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DOES GEN Z TRUST IN INSTAGRAM FASHION
INFLUENCERS? – AN ANALYSIS OF THE PORTUGUESE
CONTEXT

Internship report presented to Universidade Católica
Portuguesa to obtain a Master's Degree in Communication
Sciences - Communication, Marketing and Advertising

By

Maria Leonor de Jesus Pereira Amaral

Faculty of Human Sciences

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Under the supervision of Professor Anna Carolina Boechat

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the influencer marketing market in Portugal and in the Generation Z demographic, concentrating on the effect Instagram fashion influencers' sponsored posts have on the trustworthiness of the Instagram users/followers in them. The goal was to assess whether being a micro *versus* macroinfluencer has an impact on trust, if sponsorships negatively impact trustworthiness and if explicit disclosures can mitigate negative effects. A survey was implemented and allowed to conclude that there's no influence on trust by having more or less followers, that sponsorships do worsen trustworthiness and that explicit disclosures alleviate these negative outcomes. This research highlights the importance of transparent and honest disclosures when it comes to sponsorships on Instagram.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Fashion, Instagram, Portugal, Sponsorships, Trust, Disclosures, Gen Z

Resumo

Esta tese foca-se no mercado de influencer marketing em Portugal e na demográfica da Geração Z, concentrando-se no efeito que os posts patrocinados das influencers de moda do Instagram têm na confiança dos usuários e seguidores de Instagram neles(as). O objetivo foi aferir se ser micro ou macroinfluencer tem um impacto na confiança, se os patrocínios impactam negativamente a confiança, e se as identificações explícitas podem mitigar estes efeitos negativos. Um questionário foi implementado e permitiu concluir que não há influência na confiança ao ter mais ou menos seguidores, que os patrocínios efetivamente pioram a confiança, e que as identificações explícitas aliviam estas consequências negativas. Esta investigação destaca a importância de uma identificação transparente e honesta quando se trata de patrocínios no Instagram

Palavras-chave: Influencer Marketing, Moda, Instagram, Portugal, Patrocínios, Confiança, Identificação, Gen Z

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Introduction

Fashion bonds a unique dimension with a general appeal, as through clothing we want to express and distinguish ourselves, but also want to gain social approval, it instills a desire to belong with a desire to be different simultaneously (Kalbaska & Sádaba, 2019). This unification happens due to imitation: it promotes social uniformity and a social adaptation, meaning, a fear of social isolation urges us to imitate, to look for information and to adapt our taste (Kalbaska & Sádaba, 2019).

Katz and Lazarsfeld developed a theory of mass communication called two-step flow of communication, that highlighted the importance of personal relations in influence processes, how opinion leaders absorb the messages from mass media and reinterpret them for their audience who assimilates it (Borges, 2015), and these opinion leaders, who were generators of opinion, behavior and consumption, were connected to several aspects, including fashion (Kalbaska & Sádaba, 2019). Nowadays, with the digital transformation that our society has engulfed in, and especially through social media, influencers have become these opinion leaders that shape ideas, negotiating styles and trends through their reviews, opinions, outfits, clothing hauls, and so on (Kalbaska & Sádaba, 2019). Imitation is now mostly taking place online, a lot via influencers, and much more easily for people who have now a simple access to this type of information.

Accordingly, social media influencers have become the most used instrument to advertise, by meticulously inserting sponsored posts and brand messages within their organic and typical content, they allow to reach costumers more effectively and influence opinions and, consequently, purchasing decisions, by being less invasive than traditional marketing (Ooi *et al.*, 2023; Coco & Eckert, 2020). Influencer marketing is stellar in enhancing brand awareness and allowing the interaction with wide target audiences (Coco & Eckert, 2020). According to research from an influencer marketing data platform, 92% of consumers trust more in an influencer than a commercial or a traditional celebrity endorsement (Ooi *et al.*, 2023). And this presence is especially strong for fashion businesses, who thrive on visual platforms like Instagram (which is the social media platform that affects most of the consumers' decision-making processes), and who've contributed to the extreme growth of fashion influencers altogether (Abidin, 2016).

However, there's an important issue with the skyrocket evolution of influencer marketing: the growth of distrust, which is a topic that's starting to get more investigated by academics, to assess whether this marketing tool is still as effective as it used to be (Ki *et al.*, 2022; Coco & Eckert, 2020). As an industry, influencer marketing has begun to hit its trust threshold, the point at which a social media influencer's audience begins to question his/her intentions and opinions, unlike the beginning of this industry, when users/followers had unconditional trust (Ki *et al.*, 2022). Due to the high volume of endorsements, users and followers have started to lose track of the distinction of what is sponsored with what is not sponsored, of what is authentic with what is financially motivated, in addition, the widespread usage of manipulative and deceptive advertising posts, has increased overall skepticism when it comes to sponsorships (Ki *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, academics have studied how different are the responses to distinct ad disclosures or languages for example (papers like Stubb, & Colliander, 2019; Lee & Kim, 2020; Karagür *et al.*, 2021; Kim & Kim, 2021; and many more), and which factors impact credibility (Carr & Hayes, 2014; Costello & Urbanska, 2021; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2018), just to name a few.

With the realization of a curricular internship at a Portuguese public relations agency for 4 months called Companhia das Soluções, I've realized this topic would be interesting applied to the Portuguese market, which lacks evidence in this field of studies. Since my activities were mainly focused on Instagram and the agency worked primarily with fashion brands and influencers, I had a lot of contact with these entities, and many times had to develop reports in which I visualized the different engagement rates for the various type of influencers (micro, macro and megainfluencers), and to also stratify the age groups of influencers according to the specific brand (many times it was Gen Z targeting). Consequently, this internship served as a starting point for the theme of this thesis, additionally justifying the focus on Portugal, Instagram, fashion, the difference between micro and macroinfluencer, and Generation Z.

Therefore, this paper is divided into three parts: the first part has three chapters and it's dedicated to the literature review, there's a literary context to all the concepts mentioned

in the paper, so the first chapter is about influencer marketing – the origin of the concept and how it's evolved, the characteristics of the influencers, the role of social media, how influencer marketing works, and the latest influencer marketing themes discussed academically -, the second chapter is about Instagram fashion influencers and their followers, plus Instagram users in general – Instagram's popularity and characteristics are explained, its perfect features for the fashion industry are unfolded, and insights about its users and Instagram fashion influencers' followers are presented -, and lastly, the third chapter is about trust in influencers – what is the concept of trust, the source credibility model, the fine line currently between what is sponsored and what is not, and the consequences from this -; the second part is about the empirical investigation with two chapters, the first chapter is about the methodology - the research question and hypotheses, the research method and design, and the data collection process - , the second chapter is about the survey results and discussion; lastly, the third part are the final considerations, the chapter of the conclusion and another chapter with the research limitations, future research and implications.

Chapter 1 – Influencer Marketing

1.1. What are Influencers, really?

1.1.1. The Inception of Social Media Influencers

To first address the concept of influencers it's important to look at its origin: celebrity endorsements were considered the traditional influencers, and today we've evolved to social media influencers, due to the establishment of the Internet and the growth of social media opportunities (Belanche *et al.*, 2021; Tafesse & Wood, 2021). So, companies initially used traditional celebrities, like public figures and personalities from the entertainment industries', as brand endorsers (Erdogan, 1999). However, with the surge of social media platforms in the 2010s, social media influencers emerged and started to represent a unique and newer version of this marketing tactic (Belanche *et al.*, 2021; Marwick, 2015).

Originally, celebrity endorsement became a strategy adopted by most companies, since it allowed increased attention, image polishing, brand introduction and repositioning, and the underpin of global campaigns (Erdogan, 1999). Thus, it was one of the most powerful ways to advertise a brand, influence consumers, and increase purchase intention (Erdogan, 1999). Basically, companies that wanted to transfer the image or value of the celebrity to their brand, chose celebrities for their marketing campaigns (Belanche *et al.*, 2021). Yet, with this switch of the nature of influencers, due to the emergence of digital media, these celebrities have proven to be more effective solely as brand ambassadors (Wohlfeil *et al.*, 2019), and influencers started to dominate the marketing ecosystem (Campbell & Farrel, 2020).

Campbell & Farrel (2020) explain that this growth of influencers reigning marketers' strategies actually arises from five factors: first and foremost, consumers switched their media consumption from print to online; second, online advertising must be less obvious and blatant and become more authentic and soft, or else consumers will dislike it; third, consumers spend a lot of their time online on social media platforms; fourth, consumers now take longer considering and evaluating before they make a purchase decision, as social media exposes them to a lot of information, alternatives and reviews, which calls for a softer but

more frequent exposure to information on certain products and brands, so, consumers increasingly rely on online advertising and social media platforms to make purchase decisions (Leban & Voyer, 2021); lastly, with the Internet, there's an easy gathering of consumers based on their shared interests, which enables the emergence of niche influencers.

1.1.2. Defining Influencers

Based on the previous framework, it can be stated that influencers are a new category of opinion leaders, which position themselves between celebrities and friends (Belanche *et al.*, 2021). Celebrities and influencers differ in terms of their conceptual basis, as celebrities are famous outside of their social media activities (e.g. sports, music, cinema), and influencers are popular due to social media, their reputation derives solely from their social media activity (Belanche *et al.*, 2021). Social media influencers are basically “prominent social media users who accumulated a dedicated following by crafting an authentic online persona” (Tafesse & Wood, 2021, p.1) and “by crafting compelling stories around their interests and lifestyle” (Tafesse & Wood, 2021, p.2). They're extra opinionative, create trends in several niches and are notably influential to individuals with whom they share distinct interests (Conde & Casais, 2023). This influence is usually prompted by narrating, textually and visually, their personal details, lifestyles and decisions as consumers through user-generated content or by generating electronic word-of-mouth, triggering consumers' desire to mimic them (Conde & Casais, 2023). So, influencers create this persuasive online identity through an authentic personal narrative which merges photos, videos and other online activities with the interactive nature of social media, allowing them to attract followers and engage with them on an ongoing basis (Tafesse & Wood, 2021).

Because social media influencers share highly personal content that revolves around their lifestyle and interests, they form deep psychological bonds with their followers, unlike traditional celebrities, appearing more trustworthy and credible than conventional celebrities (Belanche *et al.*, 2021; Tafesse & Wood, 2021). Consequently, they also become trusted sources of information, are viewed as experts in specific domains of interest (e.g. fashion, makeup, photography, travel) and their followers seek and rely on their opinions and advice for their decision-making processes (Belanche *et al.*, 2021; Tafesse & Wood, 2021; Casaló

et al., 2020), having a recognized outstanding ability to influence behaviors and attitudes (Conde & Casais, 2023).

Social media influencers are then “ordinary Internet users” (Conde & Casais, 2023, p.2) that leveraged on the dissemination of social media to reach broad audiences, capitalizing and making out of their online content creation a profession (Marwick, 2015; Campbell & Farrel, 2020). As mentioned previously, and especially due to the humble origin of social media influencers, consumers are more attracted to them rather than traditional celebrities, since they’re viewed as more authentic and relatable: people trust them and believe they’re credible sources of information about specific products, becoming more persuasive (Tuten & Solomon, 2018; Yet *et al.*, 2021; Campbell & Farrel, 2020; Belanche *et al.*, 2021; Tafesse & Wood, 2021). Thus, for purchase decisions, social media influencers are very valuable sources of information.

Taking all of these factors into account, an influencer can be defined as such:

a person who has a strategic approach and ability to influence individuals and their (buying) decisions within digital communication platforms. An influencer’s space can include any communication platform, although they mainly have a niche audience that would already believe their power, authority, and expertise in a subject, product, industry, or brand. These key elements (power, authority, and expertise) can make the influencer marketing system work – having a niche and a target audience who believe what influencers say. (Yesiloglu, 2021, p.17)

Nevertheless, the term "influencer" is not used consistently in literature, and different authors may use slightly different variations of it, however, the key features of influencers that, in a personal perspective were observed that all agree upon are: their large following, their use of social media platforms, and their ability to influence the behavior or opinion of others.

1.1.3. Categorizing Influencers According to their Followers

Within these common features that define influencers, there’s several characteristics that distinguish them greatly. As Campbell & Farrel (2020) claim: “Influencers differ significantly in branding and focus, follower base, engagement rates, monetary requirements

for collaboration, and skill sets - all of which compose the package the influencer is able to offer a brand” (p.471). Precisely, the number of followers an influencer amasses has become a popular way of distinguishing and helping brands decide which influencers to select for their marketing efforts (Yet *et al.*, 2021; Campbell & Farrel, 2020; Park *et. al.*, 2021; Conde & Casais, 2023). Consequently, Campbell & Farrel (2020) developed the following classification:

- Celebrity influencers – already famous outside of social media to begin with, they have public recognition, they leveraged on their large following base to create social media presence to support their careers and propagate brand partnerships. They often have over 1 million followers and major endorsement deals with famous brands. Although they tend to form weak brand connections, celebrity influencers can carry high levels of perceived expertise, which is a factor behind their high pay. Examples: Kim Kardashian, Cristiano Ronaldo, Kylie Jenner, Selena Gomez, Dua Lipa, Cristina Ferreira.
- Megainfluencers – they don’t have prior celebrity status, they create it by establishing expertise, having attained 1 million or more followers. They’re “Internet famous”, being typically unknown outside of the Internet. In contrast with celebrity influencers, megainfluencers often align their brands more closely with paid partnerships. Examples: Mr. Beast, Chiara Ferragni, Matilda Djerf, Alisha Marie, Khaby Lame, KSI.
- Macroinfluencers – they’re extremely successful but haven’t reached celebrity status yet. They have between 100.000 to 1 million followers. They have strong engagement rates and allow for substantial brand exposure, yet they usually have lower price per post than the previous two. They allow great results for less money. They’re dominant in their subject domains (e.g., travel, fashion, makeup) and their followers aspire to be like them. Examples: Filippa Moulier, Avrey Ovard, Chris Klemens.
- Microinfluencers – they’re smaller than macroinfluencers in scale and scope. They have between 10.000 to 100.000 followers. Their followers are geographically based near them, and their income comes mainly from affiliate-links and occasional partnerships with brands, which usually are more variable. They predominantly post

video content (e.g. Instagram stories) to augment the perceived accessibility and authenticity and strengthen their connection with their followers. While bigger celebrities' recommendations aren't viewed as genuine because followers view them as more prone to "sell out", microinfluencers are more connected and trustworthy to their followers, hence why marketers are increasingly working with this type of influencers. Park *et al.*'s (2021) study has confirmed that "endorsements by microinfluencers can be more persuasive than endorsements by megainfluencers" (p.598), as well as a benchmark 2021 report from Influencer Marketing Hub (2021), which concludes that bigger influencers have lower engagement rates than smaller influencers. Examples: Jake Fleming, Minimalara.

- Nanoinfluencers – they're in the early stages of their influencer careers. They have fewer than 10.000 followers, they either purposely built up their following or they organically had follower growth through ordinary social media behavior. Their high accessibility and perceived authenticity allow them to often generate the highest engagement rates of all influencer categories. They look for networking opportunities and increasing exposure on social media, and so they usually approach brands for partnerships, and they're open to unpaid partnerships and free product samples. Examples: Teresa Vandervort, Lea (@ablondainbristol)

These same authors developed a graph which encapsulates all of this information:

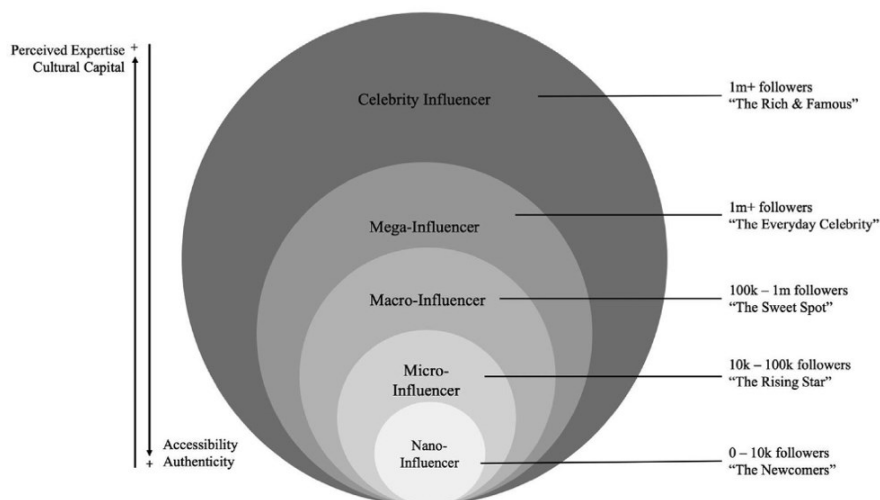


Figure 1. Types of Social Media Influencers (Campbell & Farrell, 2020, p. 471. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2020.03.003>)

In Conde & Casais' (2023) paper, which focuses on micro, macro and mega Portuguese influencers, they adapted Campbell & Farrel's (2020) global scale categorization, alongside other authors, into a context of a small country and market, as is Portugal. Consequently, they proposed a new division for smaller markets (e.g. Portugal): microinfluencers have between 1.000 – 20.000 followers (e.g. Assunção Soares, Charlene Teixeira, Mia Teixeira Queiroz), macroinfluencers have between 20.000 – 100.000 followers (e.g. Vicky Montanari, Rita Montezuma, Caetana Botelho Afonso, Concha Lima Mayer), and megainfluencers have more than 100.000 followers (e.g. Sofia Barbosa, Bárbara Inês, Alice Trewinnard) (Conde & Casais, 2023). This is especially relevant for this thesis paper, as it will be developed concerning the Portuguese market.

1.1.4. What Makes Influencers so Influential?

By analyzing literature about the subject of the influencer's unprecedented influential power, Conde & Casais (2023) emphasize the antecedents of digital influence as popularity, attractiveness, expertise and reliability. Additionally, Campbell & Farrel (2020) also conclude in their study that the larger the number of followers, the greater is the influencer's perceived expertise and cultural capital and the smaller the number of followers, the greater is the influencer's accessibility and authenticity.

However, as Leban & Voyer (2021) point out there's not a consensus between scholars yet about what truly makes media influencers more successful online, but three main criteria can be appointed as possible explanations for their stronger influence regarding their characteristics and content: being relatable, being reachable, and being perceived as trustworthy or credible.

a) Relatability

As it was already mentioned, much of social media influencers' appeal comes from the fact that they're viewed as relatable, since they usually share more personal and realistic content as well, unlike Hollywood-type celebrities who tend to use social media platforms

to showcase an extravagant and luxurious lifestyle (Leban & Voyer, 2021; Yet *et al.*, 2021; Marwick, 2015).

McQuarrie *et al.* (2013) suggest some strategies from social media influencers that promote this feeling of relatability between their followers:

- “Feigning similarity” (p.151) – this is manifested through the display of the influencer’s more mundane and ordinary angles of their lives, in an attempt to downplay and avoid flaunting their extravagances and privileges as influencers, having a balance between these two worlds, as to not distance themselves from their followers and remain relatable to them;
- “Self-deprecation” (p.151) – this is expressed through the minimizing of their accomplishments, they give part of the credit for their achievements to their followers’ support, they self-ridicule and deprecate themselves to appear as though they’re “only human”, but they never do so within their realm of expertise.

Leban & Voyer (2021) also mention another strategy which emphasizes the influencer’s relatability and strengthens the parasocial relationship from their followers: the use of friendly language (e.g. “you guys”) and directly addressing their followers and viewers.

b) Reachability

To be perceived as reachable, influencers interact with their followers through responses to comments, likes, shares, follows or by engaging during live activities. This way, influencers maintain their popularity, create an illusion of closeness, or you can call “perceived interconnectedness” (Leban & Voyer, 2021, p.40), and they stand out compared to traditional celebrities, as the latter don’t usually engage with their fans to the same extent (Leban & Voyer, 2021; Marwick, 2015; Campbell & Farrel, 2020).

c) Trustworthiness

With the substantial growth of social media influencers, it’s expected for followers to become overwhelmed and to suspect more and be more cautious on whom to trust (Leban &

Voyer, 2021; Yet *et al.* 2021). Concentrating on a more brand-perspective approach to influencers, Bakker (2018) argues that visibility of the influencer (number of followers) is important to facilitate brand awareness, but also, credibility is very important to reinforce brand attitude. Bakker (2018) claims that credibility has two components: expertise, the perceived knowledge of the source in terms of what is being advertised, and objectivity, which is the perceived sincerity or trustworthiness in how they communicate what they are speaking about. To be credible in categories such as lifestyle, beauty/fashion, and travel, influencers should have expert status (Bakker, 2018).

Other authors also emphasize the importance of trustworthiness as a key element in the credibility and, therefore, persuasion and likability of an influencer: Vrontis *et al.* (2021) state that influencer credibility consists of trustworthiness, attractiveness and expertise and also indicate that trustworthiness, argument quality, social influence and issue involvement (relevancy of issue to consumer interests) are key factors in credibility evaluations; Tuten & Solomon (2018) mention that the power of persuasion of an influencer is connected to their likeability, authority, trustworthiness, and authenticity; Leban & Voyer (2021) underline the importance of seeming genuine to be trustworthy and how it prompts more electronic word-of-mouth and more weight in the decision-making process; finally, Erdogan (1999) provides a definition for trustworthiness in this context: “the honesty, integrity and believability of an endorser” (p. 297) and declares that information from credible sources can influence beliefs, opinions, attitudes and/or behavior via a process named internalization, which happens when the receivers embrace a source influence, because of their personal attitude and value structures. All of these authors mention the source credibility model when talking about trustworthiness. This model announces that “the effectiveness of a message depends on perceived level of expertise and trustworthiness in an endorser” (Erdogan, 1999, p. 297).

Bakker (2018) states that the key elements consumers consider when choosing their favorite influencer to follow are authenticity and trust, so influencers become more popular and successful when they are authentic and spontaneous.

Now that an initial understanding about influencers and their main characteristics is presented, it makes sense to analyze, in a more profound perspective, the habitat/context in

which influencers' activities are developed and they have contact with their audience: social media.

1.2. The Role of Social Media

Social media is usually referred to as an umbrella term which comprises a range of online platforms: blogs, business networks, collaborative projects, enterprise social networks, forums, microblogs, photo sharing, products review, social bookmarking, social gaming, video sharing, and virtual worlds (Aichner *et al.*, 2021), hence why many people associate the definition of social media to the platforms they know and where many influencers “reign”, like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, and many others. Carr & Hayes (2015) conceptualize social media considering its modernization: “Social media are Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others” (p.50), inferring the concept of influencers in it.

These social media platforms and channels have an innovative and democratic nature, as no one needs to have special technical knowledge to engage in these platforms and eventually become a content creator or influencer. The production, creation and distribution of content has become significantly easier, generating a conclusion: social media empowers individuals (Yesiloglu, 2021; Tuten & Solomon, 2018; Aichner *et al.*, 2021; Carr & Hayes, 2015).

1.2.1. Benefits of Social Media

For businesses the transition of their marketing interests to social media platforms meant that their customers are no longer an audience, they're either an ally or an enemy (Aichner *et al.*, 2021). As people interact with companies, they do not have a passive role anymore, they give feedback, ask questions, and expect quick and customized answers to their specific problems (Aichner *et al.*, 2021).

For influencers, this contemporary shift from broadcast to participatory media and the subsequent popularity of social media technologies have allowed for traditional celebrities (e.g. pop stars, tv presenters and actors) to embrace social media as a way to create “direct, unmediated relationships with fans, or at least the illusion of such” (Marwick, 2015, p.139; Campbell & Farrel, 2020). But also, for that anyone with a mobile screen, tablet, or laptop can become a celebrity. There’s no need to amass an extensive number of followers/fans, just enough so that you can support yourself, empowering as well the concept of subcultural or niche celebrities, since through their online creative activities they can sustain themselves and still remain unknown to most and to mainstream media (Marwick, 2015; Campbell & Farrel, 2020). As McQuarrie *et al.* (2013) say: “they [people] could not grab the megaphone and acquire a mass audience of strangers for their acts of consumption” (p.153), but now they can.

Labrecque *et al.* (2011) summarize this phenomenon in a rather simple manner:

No longer does a person need to be familiar with complex coding languages or other technicalities to build Web sites, because virtually anyone can upload text, pictures and video instantly to a site from a personal computer or phone. With technological barriers crumbling and its increasing ubiquity, the Web has become the perfect platform for personal branding. (p. 38)

So, this occurrence that a celebrity becomes a continuum of practices performed on social media is very much linked to the concept of self-branding, which is basically a self-presentation strategy that has two main aspects: you view yourself as a consumer product, and you sell this image to others (Marwick, 2015), which is essentially what influencers do.

With social media, people now have unparalleled access to information, they are in control of what they can discuss, contribute, collaborate and share: there’s a shift from a one-to-many to a many-to-one flow of information, as the internet possesses an interactive nature that promotes this dialogue (Yesiloglu, 2021; Leban & Voyer, 2021; Bakker, 2018; Aichner *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, “ordinary users” are enabled to create their own personal brand, evolving into influencers, becoming important vehicles for marketers who want to reach out to more consumers and build better, stronger, and longer-lasting brand relationships. (Leban & Voyer, 2021). Ergo, social media allows an enhancement of the interaction and

engagement between consumers and brands (Tuten & Solomon, 2018). As Kim & Kim (2021) state “social media has fundamentally changed the way people interact and communicate, offering a greater capability for marketers to connect with their target customers” (p. 405).

There’s an environment of equal opportunities for every user to view or create any content in any form, yet, it’s not expected for users to become celebrities or famous brands, this happens when there’s a high volume of engagement with your audience. However, to gain this influential power, have this real impact and build a community, strategic practices are a must. Influencers benefit monetarily through the creation of their *best* digital self (Yesiloglu, 2021).

Companies and brands have invested greatly in social media marketing, due to its efficiency: there’s a low absolute cost for the potential business applications. It’s the best tool for: engaging consumers, garnering customer attention, improving organic search rankings, managing customer relationships, enhancing brand reputation and image, building positive brand attitudes, developing new product ideas, promoting brands and driving online and offline store traffic (Yet *et al*, 2021). Thus, in 2022 it was registered that over 90% of brands in the United States of America used social media to market their products and services (Statista Research Department, 2022).

The emergence of influencers and the wide spectrum of social media – which allows its flourishing – elevates the need for differentiation. In other words, because of the notable growth of influencers in social networks, uniqueness plays an important role. To this extent, the concept of archetypes might help to clarify different influencers’ profiles based on the literature. The next excerpt of this research will address this topic to outline its relevance.

1.2.2. Archetypes

Within the social media vast and unlimited landscape, influencers usually create their specialty, their niche, and so, social media influencers archetypes can be detected, although a clear definition of these categories is not consensual in academia. As an example, Tuten &

Solomon (2018) contribution is highlighted: they identified 8 types of social media archetypes, as presented by the table below.

Archetype Name	Description	Brands that use this archetype	Examples
The Balanced Life	This type of influencer eats well, exercises and still makes time to live an all-around healthy lifestyle	Bai, Under Armour, Beta brand	Jessenia Vice turns negatives to positives and focuses her podcasts and Instagram posts on fitness, motivation and overcoming adversity
Fashionista Coach	These influencers are fashion icons with their own personal identity	Kate Spade, Adidas and Victoria's Secret	Karlie Kloss, former Victoria's Secret Angel and fashion model, uses her unique insight into the world of fashion to inspire fashionistas around the world
The Charismatic Cook	Relatable and fun, evolving from Zen-like online chefs and food stylists from years past	Blue Apron, Kraft Foods, Wolf	Mariam Ezzeddine (@cookingwithmima) shares inspirational and healthy recipes and photos on Instagram
The Fitspiration	Makes you want to move, sharing workout and stretching tips	Lululemon, GNC, SmartWater	Anllela Sagra, a Colombian fitness guru, shares workouts and fitness inspiration on Instagram and YouTube
The Friend Zone	Online friend squads that create comedic content focused on collaboration across channels	Lego, Hotpockets	LankyBox is led by two comedic influencers – Adam & Justin. Their content is funny and family-friendly
Gaming Hero	Amasses followers seeking entertainment as well as tips and techniques to improve their own games	Warner Brothers, Motorola, Red Bull	Mari Takahashi, who uses the handle AtomicMari, shows that Gaming Heroes aren't always male
The Adventurer	Creates a lifetime narrative of storylines that blend across journeys and borders	GoPro, Northface, Patagonia, Travelocity	Meg Jerrard (@mappingmegan) has traveled the world sharing her adventures via her blog, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook

The Beauty Expert	Master of hair and/or makeup. This glamazon will show you how to get the look from beginning to end	Maybelline, MAC, Suave, Nivea	Manny Gutierrez (@mannymua733) highlights beauty tips like how to line the perfect brow on YouTube and Instagram
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Table 1. 8 Social Media Archetypes (developed by the author based on Tuten and Solomon’s (2018) contribution)

However, in my personal opinion, this perspective is outdated and incomplete - which can be justified due to the fact that it’s from 2018 and the influencer marketing market has grown immensely since then -, as it lacks other types of influencer categories, such as: parenting/moms, sustainability, art, crafts and DIY (Do It Yourself), dance, décor, photography, music, comedy, pets or animals, and technology, just to name a few. Furthermore, even some influencers don’t fall predominantly into any of these categories, some are “all over the place”, like, for example, Mr. Beast, who is “the most-subscribed-to YouTube personality in the world, with 112 million subscribers. His earnings, already the highest of any social media creator, are set to double in 2022 to as much as \$110 million.” (Sorvino, 2022, p.2). He’s a youtuber who doesn’t fit into any specific category of influencer content, he doesn’t fully compromise to a specific type of content, he does it all, having several channels to separate his different content (e.g. gaming or challenges) (Sorvino, 2022). In sum, it becomes clear that although archetypes play an important role in classifying influencers, the criteria used might not be fully consensual yet.

This perspective gains strength by the fact, for instance, that there is a tendency observed with niche influencers that as they grow in popularity from a specific type of content, they often venture to other types of content. That’s why many influencers begin with niche content and once they gain more popularity, they become broader, accepting increased sponsorships that weren’t aligned with their previous content, hence why - as Campbell & Farrel (2020), Park *et al.* (2021) and Influencer Marketing Hub’s (2021) report mention - microinfluencers and nanoinfluencers have more engagement rates and are more genuine to their followers than celebrity influencers and macroinfluencers. The first two types of influencers aren’t reached by as many sponsors as bigger influencers, who once were niche influencers and started getting more attention and popularity, losing the full trust

of their followers, who end up turning their heads to smaller influencers. Tafesse & Wood (2021) also address this topic, as they state that influencers with a bigger follower count and that additionally share diverse content prompt followers to feel detached from them and uncertain from their true identity, since the influencers post incoherent information about their domains of interest. Contrarily, influencers who focus on a specific interest produce and share highly coherent content, helping cement the influencers' identities in their followers' minds (Tafesse & Wood, 2021). As a personal perspective, it can be stated that fashionistas or beauty experts usually end up merging these categories: makeup, hair and fashion. Portuguese examples are Helena Coelho, Alice Trewinnard and Mafalda Sampaio, who all started by gaining popularity doing makeup, but now that they've amassed more following, they've created all sorts of content, mainly involving fashion and parenting. Another Portuguese example of the merging of archetypes, or the lack of one, once they gained more popularity are Leonor Macedo and Mariana InStyle: both of these influencers began as "fashion gurlies" but now Leonor has dedicated herself solely to travel content and Mariana's content has started to include a lot of traveling content as well.

As Tafesse & Wood's (2021) study demonstrates: influencers with more followers generate lower engagement if they also have different interests, having a negative interaction between the influencers' follower count and domains of interest. This combination of factors makes the followers feel disconnected from the influencers and confused about their identities (Tafesse & Wood, 2021), enhancing the archetypes concepts and relevant, but although difficult to outline.

1.2.3. Parasocial Interactions

Other topic that emerges from the relation between influencers and social media is the type of interaction that might occur in this digital environment. As previously mentioned, for influencers to have their social power and be more persuasive and effective they must be active on social media, as, this way, they'll have highly engaged followers. When followers present an active and engaged behavior with an influencer, there is a high probability for the development of parasocial interaction (Marwick, 2015; Yesiloglu, 2021; Leban & Voyer,

2021; Yet *et al.*, 2021). As Campbell & Farrel (2020) claim: “Influencers who form more intimate bonds with consumers tend to carry more persuasive power” (p. 475).

In fact, when influencers post content on their social media, they give insight into their daily lives for their followers: their hobbies, friends, families, interests, and activities, appearing as relatable people who are just sharing their day-to-day and enabling their followers to feel as though they know them well and even share a close personal relationship with them (Yet *et al.*, 2021; Marwick, 2015). So, influencers cultivate an honest, consistent and genuine narration of their personal life, as well as an open and caring relationship with their audience, and their persuasive power is strongly associated with these affective relationships they establish with their audiences (Conde & Casais, 2023). Additionally, Campbell & Farrel (2020) highlight the power of similarity between influencers and their followers: by sharing with their followers the same interests, demographics, life stages, or life events, influencers gravitate towards cultivating a strong bond with their followers, fueling authenticity and even fostering a kinship and sense of community, which is valuable as consumers tend to support individuals they like or are more attached to.

Therefore, parasocial interaction contemplates the perceived connectedness between audiences and celebrities, generated by the audiences’ perception of self-congruity, language and interest similarity, interaction frequency, friendship, physical attractiveness and credibility (Conde & Casais, 2023). Marwick (2015) says that the implication of generating this parasocial interaction is that followers/fans respond to these media figures as if they were a personal acquaintance, so this concept can be determined as the illusion of real friendships with media personalities. Additionally, Marwick (2015) even declares that, via social media, these parasocial interactions can transform into potentially social ones (through interaction in the form of likes, comments, shares, direct messages, and so on) and the emotional ties between said influencer/celebrity and follower/fan can heighten. Social media activity promotes these perceptions of intimacy, by allowing access to the influencer’s personal life and by enabling dialogue between influencer-follower; and this has advertising implications: a parasocial relationship essentially implies a trust transfer via similarity, attractiveness and fairness, all of which affect the intention to buy a recommended product

by the influencer, making a parasocial relationship an instrument for advertising (Conde & Casais, 2023).

In Conde & Casais' (2023) study, besides validating the positive impact the number of followers has on the persuasive power of the influencer, it confirms the effect parasocial relationships have on the intention to adopt influencers' recommendations, so the influencers' influence "strongly depends on emotional aspects" (p. 8), underlining the significance of the emotional relationship between influencer-follower and the followers' perceptions of the influencer in their susceptibility to product or brand recommendations.

In sum, it becomes clear that the parasocial relationship creates an emotional bond between the follower and the influencer, but this connection is one-sided, i.e., there is not an effective or personal response by the influencer to the follower. The feeling of closeness to the influencer might help to enhance marketing processes, which can justify why influencers are part of marketing strategy nowadays (Houran *et al.*, 2023; McCutcheon & Demetrovics, 2021). The next topic of this chapter will address this merging process between influencers and marketing.

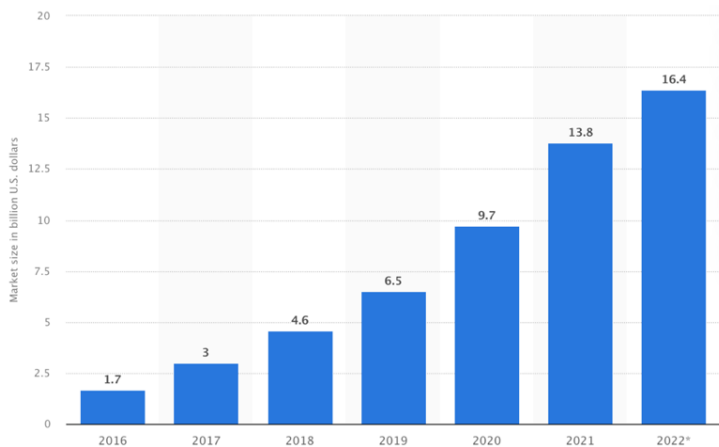
1.3. Influencer Marketing

Whilst brands have integrated social media marketing into their strategy, enhancing their interaction with their desired audiences, they're still perceived as a biased organization who just wants to sell their products. Contrarily to influencers, which are often perceived as more authentic and credible than any other form of brand-generated content created by marketers or advertisers (Kim & Kim, 2021). As Kim & Kim (2021) state, influencers can successfully manage marketing actions through the introduction of a product as organic and not commercial content, since social media users are more receptive to promotional messages when they consider it as a genuine message of the influencer. Consequently, brands and companies resorted to third-party endorsers, namely, digital influencers, who can create engaging branded content, enhance the communication with the brand's desired target, and who already have a powerful impact on their established follower base/community and their followers' purchase decision (Yesiloglu, 2021).

This impact that certain individuals have on the decision-making process of others can be defined as opinion leadership: Casaló *et al.* (2020) determine opinion leadership as “related to what extent an individual is perceived to be a model for others, the degree to which the information provided by him/her is considered interesting and their persuasiveness” (p. 511). The origin of this term derives from the two-step flow theory of communication framework by Katz & Lazarsfeld from 1955, in a sense that: opinion leaders absorbed the information from mass media and disseminated, via word of mouth, their understanding of it to the general public (Casaló *et al.*, 2020; Hepp, 2018). Nowadays, brands engage with influencers for them to endorse brand-related information to their established community on digital platforms (Casaló *et al.*, 2020; Yesiloglu, 2021). Katz and Lazarsfeld state that opinion leaders pass their knowledge to members of their personal networks as if they were the foundation of their opinions and attitudes, so the influence of media content doesn’t unfold in a direct matter, this influence is mediated through personal networks, hence the important role of influencers, as they give their interpretations and orientate people embedded in their personal networks (Casaló *et al.*, 2020; Hepp, 2018).

Accordingly, Bakker (2018) defines influencer marketing as “a process in digital marketing where opinion leaders (influencers) are identified and then integrated into a brand’s brand communication on social media platforms” (p.80). Thus, it’s a digital and paid form of word-of-mouth marketing that occurs on social media channels (Bakker, 2018). So, as brands struggle to create engaging social media content, influencers arise as specialists in creating content consumers interact with, inevitably causing the propagation of this content more widely on social media (Campbell & Farrel, 2020). Ergo, influencer marketing represents influential social media users who have “the credibility, following, and motivation to spread positive word-of-mouth in their blogs and on social media and who have an important impact on the consumption decisions of others” (Yet *et al.*, 2021, p. 161). So, the power of influencer marketing is based on the influencers’ expertise, popularity, and/or reputation (Yet *et al.*, 2021). Influencer marketing is about “leveraging the trust and connection that influencers have forged with their followers to extend the reach and impact of brands on social media” (Tafesse & Wood, 2021, p. 1)

Since influencers usually adopt new products and services related to their domains of interest earlier than most consumers, they have a first-hand experience and an advanced insight, reducing uncertainty and portraying how these products and services fit into their followers' lifestyles (Tafesse & Wood, 2021; Casalo *et al.*, 2020). Consequently, they build expert credibility and monetize their work through reviews of products, recommendations and DIY tips (Tafesse & Wood, 2021; Casalo *et al.*, 2020). So, when influencers post on social media for a brand/company they're usually either compensated with money or with free products, services, trips, or experiences (Campbell & Farrel, 2020). In this extent, brands can also work with influencers in various marketing forms: sponsored content, product placement, documenting daily life, affiliate links, partnerships, gifted posts and, lastly, through the launch of a product range together (Yesiloglu, 2021). Influencer's popularity as marketing tools in the last couple of years is showcased by the graph presented below, which portrays the global increase of the market size of influencer marketing from 2016 until 2022. The table next to graph depicts the percentage of growth between each year, which shows a positive evolution.



Year	Market Size (billion U.S. dollars)	Growth (%)
2016	1,7	-
2017	3	76,5
2018	4,6	53,3
2019	6,5	41,3
2020	9,7	49,2
2021	13,8	42,3
2022	16,4	18,8

Figure 2. Influencer Marketing Market Size Worldwide from 2016 to 2022 (in billion U.S. dollars) (Statista Research Department, 2023. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1092819/global-influencer-market-size/>)

Table 2. Percentage of Growth of Influencer Marketing Market Size from 2016 to 2022 (developed by the author based on Statista Research Department's contribution)

As Campbell & Farrel (2020) claim: “Even for skeptics, the significant influx of players into the influencer market, coupled with influencers’ effectiveness, makes the marketing tactic difficult to ignore” (p.477).

1.3.1. The Three Marketing Functions of Social Media Influencers

Campbell & Farrel (2020) introduce the three marketing functions all influencers possess: they allow for access to a potentially highly engaged audience; they are established endorser personas (can be associated with Yet *et al.*’s (2021) highlight on the influencer’s popularity and reputation); and they have skills in social media management (can be associated with Yet *et al.*’s (2021) highlight on the influencer’s expertise), the figure below showcases these functions and their ramifications.

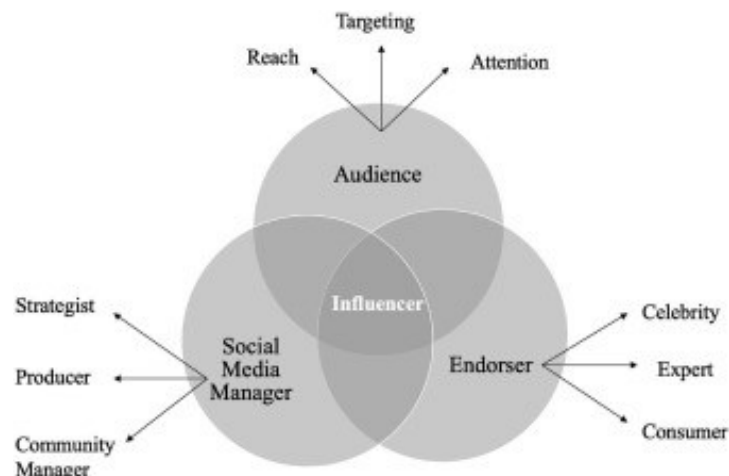


Figure 3. The Marketing Functions of Social Media Influencers (Campbell & Farrell, 2020, p. 472. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2020.03.003>)

Therefore, an influencer can be advantageous for companies because of their audience, as endorsers (related to a referential and persuasive context), and as social media managers.

a) Influencers as Audiences

Having direct cost-efficient access to a highly engaged audience who happens to be the ideal target for a brand is almost “utopian” for companies and brands alike. An influencer’s audience can provide (Campbell & Farrel, 2020):

- **Organic Reach** – an influencer’s content often allows for sizable organic reach, in a sense that it drives increased brand-related engagement more effectively and personally.
- **Specific Targeting** – because influencers are often niche or specialize in a specific category, they have a very particular audience, which is closely aligned with them regarding age, geographic location, and stage of life (e.g., college, pregnancy), which are audience attributes companies search for. So, targeting an audience via influencers is like placing ads online or on social media. However, through influencers, the ad becomes more interesting to their target audience. Another important aspect is that influencers allow specific targeting without the collection of private data, which is crucial in a time where the adoption of privacy settings is increasing (making it harder for brands to determine the consumers’ interests).
- **Increased attention** – influencer’s content lures more consumer attention (engagement and response rate) than ads from the brand itself. This happens as the influencer’s posts are seen as more subtle, genuine and candid (specially in nano and microinfluencers) than overly promotional, annoying, untrustworthy and intrusive as normal digital and traditional advertising is for a lot of consumers. Consumers respond more favorably when ads appear within content they like, they find informative or that fits in the mood, thus the importance of choosing the right influencer for the brand (Bakker, 2018). In addition, as the decision-making process is lengthened and jumbled, because of social media, there should be a longer ad exposure, which the influencer exclusively allows for by gradually including posts introducing them, informing them, and reminding them about the product of the ad.

b) Influencers as Endorsers

Becoming a source of inspiration and/or information, a model of reference or especially persuasive by attachment for their followers is a common occurrence between

influencers and their followers (Campbell & Farrel, 2020). In this sense, influencers can represent (Campbell & Farrel, 2020):

- **Celebrity Status** – in the case of celebrity influencers, their persuasive power emerges from their followers wish to be like them or emulate them, so the followers become more motivated to purchase the advertised brands to acquire the same associations. Celebrity influencers are especially effective at endorsing flashy luxury products. Their celebrity status promotes awareness, enables increasing press exposure and purchase intentions, and improves attitudes towards the brand. However, the persuasiveness from an ad featuring a celebrity besides depending on their physical attractiveness and likeability, it also depends on the match between the celebrity's content/image and the endorsed brand.
- **Expertise** (related to trustworthiness factor) – as previously mentioned, influencers are usually experts in a certain category, idea or lifestyle, they can have a niche expertise (e.g. makeup or cooking expert). The effectiveness of influencers who have credibility as experts in a specific category depends on consumers who look for deeper evaluations of the information and the sources and who want to reduce uncertainty. This happens especially when consumers seek expertise in purchasing high-involvement products (e.g. car, laptop, oven). Naturally, expert influencers' trustworthiness affects the persuasiveness of their message, consumers want to feel that the endorsers would truly use the product. Another factor is when expert endorsers highlight the pros and cons of the products in their reviews, it'll be more persuasive for the consumer, as it's perceived as more genuine/less biased.
- **Fellow Consumers** (related to relatability factor)– when influencers introduce themselves as other fellow consumers, they'll be more persuasive, because they're perceived as disinterested parties, more trustworthy, and more relatable.

c) **Influencers as Social Media Managers**

In the cases above, influencers functions are associated simply with the result of their content, in other words, brands just want for influencers to create the content and post it on their social media profile. However, in the case of this function, brands and companies want

the influencer to strategize not only the content posted, but also the engagement that follows, that is, to manage the resulting interactions with their followers (Campbell & Farrel, 2020). Ergo, influencers can undertake the role of (Campbell & Farrel, 2020):

- **Content Producers** – concerns the influencers’ abilities of directing, producing, and editing social media content for brands. These skills are particularly relevant for smaller companies who can’t create content fit to their desired target. The process of content-production can be more autonomous or entail some creative control: brands may emit a creative brief and detailed guidelines and require for content to be approved beforehand; it’s a negotiable spectrum between influencer and brands.
- **Strategists** – influencers fuse their knowledge of their audience and the needs of the brands that “hire” them and create the ideal content. So they become unique creative agents, as they are intimately united with customer bases for brands, they know how to best appeal to them, and which type of content provides more value and entertainment, especially when the influencers operate in niche categories.
- **Community Managers** (related to reachability factor) – influencers engage with their followers through stories, live streams, by feedback, Q&A’s (asking for questions from their followers and answering them), cocreating content, and responding to comments and messages (reachability). This way, they incite and boost engagement, they expand organic reach, and yield a support function. This function is especially suitable for marketing that targets millennials, who are more interested in engaging in communities than ads.

1.3.2. Research Themes about Influencer Marketing

Once this type of marketing has been tremendously explored, it seemed important to bring to this research a fresh perspective about the literature regarding influencer marketing. Based on a personal analysis, it was noted that the research themes that have been more questioned, concern the ethical issues and disclosure effects in influencer marketing (Yet *et al.*, 2021; Karagür *et al.*, 2021), which is inherently associated to the loss of trust from followers in influencers, and also virtual influencers (Vrontis *et al.*, 2021; Marwick, 2018).

Since the influencer marketing market is becoming over-saturated and it's increasingly difficult to stay unique and stand out, the rise of virtual influencers has rapidly evolved and gained notoriety, undertaking partnerships with luxury brands (Marwick, 2018). Virtual influencers are "digitally and artificially fabricated human-like influencers, created by Artificial Intelligence agencies" (Leban & Voyer, 2021, p. 40). Marwick (2018) and Vrontis *et al.* (2021) exemplify this phenomenon with Lil Miquela, a virtual influencer that has amassed 2.9 million followers on Instagram and numerous partnerships with luxury brands, such as Prada (Périer, 2018). She was even considered one of the 25 most influential people on the Internet in 2018 by Time Magazine (Staff, 2018), alongside names like Rihanna, Kanye West and Donald Trump, when he was president, all of which accentuates its influence in the social media world and opens a conversation about the role of artificial intelligence in social media.

However, a theme that's been more lately discussed and will be of focus on this thesis is related to how brand messages shared by influencers are embedded in organic user-generated content, and how it becomes puzzling and unpleasant for followers to detect what has commercial intent from what hasn't (Yet *et al.*, 2021), which affects the trust the audience has on the influencer's content. This is especially worrisome for younger audiences (children and adolescents) whom are more easily persuaded and mislead into liking products influencers might promote (Yet *et al.*, 2021). Because of these ethical concerns and deceptive nature of influencer marketing, and to make sure there's fair and transparent communication, it's now legally required for influencers to disclose that their posts have a commercial nature (Karagür *et al.*, 2021). Influencer's followers want them to be sincere and transparent about being compensated for their reviews (Yet *et al.*, 2021; Karagür *et al.*, 2021). This is also important for this research, as it will be analyzed the follower trust in influencers, in a sponsorship and recommendation context. As Karagür *et al.* (2021) state "large brand portfolios can undermine influencers' trustworthiness through higher advertising expectations" (p. 331), which implies that these disclosure practices influence the followers' trust in the influencer's recommendations or even mentionings of certain products or services. This discussion will be analyzed more in depth in a subsequent sponsorship and recommendation explanation chapter.

Now that there's an established broad context on influencers, social media and influencer marketing and how they're all connected, there's a foundation for the next chapter, which narrows down the theme in question of this thesis. The next chapter will study the correlation between Instagram, fashion influencers and their followers

Chapter 2 – Instagram Fashion Influencers, Followers and Users

2.1. The Instagram Phenomenon

2.1.1. What is Instagram all about?

Instagram and TikTok are currently the most critical social media platforms for influencer marketing (Haenlein *et al.* 2020; Lee & Kim, 2020). Instagram is a photo and video-sharing app, in which its users can upload pictures/videos in their profiles or temporarily post them in the format of stories (which allow for high customization of content using textual elements, filters or stickers, and appear only for 24 hours), and other users can like, comment or share their content with others (Haenlein *et al.* 2020). Instagram is a social network, as it predominantly shows the content of the accounts the user is following (has connected with) and allows for a direct messaging functionality, so users can communicate privately with each other (Haenlein *et al.* 2020).

Another relevant aspect are sponsored posts, which depict the content of accounts the user isn't following but is having contact with because it was promoted through paid advertising (Haenlein *et al.* 2020). The order of the posts on the user's feed is conditioned by an artificial intelligence algorithm that shows users the content they are most likely to be interested in, thus, a lot of content the user is following doesn't necessarily appear in their feed (Haenlein *et al.* 2020). As a result, the user is exposed to a lot of influencer and branded content, besides the sponsored content present in influencer profiles they might already follow.

Lastly, an important recent feature Instagram has recently added is the reels, which essentially embody the same content and functionality as TikTok (Demeku, 2023). However,

reels differ from TikTok fundamentally in terms of editing interfaces, the feed (TikTok is more customizable), and TikTok's demographic is younger than Instagram's (16-24 age range *versus* almost half of Instagram's audience is aged 25-34 years old) (Demeku, 2023).

Instagram's official webpage describes reels in the following manner:

Reels invites you to create fun videos to share with your friends or anyone on Instagram. Record and edit 15-second multi-clip videos [now up to 90 seconds (Demeku, 2023)] with audio, effects, and new creative tools. You can share reels with your followers on Feed, and, if you have a public account, make them available to the wider Instagram community through a new space in Explore. Reels in Explore offers anyone the chance to become a creator on Instagram and reach new audiences on a global stage. (Instagram, 2020, para.2)

This highlights Instagram reels' capability of limitless content, and of allowing for anything and anyone to become viral. In fact, in a study that compared several multimedia platforms (like TikTok, Youtube, Facebook, and so on) Instagram ranked first in enabling the discovery of new brands (Instagram, n.d.a). Additionally, in another study, 78% of consumers stated that reel creators have influence in helping them discover new brands (Instagram, n.d.a). Furthermore, in terms of engagement, more than half of users interact (like, comment and share) with a reel at least once a week, and reels constitute more than half of the content shared in private messages (Instagram, n.d.a). In Instagram's own reels webpage concerning the business potential they have, Instagram suggests the use of reels to create ads for brands, in order to drive sales and increase brand recognition (Instagram, n.d.a).

Therefore, Instagram was initially intended to combine the instantaneity of camera-phone technology with the connectivity of a social network, as the way users interacted with it initially lent the images posted to Instagram a quality of spontaneity and a somewhat tangible connection to a user's offline life, since their posts mediated their experiences in real time (De Perthuis & Findlay, 2019). Yet, Instagram content nowadays includes not only personal imagery posted for the enjoyment of a user's friends, but also professional photography and branded content, with the initial personal hashtags being replaced by the overt '#ad,' professedly claiming a different kind of transparency (De Perthuis & Findlay, 2019).

Instagram evolved to a strategic platform for businesses to create brand awareness and engagement, one of the aspects that proves this shift to a more ecommerce angle is the shopping feature within Instagram (Warren, 2022; Instagram, n.d.b). With Instagram Shop, brands can curate a list of shoppable products that are directly accessible through their Instagram profile, their pictures, videos, reels, stories, or their ads (Warren, 2022; Instagram, n.d.b). Instead of tagging someone that appears in a picture with you, businesses can tag a product that redirects viewers to their store front when clicked on (Instagram, n.d.b). A brand can set up a shop where people are able to search for products and collections, can develop specific collections of products, create distinct pages with details of each product, for example, with the price and exact link for users to complete purchase, and it's also possible for people to pay directly on Instagram in the U.S. (Instagram Checkout) (Instagram, n.d.b). This feature makes Instagram more commerce-friendly than other social media platform (Cheung & Choi, 2022).

Because of all of these factors, Instagram ranks among the most downloaded apps, with more than two billion monthly active users, as of January 2023 (Statista Search Department, 2023a; Iqbal, 2023). Ergo, many brands create profiles to benefit from high engagement rates among the large market of consumers, especially fashion brands and fashion influencers, who profit from functionalities like the shopping feature (Belanche *et al.*, 2021). In fact, fashion brands and influencers thrive especially on Instagram since it's a visual oriented social media platform that provides creative tools and it's the one in which the engagement rate is the highest (Casaló *et al.*, 2020). The most interactive industry is fashion, whose accounts were responsible for 25% of all brand interactions on Instagram (Iqbal, 2023). Through Instagram, influencers generate more than half of their incomes (Bakker, 2018).

So why is Instagram so helpful for the fashion industry?

2.1.2. The Perfect Harmony between Instagram & Fashion

Within Instagram, fashion brands and influencers have significantly more followers and interactions than other social media platform (Belanche *et al.*, 2021). People gain and express their status by wearing attractive and stylish clothes, therefore, companies market their items on social media to place their brands in the minds of customers, as the fashion industry evolves frequently and because individuals appreciate wearing new clothes (Casaló *et al.*, 2020). Consumers utilize social media content as inspiration for apparel, therefore social media can influence their purchasing behavior, thus, influencers can have a significant role in the fashion industry (Casaló *et al.*, 2020). Besides this, on social media, consumers discuss emerging trends and styles with one another, share knowledge, and offer suggestions, highlighting the important role social communication plays in spreading fashion trends (Casaló *et al.*, 2020).

In the graph presented in Figure 4., 4 out of the top 5 brands most mentioned by influencers on Instagram are fashion brands, being that the most mentioned brand is Instagram itself (Statista Search Department, 2023b), which highlights the dominance of fashion content and influencers within this social media platform.

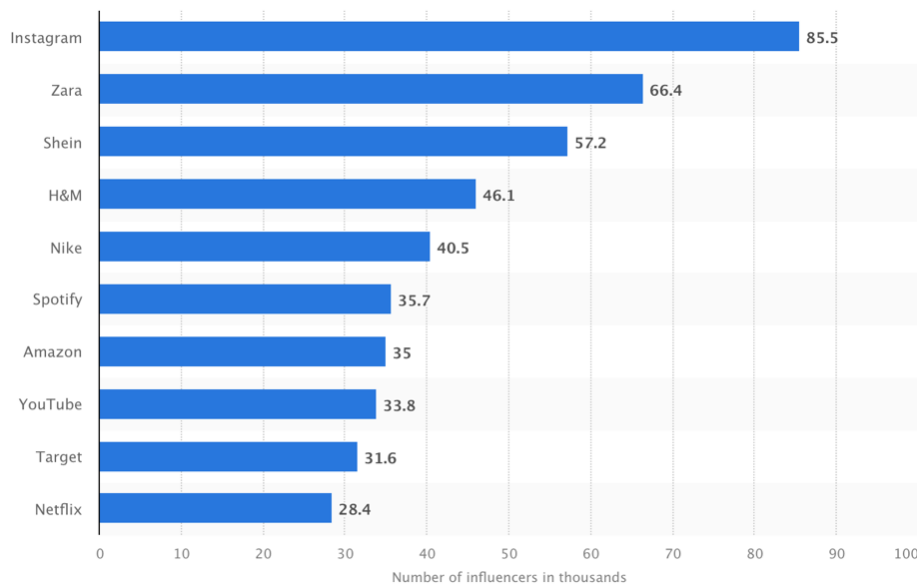


Figure 4. Leading brands on Instagram worldwide in 2022, by number of influencers mentioning them (in 1,000s) (Statista Research Department, 2023b. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1250712/leading-instagram-brands-worldwide-mentions/>)

Accordingly, Instagram is especially appealing for the fashion industry, as it allows for brands to post aesthetically pleasing, creative and alluring content (pictures, videos, life stories, etc.), focusing solely on visuals (and visual content is more captivating than word content for people); in addition, Instagram grants the scope to attractively display their products (Casaló *et al.*, 2020; De Perthuis & Findlay, 2019). The visual particularity of the app matches the image-driven industry of fashion by enabling brands to push imagery beyond linguistic barriers, to translate their promotional narrative through an immediate global lens (Mendes, 2019).

Furthermore, as De Perthuis & Findlay (2019) claim: “Digital technologies allow individuals to produce fashion discourse and a means of participating in the fashion industry to generate economic and cultural capital” (p.3). These individuals are influencers, who’ve been crucial for the development of Instagram as a fashion-marketing tool, as they’ve become intermediaries between fashion producers and their target market (De Perthuis & Findlay, 2019). Influencers have the ability to model fashion and beauty consumption in a type of content that merges Instagram’s personal and authentic appeal with the commercialized glamour of an editorial spread, so, even though they’re amateurs, influencers can produce content that emulates the look, feel and discourse of the professional fashion media (De Perthuis & Findlay, 2019). Influencers effortlessly blend everyday life with branded content (Lee *et al.*, 2022).

Thus, by collaborating with fashion brands whose status and aesthetic are coherent with and fortify the influencer’s own brand image, fashion influencers trade capital, promote and infuse commercial products with symbolic meaning, due to their personal brand, to their inclusion of discourses regarding the everyday and relatability as part of their digital persona, besides sponsored posts (De Perthuis & Findlay, 2019). Influencers can promote the brand, but also cooperate in product development, through cobranding, collaborations, and capsule collections (Mendes, 2019). Moreover, to truly become influential and a fashion opinion leader on Instagram, it’s not quality or quantity that matters, but rather originality and uniqueness; influencers, alike the fashion industry, should strive to be creative and unmatched (Bakker, 2018; Casaló *et al.*, 2020).

Besides being a visual tool for branded fashion communications by driving engaged traffic and enabling brands to directly interact with their target audience, Instagram also accelerated the trend of creating experiences for consumers, something very palpable with the case of the runway shows for the fashion industry (Mendes, 2019). Fashion shows are nowadays employed to maximize online visibility, in addition to designers looking for ideal, digital-friendly locations, the shows are usually live streamed on social media, adapting it to the digital context (Mendes, 2019). The livestreams of fashion shows had a boost with the pandemic, as it wasn't possible for people to be gathered together watching a fashion show, due to contagion concerns and health risks (Chopra, 2019).

So, as De Perthuis & Findlay (2019) state: "The fashionable ideal has traveled from print to digital, morphed from the embodied self of the professional fashion model into the influencer, yet the effect remains remarkably the same" (p.31).

Instagram is in fact a natural habitat for fashion, having several different types of profiles dedicated to the fashion industry. Besides having big fashion houses and celebrities prospering, due to its democratic nature and global audience, Instagram allows for the rise of small businesses and homegrown fashion labels (Chopra, 2019). Besides this, fashion designers also have turned to Instagram to get exposure and benefit from its connectivity (Cheung & Choi, 2022). Fashion designers used to be very dependent on being discovered by a fashion name or potential employer, nowadays they can create a fan base who's willing to support them by buying their creations; Instagram became a vital portfolio for designers, editors, photographers and other creatives (Ahmed, 2019). Fashion magazines have also become dependent on Instagram, today, magazine covers and editorial stories are imperatively posted on Instagram, thus people don't feel the need to buy a physical copy (Ahmed, 2019). Bloggers relocated to Instagram and other fashion commentators alike, having profiles that comment on fashion plagiarism or that share which brands celebrities are wearing, for example (Chopra, 2019).

Relevant aspects that need to be analyzed now are the characteristics and demographics of influencer followers and of general Instagram users.

2.2. About Instagram Users and Influencer Followers

Instagram users' region distribution concentrates on the Asia-Pacific areas, with an emphasis on India, which is Instagram's biggest market in terms of users with over 300 million active users; these assortments can be viewed in table 3 (Iqbal, 2023).

Region	Users (mm)
Asia-Pacific	893
Europe	338
South America	289
North America	222
Middle East	112
Africa	96
Australia	22

Table 3. Distribution of Instagram users by region in 2022 (in millions) (Iqbal, 2023. <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/instagram-statistics/>)

As seen by figure 5, more than half (69.1%) of worldwide Instagram users, as of January 2023, was aged 34 years or younger, being the primary demographic people between 18-24 years old, which is in accordance with Bakker (2018) who states these are the main followers of influencers, and the gender distribution being 48.4% female and 51.7% male (Statista Search Department, 2023c).

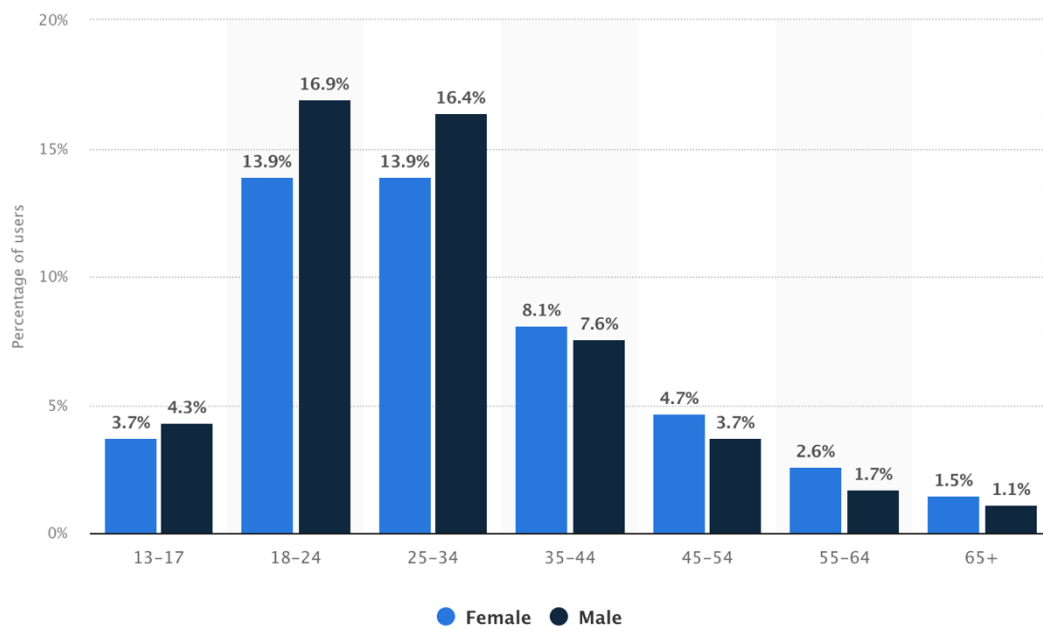


Figure 5. Distribution of Instagram users worldwide as of January 2023, by age and gender (Statista Research Department, 2023c. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/248769/age-distribution-of-worldwide-instagram-users/>)

In a study made by Dove, 86% of young Portuguese admitted being addicted to social media, a higher percentage than the European average (78%), and 90% have been using social media since the age of thirteen (Paiva, 2023). Aside from this, in a Marktest report is stated that Instagram is the network with the biggest penetration within the younger Portuguese people, as well as that 77% of them follow public figures on social media (Marktest, 2022). In 2021, Instagram was also considered one of the most influential advertising channels among American female Gen Z (people born between 1997 – 2012 (Dimock, 2022)) users for purchasing decisions (Statista Search Department, 2023c).

Furthermore, data from 2019 shows that the gender distribution of Instagram influencers themselves is very disparate, with a clear dominance of female influencers (89%) over male influencers (16%) creating sponsored posts (Statista Search Department, 2023d). Data from 2023 still confirms this, being Instagram the most female-dominated platform amongst influencers, where 78% of influencers who are monetizing their accounts are females (Fohr, 2023), which naturally impacts the typical gender of influencer followers, being the majority female, and this gender being also the most impacted in their purchasing

decisions, especially when it comes to the fashion industry (Fohr, 2023; Lee *et al.*, 2022; García, 2022). There's research that confirms that Instafamous people are more influential to young females than traditional types of female celebrities, and that women are more vulnerable than men in terms of social opinions, seeking the opinions of influencers they trust or whose lifestyle they wish to imitate, in fact, when women purchase something recommended by a celebrity, their self-esteem is enhanced (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

By analyzing all of this data, it becomes clear that there is a dominance of younger generations within the Instagram landscape and the influencer audience, and of female users being the main followers of influencers and, consequently, the most influenced in their shopping behavior.

Concerning why people follow influencers, the authors Lee *et al.* (2022) studied the underlying motives for consumers to follow social media influencers on Instagram, inspired by the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which argues that people use media with a specific goal, in order to satisfy certain social and psychological needs (Lee *et al.*, 2022). In this study, Lee *et al.* (2022) emphasize the role Instagram, especially, has on encouraging materialism, since it serves as a window into other users' lives through the app's inherent dynamic visual affordances; besides this, social media influencers support this phenomenon by boasting to their followers their lavish possessions and lifestyles, considering younger generations are more liable to such content, as they undertake observational learning through social media (Lee *et al.*, 2022). The motives these authors identified were:

- Authenticity (emotional wellbeing) – “consumers follow influencers because they are genuine, open, and relatable” (Lee *et al.*, 2022, p.90), and parasocial interaction plays a big role here, social interpersonal needs are a driver for following celebrities on social media and using Instagram in general (Lee *et al.*, 2022);
- Consumerism (wishful identification and admiration) – search for brand information, this indicates how social media influencers are vital contributors to Instagram's evolution as a social commerce platform; influencers are “shopping curators who select and recommend qualified brands, making

brand exploration easier and less risky for consumers” (Lee *et al.*, 2022, p.91);

- Creative Inspiration (emotional wellbeing) – influencers are role models of impression management on social media (‘to get tips for taking and editing pictures better’, ‘to help me express my talents as freely as they do’), influencers have culture capital by having taste leadership (Lee *et al.*, 2022);
- Envy (wishful identification and admiration) – aspiration to be like the influencer, associate with her/him and follow their brand recommendations; less prone to scrutinize their trustworthiness (Lee *et al.*, 2022).

So, and based on all of the above information, it can be generally stated that the typical fashion influencer follower is essentially female, aged between 18-35 years old, and either follows the influencer because: they’re authentic and so they’ve developed a parasocial relationship with them, they provide the latest information on brands and help the consumption process, they’re sources of inspiration, and/or envy the influencer, in a sense that they aspire to be like them.

To finish the contextualization of the fashion influencer marketing spectrum, and address the trust their followers have in them, the concept of trust and of branded ventures (sponsorship) influencers partake in need to be addressed.

Chapter 3 - Trust in Influencers

3.1. What is Trust?

Trust manifests the reliance on someone’s reliability and integrity (Kim & Kim, 2021). It’s a relationship trait settled according to the continuous interactions individuals have, meaning these can also allow for the prediction of the value of future exchanges, based precisely on this relational trust (Kim & Kim, 2021; Pop *et al.*, 2021). So, trusting a speaker means the listener is willing to rely on the message, and when there’s a promise of future rewards and these promises are fulfilled, the receiver’s trust will increase (Kim & Kim, 2021).

Ergo, trust is a critical aspect in developing and sustaining long-term relationships (Pop *et al.*, 2021), guaranteeing a desirable social exchange between parts (Kim & Kim, 2021). In the case of influencers, if followers trust them, this means that their relationship is deemed as rewarding: followers believe influencers' endorsements are beneficial to them and that they bring a positive outcome, like inform them about a product they might be interested in (Kim & Kim, 2021). Consequently, followers seek to maintain this relationship and be loyal to the influencer, as well as, the message effectiveness is enhanced and, thus, there's a higher purchase intention towards the product/service recommended or endorsed by the influencer (Kim & Kim, 2021).

Trust in an influencer marketing context involves both cognitive trust (reliance on the influencer's expertise and competence) and affective trust (emotional connection and perception of the influencer's intentions (level of concern or care)) (Cabeza-Ramírez *et al.*, 2022). So, trust extends beyond product information and recommendations to encompass the influencer's overall image and behavior.

Trust represents the anticipation that a message from an influencer is safe, reliable and aimed towards the product needs their audience (Cabeza-Ramírez *et al.*, 2022). Influencers can be either very trustworthy since they are considered competent in specialized sectors such as fashion, but they also risk their own reputation if they promote products/services that do not correspond with what their followers anticipate, meaning, influencers should disclose and justify their sponsorships, so they avoid unethical perceptions within their audience and damage trust (Cabeza-Ramírez *et al.*, 2022).

Source credibility is defined as “a communicator’s positive characteristics that affect the receiver’s acceptance of a message” (Ohanian, 1990, p. 41), and those characteristics are attractiveness, trustworthiness (differs from trust as being the joined previous perceptual experiences that lead to trust (Pop *et al.*, 2021)), and expertise (Ohanian, 1991). These features act as antecedents of the followers’ trust in an influencer’s branded post (Pop *et al.*, 2021; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), meaning these factors impact the followers’ perceived trust in an influencer and, accordingly, they determine the credibility of the influencer.

3.1.1. Source Credibility Model

Credible sources typically induce more positive attitude and behavioral changes than less credible sources (Ohanian, 1991; Erdogan, 1999; Stubb & Colliander, 2019). There are three factors that underlie source credibility and, consequently, affect the follower's trust: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise; a communicator's influence on his audience will collectively depend upon some combination of these three dimensions (Ohanian, 1991).

- **Attractiveness** - Physically attractive communicators are often more successful in changing beliefs than unattractive communicators (Ohanian, 1991). If someone has an attractive look and their lifestyle is enticing, people will be seduced by their persona (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Besides, the first impression of the attractiveness of an individual is often what first captures the attention of the viewer (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). In Djafarova & Rushworth's Instagram study (2017) they concluded that attractiveness played a more influential role amongst young females, as they aspire to be like the influencers, copying their makeup and outfits. The characteristics associated with this dimension are: attractive, classy, beautiful, elegant, sexy, stylish, unique, charming, positive, good sense of humour, current/trendy, charismatic (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2018).
- **Trustworthiness** - trustworthiness has already been defined when explaining why influencers can become so influential. This dimension is the most impactful one on an influencer's credibility (Costello & Urbanska, 2021). As Stubb & Colliander (2019) state: "Trustworthiness refers to the honesty and morality of a source in providing information that is objective and unbiased" (p.212). It relates to the perceived believability, honesty, and integrity of the speaker (Harrison & Cownie, 2021). In Gomes *et al.*'s (2022) study it is concluded that authentic and quality content is what mediates trustworthiness and purchase intention, meaning, trustworthiness indirectly influences consumers' purchase intention in fashion, and parasocial interaction (intimate bond between influencer-follower (Campbell & Farrel, 2020; Marwick, 2015)) positively influences purchase intention of a recommended fashion product. The characteristics associated with this dimension

are: dependable, trustworthy, reliable, sincere, honest, engaging with the users, constructive, authentic, consistent, informative, accurate, transparency (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2018).

- **Expertise** – expertise or competence, according to Stubb & Colliander (2019) “relates to the message source's level of knowledge and expertise to provide valid information” (p.212); it relates to the knowledge, skills and experience of the speaker (Ohanian, 1991). In Ohanian’s (1991) study it’s the most relevant factor affecting purchase intention of the endorsed brand, as celebrities are typically attractive and if they’re being sponsored, then they aren’t as trustworthy, however, most influencers don’t really have industry-related qualifications, being that this finding might be outdated (Costello & Urbanska, 2021). The characteristics associated with this dimension are: experienced, knowledgeable, professional, relevant to the product and to the customer, intelligent, high followership, competent (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2018).

Djafarova & Trofimenko (2018) added that the online behavior/self-presentation is a fourth dimension that needs to be added in order to explain source credibility in online platforms; this factor is associated with: being consistent, authentic, engaging, inspirational, sociable/friendly, positive, active, having good intentions, message strength, social ties, and high quality of posts/images.

In Gomes *et al.*’s (2022) research focused on purchase intention of fashion products, it was observed that content quality was a crucial factor for purchase intention, so, if the content was deemed accurate, reliable and updated, followers may want to purchase the recommended fashion product, however, fashion influencers being perceived as experts in this area is simply not enough to influence this purchase intention, there needs to be a positive attitude regarding the sponsored post. Additionally, this study was developed in the Portuguese market of influencer marketing and comprised of a methodological section in which Portuguese influencers were interviewed, being able to draw the following conclusions: the number of followers is not the most relevant aspect, the connection with the audience, the consistency with what is being communicated, transparency and creativity are the most important characteristics for an influencer to be effective (Gomes *et al.*, 2022).

3.2. What is Sponsored & what is not?

Instagram users are increasingly more exposed to sponsored content every day, besides users being exposed to brands and ads, influencers share (paid) brand posts/stories or document events/experiences that are brand-related, whilst blending this into their usual daily activities (Karagür *et al.*, 2021). A problem that arises from this is the lack of clarity between what is sponsored and what is original and truthful content from influencers, triggering the establishment of laws from the US Federal Trade Commission and the UK Competition and Markets Authority for the disclose of paid collaborations (Karagür *et al.*, 2021). However, there's still deceptive practices and lack of transparency when it comes to influencers' sponsored content (Costello & Urbanska, 2021).

In Portugal, legislation on this topic is starting to gain attention the Ministry of Economy and the General Administration of the Consumer want to finish with non-identified advertising on social media, claiming that influencers and their agencies will be “under fire” if they publicize products covertly (Ruela, 2019). There's the principle of identifiability, which is supported by a law in the Portuguese Advertising Code, prescribing the requisite of identifying that there's an advertisement at hand and that when it's not disclosed, then fines need to be applied (Ruela, 2019).

Nowadays, influencers partake in deceiving or less intrusive disclosure methods because they fear that with too many sponsorships, they'll lose their trustworthiness and authenticity and damage their credibility, or they're rather simply unaware on how to disclose their endorsement (Costello & Urbanska, 2021; Harrison & Cownie, 2021; Carr & Hayes, 2014; Karagür *et al.*, 2021). These ambiguous practices manifest covert marketing, meaning they consist of “the use of surreptitious marketing practices that fail to disclose or reveal the true relationship with the company that produces or sponsors the marketing message” (Martin & Smith, 2008, p.45). This marketing practice raises ethical concerns and poses a major risk to influencers, that is: if followers discover the commercial motive, they'll become skeptical and distrustful as well as their relationship with the brand might become damaged; this all contributes to consumer distrust in advertising in social media in general (Harrison & Cownie, 2021).

In fact, influencers either claim the typical slogan of “I genuinely love it”, or they use inconsistent disclosure methods such as: simply tagging the brands on an OOTD (Outfit of the Day), using the hashtags “#ad”, “#parceria”, writing a brand related description, and/or tagging the brand and/or using brand related hashtags (Costello & Urbanska, 2021; Harrison & Cownie, 2021). These methods can be observed in the profile of Rita Montezuma, a Portuguese macroinfluencer, that’ll be subject of analysis in this thesis:



ritamontezuma Celebrating the 90 years of the Crocodile in a colorful manner with the coolest Lacoste Eyewear @lacoste 🤩🌿 #LacosteEyewear #LacosteCelebrates90



ritamontezuma spring days wearing @neverfullydressed x @lizzyvdligt 🌸🦋 #NFDHoneys #AD

Figure 6. Sponsored Instagram Post (Montezuma, R. [@ritamontezuma], 2023, July 5. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CuUklLiogyA/?igshid=MzRIODBiNWF1ZA==>)

Figure 7. Sponsored Instagram Post (Montezuma, R. [@ritamontezuma], 2023, April 20. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CrQ6NUMoFeR/?igshid=MzRIODBiNWF1ZA==>)

According to Carr & Hayes (2014), there's four types of disclosure when being endorsed, which can be applied to the influencers' spectrum, and which can impact their credibility:

- **No disclosure** – no reference of a third-party involvement. Unless stated otherwise, followers assume content is inherently impartial and uninfluenced. However, overly positive reviews and product placements make people suspicious of endorsement, increasing skepticism. When an influencer is indeed being sponsored, but doesn't disclose it at all, it reveals manipulative behavior and can be extremely damaging to credibility when uncovered.
- **Impartial disclosure** – explicitly stating that a review is an unbiased opinion and not influenced by a third party. This can have a reverse effect, as people doubt the true neutrality of the message if the influencer redundantly says it's their own (if you're giving a review, it should be self-explanatory it's your own). Yet, Gomes *et al.* (2022) note that this type of disclosure makes consumers believe the posts are honest, decreasing the negative impact on source credibility.
- **Implied disclosure** – outside party influence may be tacitly recognized but not at what degree or nature, becoming ambiguous. By making the minimum disclosure effort, people often overestimate the external influence in the content, negatively impacting credibility.
- **Explicit disclosure** – full acknowledgment of compensation to speak about that brand/product/service. There's a positive impact on credibility as there's transparency in disclosing the relationship. As Karagür *et al.* (2021) state: "Both influencers and brands benefit from a transparency bonus, in terms of greater trustworthiness and intentions to like" (p.330).

The authors Stubb & Colliander (2019) concluded in their research that adding a brief note about the product/service review being non sponsored (impartiality disclosure) reduces the followers' suspicion of sponsorship more than not having any disclosure; so, including the expression that it's an "honest opinion" can mitigate the negative impact on credibility. Indeed, when there's a sponsorship in question, correct disclosure directions must be applied

to avoid liability issues; therefore, these authors suggest that when influencers make product/service-related posts they should disclose when they're sponsored but also when not sponsored, as to avoid confusion (Stubb & Colliander, 2019)

The fact that the type of disclosure impacts the influencer's credibility is important, in a sense that trustworthiness and authenticity have a high impact on purchase intention, so, influencers need to be mindful on how they disclose their relationships with brands, as to avoid the impossibility to work with brands anymore, since their followers won't trust and engage with them (Costello & Urbanska, 2021). It's also fundamental to note that the content being promoted needs to be coherent with the influencer's image and type, a high endorser-brand congruence is essential, for example, as Costello & Urbanska (2021) claim "A beauty guru promoting kitchen equipment may not receive a positive response" (p.205). So, in the fashion area it's important to align the fashion brand and a specific lifestyle, in order to improve purchase intention (Gomes *et al.*, 2022)

So, the type of disclosure is fundamental because when consumers have a favorable attitude towards influencer's sponsored posts and believe that those posts are true and accurate, they are more likely to acquire a purchase intention for the recommended fashion products (Gomes *et al.*, 2022). However, when followers feel, often through the cues of the disclosure type, as though they're being manipulated and influencers and brands are taking advantage of them, they can resort to avoidance (Pradhan *et al.*, 2022).

3.3. Worst case scenario: Influencer and Brand Avoidance

"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it" - Warren Buffett
(Berman, 2014).

Instagram users mostly follow influencers due to their personal interest, and not to receive commercial messages, consequently, they expect influencers to create authentic, appealing and engaging content (Karagür *et al.*, 2021; Pradhan *et al.*, 2022).

Ergo, disclosure may be a double-edged sword: users have awareness that Instagram comprises a commercial space, so they expect endorsements and don't trust influencers as much (also because of incorrect (non)disclosure practices), however, by having a transparent acknowledgment of the commercial nature of the content, users might appreciate the honesty, or dislike the claim of monetary compensation (Karagür *et al.*, 2021). Gen Z is a demographic who's more aware of the influencer marketing strategies adopted by brands, and they do expect for brands and influencers to be ethical while sharing content, so, if there's deceitful sponsorships, or the promotion of unrealistic or unsustainable lifestyles, and misrepresentation, this generation will avoid or even unfollow these influencers or brands altogether (Pradhan *et al.*, 2022).

Accordingly, social media users equally consider that both brands and influencers have the obligation to present honest information and feedback about the recommended products and why they're being recommended (Pradhan *et al.*, 2022). So, if brands and influencers alike engage in disingenuous practices or are perceived to do so, users will develop negative moral emotions, using coping responses such as brand/influencer avoidance or spreading negative word of mouth (Pradhan *et al.*, 2022). Influencer or brand avoidance is then a phenomenon in which followers ostracize influencers/brands, by avoiding or unfollowing their social media profile (Pradhan *et al.*, 2022).

However, brands are knowingly driven by commercial intent, they're expected to promote and advertise their products and services, so they can remain unpunished by Gen Z, unlike influencers, who Gen Z builds a parasocial relationship with and follows them for their expertise and credibility (Pradhan *et al.*, 2022). Thus, when influencers succumb to the temptation of financial gain, sneakily pushing the agenda of brands and manipulating this relationship, followers will feel more betrayed than with brands (Pradhan *et al.*, 2022). Nevertheless, the level of relationship strength - which can be strong and resilient or weak and fragile, and is measured in terms of trust, commitment, and frequency of communication - impacts the level of blameworthiness, so a higher relationship strength can attenuate influencer avoidance, which can be explained by followers being more sympathetic toward influencers due to their relationship with them (Pradhan *et al.*, 2022). Yet, the moderating role of the relationship strength in influencer avoidance needs to be further reassessed, as

this conclusion was something unexpected in the study just referenced, since the authors predicted that a stronger relationship strength would lead to a bigger punishment, as the followers would feel more betrayed.

Another aspect that weighs in on judging the influencer's credibility is their number of followers (Pradhan *et al.*, 2022; De Veirman *et al.*, 2017). For example, macroinfluencers typically endorse more products than microinfluencers, increasing followers' expectations of advertising (Karagür *et al.*, 2021). Meaning number of followers, the amount of previous endorsements, and the experience and knowledge with the influencer profile play a role in credibility as well (Karagür *et al.*, 2021). Unlike what was previously mentioned in the first chapter regarding smaller influencers being considered more genuine and trustworthy than bigger ones, and having higher engagement rates (Campbell & Farrel, 2020; Park *et al.*, 2021; Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021), Pradhan *et al.* (2022) and Janssen *et al.* (2021) claim that macroinfluencers are considered more trustworthy than microinfluencers: their opinions and recommendations are regarded as more credible and well informed than the ones made by influencers with fewer followers; this also implies that macroinfluencers are deemed to be more responsible in their conduct, being supposedly more severely punished when they commit transgressive acts. This discrepancy emphasizes the need to assess the different level of trustworthiness between these two typologies, which is one of the objectives of this paper.

Warren Buffet's quote is then very relevant in a sense that influencers need to be mindful on how they navigate their business endeavors (sponsorships and collaborations), taking into account the fact that their followers build a parasocial relationship with them, and don't want to be sneakily exploited for the influencer's financial gain. If followers do find out about this, then the influencers credibility and, therefore, reputation will be seriously damaged.

Part II – Empirical Investigation

Chapter 4 – Investigation’s Methodology

In this chapter it is presented and explained: the relevance of this dissertation, the research question and hypotheses, why a quantitative method is more suitable to this research, and the data collection process.

4.1. Research Purpose & Question

As previously presented, the aim of this dissertation is to contribute to the scarce existing literature about influencer marketing in Portugal, in a fashion domain. More specifically, how Gen Z Instagram users react to the substantial number of sponsorships and brand mentions fashion influencers partake in, if followers still trust in these influencers’ brand mentionings, and if there’s a different level of trust between microinfluencers and macroinfluencers. Gen Z (people born between 1997 – 2012 (Dimock, 2022)) was the chosen demographic, because it is very aware of the influencer marketing phenomenon and strategies adopted by brands (Pradhan *et al.*, 2022), besides being the primary age group present on Instagram (people between 18-24 years old (Statista Search Department, 2023c)) and the main followers of influencers (Bakker, 2018).

It is expected that this can represent advantageous insights for fashion brands that invest exceedingly in influencer marketing in Portugal, meaning they’ll understand better how effective their investment really is. Besides this, it is intended also to provide knowledge for Portuguese influencers and brands alike on how to better disclose their commercial partnership.

Accordingly, the research question is: *What is the level of trust of Portuguese Gen Z Instagram consumers in Instagram Gen Z fashion microinfluencers versus macroinfluencers, regarding sponsored content?*

4.2. Hypotheses

In order to answer to the research question and fulfill the objectives of this study, hypotheses, to be confirmed or denied by the methodology, need to be established.

Firstly, throughout the literary chapters the difference between microinfluencers' and macroinfluencers' engagement and trustworthiness is discussed. Many authors claim that microinfluencers have more engagement and trust from their followers, compared to macroinfluencers (Campbell & Farrel, 2020; Park *et al.*, 2021; Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021; Tafesse & Wood, 2021), while others claim the contrary, stating that more followers convey a sense of more expertise and trustworthiness for followers (Pradhan *et al.*, 2022; Janssen *et al.*, 2021). Accordingly, this paper will attempt to reassess this discrepancy, while also applying it to the Portuguese, Instagram and fashion context. Since more authors support the claim that users/followers trust more in microinfluencers, the first hypothesis is:

H1: Portuguese Gen Z Instagram users/followers trust more in fashion microinfluencers than in macroinfluencers.

Secondly, it is considered that followers don't want to encounter sponsorships whilst following an influencer and that they're aware that many influencers engage in covert marketing, becoming more skeptical towards brand mentions, which altogether deteriorates the credibility and trust followers have in them (Costello & Urbanska, 2021; Harrison & Cownie, 2021; Carr & Hayes, 2014; Karagür *et al.*, 2021; Martin & Smith, 2008; Pradhan *et al.*, 2022). Especially since trustworthiness implies for influencers to be sincere, honest, authentic and transparent (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2018), something which covert marketing clearly violates. In order to assess this in the Portuguese market and in the fashion and Instagram domain, another hypothesis is drawn:

H2: Sponsorships negatively impact trustworthiness.

Still regarding sponsorships, the type of disclosure plays a big part in the perceived trust followers have in these endorsements (Costello & Urbanska, 2021; Gomes *et al.*, 2022). More specifically, it is stated that explicit disclosures are the most beneficial ones to influencers who engage in sponsorships, improving their credibility (although they can also have a reverse effect), unlike implied and non-disclosures, that usually damage credibility (Gomes *et al.*, 2022; Stubb & Colliander, 2019; Carr & Hayes, 2014; Karagür *et al.*, 2021). Because of the possible different effects these types of disclosures might generate, they need

to be reevaluated and applied to the context of this paper, so, based on the previous arguments, the third hypothesis is:

H3: Explicit disclosures are more trustworthy.

4.3. Conceptual Design

The conceptual model and design that permeates this paper is then organized around the variables present in the hypotheses and concerning the number of followers and how the influencer being macro or micro affects the followers trust in them; the sponsorships and how they impact trust; and lastly, the type of disclosure and how it being explicit affects trust. This can be seen by figure 8.

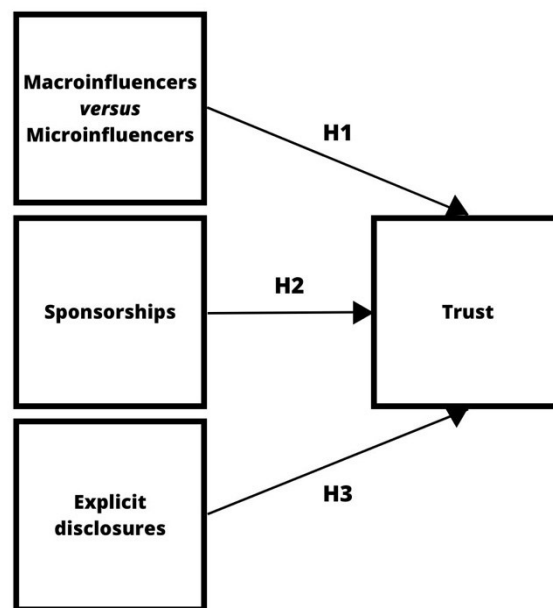


Figure 8. Conceptual model [by author]

4.4. Stimulus materials

The influencers to be analyzed in this paper are fashion Instagram macroinfluencer (133k followers, as of the date of the survey creation) Rita Montezuma (@ritamontezuma) - although this influencer currently has more than 100k followers (becoming a

megainfluencer), it was a recent fluctuant growth (after this paper had started) and it's still relatively closer to the 100k mark, being strikingly different to someone for example with 500k followers, thus classifying her as a macroinfluencer for the sake of this study - and microinfluencer (7k followers, as of the date of the survey creation) Mia Teixeira de Queiroz (@miateixeira), both Gen Z influencers. They're considered fashion influencers as they primarily work with fashion brands and predominantly share fashion related content Their Instagram pages are shown below in figure 9:

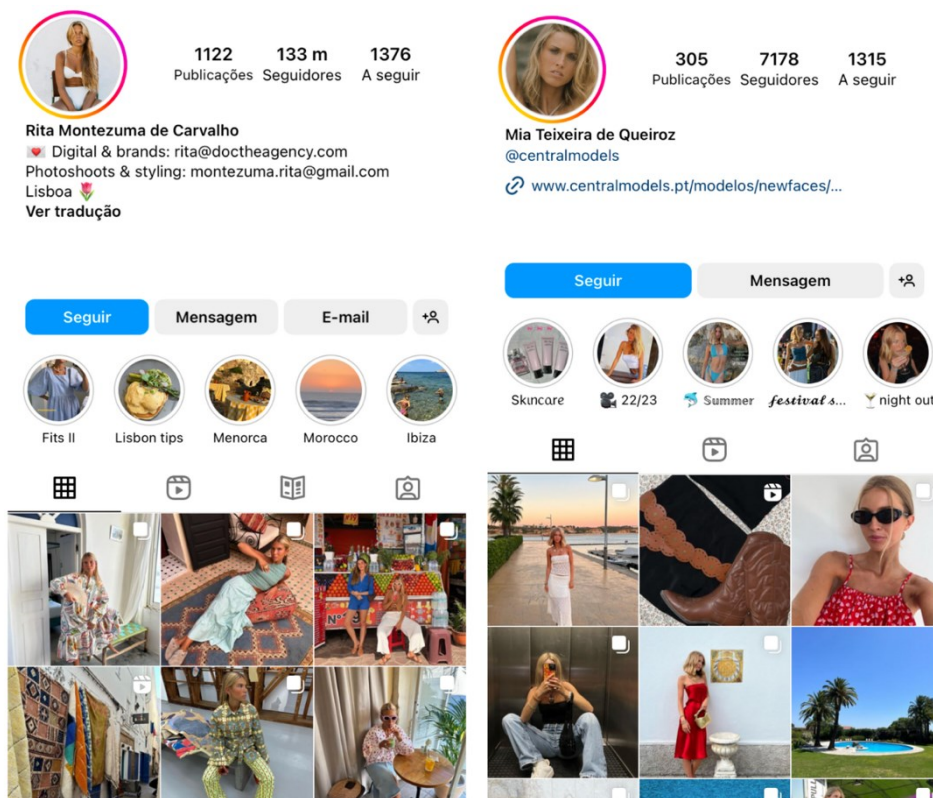


Figure 9. Profiles of Instagram Fashion influencers Rita Montezuma and Mia Teixeira de Queiroz [Rita Montezuma, n.d. <https://www.instagram.com/ritamontezuma/>; Mia Teixeira de Queiroz, n.d. <https://www.instagram.com/miateixeira/>].

The examples of sponsored posts by both influencers selected to be showed to respondents consisted of one explicitly disclosed sponsorship, an implicitly disclosed/implied sponsorship, and a non-disclosed sponsorship (from left to right), as seen below in figure 10:

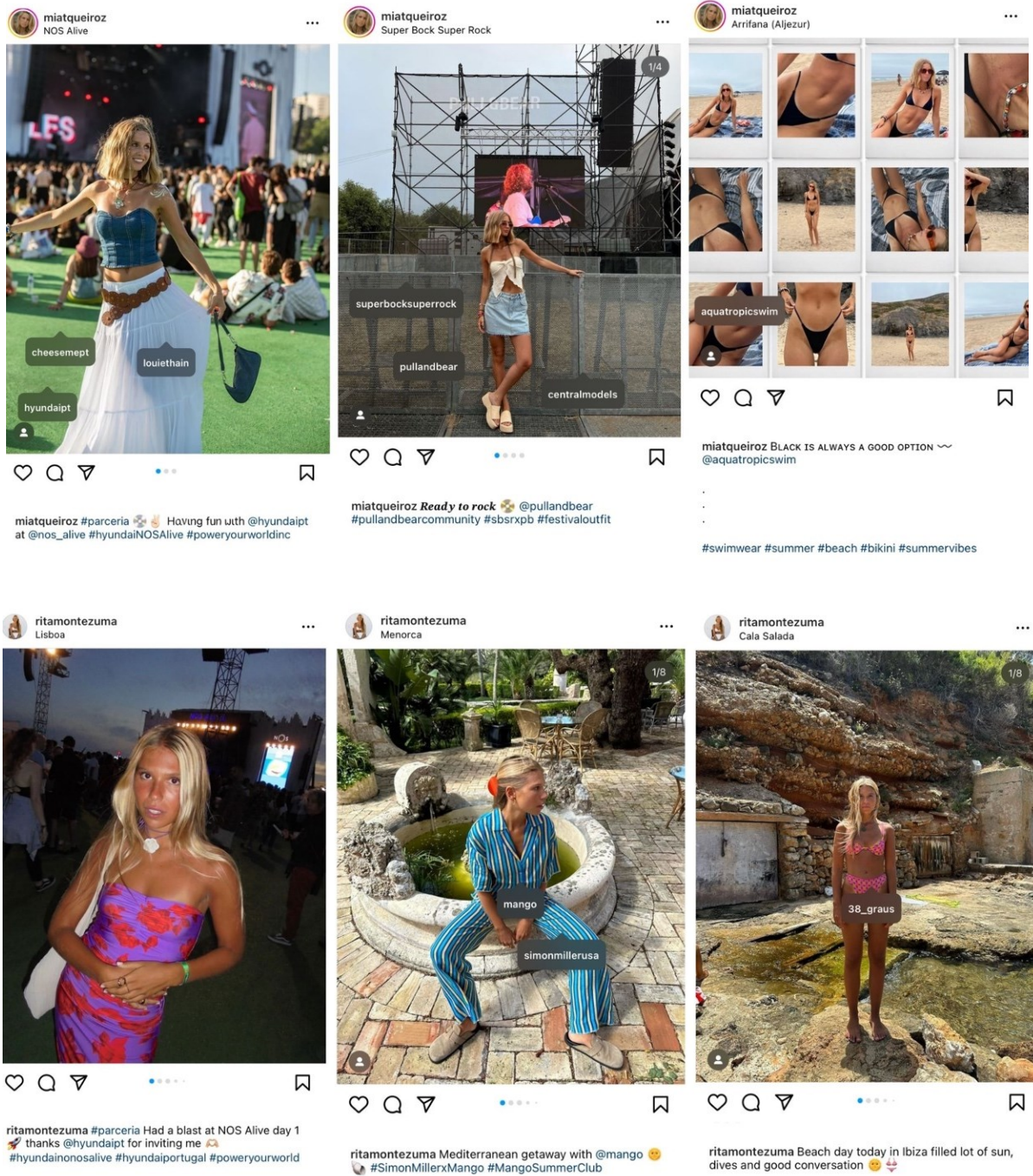


Figure 10. Brand mentioning posts by Mia Teixeira de Queiroz and Rita Montezuma (explicit, implicit and non-disclosed sponsorships from left to right) [[Rita Montezuma, n.d.<https://www.instagram.com/ritamontezuma/>; Mia Teixeira de Queiroz, n.d.<https://www.instagram.com/miatqueiroz/>].

4.5. Research Method and Design

As a means to fulfill the objectives of this paper, answer the research question and confirm or deny the established hypotheses, a quantitative method is necessary. The quantitative method allows within a relative smaller sample of individuals to make inferences about a bigger population, in this case the Generation Z of the Portuguese population in itself, and a survey is the preferred type of data collection procedure because it allows for this inference in a practical, faster and effective way, eliminating bias (Creswell, 2009). The survey was developed based on Prader's trust measurement scale, (2021), Djafarova & Trofimenko's (2018) source credibility model's expressions to employ in questions to measure trust, and Carr & Hayes' (2014) disclosure types to help measure trustworthiness in sponsorships, and also Karagür *et al.* (2021), and Stubb & Colliander's (2019) conclusions to help structure questions regarding the disclosure types. These references were all selected due to their high level of quality, academic validation, applicability and relevance and fit with the context of this research.

Once decided the methodological strategy, it was defined that the survey should start with some demographic questions, namely, age and gender. Being that age will be limited to the adult Generation Z (1997-2012), meaning between 18-26 years old, as the primary demographic on Instagram and that mainly follow influencers are between 18-24 years old (Bakker, 2018; Statista Search Department, 2023c) and Gen Z is determined to be the generation that is most aware of influencer marketing practices (Pradhan *et al.*, 2022). Excluding the underage people and including the 25–26-year-old people that belong to the Gen Z division in the survey. Then, and in order to approach the research topic, emerged the need to understand whether the respondents follow influencers and also fashion influencers and if they know and follow the two influencers in question or not. A section about the relationship with each influencer then followed up these questions.

To confirm or deny the first hypothesis and, therefore, measure trust, a trust measurement scale from Prader (2021) (Table 4.) was employed and translated into Portuguese and with an added question concerning number of followers ("The

bigger/smaller number of followers positively influences my trust”), all combined with a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from “Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree”.

Variable Trust – in sponsorship context (H1)	I can rely on the influencer’s content.
	I believe what the influencer says and I am sure that she would not try to take advantage of the followers.
	The influencer is straightforward and honest even though her self-interests are involved.
	The influencer would not tell a lie even if she could gain by it.

Table 4. Trust measurement scale employed in survey (Prader, 2021).

Additionally, to measure the relationship strength and source credibility of the influencers, and consequently contribute to deny or confirm H1, sentences related to the source credibility model factors, which are attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise (Ohanian, 1991), were implemented for the respondents to answer with a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from “Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree”. These sentences were inspired by Prader’s (2021) closeness and authenticity scale, and also by Djafarova & Trofimenko’s (2018) characteristics associated to each of the source credibility model factors, originating the sentences present in Table 5. This was also complemented with another question regarding the relation with the content of the influencer, inspired by Djafarova & Trofimenko’s (2018) contribution of online behavior/self-presentation being a fourth dimension in this model, adding the sentences also present in Table 5. to answer, once again, with a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from “Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree”.

Variable Trust – in source credibility model context (H1)	Trustworthiness	She’s like a friend to me
	Attractiveness	She inspires my style and look
	Trustworthiness	She’s authentic
	Expertise	She’s competent and experienced
	Expertise	She’s relatable
	Online behavior/self-presentation	The content is inspirational
	Attractiveness	The content is creative
	Online behavior/self-presentation	The content is high quality

Table 5. Source credibility model measurement scale employed in survey (Prader, 2021; Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2018).

After inquiring about the influencer’s characteristics, the trust level and how the respondents feel about the influencer’s content, a sponsorship section was developed. In this section, the stimulus material of the sponsored posts by each fashion influencer was shown to the respondents alongside the questions of “Is this post sponsored?” with a “yes/no/I don’t know” options, and how the respondent feels about the disclosure type of the post (having an explicit one, implicit/IMPLIED, and a non-disclosure one), whose responses were all based on the 5-point Likert Scale ranging from “Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree”. The questions that follow were inspired by the conclusions of papers by Carr & Hayes (2014), who’ve established the disclosure types, Karagür *et al.* (2021), and Stubb & Colliander (2019), that state that an explicit disclosure is viewed as honest and beneficial to the trustworthiness of the influencer, and that impartial disclosure also generates the same behaviour, meaning disclosing when there’s a sponsorship and when there’s not one is the best way to guarantee the trust of the followers.

Consequently, the respondents are faced with three examples of each type of disclosure, as presented in table 6.

Explicit post	I appreciate the honesty and transparency	H3
	I doubt the influencer’s intentions	H2
	I prefer for the sponsorship to be disclosed this way than not at all	H3
Implicit/Implied post	I appreciate the honesty and transparency	H3
	I doubt the influencer’s intentions	H2
	I prefer for the sponsorship to be disclosed this way than not at all	H3
	I wish the sponsorship was more clearly disclosed	H3
	In not clearly disclosing the sponsorship, I lose interest in following this influencer	H3
Non-disclosed post	I appreciate the honesty and transparency	H3

	I doubt the influencer's intentions	H2
	I wish the sponsorship was more clearly disclosed	H3
	In not clearly disclosing the sponsorship, I lose interest in following this influencer	H3

Table 6. Disclosure types' feedback (Carr & Hayes, 2014; Karagür *et al.*, 2021; Stubb & Colliander, 2019).

Lastly, about sponsored posts by fashion influencers in general, table 7. has the questions presented in the survey, which are based on Costello & Urbanska's (2021) and Gomes *et al.*'s (2022) conclusions that there needs to be a congruence between the sponsorship and the influencer and that consumers tend to distrust sponsored posts when they're not truthfully disclosed but have a favorable attitude when they do, and finally, on the argument that the more followers, the less consumers trust in the influencers, stated by several authors (Campbell & Farrel, 2020; Park *et al.*, 2021; Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021; Tafesse & Wood, 2021).

I trust in the sponsored posts of fashion influencers	H2
Make me doubt about other posts that mention brands	H2
I appreciate the information about products/services from the fashion world	H2
I appreciate the information about products/services outside of the fashion world	H2
I always prefer for influencers to indicate when a post that mentions brands is or isn't sponsored	H3
The bigger the number of followers, the more I distrust the post that mentions brands	H1

Table 7. Overall sponsorship feedback (Costello & Urbanska, 2021. Gomes *et al.*, 2022; Campbell & Farrel, 2020; Park *et al.*, 2021; Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021. https://influencermarketinghub.com/ebooks/influencer_marketing_benchmark_report_2021.pdf; Tafesse & Wood, 2021).

4.6. Data Collection

The survey was implemented at a smaller scale (10 people) to do a preliminary test and check for any incongruencies and misunderstandings. After it was successfully distributed, it was implemented to a bigger sample for 1 week. Accordingly, the data collection process consisted of self-administered questionnaires translated to Portuguese (as it is the target population of this paper) through the Google Forms platform and was shared via social media (Whatsapp, Instagram and LinkedIn), following the best practices highlighted by Creswell (2009). Before starting the survey, the participants were firstly briefed that they could only participate if they were between 18-26 years old and had an Instagram profile, and that all of the information gathered would respect the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), protecting their privacy and anonymity. The number of valid answers consisted of 215 and all of the data collected was analyzed and calculated through Excel.

Chapter 5 - Survey Results & Discussion

5.1. General Information about Participants

The final sample ended up consisting of 215 respondents. The age distribution of the participants corresponds to figure 11., displaying a clear dominance of the 23-24 age group (52,6% - 113 people).

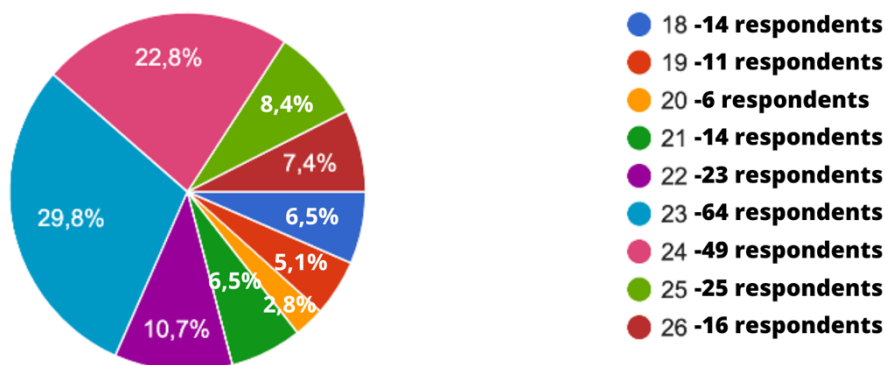


Figure 11. Survey's age distribution in a circular graph with percentages and frequencies.

The gender of the participants was distributed in manner of figure 12, having 80.9% female participants, showcasing a strong predominance of female respondents, which coincides with the fact that Instagram is the most female-dominated platform amongst influencers (as of 2023, 78% of monetizing influencers were female (Fohr, 2023)) and, consequently, most followers of these influencers are also female, especially in the fashion industry, which is already a female-oriented domain (Fohr, 2023; Lee *et al.*, 2022; García, 2022).

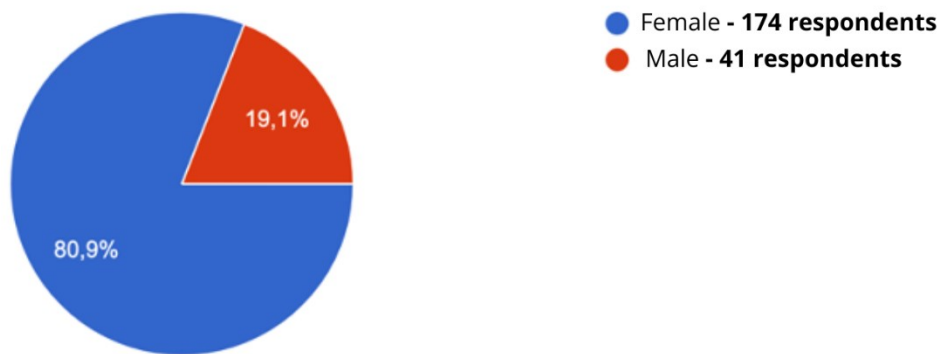


Figure 12. Survey's gender distribution in a circular graph with percentages and frequencies.

The question of whether the respondent follows influencers or not had the ensuing distribution, confirming following influencers is a trend for Gen Z, with 83,7% (180) of respondents following them:

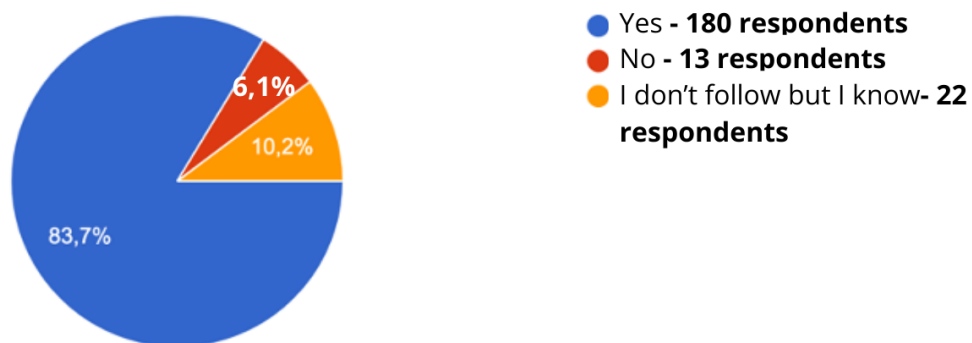


Figure 13. Survey's distribution of whether respondents follow influencers in circular graph with percentages and frequencies.

Regarding if they follow fashion influencers instead, the participants answered like so:

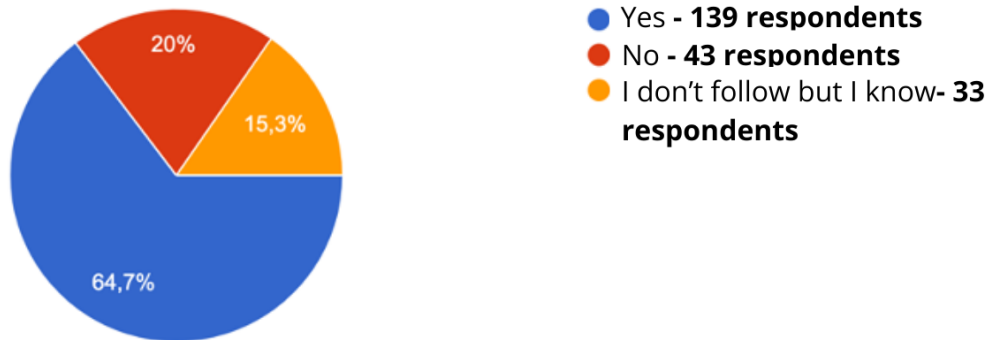


Figure 14. Survey's distribution of whether respondents follow fashion influencers in circular graph with percentages and frequencies.

Comparing figure 13 and 14, there was a 16% drop in following influencers, when they were connected to the fashion industry, a 13,9% increase in negative responses and a 5,1% increase in participants that don't follow but know fashion influencers, manifesting a slight distance and detachment from these types of influencers for the respondents.

Finally, after showing snippets of Rita Montezuma and Mia Teixeira de Queiroz's profiles, the respondents were asked if they know these particular fashion influencers, and the results were:



Figure 15. Survey's distribution of whether respondents know Rita Montezuma and Mia Teixeira de Queiroz's Instagram profiles in circular graph with percentages and frequencies.

Meaning out of the 215 participants, 103 of them (47,9%) knew these fashion influencers (I know Rita Montezuma + I know Mia T Queiroz + I know both). This question allowed to divide the survey into three subsequent sections: an ‘I only know Mia Teixeira de Queiroz’ section, an ‘I only know Rita Montezuma’ section, and an ‘I know both’ section. Additionally, the high percentage of people that don’t know these influencers (52,1%) can be explained by the previous results from figure 13 and 14, as well as, the fact that these influencers, besides being focused in fashion, they are micro and macro, meaning, they represent sort of a niche.

Concerning whether the respondents follow these two specific Instagram fashion influencers, the responses were:

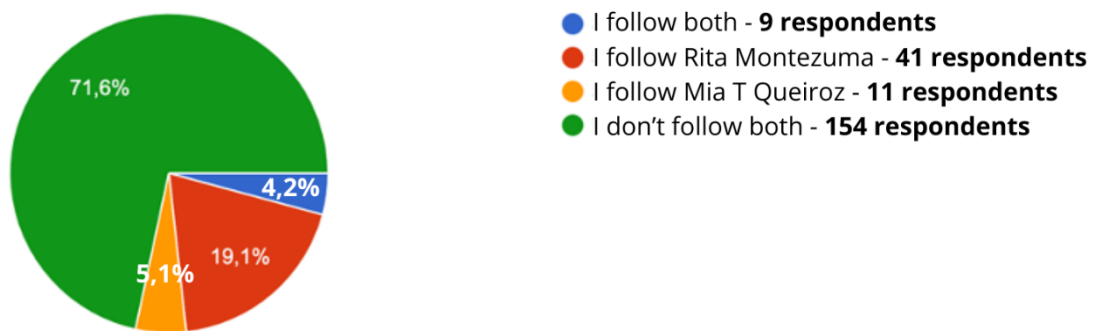


Figure 16. Survey’s distribution of whether respondents follow Rita Montezuma and Mia Teixeira de Queiroz’s Instagram profiles in circular graph with percentages and frequencies.

Indicating that out of the 215 participants, 61 of them (28,4%) follow the fashion influencers. This emphasizes the lack of intimacy most of the respondents have from the influencers in question.

Up until this point, it is now clear that there’s a weak connection between this Gen Z representative sample and the fashion industry on Instagram and these specific fashion influencers. Nevertheless, the next part of the survey is destined to dig deeper into the opinions about each influencer and the responses to the examples of sponsored content.

In the next portions of the relationship with each influencer and the examples of sponsorships, the 5-point Likert Scale ranging from “Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree” used in the survey was converted into 1-5 in order to analyze the data, generate and measure results.

The subsequent tables present the frequencies of each of the questions, the mean of each question, which allows to determine the central tendency for answers (Bhandari, 2023b), the standard deviation which measures the level of homogeneity of the answers, meaning whether the average amount of variability of the dataset, it signifies that the answers can vary up to that value from the mean (Bhandari, 2023a), the total of both of these measurements for each subtheme, and the Cronbach’s alpha of each subtheme. This last instrument measures the reliability of the set of items measuring the same construct (in this case the subthemes, which altogether measure trust), if they’re internally consistent with each other or not (needs to be above 0.7 to be acceptable) (Saidi & Siew, 2019).

5.2. Participants’ Relationship with Influencers – Hypothesis 1

Regarding the first hypothesis - **H1: Portuguese Gen Z Instagram users/followers trust more in fashion microinfluencers than in macroinfluencers** – the subsequent tables about each of the influencers (Mia Teixeira de Queiroz & Rita Montezuma) were formed, dividing the survey questions that measure the first hypothesis into 3 trust subthemes which are: overall trust in influencer (table 8. and table 11.), the source credibility factors (table 9. and table 12.), and trust *versus* the number of followers (table 10. and table 13.).

For Mia Teixeira de Queiroz, the frequency is of 75 answers, being this the number of people that only knew Mia Teixeira de Queiroz (12) and that knew both of the influencers (63).

H1 Variables	Questions about relationship with Mia Teixeira de Queiroz	frequency	mean	std	total mean	total std	Cronbach's alpha
Trust in Influencer	I can rely on the influencer's content.	75	3,43	0,93	3,40	0,95	0,81
	I believe what the influencer says and I am sure that she would not try to take advantage of the followers.		3,36	0,90			
	The influencer is straightforward and honest even though her self-interests are involved.		3,49	0,91			
	The influencer would not tell a lie even if she could gain by it.		3,17	0,94			

Table 8. H1 variable from Mia Teixeira de Queiroz – Trust in Influencer – measured by frequency, mean, standard deviation, total mean and standard deviation, and Cronbach’s alpha [from Excel].

The subtheme of trust in Mia Teixeira de Queiroz (table 8.) has a total mean of 3.4 which indicates that, on average, respondents leaned more towards agreement (4) than disagreement (2). The total standard deviation value of 0.9 reveals that the responses are moderately variable from the mean, suggesting that while the average sentiment is leaning towards agreement, there are individuals who both strongly agree and others who moderately agree or even disagree. Lastly, the 0,81 Cronbach’s alpha indicates that this set of questions are good to measure this subtheme, proving their reliability. This symbolizes that, on average, respondents do trust in Mia Teixeira de Queiroz.

H1 Variables	Questions about relationship with Mia Teixeira de Queiroz	frequency	mean	std	total mean	total std	Cronbach’s alpha
Trustworthiness	She’s like a friend to me	75	2,19	1,23	2,83	1,12	0,90
Attractiveness	She inspires my style and look		2,59	1,12			
Trustworthiness	She’s authentic		3,33	0,99			
Expertise	She’s competent and experienced		2,91	0,89			
Expertise	She’s relatable		3,16	1,03			
Online behavior/self-presentation	The content is inspirational		2,89	0,99			
Attractiveness	The content is creative		3,03	1,04			
Online behavior/self-presentation	The content is high quality		2,88	0,97			

Table 9. H1 variable from Mia Teixeira de Queiroz – Source Credibility Factors – measured by frequency, mean, standard deviation, total mean and standard deviation, and Cronbach’s alpha [from Excel].

The subtheme of the source credibility factors (trustworthiness, attractiveness, expertise and online behavior/self-presentation) (table 9.) has a total mean of 2,83, revealing that, on average, the participants tend to disagree with the factors regarding Mia Teixeira de Queiroz’s credibility. The total standard deviation of 1,12, means answers were less homogeneous than the previous subtheme, having a significant diversity in responses, some strongly disagreeing and others having a span of opinions. Dividing the data by the source credibility factors, trustworthiness has a total mean of 2,76, attractiveness of 2,81, expertise of 3,04, and online behavior/self-presentation of 2,89, meaning expertise was the most

favorable factor and trustworthiness the least. The Cronbach's alpha value of 0,90 indicates a great consistency between the questions of this subtheme, confirming their reliability. So, although on average respondents disagreed with Mia Teixeira de Queiroz's credibility factors, the opinions were very diversified.

H1 Variables	Questions about relationship with Mia Teixeira de Queiroz	frequency	mean	std	total mean	total std	Cronbach's alpha
Trust versus Followers	The smaller number of followers positively impacts my trust	75	3,33	1,04	2,91	1,12	0,36
	Regarding sponsored posts from fashion influencers. The more followers, the more I distrust the post that mentions		2,68	1,13			

Table 10. H1 variable from Mia Teixeira de Queiroz – Trust *versus* Followers – measured by frequency, mean, standard deviation, total mean and standard deviation, and Cronbach's alpha [from Excel].

Finally, the subtheme of trust according to number of followers (table 10.), the total mean of 2,91 reveals, once again, that the respondents are, on average, gravitating towards disagreeing about the influence the number of followers of Mia Teixeira de Queiroz has on their trust in her. The total standard deviation of 1,12 like the previous subtheme shows again the variability of the answers. At last, the Cronbach's alpha of 0.36 indicates that these two questions aren't consistent with each other and reliable to measure the trust *versus* the impact of followers, which can be explained by the fact that the questions have a different structure and wording.

However, the mean of the question "The smaller number of followers positively influences my trust" being 3,33 indicates that respondents, on average, agreed about it, and the mean of the question "The more followers, the more I distrust the post that mentions brands" of 2,68 infers that, on average, participants slightly tended to disagree with this statement. Although there was a moderate range of opinions, taking into account the standard deviation values, these results mean that people can agree that having fewer followers makes a positive impact on their trust, but having a bigger following doesn't necessarily make them distrust the sponsored post of the influencer. In other words, it was possible to identify a slight positive tendency between influencers having fewer followers and trust.

Upon observing each mean of every question, it's noted Mia Teixeira de Queiroz's honesty and lack of self-interest is what's most well rated by the participants ("The influencer is straightforward and honest even though her self-interests are involved" with a mean of 3,49), and the least rated is one of the attractiveness measurements, how she is a source of inspiration ("She inspires my style and look" with a mean of 2,59). This can signify that the participants believe in Mia Teixeira de Queiroz and find her a principled person, trusting in her, but they don't necessarily trust in the credibility of her content, hence the agreement in trust but disagreement and variability of attitudes in source credibility.

Concluding for Mia Teixeira de Queiroz, that the participants, on average, trust in her, as in trust in her authenticity, however, they don't find her content credible due to the low mean values in the source credibility factors, especially when it concerned her content and inspiration potential, lastly, in terms of the impact of the smaller number of followers, respondents agreed it was positively associated with trust, however, a bigger number of followers isn't a distrustful aspect for them.

For Rita Montezuma, the frequency is of 91 answers, being this number the people that only knew Rita Montezuma (28) and that knew both of the influencers (63).

H1 Variables	Questions about relationship with Rita Montezuma	frequency	mean	std	total mean	total std	Cronbach's alpha
Trust in Influencer	I can rely on the influencer's content.	91	3,65	0,75	3,23	0,73	0,76
	I believe what the influencer says and I am sure that she would not try to take advantage of the followers.		3,23	0,71			
	The influencer is straightforward and honest even though her self-interests are involved.		3,31	0,77			
	The influencer would not tell a lie even if she could gain by it.		2,95	0,80			

Table 11. H1 variable from Rita Montezuma – Trust in Influencer – measured by frequency, mean, standard deviation, total mean and standard deviation, and Cronbach's alpha [from Excel].

The subtheme of trust in Rita Montezuma (table 11.) has a total mean of 3,23, representing the participants' average tendency in agreeing they trust this specific influencer. The value of 0,73 of the total standard deviation means the answers are more homogenous than the results from table 8., so there's less variability in responses and a higher degree of consensus about their trust in Rita Montezuma. The Cronbach's alpha of 0,76 suggests that

this set of questions are acceptable to measure this subtheme, proving their soundness. This insinuates that respondents, on average, do trust in Rita Montezuma.

H1 Variables	Questions about relationship with Rita Montezuma	frequency	mean	std	total mean	total std	Cronbach's alpha
Trustworthiness	She's like a friend to me	91	2,11	1,01	3,45	0,89	0,88
Attractiveness	She inspires my style and look		3,29	1,13			
Trustworthiness	She's authentic		3,58	0,89			
Expertise	She's competent and experienced		3,76	0,79			
Expertise	She's relatable		3,34	0,87			
Online behavior/self-presentation	The content is inspirational		3,87	0,82			
Attractiveness	The content is creative		4,15	0,86			
Online behavior/self-presentation	The content is high quality		3,96	0,85			

Table 12. H1 variable from Rita Montezuma – Source Credibility Factors – measured by frequency, mean, standard deviation, total mean and standard deviation, and Cronbach's alpha [from Excel].

The subtheme of the source credibility factors (trustworthiness, attractiveness, expertise and online behavior/self-presentation) (table 12.) has a total mean of 3,45, indicating, once again, that the participants agree on average about Rita Montezuma's credibility factors. A total standard deviation of 0,89, means answers were less similar than the previous subtheme, having some variability in responses. Furthermore, dividing the data by the source credibility factors, trustworthiness has a total mean of 2,85, attractiveness of 3,71, expertise of 3,55, and online behavior/self-presentation of 3,92, meaning online behavior/self-presentation was the most positive factor and trustworthiness the more negative one. The Cronbach's alpha value of 0,88 denotes a great reliability of these questions to measure source credibility. Meaning, participants agreed, on average, about the credibility factors of Rita Montezuma (macroinfluencer), and especially valued her content, unlike Mia Teixeira de Queiroz (microinfluencer).

H1 Variables	Questions about relationship with Rita Montezuma	frequency	mean	std	total mean	total std	Cronbach's alpha
Trust versus Followers	The bigger number of followers positively impacts my trust	91	2,97	0,99	2,77	1,10	0,29
	Regarding sponsored posts from fashion influencers. The more followers, the more I distrust the post that mentions brands		2,68	1,13			

Table 13. H1 variable from Rita Montezuma – Trust *versus* Followers – measured by frequency, mean, standard deviation, total mean and standard deviation, and Cronbach’s alpha [from Excel].

Focusing now on the last subtheme of trust according to number of followers (table 13.), the total mean of 2,77 shows that the participants are, on average, gravitating more towards disagreeing about the impact the number of followers of Rita Montezuma has on their trust in her. The total standard deviation of 1,10 shows the higher variability in answers in this subtheme, there could’ve been respondents strongly disagreeing, solely disagreeing or even slightly agreeing on this subject. At last, the Cronbach’s alpha of 0.29 reflects again that these two questions aren’t reliable to measure the trust *versus* the impact of followers, presumably because the questions have a different structure and wording, being inconsistent with each other.

Yet, the question “The bigger number of followers positively influences my trust” having a mean of 2,97 means participants agreed, on average, about it, and regarding the other question “The more followers, the more I distrust the post that mentions brands”, the mean value of 2,68 conveys, once again, that, on average, respondents somewhat disagreed with this statement. Even though the standard deviation values portray a moderate variability in responses, these numbers mean that people can agree that having more followers makes a positive impact on their trust, but, as said before for Mia Teixeira de Queiroz, having a bigger following doesn’t necessarily make them distrust the sponsored post of the influencer.

When looking at all the separate means of each question, it is observed that the most valuable aspect in the relationship the respondents have with Rita Montezuma is how her content is creative (“The content is creative” with a mean of 4,15), and the least rated one is their intimacy/closeness (“She’s like a friend to me” with a mean of 2,11). Which suggests that, these users might feel more detached from this influencer, but more inspired by her content, contrarily to Mia Teixeira de Queiroz.

Concluding for Rita Montezuma, that the respondents, on average, trust in her and her content’s quality, additionally, they find her credible due to her higher mean values in

the source credibility factors, especially when it concerned her content and inspiration potential, however, intimacy and closeness aspects fell short, manifesting a bigger detachment from Rita Montezuma, compared to Mia Teixeira de Queiroz, lastly, in terms of the impact of the bigger number of followers, respondents agreed it was positively associated with trust, and that a bigger number of followers isn't a distrustful aspect for them.

In conclusion, the fact that there weren't different results in terms of trust in the character of the microinfluencer and macroinfluencer, as respondents claimed they trusted both, insinuates the first hypothesis - **H1: Portuguese Gen Z Instagram users/followers trust more in fashion microinfluencers than in macroinfluencers** – can't be confirmed. In fact, the answers to the questions that addressed the number of followers suggested that the number of followers doesn't have an effect on their trust (participants disagreed on average that “The more followers, the more I distrust the post that mentions brands”), which is further confirmed with the fact that respondents agreed that “The bigger/smaller number of followers positively influences my trust” for both cases, showcasing a lack of preference for the number of followers, and therefore, a rejection of the first hypothesis.

5.3. Participants' trust in sponsorship – Hypothesis 2

Concerning now the second hypothesis - **H2: Sponsorships negatively impact trustworthiness** – the ensuing table (Table 14.) joins the survey questions that provide data to either confirm or reject this hypothesis. The table showcases the frequency of the questions, the mean of each question (that's repeated for each section (section of I only know Mia, I only know Rita, and I know both)), the standard deviation and the Cronbach's alpha of these three questions joined to measure the impact of the sponsorship in their trust in the influencer.

	Questions about trust in sponsorship	frequency	total mean	Total std	Cronbach's alpha
H2 Variables	I distrust the influencer's intentions	103	2,42	0,99	0,84
	I trust in the sponsored posts of fashion influencers		2,78	0,95	
	Makes me doubt of other posts that mention brands		3,34	0,92	

Table 14. H2 variables measured by frequency, total mean and standard deviation, and Cronbach's alpha [from Excel].

In this table (table 14.) the frequency of 103 is of the people that knew any of the influencers (only Mia was 12, only Rita was 28, and both was 63). In the first question, the total mean of 2,42 showcases the average sentiment of disagreement in responses about distrusting the influencer's intentions when faced with a brand mentioning post. The standards deviation of 0,99 means there's a moderate degree in mutability of answers. In the other question, the value of the total mean is 2,78 demonstrating, anew, that the participants are, on average, disagreeing about trusting in the sponsored posts of fashion influencers. The total standard deviation is similar to the first one being 0,95. The last question that helps measure this hypothesis has a total mean of 3,34 meaning respondents agreed, on average, about doubting other brand mentioning posts, this question also had a standard deviation similar to the other questions being 0,92, having a moderate variability. The Cronbach's alpha of 0,84 of these three questions combined to measure H2 expresses this dataset has a good reliance in doing so.

This illustrates that the participants don't distrust these two influencers' intentions when faced with their examples of sponsored posts, which is in accordance with the previous results from hypothesis 1 of respondents trusting in these two influencers. Despite that, participants on average agreed they distrust the sponsored posts of fashion influencers and that they doubt the other posts that mention brands, accentuating the lack of trust in sponsored contexts.

	Questions about approval of sponsorship	frequency	total mean	Total std
H2 Variables	I appreciate the information about products/services FROM the fashion world	103	3,85	0,82
	I appreciate the information about products/services OUTSIDE of the fashion world		3,75	0,86

Table 15. Extra H2 variables measured by frequency, total mean and standard deviation, and Cronbach's alpha [from Excel].

This other table above (table 15.) offers another insight into the approval of sponsorships, contributing to the second hypothesis.

In terms of the appreciation of information within the fashion world, the total mean was of 3,85, denoting an average tendency in agreeing, at a relatively high level, that they like these types of sponsorships. The total standard deviation from this question was 0,82, meaning most respondents gave similar ratings to this question. Regarding the appreciation of information from fashion influencers outside of the fashion world, the responses were very similar. The total mean value was 3,75, exhibiting a strong average tendency in agreeing that they like these types of sponsorships. The total standard deviation value was of 0,86, showcasing, once again, homogenous answers and attitudes towards this question. These questions emphasize the informational value sponsorships have in Instagram users, meaning, sponsorships are valued for their utility and instructional value, but in terms of trust they aren't as appreciated, as seen by the previous results.

Therefore, the second hypothesis – **H2: Sponsorships negatively impact trustworthiness** – can be confirmed, as respondents first agreed they trusted in both of the influencers, not doubting their intentions, yet, after being exposed to examples of sponsorships, the participants attitude towards brand mentioning posts was more negative, in a sense they distrusted the sponsored posts and claimed to potentially doubt others.

5.4. Participants' approval of type of disclosure – Hypothesis 3

In order to assess the third hypothesis - **H3: Explicit and impartial disclosures are more trustworthy** – four tables were structured around the questions that assessed the approval of explicit disclosure (table 16.), implicit disclosure (table 17.) and non-disclosure (table 18.) for Rita Montezuma and for Mia Teixeira de Queiroz, plus a general question about sponsored posts of fashion influencers (table 20.), which implicitly mentions explicit and impartial disclosures' approval.

These tables have once again the frequency of 103, since it's the number of the respondents that knew any of the influencers.

H3 Variables	Questions about approval of type of disclosure	frequency	mean	std	total mean	total std	Cronbach's alpha
Explicit	I appreciate the honesty and transparency	103	4,21	0,8	4,28	0,77	0,7
	I prefer for the sponsorship to be disclosed this way than not at all		4,34	0,7			

Table 16. H3 variables – Explicit Disclosures – measured by frequency, mean, standard deviation, total mean and standard deviation, and Cronbach's alpha [from Excel].

The total mean of the explicit disclosure (table 16.) of 4,28 reveals that the participants on average leaned more towards strongly agreeing that they prefer to have a sponsorship disclosed like this. The standard deviation is of 0,77, showcases the little variability in answers. The Cronbach's alpha value of 0,70 represents an acceptable reliability for these questions to measure the approval and preference of explicit disclosures. These results emphasize the approval of explicit disclosures.

H3 Variables	Questions about approval of type of disclosure	frequency	mean	std	total mean	total std	Cronbach's alpha
Implicit	I appreciate the honesty and transparency	103	3,95	0,8	3,33	0,9	0,85
	I prefer for the sponsorship to be disclosed this way than not at all		4,13	0,8			
	I wish the sponsorship was more clearly disclosed		2,62	1			
	In not clearly disclosing the sponsorship, I lose interest in following this influencer		2,62	1			

Table 17. H3 variables – Implicit Disclosures – measured by frequency, mean, standard deviation, total mean and standard deviation, and Cronbach's alpha [from Excel].

The implicit disclosures (table 17.) total mean of 3,33 expresses how the respondents' answers were, on average, pending towards agreeing about the acceptance of this type of disclosure. However, the total standard deviation result is of 0,9, meaning answers were somewhat heterogeneous. The Cronbach's alpha is 0,85, meaning these

questions have a good consistency between them to measure this concept with solidity. This outcome denotes the acceptance of this type of disclosure. In addition, by observing the mean of “I wish the sponsorship was more clearly disclosed” of 2,62 suggests the respondents are, on average, satisfied with this type of disclosure, disagreeing it needed to be more clearly disclosed.

H3 Variables	Questions about approval of type of disclosure	frequency	mean	std	total mean	total std	Cronbach's alpha
No-Disclosure	I appreciate the honesty and transparency	103	3,54	1	3,04	1,07	0,79
	I wish the sponsorship was more clearly disclosed		3,24	1,2			
	I'm not clearly disclosing the sponsorship, I lose interest in following this influencer		2,34	1			

Table 18. H3 variables – No-Disclosures – measured by frequency, mean, standard deviation, total mean and standard deviation, and Cronbach’s alpha [from Excel].

In the non-disclosure portion (table 18.), the total mean was of 3,04, expressing how people were more prone, on average, to slightly agree on their acceptance of this type of disclosure, the total standard deviation of 1,07 reveals answers varied moderately, and the Cronbach’s alpha of 0,79 exhibits an acceptable consistency between these questions that measure the approval of non-disclosures.

	Do you consider this a sponsored post?	Frequency	Percentage
Non-Disclosure	Yes	93	49%
	No	46	24%
	I don't know	50	26%
Explicit Disclosure	Yes	158	67%
	No	7	3%
	I don't know	2	1%
Implicit Disclosure	Yes	159	67%
	No	5	2%
	I don't know	3	1%

Table 19. Respondents’ ability to identify if the post is sponsored or not with the frequencies and percentages [from Excel].

A detail that can explain these results is the fact that the respondents were the most confused about this type of disclosure and whether it was really a sponsored post or not. This is showcased by table 19., which has the most uneven responses in the non-disclosure type, having a mere 49% claiming it's a sponsored post, unlike the other types of posts where 67% in both explicit and implicit said they were sponsored posts, so an incertitude in identifying the sponsorship of the post most likely caused dubious results for this type of disclosure when it concerned the alleged transparency of the post. However, when it came to the preference for the post to have been more clearly disclosed the mean of 2,34 indicates that, on average, people agreed they wish it was indeed more intelligible.

H3 Variables	Questions about approval of type of disclosure	frequency	mean	std
General	I always prefer for influencers to indicate when a post that mentions brands is or isn't sponsored	103	3,63	1,1

Table 20. H3 variables – General preference – measured by frequency, mean, standard deviation, total mean and standard deviation, and Cronbach's alpha [from Excel].

Lastly, regarding the general question (that implicitly pertains to explicit but also to impartial disclosures) of “I always prefer for influencers to indicate when a post that mentions brands is or isn't sponsored”, looking at table 20., the mean was 3,63 displaying how respondents on average answered favoring the agreeing rating (at a moderate level). The standard deviation is of 1,1 reveals variability in responses, and the Cronbach's alpha isn't applied here because it's simply one question to measure this concept, and not a set of questions. This means that people indeed agreed, on average, that they inevitably prefer for posts to be unequivocal when they're sponsored, but also when they're not.

In looking at all the separate means of the H3 variable tables, it can be observed that the highest one is of the preference of the sponsorship being explicitly disclosed (“I prefer for the sponsorship to be disclosed this way than not at all”) and the lowest ones are

collectively the ones about influencer avoidance (“In not clearly disclosing the sponsorship, I lose interest in following this influencer”).

		Trust in Mia Teixeira de Queiroz			
		I can rely on the influencer’s content.	I believe what the influencer says and I am sure that she would not try to take advantage of the followers.	The influencer is straightforward and honest even though her self-interests are involved.	The influencer would not tell a lie even if she could gain by it.
Explicit Disclosures	I appreciate the honesty and transparency	0,26567752	0,143589071	0,244946062	0,565909867
	I prefer for the sponsorship to be disclosed this way than not at all	0,54083828	0,539276489	0,679957312	0,586170097

Table 21. Pearson correlation coefficients between trust in Mia Teixeira de Queiroz and explicit disclosures’ approval questions [from Excel].

		Trust in Rita Montezuma			
		I can rely on the influencer’s content.	I believe what the influencer says and I am sure that she would not try to take advantage of the followers.	The influencer is straightforward and honest even though her self-interests are involved.	The influencer would not tell a lie even if she could gain by it.
Explicit Disclosures	I appreciate the honesty and transparency	0,32142151	0,125846778	0,208987904	0,109959057
	I prefer for the sponsorship to be disclosed this way than not at all	0,37218063	0,255270207	0,21393794	0,164366766

Table 22. Pearson correlation coefficients between trust in Rita Montezuma and explicit disclosures’ approval questions [from Excel].

Besides this, by applying a Pearson correlation between the subtheme “Trust in Influencer” from H1 for each of the influencer, Mia Teixeira de Queiroz (table 21.) and Rita Montezuma (table 22.), and the questions that pertain to the Explicit disclosure, it is visible in the tables above how there is an overall positive correlation between each other, manifesting a positive linear increase (Bhandari, 2023c), i.e., when people trust in Mia Teixeira de Queiroz or in Rita Montezuma, they’ll appreciate more the honesty and transparency from an explicit disclosure and prefer for sponsorships to be disclosed explicitly, supporting the hypothesis that these type of disclosures are more trustworthy.

So, focusing on the third hypothesis - **H3: Explicit disclosures are more trustworthy** – the explicit type of disclosure is clearly established as a transparent and trustworthy mean of disclosing sponsorships, unlike the other types of disclosures, confirming the third hypothesis.

Part III – Final Considerations

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

This research intended to bridge a gap between influencer marketing and the role sponsorships have in the establishment of trust between influencer-consumer, in a fashion context, Instagram setting, Gen Z cap (between 18 to 26 years old) and Portuguese context. Originating the following hypotheses:

- **H1: Portuguese Gen Z Instagram users/followers trust more in fashion microinfluencers than in macroinfluencers.**
- **H2: Sponsorships negatively impact trustworthiness.**
- **H3: Explicit disclosures are more trustworthy.**

To either reject or confirm these hypotheses, a survey was designed and distributed through social media (Instagram, Whatsapp and LinkedIn) and garnered 215 responses during 1 week, incorporating the case of two Portuguese Gen Z Instagram fashion influencers: a microinfluencer named Mia Teixeira de Queiroz and macroinfluencer called Rita Montezuma, showcasing three examples of sponsored posts from these two influencers to demonstrate types of disclosures (explicit, implied and non-disclosure). A 5-point Likert Scale ranging from “Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree” was implemented throughout the questionnaire and Excel was the platform employed to analyze and calculate the data.

The main sociodemographic characteristics that can be extracted from the answers are that the most dominant age group was of 23-24 years old (52,6% - 113 people), and the leading gender was female (80.9% - 174 respondents). The bulk of the respondents follow influencers (83,7% - 180 people), yet a smaller percentage follows fashion influencers (64,7% - 139 people), and regarding the two influencers in question, Mia Teixeira de Queiroz and Rita Montezuma, an even smaller number followed or knew them (47,9% - 103 people), manifesting a slight detachment from these two influencers, which can be justified by the

fact that they can be regarded as niche, due to being Portuguese, fashion influencers and with micro/macro typology.

Concerning the first hypothesis - **H1: Portuguese Gen Z Instagram users/followers trust more in fashion microinfluencers than in macroinfluencers** – the Cronbach's alpha results were satisfactory for all of the subthemes for this hypothesis, the trust in influencer and the source credibility model factors, confirming their reliability and internal consistency, except for the trust *versus* number of followers subtheme, which can be explained by the fact that the two questions from this subtheme have different structures and wording, being inconsistent with each other, unlike the other questions.

The results of the means and standard deviations for Mia Teixeira de Queiroz indicate that, on average, the 75 respondents that know this influencer trust in her. Regarding the source credibility factors, expertise was the most well rated factor and trustworthiness the least, but overall, the participants disagreed, on average, about Mia Teixeira de Queiroz's credibility factors, although the opinions were very heterogeneous. The results of the last subtheme for this variable, the trust according to number of followers, reveal that the respondents are, on average, gravitating towards disagreeing about the influence the number of followers of Mia Teixeira de Queiroz has on their trust in her. However, the mean of the question "The smaller number of followers positively influences my trust" indicates that respondents agreed on average, whereas the mean of the question "The more followers, the more I distrust the post that mentions brands" indicates that participants slightly disagreed on average. Despite the moderate range of opinions, taking into account the standard deviation values, these findings reveal that people can agree that having fewer followers has a positive impact on their trust, but having a larger following does not necessarily make them distrust the influencer's sponsored post. Mia Teixeira de Queiroz's honesty and lack of self-interest is what is most well-rated by the participants ("The influencer is straightforward and honest even though her self-interests are involved"), and one of the attractiveness measurements, how she is a source of inspiration ("She inspires my style and look"), is the least rated. This could indicate that the participants believe in Mia Teixeira de Queiroz and consider her to be an authentic person, trusting in her, but they do not necessarily trust in the

credibility of her content, resulting in agreement in trust but disagreement and diversity in attitudes toward source credibility.

The results of the means and standard deviations for Rita Montezuma show that the 91 participants that know her agreed, on average, they trust in her. About the source credibility factors, the most positive factor was online behavior/self-presentation and trustworthiness the more negative one, meaning, participants agreed, on average, about the credibility factors of Rita Montezuma, and especially valued her content, unlike Mia Teixeira de Queiroz. Targeting now the last subtheme of trust according to number of followers, respondents are, on average, gravitating more towards disagreeing about the impact the number of followers of Rita Montezuma has on their trust in her. Yet, in the question "The bigger number of followers positively influences my trust," participants agreed on average about it, and in the other question "The more followers, the more I distrust the post that mentions brands," respondents somewhat disagreed on average with this statement. Even though the standard deviation values show a moderate variability in responses, these findings indicate that people can agree that having more followers has a positive impact on their trust, but, as previously stated for Mia Teixeira de Queiroz, having a larger following does not necessarily make them distrust the influencer's sponsored post. When all of the separate means of each question are considered, it is discovered that the most valuable aspect of the respondents' relationship with Rita Montezuma is how her content is creative ("The content is creative"), and the least valued is their intimacy/closeness ("She's like a friend to me"). This shows that, in contrast to Mia Teixeira de Queiroz, these users may feel more distant from this influencer, yet more inspired by her content.

In conclusion, given that respondents indicated they trusted both the microinfluencer and the macroinfluencer, suggests that the first hypothesis - **H1: Portuguese Gen Z Instagram users/followers trust more in fashion microinfluencers than in macroinfluencers** – cannot be verified. Participants disagreed on average that "The more followers, the more I distrust the post that mentions brands," which is further supported by the fact that respondents agreed that "The bigger/smaller number of followers positively influences my trust" for both cases, showcasing a lack of preference for the number of followers. In fact, the answers to the questions that addressed the number of followers

suggested that the number of followers doesn't have an effect on their trust, rejecting the first hypothesis.

The current literature is ambivalent concerning if a higher or lower number of followers from an influencer impacts the trust and engagement from social media users in a positive or negative way. Meaning, some authors like Campbell & Farrel (2020), Park *et al.* (2021), and Tafesse & Wood (2021) argue that a lower number of followers by an influencer, so being a microinfluencer - which have between 1.000 – 20.000 followers in a Portuguese adaptation (Conde & Casais, 2023) - has a positive effect on the establishment of a parasocial relationship, which is the emotional bond between the follower-influencer that is ultimately manipulated into an advertising tool as they are more persuasive and engaging (Marwick, 2015; Conde & Casais, 2023; Park *et al.*, 2021; Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). These authors emphasize the trustworthiness dimension (in an authenticity and transparency sense) of the source credibility model (Ohanian, 1991), which is a model that dictates the three factors that establish the credibility of a source (attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness, plus another recent factor: the online behavior/presentation (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2018)) and, therefore, the trust that it fosters. On the other hand, authors like Pradhan *et al.* (2022) and Janssen *et al.* (2021) state that more followers, thus being a macroinfluencer - have between 20.000 – 100.000 followers in a Portuguese adaptation (Conde & Casais, 2023) – manifests reliability and authority, in that way, these authors accentuate the expertise dimension in the source credibility model. Consequently, as Campbell & Farrel (2020) state: macroinfluencers convey a perceived expertise and cultural capital and microinfluencers manifest accessibility and authenticity. Which all ultimately means that both types of influencers have their valued strengths that help in the establishment of trust, and that by the rejection of the H1, it means they can be equally appreciated.

As to the second hypothesis - **H2: Sponsorships negatively impact trustworthiness** – the Cronbach's alpha result exhibits that this dataset has a good reliance in measuring H2. Regarding the overall trust in sponsorships, the means and standard deviation results of the 103 people that knew either Rita Montezuma and/or Mia Teixeira de Queiroz illustrate that the respondents don't distrust these two influencers' intentions when confronted with their samples of sponsored posts, which is consistent with the previous results from hypothesis 1 of respondents trusting in these two influencers. Regardless, participants agreed on average

they distrust the sponsored posts of fashion influencers and that they doubt the other posts that mention brands, underlining the lack of trust in sponsored contexts. Another relevant insight that complements this hypothesis is that it was agreed on average that sponsorships are valued for their informational value, however, when it comes to trust, they aren't as appreciated, as seen by the previous results. Accordingly, the second hypothesis – **H2: Sponsorships negatively impact trustworthiness** – can be confirmed, since participants initially agreed they trusted the intentions of both influencers, however, when faced with examples of their sponsorships, the respondents' attitude regarding these posts was more negative, as they agreed they distrusted the sponsored posts of fashion influencers and claimed to potentially doubt others.

These findings go in accordance with the well-reviewed theme of the negative impact sponsorships have on the relationship between influencer-consumer, how it is detrimental to the establishment of trust. Influencers have evolved to very powerful advertising tools, making influencer marketing a mandatory tactic for companies, brands and services that want to access a highly engaged audience, an established endorser persona and social media manager (Campbell & Farrel, 2020). And this is especially viral and effective on Instagram (Haenlein *et al.* 2020; Lee & Kim, 2020) and for the fashion industry (Casaló *et al.*, 2020; De Perthuis & Findlay, 2019; Mendes, 2019). Instagram is the social media platform that generates the most engagement for fashion brands and influencers and it's where influencers generate more than half of their incomes (Bakker, 2018; Casaló *et al.*, 2020; Haenlein *et al.* 2020; Lee & Kim, 2020). However, the ability for influencers to merge their organic authentic content with brand messages that's so praised by marketers is also their "curse" (Yet *et al.*, 2021). Users become puzzled on whether the content and brand mentionings have a commercial intent or if they're impartially made, which raises ethical concerns and has originated the establishment of laws from the US Federal Trade Commission and the UK Competition and Markets Authority for the disclose of paid collaborations (Yet *et al.*, 2021; Karagür *et al.*, 2021). In Portugal, fines are set to be defined if advertisements aren't properly identified (Ruela, 2019). Unfortunately, there's still deceptive (covert marketing) or unaware practices when disclosing sponsorships, contributing to the overall distrust in endorsements (Costello & Urbanska, 2021; Harrison & Cownie, 2021; Carr & Hayes, 2014; Karagür *et al.*, 2021).

Finally, concerning the final and third hypothesis - **H3: Explicit disclosures are more trustworthy** – the Cronbach’s alpha was acceptable for all of the questions regarding each type of disclosure, confirming their internal consistency with each other. Going through each of the disclosure types, the explicit disclosure mean and standard deviation results showcase the approval of this type (which had the highest approval value, comparing the values of the each of the means), the implicit disclosure similarly had the approval of the respondents, with a remark of the “I wish the sponsorship was more clearly disclosed” question which indicated that, on average, participants were satisfied with this type of disclosure, disagreeing it needed to be more clearly disclosed; finally, the non-disclosure type, the result was surprisingly that respondents also on average agreed about its acceptability. However, this final result can be justified by the overall uncertainty in identifying whether the non-disclosure type posts were sponsored or not, causing puzzling results for this type of disclosure, when it concerned the alleged transparency of the post, another important detail from the answers from this type of disclosure was that people agreed on average that they wished the post was more clearly identified. Finally, when focusing on the general question that mentions explicit and impartial disclosures, people on average agreed that they “always prefer for influencers to indicate when a post that mentions brands is or isn’t sponsored”. This means that, on average, individuals did agree that they wish posts to be unequivocal both when they are sponsored and when they are not. In conclusion, the third hypothesis - **H3: Explicit disclosures are more trustworthy** – can be confirmed, as the explicit type of disclosure was considered a favorite in terms of establishing more transparency, instituting more trust and reliance when disclosing sponsorships. Another contributing factor for the acceptance of this hypothesis are the Pearson correlation coefficients, which indicate a positive linear relationship between trust and the approval of explicit disclosures, for both of the influencers in question, Mia Teixeira de Queiroz and Rita Montezuma.

These results are in consonance with the academic contribution that states that the way sponsorships are disclosed can help mitigate or worsen the effect of sponsorships on credibility (Costello & Urbanska, 2021; Stubb & Colliander, 2019). According to Carr & Hayes (2014) there’s four types of disclosures: no-disclosure (not referencing an

endorsement, being manipulative when there's indeed one, extremely damaging credibility), impartial disclosure (claiming it's an unbiased opinion, reduces suspicion of sponsorship and fosters honesty), implied disclosure (minimal disclosure effort overestimates suspicions, damaging credibility), explicit disclosure (transparency in disclosing endorsement, positively impacting credibility). Concluding that impartial and explicit disclosures are the only ones that alleviate the potential negative impact of sponsorships, i.e., influencers should disclose when their posts are sponsored but also when they're not sponsored (Stubb & Colliander, 2019; Gomes *et al.*, 2022), just like what is corroborated by the confirmation of H3.

Concluding, it was possible to confirm the second (**Sponsorships negatively impact trustworthiness**) and third hypothesis (**Explicit disclosures are more trustworthy**), yet, the first one couldn't be verified by the generated data (**Portuguese Gen Z Instagram users/followers trust more in fashion microinfluencers than in macroinfluencers**). Meaning, the research question: *What is the level of trust of Portuguese Gen Z Instagram consumers in Instagram Gen Z fashion microinfluencers versus macroinfluencers, regarding sponsored content?*, can be answered as: Portuguese Gen Z Instagram consumers equally trust in microinfluencers and macroinfluencers regarding sponsored content, however, this type of content, although it's appreciated by its informational value, it worsens their trustworthiness, but this negative effect can be mitigated through the use of explicit (and potentially impartial) disclosures, also for both type of influencers.

Chapter 7 - Research Limitations, Suggestions for Future Research, and Implications

Certain limitations ensued this study: for example, having a bigger sample size, or implementing an additional qualitative method, such as a focus group, in order to complement the study and possibly better understand the respondents' opinions would eventually help to understand better the rejection of the first hypothesis. However, by a matter of time management it wasn't possible to develop this strategy.

Therefore, for future studies, it would be interesting to try and further verify these hypotheses, and even test them in different age groups, social media platforms, or industries, with different types of posts and influencers.

These findings ultimately mean for Portuguese consumers that they should try to look for clues in the typology of disclosure, in order for them to be able to identify if the brand being mentioned is because it's an honest recommendation or a financially motivated one. For fashion influencers, these results mean that they should engage in transparent types of disclosures when there's a third-party involvement in the product/brand/service they're mentioning or recommending, meaning, influencers should strive to be as unambiguous as possible when they're being sponsored, but even also when they're not. And lastly, for brands and companies, this means influencer marketing is still a valuable marketing tool to use, as consumers still trust in influencers, however these entities should promote non deceptive disclosure practices, they should request for influencers to explicitly claim they're being sponsored by this specific brand.

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Appendix

a) Survey Questions

Influencer Marketing em Portugal

Este questionário online é realizado no âmbito de uma tese de mestrado em Comunicação, Marketing e Publicidade da Universidade Católica Portuguesa, cujo tema é Influencer Marketing.

Este questionário destina-se exclusivamente a pessoas entre **18 e 26 anos** e que possuam uma **conta no Instagram**.

Para tal solicito a sua participação no preenchimento deste questionário, não existindo respostas certas ou erradas, o mais importante é a sua experiência e opinião.

A sua participação é essencial para o sucesso deste estudo.

Todos os dados recolhidos irão respeitar a lei de Regulamento Geral sobre a Proteção de Dados e manter o anonimato e confidencialidade de quem responder. Qualquer questão pode ser esclarecida através do email: s-mjamaral@ucp.pt (Leonor Amaral)

Muito obrigada pela sua colaboração!

Informação geral

Qual a sua idade? *

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

Qual o seu género? *

Feminino

Masculino

Segue influencers no Instagram? *

Sim

Não

Não sigo nenhum influencer, mas conheço

Segue influencers **de moda** no Instagram? *

Sim

Não

Não sigo nenhum influencer de moda, mas conheço

Conhece esta duas influencers? *



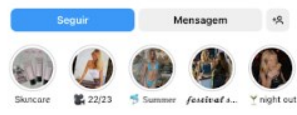
1122 133 m 1376
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Mia Teixeira de Queiroz
@centralmodels
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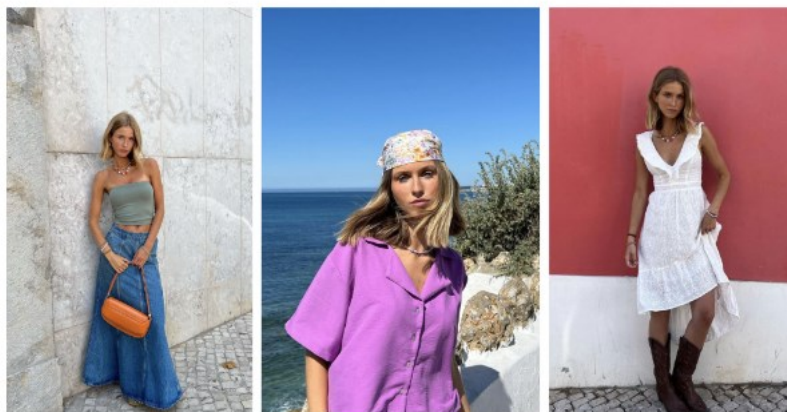


- Conheço a Rita Montezuma *Secção Relação com Rita Montezuma*
- Conheço a Mia Teixeira de Queiroz *Secção Relação com Mia Teixeira de Queiroz*
- Conheço ambas *Secção Relação com Rita Montezuma e Mia Teixeira de Queiroz*
- Não conheço nenhuma *Terminar Questionário*

Segue uma ou ambas? *

- Sigo ambas
- Sigo a Rita Montezuma
- Sigo a Mia Teixeira de Queiroz
- Não sigo nenhuma

Relação com Rita Montezuma e Mia Teixeira de Queiroz



Relativamente às características de Mia Teixeira de Queiroz... *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Ela é como uma amiga	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela inspira o meu estilo e aparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela é autêntica	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela é competente e experiente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela é relatable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Relativamente à sua **confiança** na **Mia Teixeira de Queiroz...** *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Eu consigo confiar no conteúdo desta influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eu acredito no que a influencer diz e tenho a certeza que não se aproveitaria dos seus seguidores	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Esta influencer é direta e honesta apesar dos seus interesses próprios estarem envolvidos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Esta influencer não mentiria, mesmo que pudesse beneficiar com isso	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O nº de seguidores mais reduzido influencia positivamente a minha confiança	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Quanto ao conteúdo da Mia Teixeira de Queiroz... *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
É inspiracional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
É criativo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tem grande qualidade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Relativamente às características de Rita Montezuma... *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Ela é como uma amiga	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela inspira o meu estilo e aparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela é autêntica	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela é competente e experiente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela é relatable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

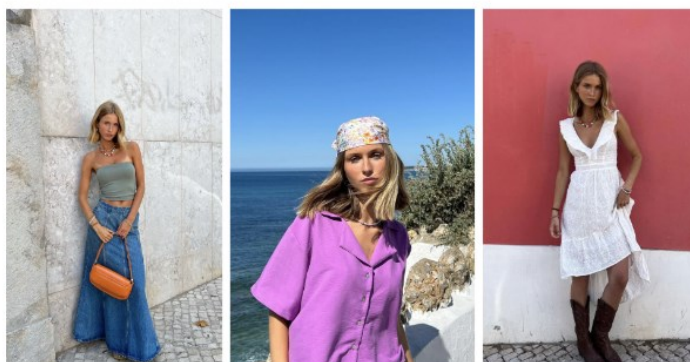
Relativamente à sua **confiança** na **Rita Montezuma...** *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Eu consigo confiar no conteúdo desta influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eu acredito no que a influencer diz e tenho a certeza que não se aproveitaria dos seus seguidores	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Esta influencer é direta e honesta apesar dos seus interesses próprios estarem envolvidos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Esta influencer não mentiria, mesmo que pudesse beneficiar com isso	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O n° de seguidores mais elevado influencia positivamente a minha confiança	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Quanto ao conteúdo da Rita Montezuma... *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
É inspiracional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
É criativo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tem grande qualidade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Relação com Mia Teixeira de Queiroz



Relativamente às características de Mia Teixeira de Queiroz... *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Ela é como uma amiga	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela inspira o meu estilo e aparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela é autêntica	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela é competente e experiente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela é relatable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Relativamente à sua **confiança** na **Mia Teixeira de Queiroz...** *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Eu consigo confiar no conteúdo desta influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eu acredito no que a influencer diz e tenho a certeza que não se aproveitaria dos seus seguidores	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Esta influencer é direta e honesta apesar dos seus interesses próprios estarem envolvidos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Esta influencer não mentiria, mesmo que pudesse beneficiar com isso	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O nº de seguidores mais reduzido influencia positivamente a minha confiança	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Quanto ao conteúdo da Mia Teixeira de Queiroz... *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
É inspiracional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
É criativo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tem grande qualidade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Relação com Rita Montezuma



Relativamente às características de Rita Montezuma... *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Ela é como uma amiga	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela inspira o meu estilo e aparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela é autêntica	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela é competente e experiente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ela é relatable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Relativamente à sua **confiança na Rita Montezuma...** *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Eu consigo confiar no conteúdo desta influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eu acredito no que a influencer diz e tenho a certeza que não se aproveitaria dos seus seguidores	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Esta influencer é direta e honesta apesar dos seus interesses próprios estarem envolvidos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Esta influencer não mentiria, mesmo que pudesse beneficiar com isso	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O nº de seguidores mais elevado influencia positivamente a minha confiança	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Quanto ao conteúdo da Rita Montezuma... *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
É inspiracional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
É criativo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tem grande qualidade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Patrocínios e Marcas - Rita Montezuma e Mia Teixeira de Queiroz



ritamontezuma
Lisboa



ritamontezuma #parceria Had a blast at NOS Alive day 1
🚀 thanks @hyundaiprt for inviting me 🍷
#hyundainonosalive #hyundaiprtugal #poweryourworld

Considera este post patrocinado? *

- Sim
- Não
- Não sei

Sendo este post **explicitamente** identificado como patrocinado, qual o seu nível de aprovação? *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Aprecio a honestidade e transparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desconfio das intenções da influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prefiro que identifique o patrocínio desta forma do que não o identifique de todo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



ritamontezuma
Menorca



ritamontezuma Mediterranean getaway with @mango 😊
👤 #SimonMillerxMango #MangoSummerClub

Considera este post patrocinado? *

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- Não sei

Sendo este post **implicitamente** identificado como patrocinado, qual o seu nível de aprovação? *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Aprecio a honestidade e transparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desconfio das intenções da influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gostava que identificasse o patrocínio mais claramente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prefiro que identifique o patrocínio desta forma do que não o identifique de todo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ao não identificar o patrocínio claramente, perco vontade de seguir a influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



ritamontezuma
Cala Salada



ritamontezuma Beach day today in Ibiza filled lot of sun, dives and good conversation 🌞🍹

Considera este post patrocinado? *

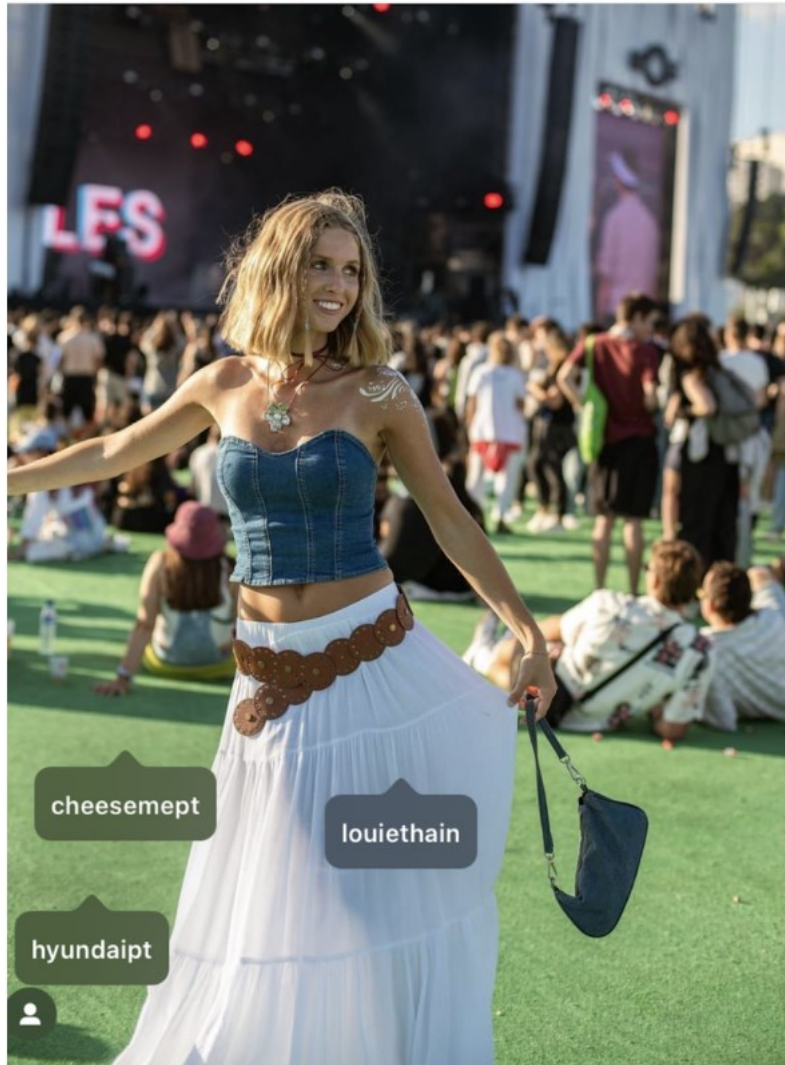
- Sim
- Não
- Não sei

Sendo este post **não identificado** como patrocinado, qual o seu nível de aprovação? *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Aprecio a honestidade e transparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desconfio das intenções da influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prefiro que identifique mais claramente se é ou não patrocinado	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ao não identificar claramente se há ou não patrocínio, perco vontade de seguir a influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



miatqueiroz
NOS Alive



miatqueiroz #parceria 🎮👌 Having fun wth @hyundaiprt
at @nos_alive #hyundaiNOSAlive #poweryourworldinc

Considera este post patrocinado? *

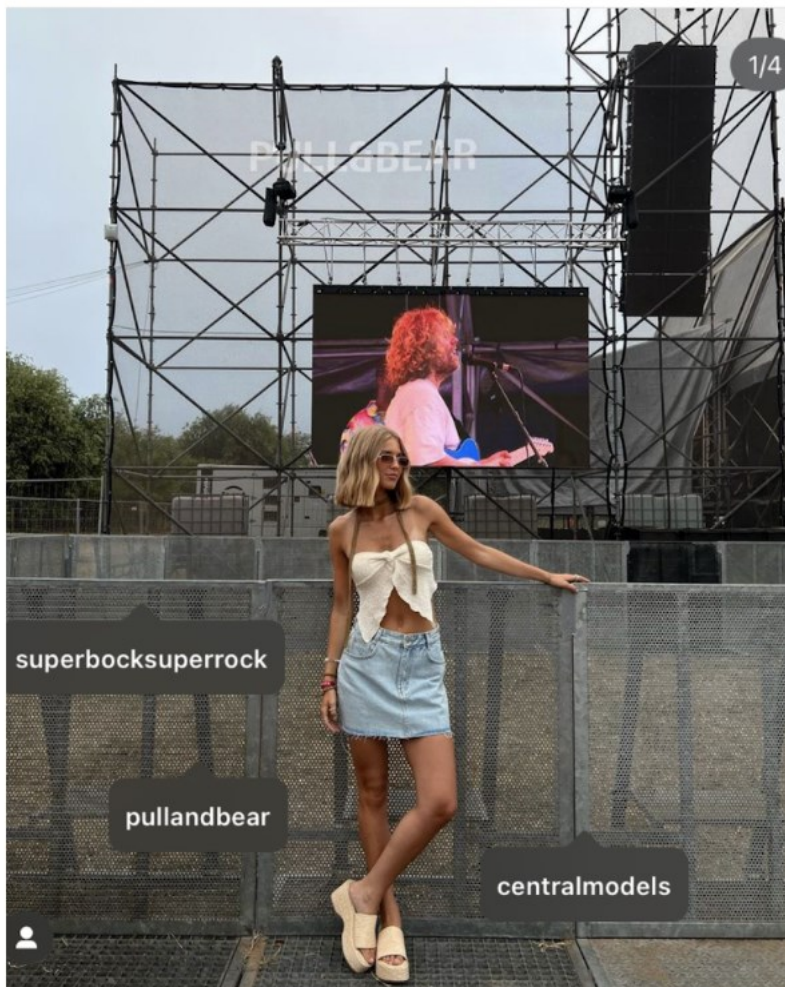
- Sim
- Não
- Não sei

Sendo este post **explicitamente** identificado como patrocinado, qual o seu nível de aprovação? *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Aprecio a honestidade e transparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desconfio das intenções da influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prefiro que identifique o patrocínio desta forma do que não o identifique de todo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



miatqueiroz
Super Bock Super Rock



miatqueiroz *Ready to rock* 🎸 @pullandbear
#pullandbearcommunity #sbsrxpb #festivaloutfit

Considera este post patrocinado? *

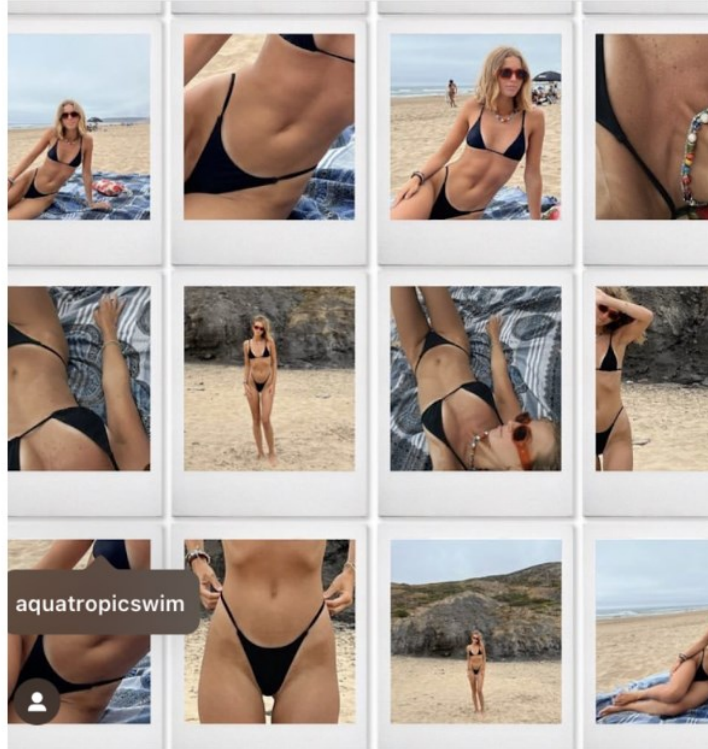
- Sim
- Não
- Não sei

Sendo este post **implicitamente** identificado como patrocinado, qual o seu nível de aprovação? *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Aprecio a honestidade e transparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desconfio das intenções da influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gostava que identificasse o patrocínio mais claramente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prefiro que identifique o patrocínio desta forma do que não o identifique de todo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ao não identificar o patrocínio claramente, perco vontade de seguir a influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



miatqueiroz
Arrifana (Aljezur)



miatqueiroz BLACK IS ALWAYS A GOOD OPTION ~
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[#swimwear](#) [#summer](#) [#beach](#) [#bikini](#) [#summervibes](#)

Considera este post patrocinado? *

- Sim
- Não
- Não sei

Sendo este post **não identificado** como patrocinado, qual o seu nível de aprovação? *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Aprecio a honestidade e transparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desconfio das intenções da influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prefiro que identifique mais claramente se é ou não patrocinado	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ao não identificar claramente se há ou não patrocínio, perco vontade de seguir a influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Quanto a posts patrocinados de influencers de moda *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Eu confio nos posts patrocinados das influencers de moda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fazem-me duvidar de outros posts que mencionem marcas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aprecio a informação sobre os produtos/serviços DENTRO do mundo da moda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aprecio a informação sobre os produtos/serviços FORA do mundo da moda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prefiro sempre que indiquem se um post que mencione marcas é ou não patrocinado	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quanto mais seguidores, mais desconfio do post que mencione marcas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



ritamontezuma
Lisboa



ritamontezuma #parceria Had a blast at NOS Alive day 1
🚀 thanks @hyunda ipt for inviting me 🤝
#hyundainonosalive #hyundaiportugal #poweryourworld

Considera este post patrocinado? *

- Sim
- Não
- Não sei

Sendo este post **explicitamente** identificado como patrocinado, qual o seu nível de aprovação? *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Aprecio a honestidade e transparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desconfio das intenções da influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prefiro que identifique o patrocínio desta forma do que não o identifique de todo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



ritamontezuma
Menorca



ritamontezuma Mediterranean getaway with @mango 😊
👤 #SimonMillerxMango #MangoSummerClub

Considera este post patrocinado? *

- Sim
- Não
- Não sei

Sendo este post **implicitamente** identificado como patrocinado, qual o seu nível de aprovação? *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Aprecio a honestidade e transparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desconfio das intenções da influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gostava que identificasse o patrocínio mais claramente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prefiro que identifique o patrocínio desta forma do que não o identifique de todo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ao não identificar o patrocínio claramente, perco vontade de seguir a influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



ritamontezuma
Cala Salada



ritamontezuma Beach day today in Ibiza filled lot of sun, dives and good conversation 🌞🍹

Considera este post patrocinado? *

- Sim
- Não
- Não sei

Sendo este post **não identificado** como patrocinado, qual o seu nível de aprovação? *

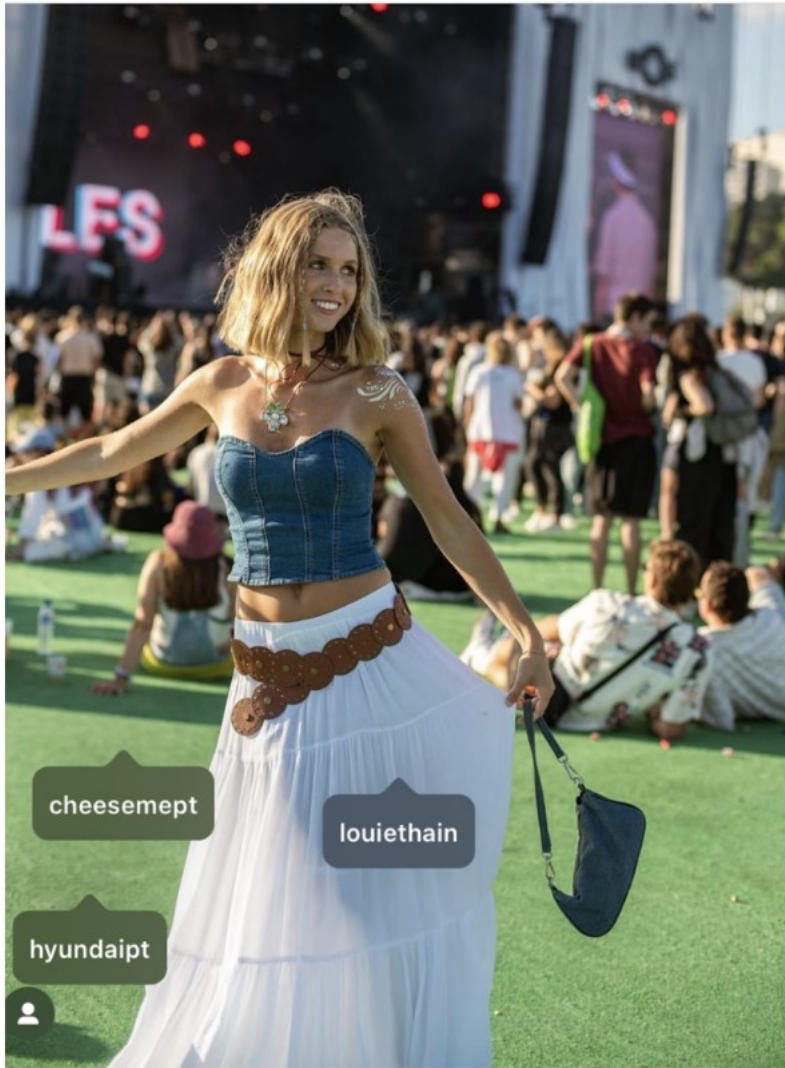
	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Aprecio a honestidade e transparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desconfio das intenções da influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prefiro que identifique mais claramente se é ou não patrocinado	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ao não identificar claramente se há ou não patrocínio, perco vontade de seguir a influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Quanto a posts patrocinados de influencers de moda *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Eu confio nos posts patrocinados das influencers de moda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fazem-me duvidar de outros posts que mencionem marcas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aprecio a informação sobre os produtos/serviços DENTRO do mundo da moda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aprecio a informação sobre os produtos/serviços FORA do mundo da moda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prefiro sempre que indiquem se um post que mencione marcas é ou não patrocinado	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quanto mais seguidores, mais desconfio do post que mencione marcas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



miatqueiroz
NOS Alive



miatqueiroz #parceria 🌍👌 Having fun with @hyundaiprt at @nos_alive #hyundaiNOSAlive #poweryourworldinc

Considera este post patrocinado? *

Sim

Não

Não sei

Sendo este post **explicitamente** identificado como patrocinado, qual o seu nível de aprovação? *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Aprecio a honestidade e transparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desconfio das intenções da influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prefiro que identifique o patrocínio desta forma do que não o identifique de todo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



miatqueiroz
Super Bock Super Rock



miatqueiroz *Ready to rock* 🎸 @pullandbear
#pullandbearcommunity #sbsrxpb #festivaloutfit

Considera este post patrocinado? *

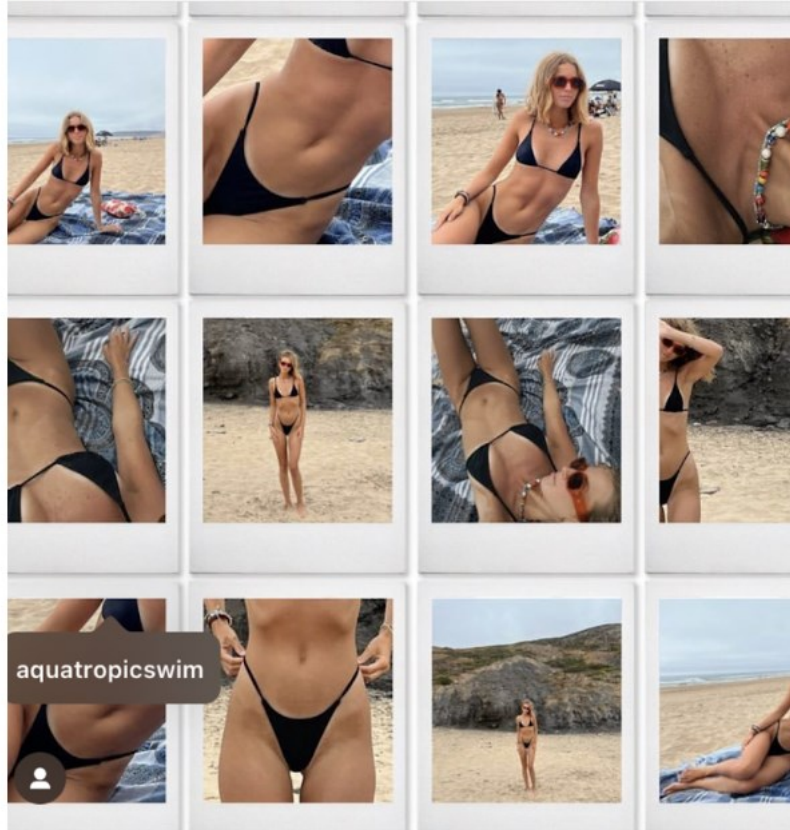
- Sim
- Não
- Não sei

Sendo este post **implicitamente** identificado como patrocinado, qual o seu nível de aprovação? *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Aprecio a honestidade e transparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desconfio das intenções da influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gostava que identificasse o patrocínio mais claramente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prefiro que identifique o patrocínio desta forma do que não o identifique de todo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ao não identificar o patrocínio claramente, perco vontade de seguir a influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



miatqueiroz
Arrifana (Aljezur)



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[@aquatropicswim](#)

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[#swimwear](#) [#summer](#) [#beach](#) [#bikini](#) [#summervibes](#)

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Sendo este post **não identificado** como patrocinado, qual o seu nível de aprovação? *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Aprecio a honestidade e transparência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desconfio das intenções da influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prefiro que identifique mais claramente se é ou não patrocinado	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ao não identificar claramente se há ou não patrocínio, perco vontade de seguir a influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Quanto a posts patrocinados de influencers de moda *

	Concordo Fortemente	Concordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Discordo	Discordo Fortemente
Eu confio nos posts patrocinados das influencers de moda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fazem-me duvidar de outros posts que mencionem marcas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aprecio a informação sobre os produtos/serviços DENTRO do mundo da moda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aprecio a informação sobre os produtos/serviços FORA do mundo da moda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prefiro sempre que indiquem se um post que mencione marcas é ou não patrocinado	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quanto mais seguidores, mais desconfio do post que mencione marcas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>