bought it five years ago.

LAm: This has happened to me too.

FP: Yes!

Rest: Me too!

SCS: Thank you again girls! For answering everything and helping with my academic thesis. If you want to access the results of this study later on, please tell me so and I will be available to meet you.

## Appendix Section 36 – Focus Group 3: Transcript

SCS: First of all, I would like to thank you for participating and for being here. This focus group is essential for my research and for me to do my thesis, otherwise I would not be able to better understand the opinion of consumers. It will take us about 60 min, and although I have already explained to you what it is about, I'll remind you that the theme is influencers. During this hour, I will ask you some pertinent but very simple questions, to better understand your opinion and receive your feedback. You don't have to worry, answer at will because there are no wrong answers. Are you ready?

All: Yes!

Sofia: Ok! First I would like to know your name and age.

MP: 22

BG: 19

CS: 19

MP: 23

CM: 22

MG: 24

FS: 24

SCS: So, I wanted to know if you use social networks, which ones and why?

MCP: I use Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. Facebook essentially because it allows me to be more aware of the news, Instagram because it allows me to literally know about the lives of others and WhatsApp, if this is considered a social network ...

SCS: Yes! It is considered!

MCP: So that's what I use to communicate with people. The one I use most, is undoubtedly Instagram.

BG: I use Instagram, WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. Instagram I mainly use to get entertained and spend some time, keep in touch with friends I don't see so often and also to see the news. The other two mentioned, are fast and straightforward applications, which are easy to use to communicate.

CS: The social networks I use most are definitely Instagram and Twitter! Twitter because through this app I feel that I can freely express my opinion without being judged. And also because it is an app where I can easily be entertained, due to having a lot of humorous content, namely memes. Instagram I also use it a lot because I love taking pictures and I feel like it's an easy app to communicate with my friends. But I use Twitter a lot too. Ah! I also use WhatsApp a lot to communicate with my friends and exchange photos, because photos lose less quality when exchanged on whatsapp. I also have Facebook but I rarely use it. I feel that it is an application for older people, namely my parents, and I feel that it is losing some use.

MP: Facebook for work and Instagram because everyone has it and it's easy to talk to the family. I use Facebook more, in fact, I'm one of the few of our age that still use Facebook.

CM: Instagram to follow pages I like, like cooking, sports, etc. Facebook to keep in touch with people. LinkedIn to contact professionals directly. WhatsApp to talk to people and Pinterest to search for recipes and images, or get some inspiration.

MG: I use Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. I like to follow the life of my friends, share my things and follow comedians and the so-called influencers or YouTubers to see what's new. It's actually a way of spending time, as we used to watch television. But I use Instagram more, no doubt.

FS: I basically use the same social networks that have already been mentioned, Instagram, Facebook, Whatsapp, Messenger, Youtube, Pinterest and Twitter from time to time. The one I use the most is Instagram.

SCS: So can you conclude that the social network you use most is Instagram?

MP: Not me, I mostly use Facebook. But I also use Instagram a lot.

SCS: And the rest? Is it Instagram?

All: Yes!

SCS: Thank you, so let's start digging into the issues. So: what kind of consumers do you consider to be?

MG: What do you mean?

SCS: If you are very consumerist, if you are more spared, if you only buy at certain times of the year, or during sales.

MCP: Ah! So it's not in the consumption of social networks?

SCS: You can also include this information, if it is pertinent.

MCP: I have times when I don't consume much, I am more spared and clinging to money. Others where I like to invest more in myself, and at that time I am a bit of a consumerist. But I can say that I am quite moderate. Unlike many people, at times of sale I don't consume anything at all, I have some adversity. In terms of social networks, I am more constant, I don't spend that much time, but I do not.

BG: I buy mainly in two situations, when it is necessary, that is, when something has gone bad or I have a more special occasion, and when I see something very different from normal. but I think the second situation only happens once a month. I don't usually buy anything on balances, and if you do, it's not on purpose. I think I'm not very constant in consumption, I can buy at the beginning of the season, in the middle or at the end. In terms of social networks, I don't spend that much time, 1 to 2 hours a day at most.

CS: I consider myself a person that saves a lot. I usually save all my money and then invest in something that is really important to me. Rather than spending on things that are not necessary at all! However, from time to time I do spend some money on clothes, more during sales time.

MP: I happen to think that I am quite in the middle, because I only consume when I need to, but also because I am not immune to the marketing techniques and the needs imposed by firms. I try to save money as much as possible.

CM: I try to save money and to be conscious. I'm working on it. I have always been careful. But I only buy something if I see that I really need it. I prefer to give more money in hopes that it will last longer, nothing exuberant, but only if I believe it is something I know will be worthwhile. To avoid buying things of poor quality that are cheaper, that tend to fail in its use, I focus on the good price and good quality relationship.

SCS: So, you think you are conscious?

CM: I don't consider myself conscious yet, but I'm working on it.

MG: I'm actually more of a consumer during sales times, beside that I'm quite careful. I think I'm more inclined towards savings, actually.

FS: I am quite moderate, there are times when I feel like buying some things for myself, and then I spend more, or buy for others. Other times I go months without consuming much. It really depends on my mind-set.

SCS: And what is your opinion on impulsive purchases, do you consider yourself to be impulsive consumers?

MCP: With low-cost things I can be quite impulsive perhaps, but when it is products of higher values I try to think better. Honestly, if I had to say yes or no, I'm impulsive.

MB: No, not at all! Usually before I buy a piece I will go for a walk and only when I realize if I really liked the piece I do buy it. I am very conscious. Maybe when I go with someone else I tend to be a bit more impulsive. Generally, I am not.

CS: I think that sometimes we have to think twice before buying something, because many times we end up not giving the necessary or sufficient use. I don't consider myself an impulsive consumer, but I think we have all made a purchase that was not really that useful or was not given the expected utility, that shows impulsiveness.

MP: I don't know, I think everything I buy I use. But then there are millions of options between things and they are so similar, that I end up buying what appears first just so I don't have to think too much about it, that's when I seem to be a little impulsive.

CM: It depends, but in general I am not. Maybe in terms of food, sometimes I feel like eating something specific and I simply buy it.

MG: Not currently, I am very thoughtful in the purchases I make. But I agree with CS, I think we have all made impulsive purchases.

FS: I used to be very impulsive, but at the moment I don't think I'm that much. I am much more thoughtful and careful when shopping.

SCS: What about shopping, do you do more online, offline or both? Which do you prefer?

MCP: In store, I definitely prefer it much more. I want to see the piece of clothing, because online often deceives, we think it is in one way and in fact it is in another. I even like to try things, because not everything we see is always a good fit for us and we only know if we try things on. I work in a store, and I even encourage clients to shop online, due to the advantages it brings, and nowadays it's so easy to return stuff that it doesn't make a big difference. However, and especially because I am a little impulsive, I like to see things and try them on, so it doesn't bother me to walk from shop to shop, in case the piece of clothing doesn't suit me.

BG: I do more offline shopping and prefer it too. Not only because I find it more reliable, and I feel more confident, but I never had to buy anything else than what I see in physical stores.

CS: I've been doing a lot of shopping online lately! But when I buy clothes or shoes I prefer to do it in physical stores. I think online shopping is getting better and better, so I give it a preference.

MP: I never buy online. I don't trust it at all, I don't think it's practical to buy clothes online. And essentially because all shopping activity must be done with awareness and with all respect for the environment around us, not simply by a click away. It does not motivate conversation or social interests. I don't just think about myself when buying, hence my way of thinking.

CM: I prefer offline, but out of necessity, that is, the lack of specific products that exist offline, I resort to online.

MG: I don't have any preference, I use both. But if I had to divide the percentage of purchases, I would say that currently 70% is online and 30% is offline. Online is more convenient.

MCP: Several times I even see it online and then I go to the store.

MP and CM: Me too!

FS: Nowadays I only buy online, I almost never have the patience to go to stores. It's so much easier, we don't have to waste time in stores and queues, and the orders arrive safely at home. Nowadays with real-time tracking and the extra security measures that exist on the cards, I trust online shopping much more.

SCS: And your loyalty to a brand, what is your opinion? Do you consider yourself loyal to any brand?

MCP: I consider myself loyal to the Inditex group, not exactly a brand. I like all the brands in the group and most of the pieces they sell.

BG: I don't think I'm loyal, I vary a lot in the brands I use. But if I think a little bit better, I always buy my pants at Pepe Jeans, so maybe there I am loyal?

CS: I don't consider myself loyal to any brand, but I confess that in certain items I use more than one particular brand. For example in sneakers, although I have converse sneakers, new balance sneakers, among others, the sneakers that I most use are from the Adidas brand, and I always buy them again.

MP: I'm not loyal, I buy what I like regardless of the brand. There are products that I like and that I buy again, but if I like another product from another brand I also buy it. For example, I like Rituals and prefer it, but I am not loyal because I buy similar products from other brands.

CM: I am not at all loyal, I really like to try new things.

MG: I am quite loyal! Handbags I only buy from a certain brand because I trust their quality. The same thing with sneakers, I am not faithful to a specific brand but to several. Bags I am loyal to Guess. Sneakers I am faithful to Adidas, Nike, New Balance and so on. And especially only branded items, I don't buy white labels at all.

FS: I am loyal, no doubt in that. I like to try new things, but I have to be honest and say that there are brands that I don't exchange for anything. I already know that I trust those products, which are good, that year after year I still feel satisfied, and that's why I always buy again. For example, Apple, I only use their products. They last for years and years and never disappoint me, why buy an Android? Or buy a Windows? Or a Samsung? When all apple products please me.

SCS: So, let's go deeper into the subject. Now my question is: What is the first thing that comes to your mind when we talk about influencers? It's because?

MCP: Joana Vaz. Maybe because I recently started to follow her and see her stuff on Instagram. But I honestly don't care much about those things.

BG: That there actually are famous people on social media. I think I started hearing more about the term when actresses and actors, youtubers and etc. said they considered themselves influencers! I never really thought about it, it was just because I heard them say it that I understood they are. And so that was the first thing that came to my mind.

CS: YouTube and Instagram, since it is through these social networks that one gets in more contact with influencers. On a daily basis, these people post on social media and receive attention from the public.

MP: Stupidity

All: (Laughter)

MP: Sorry for the choice of the word, but I think that everyone should be who they are naturally, and to not follow any temporary trends that we are told to follow just to look good and have more followers.

CM: In my case it's clothes. I know that there are influencers who work with different brands or products, some do not even aim to promote brands but ideas and good values etc. But in my mind, the first influencers I followed and learned about were fashion and makeup. Ahh! And another thing. I think that although Influencer is not just that, I feel that there is a negative connotation associated with this word that revolves a lot in superficial, consumerism, show-off and vanity.

MP: I totally agree! It's all just because of consumerism. We no longer live in a society where we buy because we need to, we live in a society that has to uphold ideals, everything that is involved within that influencer behavior, in my opinion should be discouraged.

MG: I have to continue on this negative wave. In my view they are liars, most try to impose products just because they are being paid.

FS: Marketing, no doubt. Because it is part of the world of influencers, but also because today it is being overused and misused with them. I think I have a more negative view on the matter.

SCS: Very well! What is the first influencer that comes to mind? And what draws your attention to this influence?

MCP: To me it is the same answer as the previous question. But in this case, what strikes me the most is that, unlike others, I do not see her as someone futile, I find her quite classy and elegant.

BG: Mafalda Sampaio, perhaps because she has been in the area for so long, she is very active on social media and also authentic in what she communicates.

CS: Maria Vaidosa who is Mafalda Sampaio, too. I like to see her posts and videos because they contain a lot of tutorials, daily life hacks, vlogs and funny situations. I also really like her personality and energy that she conveys when making the videos.

MP: Mãe.Guru, because she is my cousin and I want to support her, even though I don't like the influencer world that much. But I honestly don't really follow Influencers, and if I do I don't associate them with that name.

CM: I don't remember very well. But I think the one that I really realized was being paid to sponsor brands and lived off that was Camila Coelho. But I don't know, it probably wasn't her. At the time it was her beauty, the clothes and brands she promoted

MG: Helena Coelho and Catarina Filipe. Their willingness to admit to things that are not always politically correct and that are more in agreement with reality. I don't like people pretending to be a character in the digital world. Many people say that an influencer shouldn't have this kind of unpolitical posture and behavior because it can influence people to repeat it, but I think it is marvelous. Can I give you an example?

SCS: Of course it is!

MG: Catarina Filipe assumed that she smokes. For me, this was a giant step into not giving the ideas that she was a princess on Instagram, and really showing that she is a normal human being that may have less good habits she doesn't want to hide from anyone. Helena Coelho 90% of the time is quite unpolitically correct when answering comments. Before it was quite a huge topic talked about constantly, but she did not, however, alter her behavior and remained faithful to her out-there personality. This is who she is, she never disrespected anyone, she just doesn't have to be politically correct with the cute emojis and all the things others do.

MP: The problem is that there are few influencers doing this, and as I am suspicious of everything I don't even know if it is something purposeful, with more marketing tactics.

FS: Maria Vaidosa, Mafalda Sampaio. Because lately she's been posting a lot and constantly appearing on my feed. I really like her work, she was one of the first Portuguese Influencers to take a more genuine approach.

SCS: Thank you! Very well! And that influencer, is it your favorite?

MCP: It was like I said before, I don't care much about it and I don't even know her work very well. For now yes, because I started to follow her more and I even like it, but I have a very little connection with this world and I don't know many others.

BG: No, I don't have a favorite.

CS: I don't know if it's my favorite, but I really like her.

MP: I don't have one.

CM: I don't have any preferred influencers, I don't follow many influencers.

MG: In my case, the two that I mentioned are my favorites, for the reasons I described earlier.

FS: No, mine is Tess Christine, a Youtuber and American Influencer who lives in New York. I have followed her for years, there are already 5 or 6 and she keeps the same tone of voice and the same way of speaking, remains genuine.

SCS: If you see an influencer using a specific product or brand, in a publication or story, what is the first thing that comes to your mind?

MCP: Indifference.

BG: Normal. It is part of their work, it is good for them, for brands and for those who see the posts. I don't see any negative about it.

CS: I want to know more. Most of the time I will soon research about the product.

MP: Indifference, because if I see anything in someone that I like, whether influential or not, and I don't really care. I don't follow any Influencers for trends, nor do I want to encourage this type of behavior.

CM: It depends, if she is clearly showing it in your face, I think it is paid. If it's more natural, I don't think about it.

MG: Whether it was sponsored or not, when they use a product they often don't specify if it is ads or not, and I think it is very wrong.

FS: What are the products that are currently not being poorly advertised? I think things are extremely forced and you can use Influencer Marketing in another way, more genuine and attractive to the public. That is the problem, wrongful use of marketing.

SCS: And do you feel involved with this publication in any way? Or what are they talking about?

MCP: No, not at all. I ignore it and step forward.

BG: I'm interested a little, but nothing else.

CS: Me too just a little, but nothing special.

MP: I think you can already understand that this whole influencer world doesn't involve me at all, I really feel negatively about it.

CM: I actually feel involved, but not to the point of buying or anything, just when I can relate to what they say. Especially because as I don't follow many influencers, I don't care much about it. But if I do, and if I'm interested I even research more about the brand.

MG: For me, if it has to do with something that I identify with, for example, products that are suitable for my skin problem or brands that I love to use, I feel that I am stuck with the posts and that captivate me. If not, I just keep going forward.

FS: It depends on the posts. If it is something that interests me, I feel involved. If not, I completely keep going because they irritate me.

SCS: What if an influencer is constantly talking about a product or a brand? Do you feel like you want to know more about it?

MCP: At the brand level, if I like what they're talking about, it can have some impact, but I don't make a big fuss out of it. In fact, if I feel it is useful or that I need it, it can have a lot more impact. I don't think it has much to do with repetition. But of course I become curious.

BG: Not really! When it comes to these types of posts, I move away, perhaps unconsciously. The first time the influencer transmits the product or brand, if done well, I don't see the need to be doing it constantly. But if you are talking about extended time intervals then I think I will be more interested, because it gives the perspective that you are using it, be it the product or the brand, for longer time periods.

CS: With me I just feel involved in the sense that it picks up my interest. I want to know more!

MP: I don't follow Influencers, I usually just move along from these ads. Yes because I already consider it ads, even if I am not identified.

CM: Maybe, it depends if it interests me or not. But I'm starting to become intrigued.

MG: For me it works in exactly the same way as watching ads on TV, once or twice it awakes my interests on the matters, more than that, it will become tiring. In my opinion, constantly showing the same content only leads us to move away.

FS: I actually start to wonder why they are always talking about the same thing. Worse than that, I start trying to understand why there are 10 influencers talking about the same product at the same time and saying all the same things. It's a little annoying, but the truth is that it makes me go and research about it, to become curious.

SCS: I think we are all a little bit curious, and unconsciously wanting to know what this is about should happen to everyone. No?

MCP, BG, CS, CM and MG: Yes!

MP: I don't, I really feel negatively about it. It has the opposite effect.

SCS: But have you ever wanted to buy or bought something because you saw an influencer using or promoting it?

MCP: I think that never happened to me, it was like I said, I don't care much about this world.

BG: I thought about buying, but I don't think I have, it gave me a lot of recognition about a brand / product, though. There are many brands and products that I know due to influencers posts. But honestly, I think I never bought anything that I saw an influencer use.

CS: Yes, a Zara shirt that I saw and liked a lot. I bought it because I liked the product and I liked seeing it on the person in question.

MP: No, not at all. I keep moving forward, as I said, it has a negative and adverse impact on me.

CM: I more or less, I didn't buy it because she used the product, just because she introduced me to the product or because she did a good review.

MG: Yes! Because I didn't know the product, I liked it and decided to buy it to try it out. It was with makeup!

FS: Many times, but there it is, because it was probably something I was already considering buying, I just didn't know which brand. For example, in makeup, I wanted a new foundation, but I didn't know which one, and then I saw some influencers talking about a specific Kat Von D foundation, and I decided to try it out. I ended up loving it, so it worked well. Other times I saw someone wearing a piece of clothing that I loved, and I went shopping for a while.

SCS: And if the influencer is making a recommendation, what is your opinion? Do you feel more inclined to buy?

MCP: I don't notice these things, so I'm not inclined to buy.

BG: It was like I said before, if the influencers talking like that during extended periods, I trust more and I can even believe that it is not just for money.

CS: It was like I said before, I want to know more and I will do more research.

MP: I think it's all because they want to sell, and it's not a genuine recommendation at all.

CM: No. And I even have a more positive view of the product and the influencers. However there is always that thought that it might be a forced post, that they are only saying this because they are getting paid, which is not a genuine review and recommendation.

MG: It depends. If I feel or know that the opinion has been paid, no. If I realize that the opinion was spontaneous and the product is of interest to me, without a doubt.

FS: I only hear recommendations from influencers that I follow and trust. For example, from Tess Christine, I have known her work for years and she has always maintained the same way of speaking and communicating. And so, I trust her and her recommendations. So, yes, I did. But only the ones I trust.

SCS: And the way they communicate, do you think it affects you? For example, if you speak more closely to your friends? Has greater impact?

MCP: No, I don't feel any difference.

BG: I even think that the way of communicating can be similar to that of my friends. But if they also talk about the brand / product in the middle of any other subject, as if they had remembered it at the time and it wasn't purposeful, I think that for me it has more impact than talking differently.

CS: Of course, if it is similar to the recommendations and ways of talking about my friends that have the most impact, but I will always prefer and trust my friends more.

CM: With me, of course. It is a matter of identification with the person. And as it is more similar it has a greater impact. But it was like CS said, they are not my friends.

MP: For me they are not my friends and never will be. It's all false, I don't trust their word at all.

MG: No. For me they are not my friends, there is a clear distinction. They always do it with the purpose of increasing their influence, never recommending how a friend does it.

FS: No, I think they are not my friends and the way they speak is completely different. I trust the words of one of them, but I trust those of my friends more.

SCS: What if the topic you are talking about is properly marked as advertising? How do you feel about that?

MCP: I feel complete indifference, I don't see it as negative. It is their job, I see no harm in that.

BG: I think it is indifferent to me. However, when it is marked as an ad I usually move ahead just because I find it boring and because it is less genuine.

CS: In these situations it often reduces my interest, because I feel that they are directly being paid to do so and are not really interested in the product.

MP: It irritates me, I think that marketing takes advantage of it a lot, and influencers encourage it. In my opinion, this advertising by influencers, I find it of little relevance, because it does not have a big impact on important things, and in a general context I think it has a more negative than positive impact, but it still has its advantages. It's complicated, I just think it could be done in a more conscious way. It just doesn't work with me.

CM: It goes against what I said earlier, I suffers a little from the problem that I feel like they are rubbing a product into my face. There is always a feeling that is forced and false, that the influencer in reality does not recommend, but is being paid to promote it. Of course, I understand and agree with the use of this disclaimer, it is a matter of transparency, honesty and trust. But I feel it is forced.

MG: I lose interest because, in my view, they are only talking about the product because they are being paid to do so. And since I can't tell if they really liked the product and they happen to be being paid or if they don't like it at all but they talk about it just because they are paid, I don't believe in the ad. I do not trust it.

FS: Advertising is very complicated. But I have gained knowledge and started to understand more about brands and products. Sometimes some ads are really useful, other times they are really boring. It depends on what it is and whether you are interested in it or not.

SCS: What if those recommendations that are not advertised, do you consider it to be excessive advertising?

MCP: I think it has increased a lot, but I don't think it is excessive. Especially from the moment I don't care at all.

BG: I think that anything that is too much and too much ends up pulling people back a lot. I see this type of advertising as a conversation of friends, if you are always talking about the same topic it ends up getting annoying. Like everything in life, what is in excess is annoying.

CS: I think it is too much and it even disturbs me, in the sense that it tires me. I feel tired of seeing the same thing every day, even when I don't want to or don't care.

MP: Without a doubt it is too much, as I said, I think everything is taking advantage of this area.

CM: No, I don't think so. It depends a lot on the influencer. I believe that some promote everything and anything, just for the money and not because they like the product. But I trust that there are others that only promote things that they really support and believe in, which is not tiring, since you know they are recommendations of trust and interest. But if it's the other case, I think it's already annoying. Especially because an influencer gains by the content she publishes, if she only makes partitioned posts, without content, it becomes annoying.

MG: I agree with CM, I don't say it will be too much, it is more of a form of advertising. I just think it takes credibility from influencers and, with that, it doesn't add anything to brands. Those who know how to advertise properly do not have this problem of excessiveness.

FS: Sometimes it is very annoying, because you can see that it is just for advertising reasons. Other times, it is very helpful because I haven't seen it for the first time, so there is a second or third time I've seen it and I've already gained knowledge, and it's even useful for me. It depends a lot on who it is being advertised to. When it is being well targeted you don't feel adversity and negativity.

SCS: Ok girls! Thank you! Your answers have all been extremely helpful to me. I was pleased to know that we have some divergent opinions here, and some girls who feel more influenced than others. But to conclude, at the end of the day, most feel somehow influenced. Right?

MCP, BG, CS, CM, MG and FS: Yes!

FS: Even if we all end up wanting to know more about the subject, this is already an influence.

MG: And many times we buy the product straight away, or after long period of time we unconsciously buy the product we once saw before, I'm sure it has happened to everyone.

MP: I can't really agree, I feel influenced, but in the negative manner. I am the opposite of you all on this. But there you go, you can't please everyone.

All: (Laughter)

SCS: Thank you very much again girls, for answering questions and helping me with my academic thesis. If you want to access all the results later, just talk to me and I am available to show you and send you.