



Digital Influencers: The impact that Sponsorship Disclosure has on consumers' purchase intentions

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the MSc in
Management with specialization in Strategic Marketing, at the Universidade
Católica Portuguesa

January 2021

Abstract

Title: Digital Influencers: The impact that Sponsorship Disclosure has on consumers' purchase intentions

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In the past few years, it has been noticed a fast growth of social media platforms, not only for entertainment but also as platforms where companies promote their products and/or services to consumers through a recent marketing strategy - influencer marketing. This new concept has been increasingly adopted by companies mostly due to the appearance, in recent years, of digital influencers and their influence on followers' purchase intentions.

This dissertation was developed in order to understand how the disclosure of sponsorship has an impact on consumers' purchase decision. It was considered expertise condition and product type - hedonic and utilitarian - as moderators, which may vary the purchase intentions of consumers under the condition of disclosure. Therefore, a survey was conducted with 232 valid responses obtained.

The results demonstrate that sponsorship disclosure has no significant impact on consumers' purchase intentions, regardless of whether the product type is hedonic or utilitarian or whether the digital influencer is an expert in the field or not. The results also indicated that digital influencers who are perceived as experts are able to generate greater buying intentions in utilitarian products than those who are not perceived by consumers as such.

Keywords: Influencer marketing; Social media influencers; Sponsorship Disclosure; Expertise; Hedonic Products; Utilitarian Products; Purchase Intentions.

Resumo

Título: Influenciadores Digitais: O impacto que a divulgação de patrocínio tem nas intenções de compra dos consumidores

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Nos últimos anos, tem-se verificado um notório crescimento das redes sociais, não só para lazer, mas também como plataformas para as empresas promoverem os seus produtos e serviços através de uma recente estratégia de marketing - *influencer marketing*. Este conceito tem sido muito adotado pelas empresas devido, maioritariamente, ao aparecimento nos últimos anos, dos influenciadores digitais e da sua influência na intenção de compra dos seus seguidores.

Esta dissertação foi desenvolvida com o objetivo de perceber de que forma a divulgação de patrocínio tem impacto na decisão de compra dos consumidores. Considerou-se a condição de especialidade e dois tipos de produtos - hedónico e utilitário - que, como moderadores, poderão variar a intenção de compra dos consumidores sob condição de divulgação de patrocínio. Assim sendo, foi realizado um inquérito com 232 respostas válidas obtidas.

Os resultados finais indicam que a divulgação de patrocínio não tem impacto significativo nas intenções de compra dos consumidores, independentemente de o produto ser hedónico ou utilitário ou o influenciador ser especialista na área ou não. No entanto, os resultados demonstram que influenciadores percebidos como especialistas, são capazes de gerar maiores intenções de compra em produtos utilitários do que os que não são percebidos pelos consumidores como tal.

Palavras-chave: Marketing de Influenciadores; Influenciadores digitais; Divulgação de Patrocínio; Especialista; Produtos Hedónicos; Produtos Utilitários; Intenções de Compra.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor, Professor João Niza Braga, for all the knowledge shared, continuous support, advice, guidance and feedback throughout the entire process. Thank you for all the patience when I was more stressed and for the help in finding the right solutions!

A deep and strong thank you to my parents and brother, for all the support not only in these last few months but during my entire life. Thank you for believing in me and supporting me, emotionally and financially. Thank you for encouraging me to be the best version of myself and never give up on my dreams. Thank you for your unconditional love and comfort whenever I need.

To my love, thank you so much for always being by my side. Thank you for all the patience, love and advice. You were the one who never stopped believing in me and who always had the right words in the right moment.

Additionally, I would like to thank my best friends, for all the help, motivation and memorable moments. Thank you for being with me every time I needed to relax and have a fun moment.

I also would like to thank all my family and friends, for all the support, love and affection.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all participants in the experience, without your contribution and willing participation which provides me the necessary data for the analyses and results I would not be able to present my master dissertation.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Topic presentation

In a world where technology has been evolving day by day, the emergence of social media has been noticed and have inevitably implied changes in consumers' behaviour, mainly in their decision-making process (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017). According to Booth & Matic (2011), physical and temporal communication barriers have been abolished from social media which gives the possibility for consumers to produce content and share opinions with other users. This way, social media opinion leaders started to appear and are, nowadays, called digital influencers.

Aligned with this scenario, people are more critical than ever regarding advertising practices and want companies to follow new trends in order to differ from other competitors. This way, companies have been facing new challenges in their business regarding the way they communicate product offerings to consumers. To face this pressure from consumers and competitors, companies start looking for new marketing strategies and, therefore, influencer marketing arose. Influencer marketing is a new marketing approach related to the growth of social media platforms and the emerging scenario of digital influencers.

Over the last few years social media influencers have demonstrated influence on their followers in many ways, mainly on purchase intentions. This way, that influence started to arouse the interest of brands who quickly integrated them into their marketing strategies (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017; Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014). However, as this is a recent marketing practice, the all process of an influencer marketing campaign is still premature (Piskorski & Brooks, 2017). The disclosure of marketing campaigns is one of the main topics that have been debated universally since many times influencers are paid to endorse branded content and masquerade that content as organic. (Abdullahi, 2020).

The presence of sponsorship disclosure on content delivered by digital influencers may have a different impact in consumers. On one hand, consumers may perceive that disclosure as a proof of influencers' honesty which will lead consumers to look at them as credible and trustworthy people. On the other hand, communication which conveys paid nature, may activate defensive coping mechanisms on consumers such as scepticism and resistance that could negatively affect attitudinal and behavioural outcomes.

Finally, past literature has demonstrated that the expertise condition of the endorser as well as the type of product associated with the same, may have different effects on consumers' purchase intentions. In that sense, the last two conditions mentioned will be introduced in the analysis as moderators.

1.2 Problem statement

The problem this dissertation strives to understand is the impact that sponsorship disclosure by digital influencers has on consumers' purchase intentions. Basically, this academic paper was developed around one main problem that previous articles and academic papers failed to provide a clear and credible answer: When digital influencers disclose sponsorship on marketing product campaigns, consumers' purchase intentions change? If so, negatively or positively? And why?

Additionally, the study aims on understanding the role of expertise condition on digital influencers and if it moderates the impact that sponsorship disclosure may have on purchase intentions. To add some complexity to the research, the comparison of both hedonic and utilitarian products will be included since not all products are perceived the same and consumers do not attribute the same level of importance to them.

As it will be explained deeply in the next chapter of Literature Review, companies' marketing campaigns through digital influencers is a relatively new phenomenon being studied and there are a lot of contradictions and disparities in previous results. Sponsorship disclosure has even more scarce information mainly in terms of the impact that this condition may or may not have on consumers' purchase intention. In this sense, this study wants to provide that missing information in literature and that is the main reason for the development of the RQ1:

RQ1: Does sponsorship disclosure by digital influencers impact consumers' purchase intentions?

The second research question developed is related to the expertise condition, that is, if the digital influencers chosen by managers and marketers are considered as experts on the field of the product they are endorsing. So, RQ2 was developed to provide useful insights that could help companies decide which digital influencer fit better for the purpose of the campaign. Also, this research question will help understand if this condition will moderate the impact that sponsorship disclosure already has on consumers' purchase intentions.

RQ2: Does perceived expertise of the digital influencer significantly affect consumers' purchase intentions? If so, does it moderate the impact, negative or positive, that sponsorship disclosure may have?

To finalize, the last research question will help in understanding if the type of product endorsed also moderates the impact of sponsorship disclosure.

RQ3: Is the product type the digital influencer is endorsing important in moderating the impact, negative or positive, that sponsorship disclosure may have?

1.3 Academic and Managerial Relevance

Nowadays, consumers use social media platforms for searching information, reviews and different opinions about products they intend to buy in order to help them in their decision-making process. Digital influencers have a determinant role in this search for information since they are considered as opinion leaders with the necessary credibility consumers need to make the right decision. This way, brands have invested each time more in influencer marketing campaigns in different social media platforms, mainly in Instagram. (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2019; Piskorski & Brooks, 2017; Veirman et al., 2017).

Although digital influencers are considered more essential than ever in companies' marketing strategies, this is a recent topic which does not have extensive literature published. (Piskorski & Brooks, 2017; Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014). Also, the mandatory disclosure of sponsorship is a hot and recent topic worldwide, and the impact that it has on consumers is still not completely known. Thus, this dissertation wants to provide relevant insights about the impact that sponsorship disclosure by social media influencers may have on consumers' purchase intention. Additionally, this academic paper aims to deepen that understanding using two advertisements with different product types - hedonic and utilitarian - promoted by two fictional digital influencers who can be or not experts on the field. This manipulation may be relevant to know how consumers react within different circumstances in regard to disclosure conditions, providing a lot of academic value within a topic that has scarce information about.

Regarding managerial relevance, since companies are increasingly investing in influencer marketing campaigns, it is important for them to know what type of influencer for each type of product they should choose to better fit what the brand is and what the brand wants to transmit to their customers. Moreover, by understanding the impact that sponsorship disclosure by digital influencers may have on consumers' purchase intentions, managers and marketers will be able not only to make better choices in terms of who should endorse their

products but also improve their endorsement marketing practices in order to generate more awareness and higher purchase intentions.

1.4 Dissertation Outline

The flow of this dissertation will be divided into five chapters. First, the introductory chapter where it will be presented the Topic Presentation, Problem Statement and Academic and Managerial Relevance. In chapter 2, it will be presented a literature review based on the main results from previous published articles and academic papers regarding the main topics of this study: Influencer Marketing, Social Media Influencers, Sponsorship Disclosure, Expertise and Hedonic & Utilitarian Products. Next, in chapter 3, will be provided all information regarding methodology, i.e, the research approach used, and the tools adopted to collect essential data to answer research questions and test the hypotheses developed in the previous chapter. Afterward, in the chapter 4, the collected primary data will be presented to the readers and the results will be discussed and analysed.

To finalize, the last chapter provides the main findings and conclusions of the study, followed by some limitations that provide recommendations for future research.

2. Literature Review

In this chapter, previous academic literature will be introduced, analysed and reviewed in order to better understand the scope of this study. Additionally, literature will help in finding an appropriate answer to the research questions in which this thesis is based. The following chapter is divided into five sub-topics: Influencer Marketing, Social Media Influencers, Sponsorship Disclosure, Expertise and Product Type.

The concept of Influencer Marketing and Social Media Influencers will be examined to understand if this recent form of advertising is more effective than the existing ones. Moreover, this study aims to understand the impact that Sponsorship Disclosure condition have on consumers' purchase intentions and how expertise condition of the digital influencer and type of product endorsed moderate that impact.

2.1 Influencer Marketing

Nowadays, brands can use social media platforms in many ways, i.e., not only through brand pages but also through electronic word of mouth - eWOM - in order to engage with the target audience. eWOM includes different types of communication such as unpaid and organic communication by consumers who want to share brand-related information in their particular social media platforms (Phua & Ahn, 2016) or by consumers who are considered as advocates since already have a relationship with a particular brand and had positive prior experiences to share with other potential consumers (Scott, 2015). Moreover, brands may often use paid eWOM to spread brand messages through opinion leaders, that is, people perceived as similar to consumers, but with a position of reference earned by their status as celebrities and/or experts (Martínez-López et al., 2020), with many followers on their social media platforms.

Influencer marketing is a new strategy that has been adopted by companies (Lou & Yuan, 2019; De Veirman et al., 2017) due to the growing recognition of influencers as an important role in the marketing strategy of brands (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2019; Launch Metrics, 2018; Veirman et al., 2017). This growing recognition may be related with the fact that individuals consume a lot of content provided by influencers and are more reticent about content generated by brands (Müller & Christandl, 2019). As a matter of fact, people know that information found on companies' webpage is inevitably biased (Müller & Christandl, 2019), being perceived more negatively than editorial content (Dickinger, 2011) and, consequently, the influence of content generated by the seller is weaker than the same generated by an

independent person (Ha, Bae, & Son, 2015). This way, consumers have been using social media platforms to help them in their decision-making process (Arora et al., 2019; De Veirman & Hudders, 2020).

Influencers not only are cheaper for brands than traditional advertising campaigns but also reach a bigger audience in a shorter period of time (Phua et al., 2016) As a result, influencers have significantly increased consumers' positive brand perceptions and, consequently, purchase intentions.

Companies who have been adopting this new marketing strategy have gained competitive advantage over other companies in regards to online advertising, deviating away from celebrity endorsement, since consumers are more likely to respond in a positive way to a source that is perceived as more credible and trustworthy (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015). Thus, this emerging scenario has been good for companies to be more present on the online world, however, it also has a negative side. When brands use digital influencers in their marketing campaigns, they lose part of the control over their brands, which is challenging to manage, even more for those not culturally prepared to share brands' image and related information flow (Vernuccio & Ceccotti, 2015). As a result, brands need to choose influencers to advertise their products or/and services that are aligned with the company values as well as with their target audience. Even though contracts between brands and influencers delimit the creative functions and payments (Woods, 2016), brands need to ensure that the influencer chosen is a credible intermediary (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014) in order to avoid possible negative effects (Abidin & Ots, 2015; Green, 2015). In order to get positive recommendations from influencers, brands usually send them free products and offer incentives to stimulate them to generate content on the product (Petrescu et al., 2018).

The control over influencers' messages made by brands can, however, make consumers react negatively towards the advertising since they perceive that the content is controlled and, therefore, not authentic (Woods, 2016). For this to not happen, companies should participate in conversations as equals, offering information and building brand awareness (Fournier & Avery, 2011; Gensler et al., 2013). This way, companies will be ceding part of the control of brands to their consumers (Bal et al., 2017). Regarding influencer marketing context, this approach requires non-commercial conversations between influencers and followers, free of manipulation by companies (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014). Therefore, consumers will believe in the content delivered by the influencer, particularly regarding his/her independence and authenticity (Arora et al., 2019) and do not react negatively towards him/her.

2.2 Social Media Influencers

Social media influencers are individuals who have become more and more important in our society because of their ability to influence followers' opinions and behaviours and create an increasingly desire to act like them and purchase what they have. Contrarily to traditional celebrities who have become famous from music, TV shows and films, social media influencers became famous because of their online presence (Khamis et al., 2016). Therefore, digital influencers are considered as the new opinion leaders since, compared to the former, they have greater influence and are able to reach users globally (Lyons & Henderson, 2005; Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014). This way, social media influencers “represent a new type of independent third-party endorser” (Freberg et al., 2016).

On social media platforms, consumers stopped being passive and started wanting to participate actively with brands, trusting on opinions delivered by similar people (Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014) – influencers - who seek for information, share ideas, recommendations, knowledge and advice about products or/and services they like (Keller & Fay, 2016). In fact, consumers believe more in the opinion of other consumers perceived as experts than in brands since these opinion leaders have with no interest in selling products (Chatterjee, 2011; Koo, 2016). However, influencers generate content about brands with they wish to associate their name, or with brands they already have a relationship (Peshev, 2017) and, thus, consumers end up being significantly affected by content generated by digital influencers that influence their opinions and purchasing behaviour (Müller & Christandl, 2019).

These opinion leaders have been naturally including in their daily narratives the endorsement of products and/or services and this practice has become so common that is considered as a highly credible form of eWOM (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Veirman et al., 2017), due to the fact that social media influencers are perceived as authentic and accessible individuals by their followers (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

2.3 Sponsorship Disclosure

Influencer marketing strategies have arguably brought benefits to companies. However, this practice has also received some criticism regarding the possibility of paid brand endorsements hidden as organic/unpaid posts from several organizations including the Federal Trade Commission (FCT).

According to FCT (2015), influencers often use labels or disclosures to indicate that the post is sponsored. However, although influencers use the presence of these labels or disclosures on sponsored posts as recommended by FCT, little is known about what disclosure language characteristics (e.g. no disclosure, “SP,” “Sponsored,” “Paid Ad”, “Partnership with” etc.) are more effective for consumers to recognize influencers’ posts as advertising (New York Times, 2016). In fact, the presence of advertising disclosures on sponsored posts should be effective and clear, in order to easily identify the persuasion attempt and help consumers recognize the content delivered as advertising, protecting them from being deceived (Hoy & Andrews 2004; Rozendaal et al. 2011).

On the regulator side, the main concern is the possibility of consumer deception. This happens because oftentimes the nature of sponsorship disclosures is insufficient to help consumers recognize it as sponsored by a third-party, and this lack of recognition raise the possibility of deception and, consequently, affects consumers’ decisions (Sahnu & Nair, 2016).

Portugal decreed that “all forms of hidden, indirect or malicious advertising are prohibited” (Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, art. 60º) and that “advertising must be unequivocally identified as such, whichever means of diffusion used” (The advertising code, Principle of Identification, art. 8º). However, an understanding of the effects of sponsorship disclosure on consumers’ purchase intention is lacking.

Previous researches showed that the impact of sponsorship disclosures indicate a significant negative effect in purchase intention, online sharing and credibility perceptions. According to Tessitore et al. (2013), product placement (“PP”) which is a common practice of advertising in American movies, when recognized by consumers activate persuasion knowledge and decrease purchase intentions. Additionally, Lee et al. (2016), explained that ads non-intrusiveness have positive impact in sharing intention, however, ads perceived as manipulateness have, contrarily, negative impact. Finally, Wojdyski & Evans (2016) explore what positioning and wording used to disclose sponsorship were more easily recognized by consumers and conclude that ad recognition lead to negative evaluations towards the brand and the publisher.

Regarding social media influencers’ posts that convey the paid nature of the communication and delineate the content as advertising, such disclosure will negatively affect attitudinal and behavioural outcomes (Evans et al., 2017). Consumers who recognize the influencer’s post as an advertisement will probably activate persuasion knowledge that cause defensive coping mechanisms (Freistad & Wright 1994) such as scepticism, resistance, or counter (Shrum et al. 2012).

In contrast, there are some previous researches which have tested sponsorship disclosure condition versus non-disclosure condition on consumer responses to social media influencers and the most significant result indicates that consumers perceive the digital influencer to be more trustworthy in disclosure condition. Transparency in disclosing posts' advertising increases positive responses toward the influencer, which strengthens the use of influencer advertising (Abdullahi, 2020).

Influencer marketing is a relatively new phenomenon as is the implementation of disclosures. Therefore, consumers may not be completely aware that disclosure practices even exist, and disclosures may stand out and attract attention (Lang et al., 1999).

The following hypotheses are based on the above-mentioned disparity of results and opinions on previous researches. Sponsorship disclosure can negatively affect purchase intention, however, advertising disclosure increases positive responses toward the influencer since consumers perceive them as credible and trustworthy which would probably lead to higher purchase intentions.

H1: *Non-sponsorship disclosure has a negative impact on purchase intention.*

H2: *Sponsorship disclosure has a positive impact on purchase intention.*

2.4 Expertise

The ability that some individuals have to influence consumers more than others is related with several factors, including perceived expertise (Bansal & Voyer, 2000; Gilly et al., 1998).

The concept of expertise is defined as “the degree to which the endorser is perceived to have the adequate experience, knowledge, or skills to promote the product” (Van der Waldt et al., 2009:104). Hence, different levels of consumers' perceived expertise will result in a different impact on the endorser's effectiveness and consequently in consumers' purchase intention. Considering this information, this study aims to deepen that understanding considering expertise condition as a moderator and exploring its impact on purchase intention.

According to Ohanian (1990), consumers are more influenced by individuals they perceived as expert than a source perceived as non-expert. As said, since experts have a greater influence on the receiver (Bone, 1995; Herr et al., 1991; Feick & Higie, 1992), it is essential that these individuals have qualifications about product category or social environment (Troidahl & van Dam, 1965; Myers and Robertson, 1972).

Social media influencers oftentimes are seen as experts by followers, thus, they are frequently asked for advice in their area of expertise and their opinion is considered to have higher quality than others. (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Gilly et al., 1998).

An expert endorser is perceived by others as highly credible as long as his/her communication is effective. The clarity of the message delivered to followers plays a vital role in the process and outcome of social influence (Gatignon & Robertson, 1991). This will result in a higher likelihood of purchasing the product and/or service advertised (Pornpitakpan, 2004a). It is then relevant to test if the expertise condition has impact on purchase intention, moderating the impact that sponsorship disclosure condition may already have, especially on posts endorsed by experts who are seen as highly credible and trustworthy.

H3: *Perceived expertise moderates the impact of sponsorship disclosure on purchase intention.*

H3a: *Consumers' purchase intentions are higher for products sponsored by social media influencers who are perceived as experts than non-experts.*

2.5 Hedonic vs Utilitarian products

Consumers oftentimes purchase the same products or services for different purposes, whether for their own pleasure – hedonic consumption – or to complete a specific task in an efficient and effective way – utilitarian consumption (Botti & McGill, 2011).

By nature, people are motivated to consume products or services that give them pleasure. However, that feeling of enjoyment brings, at the same time, guilt and need for justification. Thus, the need for justification usually leads consumers to not choose hedonic goods if they feel they are unable to justify their own purchase (Okada, 2005). Hedonic consumption is based on emotional attachment, excitement and enjoyment (Arnold & Reynolds 2003; Babin et al., 1994), focusing on fun, sensorial and spontaneous experiences (Holbrook & Hirschman 1982). By contrast, utilitarian consumption is more related with practical functionality (Okana, 2005), connected to the need to complete specific tasks efficiently and effectively (Childers et al. 2002; Mathwick et al., 2001).

When it comes to advertise these two types of products, firms choose to emphasize either hedonic or utilitarian benefits provided by a product (MacInnis & Jaworski 1989), which means that marketing communications and their related arguments emphasizes hedonic benefits for hedonic products and utilitarian benefits for utilitarian products (Lavine & Snyder 1996; Shavitt 1990).

Processing and evaluation of information about utilitarian products is highly cognitively driven (Homburg et al. 2006). For utilitarian products, consumers are more likely to search and inspect all available information, paying more attention to content they perceive as relevant (Aaker & Lee 2001; Gürhan-Canli & Maheswaran 1998). Thus, marketers should elaborate the argument of communication, placing higher importance on content that is relevant to their consumption goal (Klein & Melnyk, 2014). When evaluating hedonic products, these are less likely to be subject of extensive information search and processing by potential consumers (Mittal, 1989), considering available information only superficially (Botti & McGill 2011; Shiv & Fedorikhin 1999). Marketers, rather than elaborating intensively on the message content, should take into consideration that for this type of products, the decision process of consumers rely heavily on heuristics such as the number of arguments, the length of the text, or the background context, and their affective reactions to evaluate the message (Chaiken 1980; Maheswaran et al. 1992). Hence, consumption goals determine how the product information is likely to be processed.

Furthermore, the less detailed cognitive structure of hedonic goods may result in a higher difficulty in finding information about its attributes. Although consumers are more uncertain about purchasing hedonic products (Okana, 2005), they will probably rely more on social media influencers in order to minimize the feeling of guilt and find a justification for the purchase, reaching the levels of certainty needed to make a decision of whether to buy the product or not. However, sponsorship disclosure by digital influencers may lead to another level of uncertainty since consumers may perceive the sponsored post as not authentic and credible. This way, sponsorship disclosure would have a negative impact on hedonic products when compared to utilitarian ones. In fact, the latest have more objective evaluation standards comparing to the formers which makes it more difficult for influencers to bias the reviews made about a certain product. Also, during the buying process of hedonic goods, sponsorship disclosure by digital influencers may end up magnifying the already existing consumers' guilt and need for purchase justification.

H4: *Product type (hedonic vs utilitarian products) moderates the impact of sponsorship disclosure on purchase intention*

H4a: *In sponsorship disclosure condition, consumers' purchase intentions are higher for utilitarian goods than for hedonic goods.*

H4b: *In non-sponsorship disclosure condition, consumers' purchase intentions are higher for hedonic goods than for utilitarian goods.*

2.6 Summary of the Literature Review

This study aims to understand the impact that sponsorship disclosure by social media influencers may have, in a positive or negative way, on consumers' purchase intentions. From previous literature, it is already known that this new phenomenon may affect consumers' attitudinal and behavioural outcomes, however, there are a lot of contradictions and disparities in previous results published. This dissertation will deepen this new topic, and it will give to readers the information that is missing in past literature. Moreover, to add some complexity to the study, it will be relevant to understand if the type of product, utilitarian or hedonic, will have an important role on the impact that sponsorship disclosure has on purchase intention. Expertise condition, being one of the three dimensions of the Source Credibility Model (Ohanian, 1991), may also be important to deepen further that understanding of the impact that again, sponsorship disclosure has on purchase intentions.

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

RQ1: Does sponsorship disclosure by digital influencers impact consumers' purchase intentions?

H1: *Non-sponsorship disclosure has a negative impact on purchase intention.*

H2: *Sponsorship disclosure has a positive impact on purchase intention.*

RQ2: Does perceived expertise of the digital influencer significantly affect consumers' purchase intentions? If so, it moderates the impact, negative or positive, that sponsorship disclosure may have?

H3: *Perceived expertise moderates the impact of sponsorship disclosure on purchase intention.*

H3a: *Consumers' purchase intentions are higher for products sponsored by social media influencers who are perceived as experts than non-experts.*

RQ3: Is the product type the digital influencer is endorsing important in moderating the impact, negative or positive, that sponsorship disclosure may have?

H4: *Product type (hedonic vs utilitarian products) moderates the impact of sponsorship disclosure on purchase intention*

H4a: *In sponsorship disclosure condition, consumers' purchase intentions are higher for utilitarian goods than for hedonic goods.*

H4b: *In non-sponsorship disclosure condition, consumers' purchase intentions are higher for hedonic goods than for utilitarian goods.*

3. Methodology

3.1 Research objective

From literature review, it was possible to notice that social media influencers are a recent topic and scarce authors have studied them. This is even more notorious regarding sponsorship disclosure by digital influencers, thus there are some contradictions and disparities in previous results. Hence, this study aims to understand the way consumers perceive sponsorship disclosure and, consequently, their purchase intention regarding products endorsed by these opinion leaders. Moreover, to deepen further that understanding, this study considers expertise condition and two different types of products - hedonic and utilitarian - that might vary consumers' purchase intention under sponsorship/non-sponsorship disclosure condition.

3.2 Research Design

To research the chosen problem, the study wants to test whether exposing consumers to different realities can affect their purchase intention. This way, a cause-and-effect relationship will be established between sponsorship disclosure and consumers' purchase intention of a product using two different moderators: expertise and product type (hedonic and utilitarian).

Following Malholtra and Birks (2007), an appropriate research design will be chosen in order to gather the most accurate information and minimize error. With this said, a full factorial design will give to the researcher all the necessary conditions. The study will be developed to follow a between-subjects design - 2 (sponsorship disclosure: disclosed vs. non-disclosed) x 2 (influencer expertise: expert vs. non-expert) x 2 (product type: hedonic vs. utilitarian) - with repeated measures in the last factor. Within each of the four online questionnaires developed, all participants will be subject to both hedonic and utilitarian products, however, the other two conditions (sponsorship disclosure and expertise) will be randomly but evenly assigned. This method of distribution was followed to ensure a higher and equal number of responses for each condition.

3.2.1 Variables

3.2.1.1 Dependent variable

According to Bagozzi et al. (1979), purchase intention is a tendency where people do a personal action related to a particular brand. Over time, previous literature has been studied that attitude can influence behaviour through behavioural intentions (Fishbein and Ajzen's, 1975). This way, and following common marketing practices, this research assumes a link between behaviour and intent.

3.2.1.2 Independent variables

There are three independent variables in the study, Sponsorship Disclosure, Expertise and Product Type, which will result in 8 different conditions. All of the independent variables have 2 different levels, which will allow the researcher to study the interactions effects between them and evaluate their strength. It is expected that expertise and product type moderate the relationship between disclosure condition and purchase intention.

3.3 Pre-test

Before the main study of this dissertation, a pre-test was conducted to understand if the products chosen for utilitarian and hedonic purposes were perceived in that way by participants. Moreover, participants were asked about the likability and perceived performance/quality of the computers for both purposes in order to avoid different preferences between products.

This pre-test was also conducted to select the description that will be used on both products endorsed by the digital influencers on Instagram. The participants will be presented with two hedonic descriptions and two utilitarian descriptions. All the descriptions will be evaluated as hedonic or utilitarian, the perceived likability and performance/quality they have when reading the description.

To rate the products and descriptions as hedonic or utilitarian, the participants will be presented with a seven-point semantic differential scale, where 1 is Hedonic and 7 Utilitarian. Regarding the likability and perceived performance/quality of both products and descriptions will be evaluated using a 7-Point Likert Scale.

The online pre-test survey was developed through Qualtrics and was distributed via social media platforms to 20 Portuguese participants, male and female, with ages between 21 and 55.

A paired-sample t-test was developed to detect if there were any significant differences between product types in regard to likability and performance. From the analysis of the results, (Appendix A), there was no statistical significance between the utilitarian product and the hedonic one. The likability and performance/quality of the products presented a p-value equal to 1 and 0,881, respectively, which is higher than the level of significance (0,05).

Regarding descriptions, the two descriptions which should depict a hedonic product were assumed by participants as such and the same happened for utilitarian descriptions. Moreover, in order to ensure that there were no significant preferences between hedonic and utilitarian products, paired-sample tests were made between hedonic and utilitarian descriptions always analysing the likability and perceived performance/quality. The results showed (Appendix B) that the second utilitarian description and the second hedonic description were the only ones that, when compared to each other, did not have statistical significance neither in likability nor performance/quality, presenting a p-value of 0,094 and 0,134, respectively.

The descriptions chosen for the online survey will be the ones referred above to avoid biases because of preferences between products. The descriptions will be the following:

Description for Hedonic Product	@emilygamer Good morning everyone! This computer is my new partner when I'm playing games. It gives you a pleasant experience and the games run super well. Also, it is super-fast in the other normal stuff you do on your computer: internet, video and microphone... It's totally a 4,5/5 stars!!!
Description for Utilitarian Product	@hannah_brown Good morning everyone! Check out my new computer for work. I'm totally in love with it! It's super-fast when I'm using internet, Microsoft office and when I'm having work calls... Also, all the programs I use for analysis run super well! It's completely a 4,5/5 stars!!

Table 1: Descriptions presented on Instagram's posts for both products

3.4 Materials

The aim of this survey is measuring the impact of sponsorship disclosure condition in consumers' purchase intention, moderating this impact with two moderators: expertise

condition and product type. For this to be possible to measure, 8 different conditions will be developed.

The four questionnaires for this study were developed through Qualtrics and distributed via social media platforms, mainly WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram since these channels have high reachability. In Appendix C, the official survey transcript is presented.

Depending on the questionnaire randomly assigned, all participants will be presented with two advertisements of two different computers - one for hedonic purposes and other one for utilitarian - endorsed by two fictional influencers. Also, regardless of the condition each one of them will be assigned, they will all have to answer the same questions to measure their perceptions towards expertise condition, sponsorship disclosure condition and purchase intentions.

The following Instagram’s posts will be presented to participants:



Figure 1: Instagram post: Fictional digital influencer (@emilygamer) with Hedonic product – Disclosure and Non-disclosure condition



Figure 2: Instagram post: Fictional digital influencer (@hannah_brown) with Utilitarian product – Disclosure and Non-disclosure condition

The measures used in the online survey will be adapted from existing literature using two formats - 7-Point Differential scale and 7-Point Likert scale - to ensure reliability of the questions and the items. Also, using always the same 1 to 7 scale, makes it easier for participants to understand the mechanics and flow of the questionnaire.

For expertise variable analysis, participants will be asked in the beginning of the survey to rate the influencers they follow or used to follow in the past in different characteristics. Since expertise is one of the three dimensions of Source Credibility, a study conducted by Ohanian (1990) was followed by the researcher and adapted to this study. The most relevant characteristics used to measure expertise will be not expert/expert, unqualified/qualified, inexperienced/experienced, unskilled/skilled and will be presented in a seven-point semantic differential scale. Moreover, in order to control if participants understood the expertise manipulation, they will be asked on a 7-Point Likert scale if they perceive the influencer they

saw on the survey as an expert on the field of the product she is endorsing, which is, in this case, technology and/or gaming.

Regarding influencers' sponsorship disclosure, to check the manipulation of sponsorship disclosure by participants, they will be asked if the post presented to them is sponsored by a brand or not. Also, the study will try to understand if the content delivered by the digital influencer is perceived as controlled by a brand and if it is important that social media influencers inform followers of sponsored posts. Related to the latter, the study will also try to understand why it is important that influencers inform followers, that is, if disclose sponsorship by digital influencers prove they are honest and/or ethically correct and even if it decreases/increases their willingness to buy. Participants will be asked about these subtopics on a 7-Point Likert scale.

In terms of purchase intention, following Park et al. (2007), participants will be asked three different questions using a 7-Point Likert scale, assessing the likelihood of considering the purchase of the product endorsed by the digital influencer they saw, the likelihood of actually buying the product and finally, the likelihood of recommending the product to friends/family.

Finally, the demographic questions were made regarding gender, age, nationality and current occupation.

3.5 Participants

The target population of this online survey will be individuals, male and female, from different nationalities within a large range of age. However, the main statistical target of this study are Millennials (Generation Y) and people from Generation Z who are more interested in digital influencers and are more accustomed to Social Media platforms, using it daily (Singh, 2014). These individuals were raised in the Internet era and closely observed the development of the main social media platforms and consequently, of digital influencers. Nevertheless, the survey is not limited to these generations, since it will be interesting to understand how other generations who are not so involved with social media platforms or do not follow digital influencers interact with this new marketing strategy - influencer marketing.

Following Malhotra (2006), this study will use a non-probabilistic convenience sampling which relies on the researcher's ability to select randomly the participants. Also, this technique is inexpensive, least time-consuming and allows the researcher to reach a large number of participants.

3.6 Procedure

Following Malhotra et al. (2012), a survey with several structured questions were developed and distributed to a population sample who will be studied.

The survey will be distributed via social media platforms, mainly Facebook and Instagram. Participants will use a link to enter the survey and will be randomly assigned to one of the four questionnaires available. Next, they will be in contact with an initial page with relevant information about the study. First of all, they will be presented with the researcher's name and the purpose of the study. To avoid that participants try to look good in the most acceptable social way, participants are informed that there are no wrong or right answers and their honesty is appreciated. Also, according to Lin et al. (2011), the researcher will ensure anonymity and confidentiality to participants, informing that their answers will only be used for academic purposes. To finalize, participants will be informed of the duration of the study and a thank you message will be left.

After the introduction of the study, all participants will have the same general questions to answer regarding digital influencers. First, participants will have to respond if they follow or used to follow in the past any social media influencer. In case of a positive answer, they will be asked to select, on average, how many social media influencers do they follow. If they select "No" in the first question they will be redirected to the third one. On the third question, participants will have to rate their preference in regard to the content they prefer to follow such as "Fashion and Beauty", "Lifestyle", "Technology", "Food recipes/products" or "Healthy lifestyle". After, they will be presented with possible reasons that make them follow social media influencers and they have to rate it according to their truth. Moreover, individuals who are participating in the study will have to rate some characteristics they think digital influencers they follow or used to follow have. To finalize general questions, participants will be asked how likely they would be in buying a product that an influencer is endorsing.

Thereafter, all participants will be presented with a hedonic product - computer for gaming purposes. Participants will have a description of the influencer, explaining that she is a known influencer with thousands of followers, the age and a little information of their life on social media platforms and work experience. Half of the participants will be presented with an influencer - @emliy gamer - who is an expert on the field, being a professional gamer for over 6 years. The other half will be presented with the exact same influencer, however, she will not be an expert, sharing with her followers only her opinion. After description, all participants will be able to see an Instagram's post where the influencer expresses her opinion about the

computer while she promotes it. As it happens with the expert condition, half of the participants will see on the end of the Instagram description the hashtag “#sponsored” and the other half will not be able to know if the post is sponsored or not. This way, within the hedonic product, participants will be randomly presented with 4 different conditions: Expert & Sponsorship Disclosure, Expert & Non-sponsorship Disclosure, Non-expert & Sponsorship Disclosure and Non-expert & Non-sponsorship Disclosure.

After this introduction of the digital influencer and the product all participants will have to respond to the same questions. First, purchase intention, i.e, they will be able to rate if they would consider purchasing the product endorsed by that specific influencer, if they would actually purchase the product and if they would recommend it to friends and/or family. Next, in order to understand how participants perceived the digital influencer and the content delivered by her, three questions about each will be made regarding credibility, trustworthiness and authenticity as well as attitudes, values and opinions. After, participants will be asked to rate if they think the content delivered by the influencer is controlled by a brand. Still related to this post, as control measures participants will have to rate to what extent they perceive the influencer they saw as an expert in the field and if they think the post is sponsored by a brand. Through these two questions, it will be easier to understand if participants understood the manipulation of the descriptions and Instagram’s posts regarding expertise and disclosure conditions. In terms of expertise, the participants will also be asked about the importance of training and/or work in the field of the product in order for them to trust in the advertising she is doing. To finalize, the importance of influencers in informing followers that they are being paid to advertise the product will be asked and some reasons such as honesty, ethics and willingness to buy will be rated regarding this importance.

After answering all questions about the hedonic computer, all participants will be presented with a utilitarian product - computer for work purposes. Participants will have a description about the influencer with exactly the same amount of information they had on the previous product, except the username - @hannah_brown. This way, as it happened in the hedonic product, participants will be randomly exposed to different expertise conditions and the instagram’ post will have a different photo and description, however, the same method will be used regarding sponsorship disclosure. Thus, within the utilitarian product, participants will also be randomly assigned between four different conditions. After the introduction, all participants will respond to the same questions they already have responded to in the previous product but now, regarding the new advertisement.

The last part of the survey gathered participants' demographic data: gender, age, nationality and occupation. Finally, a thank you message will appear, indicating that they have reached the end of the survey and the researcher's email will be available to give participants the opportunity of leave questions and suggestions.

4. Results Analysis

4.1 Data collection and Data cleaning

Before starting to analyse all the data collected, the results obtained were subject to data cleaning.

First, from the initial total number of 395 participants who initiated the survey, only 232 were considered as complete answers for further analysis. The participants who were not included into the study were the ones that had a completion rate below 90% (163 participants) since all the information gathered with the survey were important to collect valuable insights for this dissertation.

Further, to guarantee the homogeneity of responses, the four questionnaires were evenly randomly assigned to participants ensuring that from the 232 complete responses, 61 were assigned to the Expert & Disclosure condition, 60 to the Non-expert & Disclosure, 56 to the Expert & Non-disclosure, and, finally, 55 to Non-expert & Non-disclosure condition.

4.2 Sample Description

4.2.1 Demographics

Using IBM SPSS version 26.0, it was possible to analyse the 232 participants in terms of demographic information. In this sense, it was conducted a descriptive analysis (Appendix D). The sample showed that 29,3% of the participants were male, 69,0% female and 1,7% preferred not to refer. Concerning age, the sample showed that there were responses from participants with ages between 12 years old and 66 years old. However, since the survey was distributed among social media platforms, friends and colleagues from Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics and other universities, the higher number of responses were from individuals aged between 18 years old and 26 years old (60,7% of the sample).

In terms of nationality, 96,1% of the participants were Portuguese and 3,9% were from other nationalities such as Dutch, German, Greek, Iran, Italian, Spanish, Ukrainian and Finnish. In respect to participants' occupation, 50,9% are employed, 1,7% unemployed, 1,3% retired, and 46,1% are students.

4.2.2 Digital Influencers

Participants were asked about general questions regarding social media influencers and conducting a descriptive analysis (Appendix E) it was possible to know that 77,2% of participants follow or used to follow digital influencers and 22,8% do not follow. Moreover, from that 77,2%, 36,9% follow more than ten influencers on social media platforms, 16,8% follow between six to nine, 21,2% follow four to six and, finally, 25,1% follow just one to three digital influencers.

Regarding why participants follow social media influencers, entertainment seems to be the main reason ($M = 4,86$; $SD = 2,00$) followed by the interest in knowing which products/brands digital influencers are using ($M = 4,22$; $SD = 1,98$) and where they buy that same products/brands ($M = 4,18$; $SD = 1,99$) (Appendix E).

In terms of the content produced by influencers, most participants prefer to follow the ones who have content related to Lifestyle ($M = 4,35$; $SD = 2,12$), followed by, Fashion and Beauty ($M = 4,02$; $SD = 2,21$), Food recipes ($M = 3,85$; $SD = 1,93$), Healthy Lifestyle ($M = 3,39$; $SD = 1,95$) and Technology ($M = 3,37$; $SD = 1,93$) (Appendix E).

Concerning the likability of buying a product endorsed by an influencer, 44% referred they are likely to purchase the product, 16,4% neither likely or unlikely, and 39,3% are not so much likely in purchasing the product promoted by an influencer (Appendix E).

Regarding the importance of digital influencers expertise (Appendix E), participants affirmed that expertise on the field of the product they are endorsing is important for them to trust on the advertisement ($M = 4,97$; $SD = 1,74$). Moreover, respondents assumed that for them it is important digital influencers inform followers they are being paid to publish a certain post ($M = 5,47$; $SD = 1,84$) and that transparency proves they are honest ($M = 4,74$; $SD = 1,57$) (Appendix E).

4.3 Reliability Analysis

As mentioned in Chapter 3, to ensure reliability to this study, several scales used were adapted from previous literature. However, to ensure reliability of all scales used in the four questionnaires, Cronbach's Alpha test was conducted.

According to Peter (1979) and Cortina (1993), the Cronbach's Alpha should present a value higher than 0.5 and preferentially above 0.7. In the current study, all values were higher

than 0.7, as shown in the *table 2* presented above - Scales' Reliability Test. In Appendix F it is possible to see all SPSS outputs for each Cronbach's Alpha in more detail.

Dimensions	Scales	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
All Participants	Expertise	4	0,945
Hedonic Product	Purchase Intentions	3	0,906
Utilitarian Product	Purchase Intentions	3	0,952
Hedonic Product	Credibility of Influencer	9	0,926
Utilitarian Product	Credibility of Influencer	9	0,963

Table 2: Scales' Reliability Test

4.4 Manipulation Checks

4.4.1 Sponsorship Disclosure Condition

Participants were randomly assigned to four different questionnaires with different manipulations. Thus, it is necessary to check if manipulations were perceived by participants as they should. First, it is essential to ensure that participants' perception of the disclosure of sponsorship was correct. In order to do that, it was inserted in the survey a standard question that required participants to rate how much they think the post they saw was sponsored by a brand (1=Not at all to 7=Completely). Although the question chosen for this manipulation did not address the issue of whether the post has disclosure or not, it will help to understand if the participants perceived the post as sponsored or not. By running a 2 (sponsorship disclosure: disclose vs. non-disclose) x 2 (product type: hedonic vs. utilitarian) Repeated Measures ANOVA test, with repeated measures in the last factor (Appendix G), it will be possible to understand if the posts with the hashtag #sponsored were more perceived as sponsored than the ones that did not present the hashtag.

Through the analysis of the table Test of Within-Subjects Effects (Appendix G), the null hypothesis is not rejected ($F(1,230) = 0,49$; $p\text{-value} = 0,826$), which means that there is not a significant difference between the means of sponsored and non-sponsored post for both hedonic and utilitarian products.

When analysing the table Test of Between-Subjects Effects (Appendix G), that shows that there was no statistically significant effect from the disclosure condition for a significance level of 5%. However, for a significant level of 10%, there is a marginal significant effect

between disclosure and non-disclosure conditions ($F(1,230) = 3,418$; $p\text{-value} = 0,066$). This means that in the condition of disclose the participants perceived more the post as sponsored than in non-disclose condition.

In addition, there is also no significant effect in terms of the interaction between product type*disclosure condition ($F(1,230) = 0,021$; $p\text{-value} = 0,886$), meaning that there are no significant differences between perceived post sponsored for both products under sponsorship disclosure and non-disclosure conditions.

As shown on the table below (Table 3), and discussed on the results presented above, the group presented with disclosure condition perceived the post as sponsored more than the ones presented with non-disclosure condition. However, there are no significant differences between hedonic and utilitarian product under sponsorship disclosure or non-disclosure conditions.

	Disclosure Conditions	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Hedonic Product: Post Sponsored	Disclosure	5,33	2,013	121
	Non-disclosure	4,92	1,969	111
Utilitarian Product: Post Sponsored	Disclosure	5,37	1,870	121
	Non-disclosure	4,93	1,901	111

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics: Perceived sponsored for both hedonic and utilitarian products under disclosure conditions

In sum, the manipulation was successfully made since participants perceived more the posts with the hashtag “sponsored” as sponsored than the posts presented without the hashtag.

4.4.2 Expertise Condition

It was also necessary to check if the participants perceived the fictional influencers as experts or non-experts depending on the condition they were randomly assigned. As it was made regarding participants’ perception if the post was sponsored or not, a standard question regarding perceived expertise was also inserted in the survey (1-Not at all to 7- Completely).

A 2 (influencer expertise: expert vs. non-expert) x 2 (product type: hedonic vs utilitarian) Repeated Measures ANOVA test, with repeated measures on the last factor, was conducted to check expertise manipulation (Appendix H).

The Within-Subjects test (Appendix H) reveals that for a level of significance of 5%, there was no significant difference between the means of perceived expertise for the two types of products ($F(1,230) = 3,468$; $p\text{-value} = 0,064$).

Concerning the table Test of Between-Subjects Effects, expertise condition presented a $p\text{-value} < 0,001$, meaning that there is a significant difference between experts and non-experts regardless product type. In this case, experts are perceived as more experts than non-experts.

Moreover, there is a significant effect regarding the interaction between product type*influencer expertise ($F(1,230) = 8,899$; $p\text{-value} = 0,003$). This way, it is possible to conclude that the difference between expert and non-expert is higher for utilitarian products when compared to hedonic. Also, as expected, for utilitarian products the expert was perceived more expert than for hedonic products. This may be related with the fact that since hedonic products are more subjective than utilitarian, it is more difficult to assume that the fictional influencer is actually an expert on the field.

As it is shown on the Descriptive Statistics table below (Table 4), for both product types, experts were perceived as such – $M = 4,03$; $SD = 1,78$ for hedonic and $M = 4,61$; $SD = 1,79$ for utilitarian. The same happened for non-expertise condition: $M = 3,17$; $SD = 1,64$ for hedonic product and $M = 3,04$; $SD = 1,62$ for the utilitarian product. This will help to better understand the results discussed above.

	Expertise Conditions	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Hedonic Product: Expert on the field	Expert	4,03	1,776	117
	Non-expert	3,17	1,638	115
Utilitarian Product: Expert on the field	Expert	4,61	1,789	117
	Non-Expert	3,04	1,622	115

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics: Perceived expertise for both hedonic and utilitarian products under expertise

By running an Independent-sample T-test (Appendix I), between expert and non-expert conditions, it is possible to assume that for both product types, the fictional influencer described as expert was perceived as supposed ($p\text{-value} < 0,001$, for hedonic and utilitarian conditions). Thus, the manipulation related to perceived expertise was successfully made.

4.5 Hypothesis Analysis

To answer the hypothesis developed in Chapter 2, ANOVA tests were conducted to detect any significant differences between purchase intentions' means recorded for the different conditions that participants were randomly assigned in the survey.

In **Hypothesis 1** and **Hypothesis 2**, it was proposed that non-sponsorship disclosure and sponsorship disclosure would have a negative or positive impact, respectively, on purchase intentions, regardless other conditions.

Regarding the other hypothesis developed, two other conditions - Expertise and Product Type - were used to understand if they would moderate the impact that disclosure condition would have on purchase intentions.

A 2 (sponsorship disclosure: disclose vs. non-disclose) x 2 (influencer expertise: expert vs. non-expert) x 2 (product type: hedonic vs. utilitarian) Repeated Measures ANOVA, with repeated measures in the last factor (Appendix J), was performed to detect any significant differences between purchase intentions' means recorded for each type disclosure and expertise condition.

The means for all items utilized to measure participants' purchase intentions can be observed in Appendix J.

By analysing the table Test of Within-Subjects Effects (Appendix J), the null hypothesis is rejected, which means that there is a significant difference between means of purchase intention of the digital influencers for the two types of products ($F(1,228) = 51,011, p\text{-value} < 0,001$). It is possible to conclude that participants are more likely to purchase the utilitarian product than the hedonic product, regardless other conditions.

Through the analysis of the Test of Between-Subjects Effects (Appendix J), there was a statistically significant effect from the expertise condition ($p\text{-value} = 0,024$), meaning that digital influencers perceived as experts are able to generate higher purchase intentions than the ones perceived as non-experts. Regarding disclosure condition there was no statically significant effect ($p\text{-value} = 0,539$), rejecting the **Hypothesis 1** and **Hypothesis 2**. In terms of the interaction between disclosure condition*expertise condition, the **Hypothesis 3** cannot be validated since there was no significant effect ($p\text{-value} = 0,485$).

Additionally, there is a significant effect regarding the interaction between product type*expertise condition ($FD(1,228) = 9,930 ; p\text{-value} = 0,002$), that means that purchase intentions are affected in different ways for hedonic and utilitarian products regarding expert and non-expert condition. For example, experts who advertise a utilitarian product are able to generate higher purchase intentions than experts who promote a hedonic product. On the other hand, there was no statistically significant effect ($p\text{-value} = 0,684$) regarding the interaction between product type*disclosure condition. This way, **Hypothesis 4** cannot be confirmed.

By looking at the Means of Purchase Intentions in table 6 it is possible to assess all means for the utilitarian product and hedonic product under both disclosure and expertise conditions.

	Disclosure Condition	Expertise Condition	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Hedonic Product: Purchase Intentions	Disclosure	Expert	2,760	1,486	61
		Non-Expert	2,622	1,533	60
	Non-disclosure	Expert	2,613	1,521	56
		Non-expert	2,453	1,504	55
Utilitarian Product: Purchase Intentions	Disclosure	Expert	3,557	1,741	61
		Non-expert	3,081	1,582	60
	Non-disclosure	Expert	3,735	1,958	56
		Non-expert	2,740	1,748	55

Table 6: Means of purchase intentions for hedonic and utilitarian products

By conducting an Independent-Sample T-test between Expert and Non-expert conditions (Appendix K), it was possible to conclude that there was no statistically significant effect between expertise conditions for the hedonic product ($p\text{-value} = 0,455$). However, for utilitarian product, there was a statistically significant difference of purchase intentions between the digital influencer described as expert and the one that was non-expert ($p\text{-value} = 0,002$). Thus, the digital influencer perceived as an expert is able to generate higher purchase intentions but only for utilitarian products, validating partially **Hypothesis 3a**.

After, it was conducted another Independent-Samples T-test between Disclosure and Non-disclosure conditions (Appendix L), and it is possible to conclude, as expected, that there was no statistically significant effect ($p\text{-value} = 0,427$ for hedonic and $p\text{-value} = 0,738$ for utilitarian) between disclosure conditions and both product types for a level of significance 5%, meaning that the average level of purchase intention for both hedonic and utilitarian products is identical across disclosure and non-disclosure of sponsorship conditions Therefore, **Hypothesis 4a** and **Hypothesis 4b** are rejected.

5. Conclusions and Future Research

5.1 Discussion and Conclusions

The objective of this study was to further analyse sponsorship disclosure and understand how it might impact purchase intentions differently considering the level of expertise of the digital influencer that is endorsing the product and the type of product he/she is advertising.

Compiling all the data collected and analysed in the previous chapter, it is now possible to review the research questions of this study presented in Chapter 1 and draw the main conclusions.

As already mentioned in this dissertation, there is a lack of theoretical and empirical data regarding the effectiveness of digital influencer endorsers in influencing consumers' purchase intentions in consumers. This lack of information is even more notorious in regard to sponsorship disclosure by social media influencers and the impact that it has on consumers' behavioural outcomes.

The first research question developed aimed at understanding if disclosure of sponsorship by social media influencers would have an impact, negative or positive in consumers' purchase intentions. However, as it is presented in the previous chapter, disclosure and non-disclosure of sponsorship conditions did not present impact on purchase intentions rated by participants. This means that participants' purchase intentions do not change significantly with disclosure or non-disclosure of advertising by digital influencers. These unexpected results might reveal other consumers' opinions or outcomes regarding sponsorship disclosure that were not investigated in this study. Therefore, results can be interpreted in different ways. On one hand, although consumers express that it is important that digital influencers inform followers of sponsorship, this transparency will only prove they are honest and will not influence the decision-making process. On the other hand, this also can mean that nowadays people automatically assume that digital influencers' posts are sponsored by a brand regardless if they assume it or not.

The second research question has the purpose to understand how the expertise of the digital influencers moderate the impact that sponsorship disclosure has on purchase intentions. In fact, as it was shown in Chapter 4, there was no significant effect between Disclosure Condition and Expertise condition. However, regarding purchase intentions for the utilitarian product, digital influencers perceived as experts generate higher purchase intentions than the influencers perceived as non-experts. In terms of purchase intentions of hedonic products, there

was no statistically significant effect between different levels of expertise condition, meaning that digital influencers will be able to generate equal purchase intentions regardless his/her level of expertise.

Finally, the third research question was developed in order to understand if different product types moderate the impact that sponsorship disclosure would have on consumers' purchase intentions. From the analysis of the data collected, it is possible to conclude that disclosure conditions do not have any significant impact on purchase intentions whether for hedonic or utilitarian products. This final conclusion was already expected taking into account the results of the first research question regarding general purchase intentions and disclosure conditions.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

Although there is previous literature dedicated to sponsorship disclosure, digital influencers and their perceived expertise or/and impact on consumers' purchase intentions, there are no other studies focusing on this relationship and even adding two different product types.

From the academic perspective, the findings that this dissertation wants to provide are exactly that missing information that exists in previous literature or complement them with additional findings. With this said, this academic paper wants to explore the capability that disclosure of sponsorship by digital influencers may have to impact consumers' buying intention across both hedonic and utilitarian products.

In previous literature, regarding sponsorship disclosure by social media influencers it still exists a lot of contradictions. On one hand, there are some authors that defend that posts which convey paid nature communication, will affect negatively attitudinal and behavioural outcomes on consumers (Evans et al., 2017) since it can activate defensive coping mechanisms like scepticism, resistance or counter (Freistad & Wright 1994; Shrum et al. 2012) and, consequently, decrease purchase intentions (Tessitore & Geuens, 2013). On the other hand, according to Abdullahi (2020), transparency in disclosing advertising may increase responses regarding the influencer which will strengthen the use of influencer marketing and possibly increase buying intentions. In fact, the results of the present study, showed that although it is possible to note a slight positive difference in means of disclosure condition when compared to non-disclosure, it did not inflate significantly purchase intentions of consumers.

Concerning expertise, it was shown that perceived expertise by consumers have a positive impact on buying intentions. It was expected that the proven of adequate experience, knowledge or skills (Van der Waldt et al., 2009:104) would lead to this result. From the analysis of the data collected, it can be concluded that although expertise conditions did not moderate significantly the impact that sponsorship disclosure has on purchase intentions, it increases purchase intentions of consumers significantly for utilitarian products which are aligned with previous results of Friedman and Friedman (1979) but, in this study, regarding digital influencers.

Lastly, the independent variable product type contrarily of what was assumed by the researcher did not moderate the impact that sponsorship disclosure by social media influencers may have on purchase intentions.

5.3 Managerial Implications

The findings of this dissertation want to provide valuable insights to marketers and managers, in order to increase firm's sales performance. This study shows that the attention of marketers should not be related to sponsorship disclosure, as these do not have significant impact in the purchase intentions of consumers, and it is decreed by law that advertising must be identified as such. On the contrary, they should explore which characteristics consumers value more in digital influencers so they can decide the right influencer they want to associate their brand with regarding the company's values and the target group they want to achieve. This way, companies will not only save money but also increase brand awareness. The results of this research show that marketers should focus their attention on digital influencers that are experts on the field of the product the company wants to promote. Moreover, understanding the importance that consumers give to expertise regarding different product types may be relevant to decide which products are more adequate for advertising through influencer marketing. From the literature review and the study results, it was shown that consumers are more influenceable by digital influencers with utilitarian products when compared to hedonic products.

In summary, this dissertation provides valuable tactical guidelines to companies in regard to influencer selection criteria. By following this, marketers will be able to choose the right influencer to advertise the right product. This way, the brand will have a perfect product-match up proposition which is essential for achieving a successful brand communication and a strong presence in social media.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research Recommendations

This study gave valuable insights concerning the effect that sponsorship disclosure has on consumers and their purchase intentions. However, some important limitations need to be discussed in order to provide future recommendations.

First, the findings of this research are limited to digital influencers and specific product type - hedonic and utilitarian. So, for future research, it could be interesting to explore different types of influencers like celebrities or distinguish between macro and micro digital influencers. In regard to product selection, according to Mittal (1998), it would be relevant to understand the difference that may have between high and low involvement for both hedonic and utilitarian products. Also, the presenting order that products appear on survey was not rotated among participants, that is, the hedonic product was always shown first and the utilitarian product second. In order to minimize confounding results, the practice of rotating conditions should be applied.

Secondly, previous literature has proposed to use other source credibility dimensions, like trustworthiness and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1991). This way, it could be interesting exploring other dimensions to see if they are able to moderate the impact that sponsorship disclosure has on consumers' purchase intentions.

Thirdly, purchase intentions rated by participants could be associated with the chosen products - computer for gaming as hedonic product and computer for work as utilitarian product. Although a pre-test was made to understand if the products are perceived by participants with the same quality/performance and likability, it is important to mention that the chosen products were not the best. This happened mainly because people that do not play computer games (hedonic product) probably will not be likely to buy that type of product. For future research, the choice of products should be based on daily basis products that everyone uses or need to avoid biases in purchase intentions.

In terms of other future research recommendations, bearing in mind the results of this study, it would be interesting to understand why disclosure conditions did not reveal significant effect on purchase intentions. As it was mentioned in conclusions, it can be related to the fact that followers trust so much on influencers' opinion that they think social media influencers would not be associated with a brand they do not like or believe. Another way to investigate these results may be trying to understand if influencer marketing, being a phenomenon that has been growing exponentially, made people look to influencers' posts where they are showing some products as sponsored regardless if they disclose it or not.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Pre-test results: Paired-sample T-test between products

Paired Sample Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Utilitarian Product	5,55	20	1,276	,285
	Hedonic Product	2,90	20	1,889	,422
Pair 2	Utilitarian Product – I like the product	4,50	20	1,192	,267
	Hedonic Product – I like the product	4,50	20	1,762	,394
Pair 3	Utilitarian Product – The product has great performance	4,75	20	1,293	,289
	Hedonic Product – The product has great performance	4,80	20	1,576	,352

Paired Sample Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Utilitarian Product – Hedonic Product	2,650	2,434	,544	1,511	3,789	4,869	19	,000
Pair 2	Utilitarian Product – I like the product - Hedonic Product – I like the product	,000	2,103	,470	-,984	,984	,000	19	1,000
Pair 3	Utilitarian Product – The product has great performance - Hedonic Product – The product has great performance	-,050	1,468	,328	-,737	,637	-,152	19	,881

Appendix B: Pre-test results: Paired-sample T-test between descriptions

Paired Sample Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	2 D.P.U	5,65	20	1,599	,357
	2 D.P.H	3,30	20	1,809	,405
Pair 2	2 D.P.U – I like the product	5,15	20	1,182	,264
	2 D.P.H – I like the product	4,60	20	1,501	,336
Pair 3	2 D.P.U – The product has great performance	5,20	20	1,005	,225
	2 D.P.H – The product has great performance	4,80	20	1,152	,258

Paired Sample Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	2 D.P.U – 2 D.P.H	2,350	2,852	,638	1,015	3,685	3,685	19	,002
Pair 2	2 D.P.U – I like the product – 2 D.P.H – I like the product	,550	1,395	,312	-,103	1,203	1,764	19	,094
Pair 3	2 D.P.U – The product has great performance – 2 D.P.H – The product has great performance	,400	1,142	,255	-,135	,935	1,566	19	,134

Appendix C: Survey Transcript

Randomization

Q1: Please click [here](#) to be direct to the study.

(By clicking on the word “here”, participants were redirected to one of the four questionnaires)

Block 1 – Introduction

Dear participant,

My name is **Catarina Almeida** and I’m a master’s student from Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics. This survey aims to better understand the **consumers’ purchase intentions** regarding **social media influencers’ marketing campaigns**.

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

It should take less than 7 minutes to answer all the questions and **your help is really appreciated**.

Thank you very much for your help!

Block 2 – General information

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

- Yes
- No

(Condition: **No** is selected → Skip To: Q3)

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

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

Q3: Please rate from **1 (Not at all)** to **7 (Completely)** the following statements:

I prefer to follow social media influencers which produce content related with...

	1. Not at all	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Completely
Fashion and Beauty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lifestyle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food recipes/products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Healthy lifestyle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4: Please rate from **1 (Not at all)** to **7 (Completely)** the following statements:

I follow social media influencers because...

	1. Not at all	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Completely
I identify myself with the influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see the influencer as a friend	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel very close to the influencer because of their type of individual communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to know which products/brands they are using	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to know where I can buy the products/brands they are using	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to know more about social media influencers and their life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Entertainment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5: Bearing in mind the influencers you follow, please rate them from **1 (Not at all)** to **7 (Completely)**, according to the following **characteristics**:

Non-Expert	<input type="radio"/>	Expert
Unqualified	<input type="radio"/>	Qualified
Inexperienced	<input type="radio"/>	Experienced
Unskilled	<input type="radio"/>	Skilled

Q6: Please rate from **1 (Not likely at all)** to **7 (Very Likely)** how likely you be in **buying a product that an influencer is endorsing**:

	1. Not Likely at all	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Very Likely
Purchase a product endorsed by an influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Block 3 – Hedonic Product/ Block 4 – Utilitarian Product

(Participant is presented with an Instagram post of a fictional digital influencer endorsing the product and a small text with the description of the influencer)

Q7/: Please rate the following statements on a scale from **1 (Not at all likely)** to **7 (Very likely)**:

	1. Not at all likely	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Very likely
I would consider purchase the product endorsed by this social media influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would purchase the product endorsed by this social media influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would recommend this product to my friends/family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q8/Q17: Please rate from **1 (Not at all)** to **7 (Completely)** the digital influencer you just saw on the following **attributes**:

	1. Not at all	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Completely
Credibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trustworthiness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Authenticity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q9/Q18: Please rate from **1 (Not at all)** to **7 (Completely)** to what extent do you think the content delivered by the digital influencer was...

	1. Not at all	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Completely
Credible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Authentic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q10/Q19: Please rate from **1 (Not at all)** to **7 (Completely)** to what extent do you think the content delivered by the social media influencer reflects her...

	1. Not at all	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Completely
Attitudes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Values	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opinions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11/Q20: Please rate from **1 (Not controlled at all)** to **7 (Extremely controlled)** to what extent do you think the content delivered by the social media influencer was controlled by a brand:

	1. Not controlled at all	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Extremely controlled
Content delivered by the influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12/Q21: Please rate from **1 (Not at all)** to **7 (Completely)** to what extent do you perceive the influencer you just saw as an expert on the field of the product she is endorsing:

	1. Not at all	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Completely
Expert on the field	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q13/Q22: Please rate from **1 (Not important at all)** to **7 (Extremely important)** how important do you consider that a social media influencer has training and/or work in the area in order to you trust in the advertising she is doing

	1. Not important at all	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Extremely important
Training and/or work in the area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14/Q23: Please rate from **1 (Not at all)** to **7 (Completely)** to what extent do you think the post you just saw is sponsored by a brand:

	1. Not at all	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Completely
The post is sponsored by a brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q15/Q24: Please rate from **1 (Not important at all)** to **7 (Extremely important)** how important is for you that social media influencers inform followers that they are being sponsored to advertise the product:

	1. Not at all	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Completely
Inform followers of sponsored products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q16/Q25: Please rate from **1 (Not at all)** to **7 (Completely)** to what extent do you agree with the following statements:

When social media influencers disclose sponsorship...

	1. Not at all	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7. Completely
I think they prove they are honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think they prove to be ethically correct	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think it increases my willingness to buy the product	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think it decreases my willingness to buy the product	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Block 5 – Demographics

Q26: Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

Q27: Age: _____

Q28: Nationality:

- Portuguese
- Other: _____

Q29: Current occupation

- Employed
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Student

Appendix D: Sample Descriptive Statistics: Demographics

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	68	29,3	29,3	29,3
	Female	160	69,0	69,0	98,3
	Prefer not to say	4	1,7	1,7	100,0
	Total	232	100,0		

Nationality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Portuguese	223	96,1	96,1	96,1
	Other:	9	3,9	3,9	100,0
	Total	232	100,0	100,0	

Nationality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		223	96,1	96,1	96,1
	Dutch	1	,4	,4	96,6
	Finnish	1	,4	,4	97,0
	German	2	,9	,9	97,8
	Greek	1	,4	,4	98,3
	Iran	1	,4	,4	98,7
	Italian	1	,4	,4	99,1
	Spanish	1	,4	,4	99,6
	Ukrainian	1	,4	,4	100,0
	Total	232	100,0	100,0	

Current Occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Employed	118	50,9	50,9	50,9
	Unemployed	4	1,7	1,7	52,6
	Retired	3	1,3	1,3	53,9
	Student	107	46,1	46,1	100,0
	Total	232	100,0	100,0	

Appendix E: Sample Descriptive Statistics: Digital Influencers

Follow Influencer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	179	77,2	77,2	77,2
	No	53	22,8	22,8	100,0
	Total	232	100,0	100,0	

Many Follow

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-3	45	19,4	25,1	25,1
	4-6	38	16,4	21,2	46,4
	6-9	30	12,9	16,8	63,1
	>10	66	28,4	36,9	100,0
	Total	179	77,2	100,0	
Missing	System	53	22,8		
Total		232	100,0		

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I identify myself with the influencer	232	1	7	3,94	2,052
I see the influencer as a friend	232	1	7	2,12	1,501
I feel very close to the influencer because of their type of individual communication	232	1	7	3,04	1,886
I want to know which products/brands they are using	232	1	7	4,22	1,975

I want to know where I can buy the products/brands they are using	232	1	7	4,18	1,985
I like to know more about social media influencers and their life	232	1	7	3,31	1,940
Entertainment	232	1	7	4,86	2,00
Valid N (listwise)	232				

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Content: Fashion&Beauty	232	1	7	4,02	2,214
Content: Lyfestyle	232	1	7	4,35	2,118
Content: Technology	232	1	7	3,37	1,931
Content: Food recipes/products	232	1	7	3,85	1,927
Content: Healthy Lifestyle	232	1	7	3,39	1,953
Valid N (listwise)	232				

General Purchase Intention

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1. Not at all likely	33	14,2	14,2	14,2
	2.	20	8,6	8,6	22,8
	3.	37	15,9	15,9	38,8
	4.	40	17,2	17,2	56,0
	5.	52	22,4	22,4	78,4
	6.	21	9,1	9,1	87,5
	7. Very likely	29	12,5	12,5	100,0
	Total	232	100,0	100,0	

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Importance Expertise	232	1	7	4,9720	1,73732
Importance Sponsorship Disclosure	232	1	7	5,4673	1,84328

Valid N (listwise)	232				
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Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Honesty – Sponsorship Disclosure	232	1	7	4,7345	1,56450
Valid N (listwise)	232				

Appendix F: Cronbach’s Alpha results

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach’s Alpha	N of items
,945	4

Cronbach’s Alpha: Expertise

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach’s Alpha	N of items
,906	3

Cronbach’s Alpha: Purchase Intentions for Hedonic Product

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach’s Alpha	N of items
,952	3

Cronbach’s Alpha: Purchase Intentions for Utilitarian Product

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach’s Alpha	N of items
,926	9

Cronbach’s Alpha: Credibility of Influencer for Hedonic Product

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach’s Alpha	N of items
,963	9

Cronbach’s Alpha: Credibility of Influencer for Utilitarian Product

Appendix G: Manipulation Check Sponsorship Disclosure: Repeated Measures ANOVA

Descriptive Statistics

	Disclosure Condition	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Hedonic: Post Sponsored	Disclosure	5,33	2,013	121
	Non-disclosure	4,92	1,969	111
	Total	5,13	1,998	232
Utilitarian: Post Sponsored	Disclosure	5,37	1,870	121
	Non-disclosure	4,93	1,901	111
	Total	5,16	1,894	232

Test of Within-Subjects Effects

		Type III Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Post Sponsored: H&U	Greenhouse-Geisser	,066	1,000	,049	,826	,000
Post Sponsored: H&U * Disclosure Condition	Greenhouse-Geisser	,028	1,000	,021	,886	,000
Error (Post Sponsored: H&U)	Greenhouse-Geisser	312,157	230,000			

Test of Between-Subjects Effects

	Type III Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	12208,227	1	1980,99	,000	,896
Disclosure Condition	21,062	1	3,418	,015	,015
Error	1417,412	230			

Appendix H: Manipulation Check Expertise: Repeated Measures ANOVA

Descriptive Statistics

	Expertise Condition	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Hedonic: Expert on the field	Expert	4,03	1,776	117
	Non-expert	3,17	1,638	115
	Total	3,60	1,760	232
Utilitarian: Expert on the field	Expert	4,61	1,789	117
	Non-expert	3,04	1,622	115
	Total	3,83	1,878	232

Test of Within-Subjects Effects

		Type III Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Expertise: H&U	Greenhouse-Geisser	5,605	1,000	3,468	,064	,015
Expertise: H&U * Expertise Condition	Greenhouse-Geisser	14,381	1,000	8,899	,003	,037
Error (Expertise: H&U)	Greenhouse-Geisser	3171,656	230,000			

Test of Between-Subjects Effects

		Type III Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept		6389,296	1	1512,842	,000	,868
Expertise Condition		172,196	1	40,772	,000	,151
Error		971,376	230			

Appendix I: Manipulation Check Expertise: Independent-sample T-test

Independent-samples T-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Hedonic: Expert on the field	Equal variances assumed	,0127	,722	3,861	230	,000	,866	,224
	Equal variances not assumed			3,863	229,076	,000	,866	,224
Utilitarian: Expert on the field	Equal variances assumed	1,991	,160	7,001	230	,000	1,571	,224
	Equal variances not assumed			7,007	228,510	,000	1,571	,224

Appendix J: Hypothesis: Repeated Measures ANOVA

Descriptive Statistics

	Disclosure Condition	Expertise Condition	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Hedonic Product: Purchase Intentions	Disclosure	Expert	2,760	1,486	61
		Non-Expert	2,622	1,533	60
		Total	2,6914	1,505	121
	Non-disclosure	Expert	2,613	1,521	56
		Non-expert	2,453	1,504	55
		Total	2,534	1,508	111
	Total	Expert	2,690	1,498	117
		Non-expert	2,541	1,516	115
		Total	2,616	1,505	232
Utilitarian Product: Purchase Intentions	Disclosure	Expert	3,557	1,741	61
		Non-expert	3,081	1,582	60
		Total	3,321	1,674	121
	Non-disclosure	Expert	3,735	1,958	56
		Non-expert	2,740	1,748	55
		Total	3,242	1,915	111
	Total	Expert	3,643	1,843	117
		Non-expert	2,917	1,665	115
		Total	3,283	1,790	232

Test of Within-Subjects Effects

		Type III Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Purchase Intentions: H&U	Greenhouse-Geisser	51,376	1,000	51,011	,000	,183
Purchase Intentions: H&U * Disclosure Condition	Greenhouse-Geisser	,168	1,000	,167	,684	,001
Purchase Intentions: H&U * Expertise Condition	Greenhouse-Geisser	10,001	1,000	9,930	,002	,042
Purchase Intentions: H&U * Disclosure Condition *	Greenhouse-Geisser	1,785	1,000	1,772	,184	,008

Expertise Condition						
Error (Purchase Intentions: H&U)	Greenhouse-Geisser	229,628	228,000			

Test of Between-Subjects Effects

	Type III Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	4016,848	1	919,153	,000	,801
Disclosure Condition	1,654	1	,378	,539	,002
Expertise Condition	22,666	1	5,186	,024	,022
Disclosure Condition * Expertise Condition	2,119	1	,487	,487	,002
Error	996,397	230			

Appendix K: Hypothesis 3a: Independent-sample T-test

Descriptive Statistics

	Expertise Condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Hedonic: Purchase Intention	Expert	117	2,6895	1,49823	,13851
	Non-expert	115	2,5414	1,51470	,14125
Utilitarian: Purchase Intention	Expert	117	3,6426	1,84254	,17034
	Non-expert	115	2,9174	1,66485	,15525

Independent-samples T-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Hedonic: Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	,094	,759	,748	230	,455	,14802	,19781
	Equal variances not assumed			,748	229,817	,455	,14802	,19783
Utilitarian: Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	,825	,365	3,144	230	,002	,72516	,23068
	Equal variances not assumed			3,146	228,395	,002	,72516	,23047

Appendix L: Hypothesis 4a and 4b: Independent-sample T-test

Descriptive Statistics

	Disclosure Condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Hedonic: Purchase Intention	Disclosure	121	2,6914	1,50455	,13678
	Non-disclosure	111	2,5340	1,50795	,14313
Utilitarian: Purchase Intention	Disclosure	121	3,3209	1,67442	,15222
	Non-disclosure	111	3,2420	1,91521	,18178

Independent-samples T-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Hedonic: Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	,032	,857	,795	230	,427	,15743	,19796
	Equal variances not assumed			,795	228,196	,427	,15743	,19797
Utilitarian: Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	2,916	,089	,335	230	,738	,07892	,23573
	Equal variances not assumed			,333	219,443	,740	,07892	,23710