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The influence of fashion blogger credibility, engagement and homophily on intentions to buy and e-WOM.
Results of a binational study

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The influence of fashion blogger credibility, engagement, and homophily on intentions to buy and e-WOM. Results of a binational study

Abstract

Purpose – The study aims to contribute to knowledge on the influence exerted by fashion bloggers on readers' intention to buy in both advanced and emerging markets. Specifically, the study investigates the impact of credibility, engagement, and homophily on intentions to buy fashion products recommended by a blogger.

Design/methodology/approach – The research builds on an online survey with a sample of 402 consumers (189 Italian and 213 Taiwanese). A proposed model was tested through structural equation modelling.

Findings – Results showed that homophily and a fashion blogger's credibility positively influenced engagement with the blog. Moreover, perceived similarity with other followers of the blog (homophily) and a higher engagement with the blog both translated into a stronger intention to buy the products mentioned by the fashion blogger and to spread positive word of mouth about the blog.

Originality/value – The study contributes to a better understanding of the influence exerted by blog engagement on intentions to follow a blogger's recommendations. The study also examines credibility and homophily as antecedents of engagement, which have not been extensively researched in the past with respect to blogs.

Practical implications – The study has practical implications since it suggests strategies for companies that create partnerships with famous fashion bloggers and for bloggers who have turned their diary-style websites into a business.

Keywords: fashion blogger credibility, engagement, homophily, purchase intention, electronic word of mouth

Paper type – Research paper

Introduction

In this digital age, many bloggers have reached high levels of trust and recognition to the point of transforming themselves from amateur writers to opinion leaders. Bloggers have become social influencers, sharing persuasive opinions with their followers and encouraging interactions through comments and feedback. Consumers' perception that

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3 blogs are useful is based on their conviction that the information obtained from blogs can
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5 facilitate purchase decisions. A few blog-related studies have demonstrated that bloggers'
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7 recommendations can result in a powerful marketing effect: they engage and persuade
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9 consumers (Quelhas-Breto, Brandão, Gadekar, and Castelo-Branco, 2020; Hsu, Lin, and
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11 Chiang, 2013). Bloggers create content that can generate a lot of interactions through
12
13 which they can influence followers. A blogger is a passionate writer and/or reporter of a
14
15 certain subject. Although some bloggers aim for financial rewards and public visibility,
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17 they can only be achieved with strategic business thinking.
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21 Social media use is transforming the fashion industry, enabling consumers to have more
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23 interaction with fashion designers and high-end clothing, shoes, and accessory firms.
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25 However, the growth of digital channels has not only provided new means of communication
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27 but has also brought to light new actors capable of mediating the information flows between
28
29 businesses and consumers (Chetioui, Benlafqih, and Lebdaoui, 2020). Bloggers are a
30
31 prominent tool in social media marketing and increasingly used by organizations to promote
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33 products. Starting from this standpoint, the most successful bloggers (in different
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35 contexts) have learned to monetize their blogs in terms of advertising, campaigns, and
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37 brand projects, thus creating a business model to be emulated. In particular, fashion
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39 bloggers were the first to launch "second wave" style blogging, which was characterized
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41 by an increasingly intense partnership with the fashion industry and established fashion
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43 brands (Fernandez and Karhawi, 2015). This new type of marketing and product placement
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45 is changing marketing strategies by creating alternative ways of reaching audiences.
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47 However, the effectiveness of bloggers' communication is increasingly dependent on their
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49 credibility, rather than just the size of their follower base on social media (De Veirman,
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51 Cauberghe, and Hudders, 2017).
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3 The fashion industry has far more well-known and famous bloggers than other sectors,
4 such as food, travel, or politics. A clothing brand might hire a fashion blogger to take part
5 in a runway show and post images on their blog or to endorse a product. However, the
6 proliferation and diversity of blogs together with the absence of real expertise raise
7 questions about the effect of blogger credibility on the behavioural intentions of the
8 readers. These issues are a growing topic in the fashion industry. For example, recently,
9 *Vogue* editors declared: “Bloggers heralding the death of style” (Mower, 2016). However,
10 despite fashion bloggers gaining popularity in the blogosphere and attracting the attention
11 of marketing scholars (Metz, 2016; Cosenza, Solomon, and Kwon, 2015), a literature
12 review has highlighted some gaps in the literature regarding the role of the credibility of
13 the blogger and consumers’ engagement with fashion blogs in terms of consumer
14 behaviour. Moreover, past studies have mainly restricted analysis of fashion blogs to
15 advanced or Western countries. For example, considering the Asian context, only a few
16 studies have attempted to investigate how consumers’ attitudes and purchase intentions
17 are influenced by bloggers’ suggestions (Siddiqui, Mannion, and Marciniak, 2019; Cano,
18 Doyle, and Zhang, 2018; Lu, Chang, and Chang, 2014). Such gaps call for further
19 research.

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42 Based on the above considerations, the present study aims at contributing to the current
43 knowledge on blogger credibility in both advanced and emerging markets. More
44 specifically, the potential impact of homophily, engagement with the blog, and blogger
45 credibility on post-reading intention to buy and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) have
46 been investigated. The markets under investigation are Italy and Taiwan, which are
47 advanced and emerging markets, respectively. These countries show some cultural
48 differences based on Hofstede’s (an anthropologist) model of cultural dimensions (2010).
49 The model classifies cultures in accordance with their relative positions on a number of
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polar scales (cultural dimensions). The main differences between Italy and Taiwan relate to the dimensions of *individualism vs collectivism*, *masculinity vs femininity* and *long-term vs short-term orientation*. The first dimension focuses on the ties among individuals in a society. In collectivist cultures (like Taiwan), individuals define themselves more as members of a social group. They are expected to share their belongings with cohesive groups and extended families. The second dimension (*masculinity vs femininity*) refers to the differences between the social roles attributed to men and women and their expected behaviour. Italy shows more masculine values compared to Taiwan. Finally, *long-term vs short-term orientation* measures a society's bond with its traditions and its propensity to change. A low index refers to stability and a strong link with traditions; high values indicate openness to innovation and adaptation. Although both countries show quite high indices of long-term orientation, Taiwan is characterized by a much greater openness to change than Italy.

In light of these cultural differences, it is interesting to investigate whether and how these cultural differences affect the attitude and propensity of users to rely on and draw inspiration from bloggers in their decision-making processes. Some authors showed that cultural dimensions come into play when bloggers and readers engage in social interactions (e.g., Lee & Gretzel, 2014; Mandl, 2009; Yoo & Huang, 2011). This can translate into different behavioural consequences in terms of purchase decisions and conversion of engagement with the blog into echo (triggering a positive word of mouth (WOM) on the content of the blog).

Theoretical background

Blogs specializing in specific topics such as fashion, tourism, food, sports, and art deliver detailed and updated information. Through their diary structure, blogs provide a mechanism for personal publishing, encouraging the expression of thoughts, feelings, and

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2
3 emotions. Several studies have confirmed that blogs, compared to other media, are more
4
5 dynamic and are often judged by general users to be more reliable and credible than other
6
7 offline or online sources (Cosenza, Solomon, and Kwon, 2015; Johnson and Kaye, 2004).

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10 Bloggers act like social influencers because they can influence future purchase decisions
11
12 and attitude formation. An influencer is able to influence the purchasing decisions of
13
14 members of a community because they have built a strong relationship with its members
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16 (Chopra, Avhad, and Jaju, 2021). Bloggers are influencers who can craft original content
17
18 or allow sponsored content on their blogs. There are two more categories of influencers:
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20 celebrities and micro-influencers. A celebrity is someone who is already famous and
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22 influences others because of their popularity. Micro-influencers represent the newest
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24 generation who become popular through their social media accounts in which they share
25
26 their interests and passions. They do not have a big audience but, in general, their
27
28 followers show a high level of engagement (Schouten, Janssen and Verspaget, 2020).

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31 We maintain that fashion bloggers are important social influencers due to the fact that
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33 they share their own ideas with a social network of blog followers, and they can spread
34
35 new ideas or fashion trends. More than other types of blogs, fashion blogs can be
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37 interpreted as a social hub where participants do not necessarily actively participate in
38
39 discussions, but they read the communications disseminated by the fashion blogger.
40
41 However, the high adoption levels of social media by individuals, as well as bloggers, has
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43 contributed to modifications (widening) of the communication flow between source and
44
45 receiver. Evidence shows that style bloggers, who also use social media as a platform to
46
47 reinforce their self-brand, gain high levels of creativity and self-expression, thus
48
49 reinforcing followers' engagement in blog activities (Liu and Suh, 2017).

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52 Past studies have focused on opinion leaders in online communities (De Valck, van
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54 Bruggen, and Wierenga 2009; Zhang and Dong, 2008) and investigated the role of source
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3 credibility and customer engagement (Forbes, 2010; Kaye and Johnson, 2011; Cosenza,
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5 Solomon, and Kwon 2015). According to Carr and Hayse (2014), the level of credibility
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7 that an influencer can express is key to maintaining good and trusting relationships with
8
9 followers. Fashion bloggers have been described as influential sources in the fashion
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11 industry given their ability to generate trust, credibility, engagement, and e-WOM among
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13 consumers (Lee and Youn, 2009; Li and Du, 2011). In recent times, fashion bloggers have
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15 developed a greater sense of responsibility towards their readers in terms of the necessity to
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17 maintain credibility by providing greater transparency and being more discerning with their
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19 editorial content and partnership choices. Gaining and maintaining credibility requires the
20
21 ability to show competence, including references to industry events, and comments on and
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23 technical descriptions of styles, design, and materials of fashion collections. Of course, the
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25 typology of the fashion blog may influence the nurturing and management of credibility. For
26
27 example, in the case of insiders (i.e., people who work or have previously worked in the
28
29 fashion industry), the credibility issue may not be an insurmountable obstacle because the
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31 blogger may be able to leverage a “certified” background to authenticate the reliability of
32
33 their content. However, in the case of aspiring insiders (i.e., people who want to work in the
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35 fashion industry and believe that their blog can offer a gateway to the world of fashion
36
37 journalism), the credibility construction process can be quite difficult requiring greater
38
39 involvement in relevant initiatives and events. There seems to be a general consensus on
40
41 the positive impact of a blogger’s credibility on intention to buy (Esteban-Santos, Garcia
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43 Medina, and Carey, 2018), according to the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and
44
45 Fishbein, 1975) and the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).
46
47 However, with the exception of a few studies (Hollebeek, 2013; Magno, 2017), the
48
49 interactions between credibility, engagement, and purchasing patterns within the
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51 blogosphere remain under-researched. The role of the blogger in influencing the intention
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3 to buy of followers is an important knowledge gap in the marketing literature.
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5 Accordingly, the main research question of this study is the analysis of potential
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7 influences exerted by blogger credibility, homophily, and engagement on intentions to
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9 buy fashion products and e-WOM.
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11 12 **Research model and hypotheses** 13

14 The conceptual foundations of the proposed model and related hypotheses are drawn from
15
16 three different research streams: *source credibility* (Pornpitakan, 2004; Johnson and Kaye,
17
18 2004; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986, 1983); *consumer engagement* (Hollebeek, Glynn, and
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20 Brodie, 2014; Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric, and Ilic, 2011; Taylor and Kent, 2014; van Doom,
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22 Lemon, Mittal, Nass, Pick, Pirner, and Verhoef, 2010); and *purchase intentions* (Moon,
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24 Chadee, and Tiko, 2008; Yoo and Donthu, 2001). In a review of the relevant literature, the
25
26 most robust constructs were assessed, and the selection was made according to their relevance
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28 and expected validity for the purpose of the study. From a structural point of view, the
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30 research model is composed of five main constructs derived from the literature review: a)
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32 *blogger credibility*, resulting from the perceived level of expertise and trustworthiness of a
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34 blogger (Cosenza, Solomon, and Kwon, 2015); b) *homophily*, defined as a tendency in social
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36 groups for similar people to be connected together (Kusumasondjaja, 2015); c) *blog*
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38 *engagement*, which refers to outcomes of interactive blog communication encompassing
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40 cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural attachment (Yang and Kang, 2009); d) *intentions to*
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42 *buy*, defined as the probability that the consumer will buy the product suggested or seen in
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44 the blog (regardless of whether they are part of a commercial cooperation or not) in the near
45
46 future (Mikalef, Giannakos, and Adamantia 2013); e) *e-WOM*, defined as “any positive or
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48 negative statement made by consumers, which is made available to a multitude of people and
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50 institutions via the internet” (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, and Gremler, 2004, p. 39).
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52 More precisely, there are three types of e-WOM: information and advice seeking when
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3 making a purchase (opinion-seeking); generation of information and advice that are
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5 potentially able to affect the decisions or opinions of other users (opinion-giving); and sharing
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7 of third-party information (opinion-passing) (Flynn et al., 1996; Sun et al., 2006). These types
8
9 of e-WOM involve roles which do not have a clear distinction as each person can do all three.
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11 In the present study the focus is on the opinion-giving and opinion-passing roles of the blog
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13 readers, specifically defined as propensity to share the content of the blog as well as positive
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15 comments about the blogger.
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19 As shown in Figure 1, the main underlying hypothesis of the proposed model is that blogger
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21 credibility is judged capable of positively influencing engagement with a blog. Moreover, it is
22
23 hypothesized that credibility could positively influence both intentions to buy the fashion
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25 products suggested by the fashion blogger and e-WOM. Likewise, homophily is expected to
26
27 positively affect blog engagement, intentions to buy, and e-WOM. Regarding blog
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29 engagement, we assume that this positively influences intentions to buy the products
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31 suggested by the fashion blogger and e-WOM.
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37 ---- FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE ----
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40 ***Influence of blogger credibility on blog engagement, intentions to buy, and e-WOM***

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44 Credibility has been defined as “the extent to which a source is perceived as possessing
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46 expertise relevant to the communication topic and can be trusted to give an objective opinion
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48 on the subject” (Goldsmith Lafferty and Newell, 2000). The perception of source credibility
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50 might influence beliefs and opinions as well as behaviours through an “internalization”
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52 process in which a receiver welcomes the source’s influence in terms of his/her personal
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54 attitudes and value structure (Ermeç Sertoglu, Catli, and Korkmaz, 2014). If the credibility,
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56 as well as the authority and social attractiveness of the producer of a message are high, then
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58 the level of persuasion for the receiver to accept the message is high. Authority is related
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3 to the position of the source in the social structure, whereas source credibility is the result of
4
5 the trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise of the communicator (Sokolova and Kefi,
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7 2020). Credibility can be nurtured by the quality of arguments and the persuasive strength of
8
9 the endorser. If reviews and comments are judged valid, this will develop positive attitudes
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11 towards brands and products endorsed by the source (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017).

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14 Therefore, highly credible sources produce a more positive receiver's attitude and induce
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16 more behavioural compliance than do sources that are less credible (Chu and Kamal,
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18 2008). Past studies have shown that users find blogs credible because they are perceived as
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20 independent sources rather than sources controlled by corporate interests (Johnson and Kaye,
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22 2004). In their research on online credibility, Johnson and Kaye (1998) analysed media usage,
23
24 demographics, and reliance on traditional media counterparts to test online media credibility.
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26 The results of their survey demonstrated that online media were rated as more credible than
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28 their traditional forms. The power of credibility lies in its capability to transform people that
29
30 you do not know first-hand into trustworthy sources for decision-making processes. Forbes
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32 (2010) studied credibility, engagement, and endorsement and found that the credibility
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34 nurtured towards social networks increased the level of engagement. Moreover, Jiménez-
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36 Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández (2019) found that when a social influencer is able to gain
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38 influential power – recognized and appreciated by their audience – they may record more
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40 engagement and greater intention to buy recommended brands. Following this perspective,
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42 blogger credibility is judged to be capable of impacting blog engagement. Thus, it is
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44 hypothesized that:
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51 H_{1a} : *Blogger credibility positively influences blog engagement.*

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53 H_{1b} : *Blogger credibility positively influences intentions to buy.*

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55 H_{1c} : *Blogger credibility positively influences e-WOM.*

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59 ***Influence of homophily on blog engagement, intentions to buy, and e-WOM***

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4 In communication research, similarity can be expressed in terms of homophily, which
5 describes the situation in which communicator and receiver have similar characteristics
6 (Gilly, Graham, Wolfenbarger, and Yale, 1998). The presence of similar values, preferences,
7 and lifestyles between individuals can facilitate consumers' external information search
8 process because it reduces uncertainty (Chu and Kim, 2011).

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16 There is a growing interest in homophily in the marketing literature because of the spread of
17 social media and social contexts, such as social commerce, blogging, and social servicescape.
18 Perceived similarity was proved to influence community commitment and positively impact
19 information quality (Ladhari, Massa, and Skandrani, 2020). Moreover, empirical evidence
20 has shown that consumers are often more encouraged to communicate with a similar source
21 and, consequently, to cultivate a trusty relationship (Hopp and Gallicano, 2016). **Social media**
22 **users generally view influencers as attractive and similar to them (Ki, Cuevas, Chong, and**
23 **Lim, 2020;** Schouten, Janssen and Verspaget, 2020; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020), **and** previous
24 research has shown that interacting with others who share similar values and social identity
25 can generate more interest in a blog, thus leading to greater levels of engagement. Thus,
26 information deriving from a socially similar source might increase the degree of engagement
27 in blog activities (Magno, 2017). Based on the above considerations, we hypothesize that:

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43 H_{2a} : *Homophily positively affects blog engagement.*
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48 Previous research demonstrated that consumers perceive consumer-created information to be
49 more trustworthy than information created by a company (Dellarocas, 2003). Considering the
50 great number of consumers that read blogs for inspiration, bloggers can be viewed as
51 persuaders due to their credibility. As a blogger can be recognized as a friend rather than a
52 formal digital writer, it is generally assumed that social ties activated on the blog between a
53 blogger and readers, and among readers, are likely to have an influence on readers' purchase
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3 intentions. A social tie can be interpreted as the result of a positive relationship between
4
5 the similarity of two nodes in a network (Song, Tang, and Huang, 2019). Thus, social ties
6
7 underline the process of homophily and, more precisely, “value homophily” with respect
8
9 to the context under investigation. Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954) distinguished two types
10
11 of homophily: *status homophily* where similarity refers to informal or formal status, and
12
13 *value homophily*, which is based on values, attitudes, and beliefs assumed to shape future
14
15 behaviours (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook, 2001). In the fashion context, the perceived
16
17 similarity may be interpreted in terms of “obsession” for the fashion industry or a desire to
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19 be kept informed; blog readers perceive that in a blog community they can find people with
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21 the same “obsession” without fear of being judged and with the freedom to comment and
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23 collect stimuli and advice.
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28 However, too little attention has been paid to the relationship between homophily and
29
30 intentions to buy in terms of blog readers’ intentions to buy products promoted by a
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32 blogger (Tropp, Alisic, and Netterström 2015). Thus, it is hypothesized that:
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35 H_{2b} : *Homophily positively affects intentions to buy.*
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40 Several studies have observed that the potential impact of others’ opinions has increased with
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42 the development of the internet, thus demonstrating that personal sources of information like
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44 e-WOM are more influential. Consequently, research has begun to investigate the
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46 determinants of e-WOM. The power of eWOM to operate within a “social” network is
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48 influenced by the tie strength and by how similar (homophily) consumers are in terms of
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50 opinions, judgments, likes, and dislikes (Bansal and Voyer, 2000; Abd-Elaziz, Aziz, Khalifa,
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52 and Aleem Ma’youf, 2015). Furthermore, a study by Teng, Khong, Goh, and Chong (2014)
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54 using the social media platform QQ found that source credibility as well as homophily
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56 affected e-WOM. Despite a growing interest in the influence exerted by homophily in the
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3 online context, there has been relatively little research on the interactions between homophily
4 and e-WOM in the blog setting. Therefore, we posit the following:
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8 H_{2c} : *Homophily positively affects e-WOM.*
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10 11 ***Influence of blog engagement on intentions to buy and e-WOM*** 12

13 Compared to traditional media, blogs are an informal communication channel that consumers
14 can consult to find useful suggestions in a more comfortable and credible space. Engagement
15 represents a personal psychological state, and it might be interpreted as a multidimensional
16 construct encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioural components (Bowden, 2009).
17 Customer engagement emphasizes the interactive nature of the relationship between a person
18 (reader) and an object (blog) (Magno, 2017; Geissinger and Laurell, 2016). Several studies
19 have demonstrated that engagement can positively influence followers' decision-making
20 processes by guiding their consumption choices (Bouhleb, Mzoughi, Ghachem, and Negra,
21 2010). Hence, when a blog becomes intrinsically significant to a reader (Shiau and Luo,
22 2013), it can influence their decision making (Sigala, 2007). Furthermore, regarding the link
23 between engagement and WOM, Muñiz and Schau (2015) found that readers who experience
24 a positive engagement with a blog are more likely to spread positive WOM about the blogger.
25 Therefore, we assume that higher levels of blog engagement will result in a higher degree of
26 intentions to buy the products suggested by the fashion blogger (as organic or sponsored
27 content) as well as a higher propensity to share the content of the blogs and positive comments
28 about the blogger:
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50 H_3 : *Blog engagement exerts a positive effect on intentions to buy (H_{3a}) and e-WOM (H_{3b}).*
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53 **Method**

54 ***Participants and procedure*** 55 56 57 58 59 60

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3 To test the proposed model, a self-administered questionnaire was filled in online by a
4
5 sample of 252 Italian and 276 Taiwanese participants. In addition to the desire to compare
6
7 an advanced and an emerging market, the selection of these two countries was also
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9 motivated by the dynamism they show with respect to the fashion industry. Italy has
10
11 always been, by virtue of its manufacturing tradition, a context in which fashion is
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13 intrinsically linked to its cultural heritage, and this is also reflected in the relevance
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15 attached and interest paid by consumers to fashion products. Moreover, with reference to
16
17 fashion blogging, Italy has a huge fashion blogosphere animated by some of the most
18
19 influential fashion bloggers (e.g., Chiara Ferragni, Mariano Di Vaio, Veronica Ferraro,
20
21 Chiara Biasi) (Mortara and Roberti, 2017). With respect to the Taiwanese market, it can
22
23 be observed that consumers crave comfort in everything. The growing relevance of
24
25 fashion in Taiwan is confirmed by recent data. The value of fashion products sold in
26
27 Taiwan is more than four times higher than that in some wealthy Arab Gulf states, such
28
29 as Qatar (Hall, 2020). In addition, fashion blogging in Taiwan is blooming because
30
31 Taiwanese think that fashion blogs are an easy and effective way to acquire information
32
33 about fashion trends (Cheng and Fang, 2015). Moreover, the spread of fashion blogging
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35 has not been restricted by the Great Firewall of China; thus, the most influential social
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37 media platforms are the same as those in the West.

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40 Respondents were recruited online via the publication of an informative post on some
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42 social media users' accounts (Facebook and Instagram for the Italian sample; Facebook
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44 and Line for the Taiwanese sample). Respondents were immediately asked if they had
45
46 ever consulted a fashion blog or the social network profile of a fashion blogger. Only
47
48 those who answered "yes" were able to complete the questionnaire, thus reducing the
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50 sample size to 197 for Italy and 240 for Taiwan. The questionnaire included questions
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52 about general demographics (gender, age, place of residence, and education), engagement
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3 with fashion blogs and with fashion bloggers' social network profiles (frequency of
4 reading), credibility of the preferred fashion blog, homophily, engagement with the blog,
5
6 intention to buy products mentioned by the blogger, and propensity to spread positive
7
8 WOM about the blogger.
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11 As the questionnaire scale was originally developed in English, a back-translation
12 procedure was conducted to ensure the validity of the translation (Brislin, 1970). First, all
13 original items were translated from English to Taiwanese/Italian by an expert translator
14 whose native language was Taiwanese/Italian and who was fluent in English. Then,
15 another expert translator (who was fluent in both languages) independently translated the
16 items back to English. Further, the two researchers confirmed the meaning of the
17 Taiwanese/Italian version by comparing the two English versions. Then, face validity was
18 addressed by a panel of experts (an Italian academic who was an expert in Asian culture,
19 an Italian marketing academic, and a Taiwanese marketing academic) to assess the clarity
20 and, above all, the appropriateness of the questions. The two Italian academics first
21 evaluated the English version and then the Italian one. The Italian expert in Asian culture
22 and the Taiwanese scholar evaluated the Taiwanese version. Based on this feedback, the
23 questionnaire was modified to improve the correct translation of meanings.
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43 *Measures*

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45
46 The latent variables were measured using scales that have been validated in the literature.
47 Blogger credibility was assessed with the four-item scale by Cosenza, Solomon, and
48 Kwon (2015) adapted for fashion blogs. The concept of homophily was measured using
49 the four items developed by Kusumasondjaja (2015). The level of engagement within the
50 fashion blog was assessed with the four-item scale by Shiau and Luo (2013). Purchase
51 intention was measured using the six items proposed by Mikalef, Giannakos, and Adamantia
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(2013). Finally, the four-item scale proposed by Alhidari, Iyer, and Paswan (2015) was used to assess e-WOM with some adjustments for the purpose of the research. All statements were on a 7-point anchored scale (from “completely disagree” to “completely agree”).

Analytical procedure

Data underwent three phases of analysis. First, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with the latent variables was performed to obtain evidence of convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement scales. Second, the paths of the hypothesized relationships were explored simultaneously for the Italian and Taiwanese groups of respondents. To investigate the potential moderating role of the country, in the third analysis phase, configural, metric, and scalar invariances were estimated to identify the baseline model against which the theoretical model could be compared. Finally, the hypothesized moderating effect was tested by constraining the relevant structural parameters to be equal in both groups. Structural equation modelling with maximum likelihood estimation was employed for the CFA and for the analysis of the conceptual models. The data were analysed in LISREL 8.80 (Scientific Software International, 2006). The fit of the models was interpreted based on a range of indices: the chi-squared (χ^2) value, the degrees of freedom (df), the comparative fit index (CFI), the non-normed fit index (NNFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). A good fit of the data is indicated by a chi-squared/df value of less than 4 (Field, 2000). Values in the range of 0.90 and above have been deemed acceptable for CFI and NNFI (Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen 2008; Hu and Bentler, 1995). Values lower than 0.08 were deemed acceptable for the RMSEA and SRMR (Bollen, 1989; Browne and Cudeck, 1993).

Common method bias evaluation

As all measures were self-reported, preliminary remedies were adopted in the questionnaire design stage to minimize possible common method variance (CMV).

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3 Firstly, an introductory message was used to assure respondents of the anonymity of all
4 data and confidentiality of the study (Chang, Van Witteloostuijn, and Eden, 2010).
5
6

7 Secondly, as proposed by Chang et al. (2010), the order of questions was randomized so
8 that interviewees could not perceive the detailed content of each construct. Thirdly,
9 following Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003), we carefully designed
10 questionnaire items to promote clarity and increase respondents' understanding.
11
12

13 On participants' completion of the questionnaires, we investigated CMV by performing
14 Harman's (1967) single-factor test. Unrotated CFA showed that one factor explained 38%
15 of the variance (threshold value < 50%), indicating that the findings were not subject to a
16 bias caused by CMV.
17
18

19 **Results**

20 *Sample characteristics*

21 After removing missing data, the number of valid questionnaires was 189 for Italy and
22 213 for Taiwan. Overall, the sample was represented by 86% female respondents and
23 14% male respondents, mainly aged between 17 and 34. The respondents were well-
24 educated: 82% had graduated or post-graduated and 16% completed high school. Out of
25 the sample, 32% read their favourite fashion blog or a blogger's social pages at least once
26 a day and 27% read their favourite fashion blog or a blogger's social pages at least once
27 a week. A more descriptive analysis (for both Taiwanese and Italian samples) is reported
28 in Table 1.
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---- TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE ----

51 *Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

52 To assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement scales, a CFA was
53 estimated using the total sample as well as the Italian and Taiwanese data separately. As the skew
54 and kurtosis statistics showed that the normality assumption was violated, the models were
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1
2
3 estimated using the Satorra–Bentler method (Satorra and Bentler, 1994). The fit statistics
4
5 indicated that the measurement models fitted the data well (total sample, $\chi^2 = 730.02$, $df = 199$, p
6
7 $< .001$, CFI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.08, NNFI = 0.97, SRMR = 0.07; Italian sample, $\chi^2 = 432.70$, df
8
9 $= 199$, $p < .001$, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.08, NNFI = 0.97, SRMR = 0.07; Taiwanese sample, χ^2
10
11 $= 390.96$, $df = 199$, $p < .001$, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.07, NNFI = 0.98, SRMR = 0.07).
12
13 Convergent validity was tested by checking that all items substantially and significantly loaded
14
15 onto the expected latent construct (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). All constructs also showed
16
17 satisfactory levels of composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE),
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19 exceeding the recommended cut-off points for the adequacy of 0.70 and 0.50, respectively
20
21 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Steenkamp and Van Trijp 1991). Next, discriminant validity
22
23 was assessed by Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion. The average variance explained by each
24
25 latent variable was greater than any of the squared correlations involving the variable, suggesting
26
27 that discriminant validity was achieved. Cronbach's alpha was used to confirm the scales'
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29 reliability. All constructs were greater than the threshold value of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). Table 2
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31 reports the reliability and validity indices for each construct.
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39 ---- TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE ----
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41 ***Tests of the structural model***

42 The results showed that the model fitted the data well for both groups (Italian sample, $\chi^2 =$
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44 540.124 , $df = 200$, $p < .001$, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.08, NNFI = 0.97, SRMR = 0.07;
45
46 Taiwanese sample, $\chi^2 = 614.58$, $df = 200$, $p < .001$, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.07, NNFI = 0.97,
47
48 SRMR = 0.09) (Table 3). The analysis indicated that H1 was only partially supported in both
49
50 groups. Although fashion blogger credibility positively influenced engagement with the blog
51
52 ($\gamma_{\text{Italy}} = 0.280$, $p < .01$; $\gamma_{\text{Taiwan}} = 0.352$, $p < .01$), it did not increase intention to buy products
53
54 introduced by the blogger (H1b; $p > .05$) or to share positive comments about the blogger
55
56 (H1c; $p > .05$). Conversely, H2 (a, b, and c) was fully supported by the data. Perceived similarity
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with other followers of the blog (homophily) increased the level of engagement with the blog ($\gamma_{Italy} = 0.482, p < .01; \gamma_{Taiwan} = 0.361, p < .01$) and exerted a significant and positive effect on both purchase intention ($\gamma_{Italy} = 0.474, p < .01; \gamma_{Taiwan} = 0.602, p < .01$) and e-WOM ($\gamma_{Italy} = 0.540, p < .01; \gamma_{Taiwan} = 0.640, p < .01$). Finally, higher engagement with the blog translated into a stronger intention to buy the mentioned/sponsored products ($\beta_{Italy} = 0.405, p < .01; \beta_{Taiwan} = 0.319, p < .05$) and to spread positive WOM about the fashion blogger ($\beta_{Italy} = 0.513, p < .01; \beta_{Taiwan} = 0.520, p < .01$), thus supporting H3 (a and b).

---- TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE ----

Moderation analysis

To investigate the potential moderating role of the country, invariance analyses were performed to identify the baseline model against which to compare the theoretical model. As configural and metric invariance were supported, the relevant structural parameters were constrained to be equal across groups to test each moderator hypothesis. Scalar invariance was not supported as the χ^2 difference test indicated a significant deterioration in the fit of the constrained model. Therefore, comparisons between the means of the latent variables were not performed. The $\Delta\chi^2$ tests between the constrained models and the benchmark model were not significant for each pair of parameters. Therefore, no relevant differences emerged in the hypothesized relationships between the two countries. Although characterized by different levels of “development”, the populations of the two countries show similar ways of approaching blogs as a source of information and influence on purchasing decision making.

---- FIGURES 2 AND 3 ABOUT HERE ----

Discussion

This research aimed to make a valuable contribution to prior studies on the role of fashion blogs and behavioural outcomes on the part of readers. More specifically, the study analysed how credibility and homophily can impact consumer engagement with a blog and

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2
3 how these three constructs may affect blog readers' behaviour (shopping intentions and e-
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5 WOM).

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8 The study addressed some unexplored gaps with respect to the combination blogs and
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10 fashion, especially in terms of influences exerted by blog engagement. Another
11
12 meaningful contribution of our study is the proposal of an integrated conceptual
13
14 framework, which highlights both antecedents of engagement and consequences in terms
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16 of behaviours in order to fully analyse the effects on intention to follow blogger's
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18 suggestions.

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21 Both theoretical and managerial contributions of the paper are well explained in the following
22
23 sections. At the end, limits and further research directions are highlighted.

24 25 ***Theoretical implications***

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28 The results of the study enrich the literature on the role of fashion blogs in consumers'
29
30 decision-making processes (Cheng and Fang, 2015; Vineyard, 2014; McQuarrie, Miller and
31
32 Phillips, 2012) by proposing a joint analysis of some significant dimensions that can influence
33
34 an individual's engagement with a blog and their behaviour.

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36
37 Confirming past studies (Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, 2019; Magno, 2017), the
38
39 results showed that the perceived level of expertise and trustworthiness of a blogger (blogger
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41 credibility) as well as the followers' tendency to be connected to the other followers
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43 (homophily) increased the level of engagement with the blog. Blogger credibility was
44
45 confirmed to be a crucial factor in influencing the emotional attachment of readers towards
46
47 blog content and projects. The more trustworthy and experienced the blogger is perceived to
48
49 be, the more motivated the reader will be to play a participatory role in the community.
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51 Moreover, it is important to point out that the findings of this study indicated that credibility
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53 does not influence intentions to buy or e-WOM in the two groups (Italy and Taiwan).
54
55 Therefore, credibility increases the desire to create a connection with the blog, which is
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3 perceived to be a pleasant and useful source of information. Nevertheless, credibility alone is
4
5 not able to directly impact readers' behaviours (intentions to buy and e-WOM). These results
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7 disconfirm past studies (Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, 2019; Park and Kim,
8
9 2018; Ermec Sertoglu, Catli, and Korkmaz, 2014) that investigated the role of credibility in
10
11 the blogosphere. However, our results shed light in the context of fashion blogs. Credible
12
13 fashion bloggers may create an engaged community, but credibility itself is not able to affect
14
15 purchase intentions and e-WOM.
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19 With respect to the role of homophily, results confirm the crucial value of "tribal bonds"
20
21 characterizing the blog community. Social interactions with individuals sharing the same
22
23 consumption-related interests and passions may satisfy a sense of belonging. The blogger
24
25 becomes a "tribal entrepreneur" (Mardon, Molesworth and Grigore, 2018) who leverages on
26
27 the interaction between their insider knowledge and the consumption rituals of the
28
29 community. On the one hand, credibility ensures and confirms the blogger's role as the leader
30
31 of the community, on the other hand, homophily activates valuable ties that contribute to
32
33 reinforce the blog identity. Moreover, homophily appears to be a significant influencing
34
35 factor within the process of creating purchase intentions and willingness to share online
36
37 comments about the blog. Such findings are consistent with past studies (Ladhari, Massa, and
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39 Skandrani, 2020; Magno, 2017; Saleem and Ellahi, 2017).
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45 Turning to blog engagement, the results strengthen past empirical evidence. Our results
46
47 confirmed the positive influence of engagement on: (a) the intention to buy products the
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49 fashion blogger wrote about (Bouhlel, Mzoughi, Ghachem, and Negra, 2010; Shiao and Luo,
50
51 2013); and (b), the propensity to trigger positive WOM about the blogger (Muñiz and Schau,
52
53 2015). Emotional involvement impacts behavioural patterns: it increases the likelihood that
54
55 intentions to purchase fashion products will be activated; thus, confirming the link between
56
57 emotions and fashion consumption (Rafferty, 2011). Content and reviews on fashion brands
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3 and products provided through an online blogging platform are perceived to be useful by
4
5 readers. However, as sensory products, fashion items also require the transfer of symbolic
6
7 values that complement the perceived value of the good to the point of finalizing the choice.
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9
10 Alongside emotional involvement in blog activities, Italian and Taiwanese readers seem to
11
12 confirm that social ties also have a decisive role in creating a persuasive process that starts
13
14 from homophily, passes through engagement, and ultimately impacts behaviours. Fashion
15
16 blogs that have high levels of interaction with their readers, through encouraging
17
18 participation and investing in the perceived similarity among members, build quality
19
20 relationships founded on trust (Hudson et al., 2016). Social similarity can nurture a sense
21
22 of belonging that enriches the blog engagement by characterizing it not only with the
23
24 qualities of the blogger but also with the values shared and expressed by the community.
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28 ***Managerial implications***

29
30 From a managerial point of view, these results suggest strategies to companies wishing to
31
32 create partnerships with famous fashion bloggers and to bloggers who have turned their blog
33
34 into a business. Investing in a partnership with a blogger who is considered sincere, expert,
35
36 and trustworthy represents a strategic tool for fashion companies to influence consumers'
37
38 decision-making process (Arora et al., 2019). These findings reveal the crucial role of
39
40 credibility, that directly reinforces engagement with a blog and indirectly impacts intentions
41
42 to buy and e-WOM. Fashion bloggers must invest in credibility while maintaining their
43
44 authenticity without excessive corporate collaborations that are guided only by visibility and
45
46 earnings. The choice to promote or write about a particular brand must be motivated by an
47
48 effective sharing of values between the blogger and the sponsored company. A blog audience
49
50 may be sceptical about a new project involving formal cooperation with a brand or a fashion
51
52 company. Therefore, the blogger must take care to reassure readers by giving details of the
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54 collaboration and making the readers part of activities that go beyond the presentation of a
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3 fashion outfit. For example, the blogger could give evidence of visits to showrooms and brand
4
5 preview events to give transparency, personality, and uniqueness to the storytelling strategy
6
7 (Kulmala, Mesiranta, and Tuominen, 2013). Fashion bloggers must not overlook the
8
9 relevance of their own language that should be personal and differ from general marketing
10
11 communication, so as not to lose authenticity and genuineness in the eyes of their
12
13 audience (Kulmala, Mesiranta, and Tuominen, 2013). This means reinforcing credibility
14
15 through relevance. Reviews, comments, and content, especially when related to a specific
16
17 brand or product, must be “relevant” to the blogger; for example, a sponsorship of children’s
18
19 clothing products in the case of a new parent blogger; also, the promotion of garments that
20
21 help to improve the appearance and enhance body parts, using the personal experience of the
22
23 fashion blogger. Fashion bloggers can create completely different stories depending on the
24
25 archetype and myths they want to transfer to their audience. Combinations of implicit and
26
27 explicit self-brand associations (with sponsored brands or owned brands) are the ground on
28
29 which to define compelling archetypal narratives (Kretz and de Valck, 2011).
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34
35 Of course, the reinforcement of credibility is influenced by cultural differences. For instance,
36
37 Taiwanese fashion bloggers share a lot of self-portrait pictures including long captions
38
39 concerning personal stories. In their posts, they do not just talk about style and fashion,
40
41 but they basically engage themselves as customers who have a good sense of fashion. In
42
43 addition, Taiwan is a high-context country, and this feature is reflected in the way
44
45 bloggers share their content. The most influential fashion bloggers like specifying all
46
47 features about what they wear to help readers realize all the different types of content.
48
49 They are a sort of guide for followers to learn how to become a better person (Lee, 2016).
50
51 This is also connected with the feminine nature of Taiwanese society where quality of
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53 life is a sign of success. By contrast, Italian fashion bloggers – as an expression of an
54
55 individualistic and masculine culture – are seen as leaders and intermediaries of fashion
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3 brands, because they are able to create fashion communities based on love for fashion.

4
5 Also, many of them have managed to become international fashion gurus because of the
6
7 strong link between fashion and Italian culture, one supreme example is Chiara Ferragni.

8
9
10 However, given the growing number of fashion bloggers, companies need strategic guidance
11
12 on the most effective criteria for selecting bloggers. A high number of followers can no longer
13
14 be a discriminating factor because it does not ensure a high engagement rate.

15
16 Engagement is the critical success factor in determining a blog's effectiveness in achieving
17
18 its overall objectives. Companies wishing to enter into a profitable relationship with a blogger
19
20 should evaluate possible candidates based on the level of engagement and investigate the
21
22 perceived credibility of the blogger and the value similarity between the source and its
23
24 followers (. With respect to blog engagement, fashion companies could consult some key
25
26 performance indicators that have proven to be effective, because of the large database
27
28 provided by social media, in assessing potential collaboration with a blogger. For
29
30 example, companies could analyse the engagement value and the engagement rate of the
31
32 blog. The first refers to the total number of interactions (likes, comments, clicks, shares,
33
34 reactions, brand mentions) with a given piece of published content. The latter describes
35
36 the ratio of the total number of interactions to the number of followers of the blogger.
37
38 Conversion analysis can also support the selection of a fashion blogger. Conversions are
39
40 purchases made on an e-commerce site to which users have been redirected via a link, as
41
42 well as downloads, newsletter subscriptions, and all those actions completed by users,
43
44 which can lead to the achievement of a marketing objective (Engage Report, 2020).
45
46 Information about these metrics can be tracked with the help of consultancy agencies
47
48 specializing in digital and influencer marketing. Of course, the effectiveness of such an
49
50 analysis will also depend on the company's ability to integrate qualitative considerations
51
52 relating to the company's objectives.
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3 With regard to credibility, several aspects can be assessed. First of all, the level of a
4
5 blogger's expertise in relation to the sector. This can be evaluated by analysing the nature
6
7 of the blogger's interest in fashion (i.e., past work experience with higher-end brands,
8
9 previous experience as industry insiders, and aspiration to work in the fashion industry).
10
11 Alongside this, an analysis of previous partnerships with fashion brands will be crucial.
12
13 The characteristics of brands sponsoring a blog are an indication of a blogger's reputation.
14
15 Past evidence (Kozinets et al., 2010) showed that the authenticity of blog communication is
16
17 influenced by the characteristics of sponsored campaigns, which must be accompanied by the
18
19 blogger's ability to provide an accurate description and presentation of the products and
20
21 brands incorporated in their personal style choices.
22
23

24
25 In addition, a further indication of credibility may be the launch of a fashion blogger's
26
27 own products. Finally, sponsorship transparency and disclosure policies are becoming a
28
29 more and more crucial aspect that can reinforce a blogger's credibility in the fashion
30
31 community (Indvik, 2016).
32
33

34
35 Homophily analysis may be a harder investigation. As highlighted above, the intensity of
36
37 the social ties between community members and the content of their conversations are
38
39 significant indicators for a better understanding of the values characterizing the blog
40
41 community. Homophily insights about the fashion blog may help fashion companies to
42
43 find a more coherent audience with respect to the brand system. Content analysis is a
44
45 method that can be very effective in understanding the social mechanisms regulating a
46
47 blog community, which can be carried out on the comments published by the most
48
49 active readers. Content analysis of blog posts can detect the main key themes
50
51 characterizing information propagation within the community and the identities of
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53 influential bloggers (Tan, Na, and Theng, 2011).
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3 However, the selection of a blogger must take into account the characteristics of the
4 country (a micro-influencer in the Taiwanese/Chinese market could be too niche) and the
5
6 context of reference (mass market, premium, luxury leader, newcomer indie).
7
8

9
10 The findings of this research also offer fashion bloggers some insights into blog design.
11
12 Namely, the quality and authenticity of content should also be supported by consistent
13
14 stylistic and functional choices. The navigation of the blog must be simple, and the user must
15
16 be able to find all the main references of the articles or reviews (e.g., hashtags, titles, links, or
17
18 “read more” sections). Of course, in the case of sponsored content, the blogger must pay
19
20 particular attention to transparency of communication. Readers are increasingly demanding
21
22 in terms clarity and transparency of sponsored partnerships. Some non-transparent past
23
24 practices have increased public distrust towards advertising projects. This issue must be
25
26 handled with care. It is not sufficient to add the label “sponsored content”. Recent research
27
28 reported that labels such as “in collaboration with” are not clear, the reader needs to know
29
30 and understand what the relationship is like to make informed decision (Hughes,
31
32 Swaminathan, and Brooks, 2019). As highlighted above, the content must be authentic
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34 and in the case of sponsorships this means giving the reader “transparent” information
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36 and making clear the motivations that led the blogger to promote such a collaboration.
37
38 Content enrichment may also provide more pleasant and enjoyable reading experiences,
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40 thus increasing blog engagement. The value of a blog is less about “increasing traffic” and
41
42 more about learning how to do more in terms of high-quality content and enjoyment.
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50 ***Limitations and further research***

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52 Despite its contributions to the literature, this study has some limitations. First, the
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54 recruitment method and the sample size prevent us from generalizing the results. Further
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56 research is recommended to extend the investigation to larger samples that are
57
58 representative of the general population. Second, since consumers might have different
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3 evaluation factors in shaping attitudes and behaviours for different product categories, future
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5 studies should consider other sectors to investigate whether the findings can be extended to a
6
7 different context. Third, only purchase intention was measured, not actual behaviours.
8
9
10 Therefore, new empirical research should be undertaken to investigate whether the
11
12 intention translates to behaviour. Finally, research in other countries with different levels
13
14 of fashion consciousness could enhance understanding of the phenomenon.
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Figure 1. Research model and hypotheses

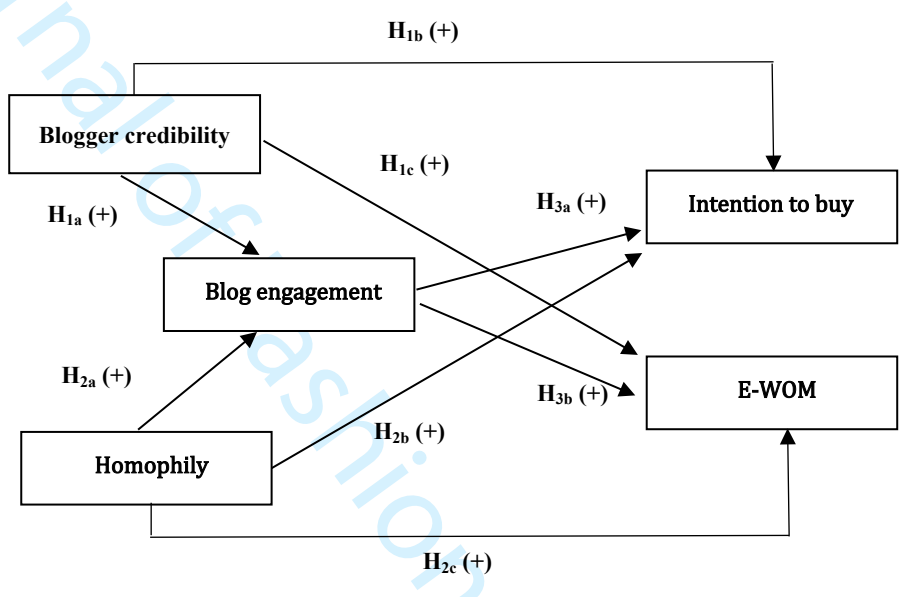
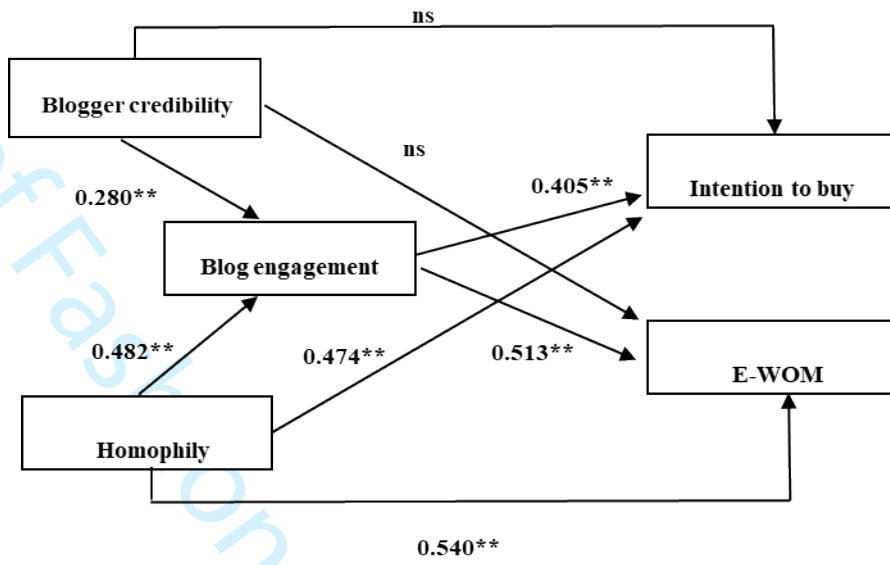


Figure 2. Structural model for the Italian sample



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Figure 3. Structural model for the Taiwanese sample

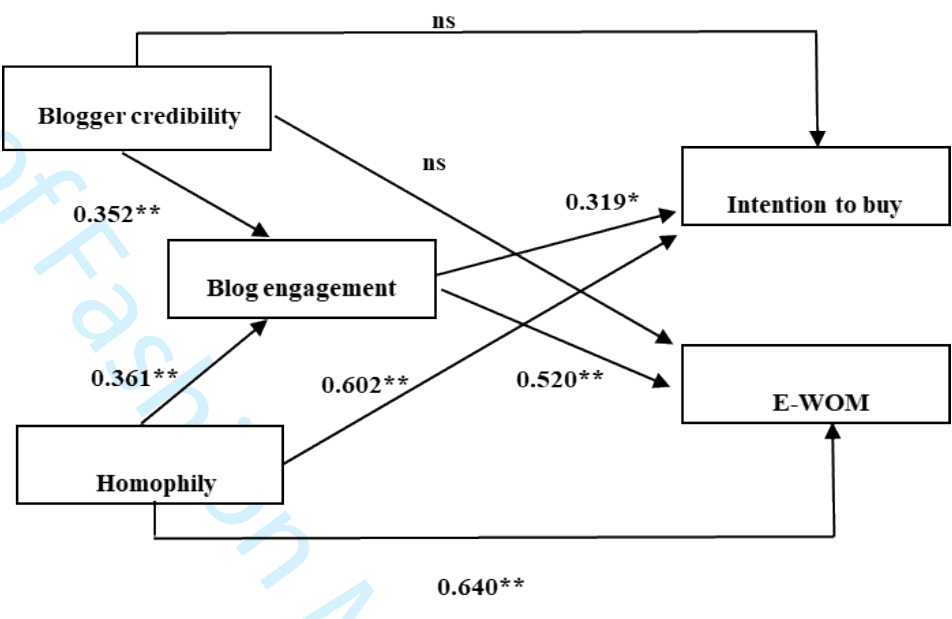


Table 1. Profiles of respondents

| Measure | Items | Percentage | | |
|--|------------------------|------------|--------|-------|
| | | Overall | Taiwan | Italy |
| Gender | Female | 85.7 | 81.1 | 85.7 |
| | Male | 14.3 | 18.9 | 14.3 |
| Age | 17-24 | 67.8 | 72.2 | 63.0 |
| | 25-34 | 26.9 | 21.2 | 33.3 |
| | 35-44 | 3.7 | 5.7 | 1.6 |
| | 45-64 | 1.2 | 0.9 | 1.6 |
| | >64 | 0.2 | - | 0.5 |
| Education | Primary school | 0.3 | 0.5 | - |
| | Secondary school | 1.5 | 0.5 | 2.7 |
| | High school | 16.3 | 0.5 | 34.0 |
| | Bachelor's | 65.3 | 85.4 | 42.6 |
| | Master's | 14.0 | 13.2 | 14.9 |
| | PhD | 2.8 | - | 5.9 |
| Fashion blogs/fashion bloggers social networking profiles (frequency of reading) | Every hour of the day | 9.0 | 15.0 | 2.1 |
| | Every 3-4 hours a day | 6.7 | 8.0 | 5.3 |
| | At least once a day | 32.2 | 30.0 | 34.6 |
| | At least once a week | 27.4 | 25.4 | 29.8 |
| | At least once a month | 7.7 | 5.2 | 10.6 |
| | Less than once a month | 17.0 | 16.4 | 17.6 |

Table 2 - Measurement scales reliability and validity

| Sample size | | Overall | Italy | Taiwan | |
|----------------------------|--|------------------|-------|--------|------|
| | | 402 | 189 | 213 | |
| Blogger credibility | | | | | |
| | I think this fashion blogger is informed about fashion | CR | 0.88 | 0.88 | 0.87 |
| | I perceive that blogger's interest towards fashion is sincere | AVE | 0.64 | 0.65 | 0.64 |
| | This fashion log respect my evaluations | | | | |
| | I think the blogger is trustworthy | Cronbach's Alpha | 0.88 | 0.87 | 0.87 |
| Homophily | | | | | |
| | The interest of the other blog readers is similar to mine | CR | 0.87 | 0.92 | 0.94 |
| | In the blog, I find ideas similar to mine | AVE | 0.89 | 0.92 | 0.94 |
| | I share the same tastes with other readers of the blog | | | | |
| | I found similarity in the likes/dislikes with other readers of the blog | Cronbach's Alpha | 0.66 | 0.73 | 0.80 |
| Blog Engagement | | | | | |
| | I spend a lot of time on this blog | CR | 0.91 | 0.90 | 0.89 |
| | I am proud to follow this fashion blog | AVE | 0.71 | 0.69 | 0.67 |
| | I am very attached to this blog | | | | |
| | This blog is precious to me | Cronbach's Alpha | 0.91 | 0.90 | 0.89 |
| Intention to buy | | | | | |
| | In the future, I will consume the products suggested by the blog | CR | 0.93 | 0.94 | 0.95 |
| | I would like to buy one or more products that I have consulted in the blog | AVE | 0.69 | 0.71 | 0.75 |
| | My future purchases will be based on the information I found in the blog | | | | |
| | I buy the fashion products I see in the blog through the e-shop | Cronbach's Alpha | 0.93 | 0.94 | 0.95 |
| | Fashion blogs are a good way to shop online | | | | |
| | I will continue to use blogs in the future to buy online | | | | |
| E-WOM | | | | | |
| | I like to make positive comments on the blog to contacts in my social media accounts | CR | 0.80 | 0.83 | 0.90 |
| | I like to share with my friends the reviews of the blog about the products I like | AVE | 0.51 | 0.55 | 0.69 |
| | I like to upload content from the fashion blog to my social media pages | Cronbach's Alpha | 0.78 | 0.83 | 0.89 |

Table 3 - Hypothesised relationships and structural coefficients

| | Hypothesized relationships | Overall | Italy | Taiwan |
|----|-----------------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| 7 | H_{1a} CRED → ENG | 0.171* | 0.280** | 0.352** |
| 8 | H_{1b} CRED → INT | ns | ns | ns |
| 9 | H_{1c} CRED → WOM | ns | ns | ns |
| 11 | H_{2a} HOMO → ENG | 0.575** | 0.482** | 0.361** |
| 12 | H_{2b} HOMO → INT | 0.545** | 0.474** | 0.602** |
| 13 | H_{2c} HOMO → WOM | 0.591** | 0.540** | 0.640** |
| 14 | H_{3a} ENGAG → INT | 0.254** | 0.405** | 0.319* |
| 15 | H_{3b} ENGAG → WOM | 0.458** | 0.513** | 0.520** |

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

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31 24 May 2021
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37 The article "The influence of fashion blogger credibility, engagement, and homophily on
38 intentions to buy and e-WOM. Results of a binational study", excluding the References section,
39 was language edited by Dr L. Free, Professional Member of the Chartered Institute of Editing
40 and Proofreading (www.ciep.uk) on 21 and 22 April 2021.
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