MGI

Mestrado em Gestão de Informação
Master Program in Information Management

Social Media Influencers in Travel and Tourism

Pedro Henrique Silva Martins Pereira

Dissertation report presented as partial requirement for obtaining the Master's degree in Information Management

NOVA Information Management School
Instituto Superior de Estatística e Gestão de Informação
Universidade Nova de Lisboa

NOVA Information Management School

Instituto Superior de Estatística e Gestão de Informação

Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Social Media Influencers in Travel and Tourism

by

Pedro Henrique Silva Martins Pereira

Dissertation proposal presented as partial requirement for obtaining the Master's degree in Information Management, with a specialization in Information Systems and Technologies Management

Advisor / Co Advisor: Diego Costa Pinto, phd

ABSTRACT

The use of Social Media in travel contexts has risen on the past years and is now an important strategic tool regarding tourism development of travel destination. This research aims to examine the impact of social media platforms and the specific effect of influencer presence for destination promotion and the perception. To understand this, this research evaluates the impact of micro and macro influencers on the perception and destination dimensions. The findings suggest that destination perception varies due to the type of influencer chosen for a campaign. When using a micro influencer, physical attractiveness seems to be the most relevant topic to explore, while using macro influencers dimensions such as congruence and trustworthiness are more relevant for the perception outcome. The findings have important implications for travel destinations research and practice.

KEYWORDS

INDEX

1. INTRODUCTION

The increase importance of digital platforms has given consumers an overload of information regarding their purchase decisions (Castañeda et al., 2020). Also, the increase of influencer marketing on those platforms is a successful and effective tool for shaping consumers decision process, as technology has risen the number of opinions that bear on a customer journey (Hamilton et al., 2021). A study indicates that 40% of respondents have purchased an item after seeing it used by an influencer on social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter or YouTube (Swant, 2016). This research also states that Twitter users reported 5.2 times increase in purchase intent when exposed to both brand and influencer tweets about the product.

Research has mainly focused on the role of social media influencers, on how they affect the brand communication and brand image and on the power of their message (Hamilton et al., 2021; Gretzel, 2018; Appel et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021; Lou & Yuan, 2019). There are also previous studies regarding the digital side of consumer experience, but these focused more on connectivity at different trip stages (Tanti & Buhalis, 2017) and on a rather technical than business oriented approach. Regarding the travel industry, research focused more on experience sharing and the sub consequents dimensions that underly those mechanisms as well as on the effects social media and digital platforms have on the intentions to travel to specific destinations ((Ye & Tussyadiah, 2011); (Kang & Schuett, 2013); (Oliveira et al., 2020)). Therefore, prior research does not provide insights on how social media influencers posts and advertisements on digital platforms impact the travel consumer destination perception, more specifically when they are promoting a certain destination. This is of major importance for companies and travel brands to acknowledge the impact of influencers and understand how they can be incorporated on their digital marketing strategies (Li et al., 2021).

This research aims to understand the impact of social media influencers on the consumer destination perception by comparing the effect of micro and macro influencers in an Instagram paid

media, understanding the mediating role of social credibility as well the endorser-destination relationship.

Previous studies show that the use of social media alone does not generate customer value, which instead is attained through the generation of connections and interactions between companies and customers and among customers themselves (Li et al., 2021), showing that it is key to recognize customer's motivations and perceptions in order to engage in brand related social media activities and encourage their value contribution, using different strategies that will depend on the ability to transform consumers from passive receivers to active value contributors in social media. Also, social media is used during all stages of the travel planning process and evidence shows that there is a strong correlation between perceived level of influence from social media and changes made in travel plans prior to final decisions (Fotis et al., 2008).

The current study aims to complement social media research and extending it by understanding the effect caused by influencers ads on users travel destination perceptions, clearing ways to maximize the investment made in this type of Digital Strategy in order to achieve the main goal of transforming customers from passive receivers of the firm's social media offerings to active value contributors (Li et al., 2021). Therefore, this paper ads important contributions to current literature that will also help travel companies understand what to prioritize when preparing an influencers marketing campaign, what type of influencer should they choose to perform it and the impact of the different dimensions of the personality on the user destination perception and image visualization.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS IN TRAVEL AND DESTINATION MARKETING

Nowadays social media is an area that is in a state of flux, becoming highly culturally relevant and a dominant form of communication and expression, establishing an omni-social presence among consumers (Appel et al., 2020). However, the use of social media alone does not generate customer value, which instead is attained through the generation of connections and interactions between the firm and its customers, as well as among customers themselves (Li et al., 2021). Regarding tourism, social media is used during every stage of the travel process (Fotis et al., 2008), acting as an important source of information. Although consumers may find travel related information in many different sources such as websites, pages, ads or blog posts (Castañeda et al., 2020), online Word-of-Mouth is the most used source for consumers searching for travel information (Terttunen & Terttunen, 2017) and it is the pillar for influencer marketing in travel and tourism (Gretzel, 2018).

Travel and the implementation of destination decisions are made easier by social media (Bakr & Ali, 2013). Social media is used before, during, and after travel, demonstrating the temporal functions throughout the tourist journey. Social media seems to be relevant and helpful in influencing tourist choices and decision-making at each of these three stages. First, before departing, travelers use social media to speed up their information search and seek for travel-related information (Liu, Norman & Pennington-Gray, 2013). Utilizing social media can also assist travelers in defending their decisions and lowering post-purchase dissonance, including their choice of destination (Tussyadiah et al., 2018). For this, enterprises need to define a Social Media Marketing Strategy and marketers should proactively create unique social media resources based on existing organizational resources and capabilities because of social media's changing role from a communication tool to one of learning about customers and the market. Furthermore, social media engagement involves a procedure that enables the exchange of resources between businesses and customers. Notably, relationships between customers are also crucial, particularly for greater levels of engagement behaviors (Fehrer et al. 2018).

A well-known marketing tactic is to try to persuade people by using well-known opinion leaders or celebrities with strong social standing (in consumer markets or business markets, respectively) (Knoll and Matthes, 2017). Social media's pervasiveness has greatly boosted this approach's accessibility and attractiveness. Social Media Influencers occupy a new, advantageous space at the intersection of paid, earned, shared and owned media (Femenia-serra & Gretzel, 2020) and destinations should use them to demonstrate ease of visit planning as well as facilitate destination choice, given the high level of engagement of tourists in social media and the most times significant level of planning complexity associated with travel expectation (Tham et al., 2020).

Influencers are personalities who are viewed as verbal, smart, ambitious, productive, and poised, taking pleasure on offering advice regarding a product or a service (Freberg et al., 2011). Bakker (2018) found out that influencers are most popular and successful when they are authentic and spontaneous, as well as that authenticity and trust in the influencer are the key aspects viewed by the consumers when following a social media influencer. Furthermore, there are other attributes of influencers that need to be considered when collaborating in a digital campaign, such as the elements proposed by McGuire (1985) on his social attractiveness theory, consisting of Familiarity, Likeability and Similarity. Familiarity is the level of knowledge of the source/influencer through repeated exposure (Muda et al., 2014) and Chung and Cho (2017) have found that consumers are more likely to trust familiar influencers than unfamiliar ones. Influencer likeability can occur from an affection resulting from physical appearance or behavior (Amos, Holmes and Strutton, 2008) and popularity (de Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). McGuire (1985) states that when an endorser or influencer is liked by a consumer, the consumer is likely to transfer those positive thoughts towards the brand or the product that the influencer endorses. Similarity is the supposed resemblance between a source of a message and the receiver of that message (Kim and Park, 2011). The effectiveness of a marketing communication message or digital campaign can be dependent on similarity because consumers tend to be more influenced when a message comes from someone they feel a sense of similarity with (Lou

& Yuan, 2019). Ultimately, these dimensions were found to have significant impact on consumer engagement (Duh & Thabethe, 2021).

To get to consumers, the use of different levels of influencers is possible depending on variables such as the investment from a campaign or company dimension. For example, smaller firms have started and will continue to benefit from the popularity and success of what are known as "micro-influencers", signifying a new type of influencers, even though major brands may use may bigger influencing names, affording pricey quotes. Micro-influencers are influencers who are less known than macro influencers but who have loyal and ardent followings that are typically more focused, with numbers ranging from a few thousand to hundreds of thousands of followers (Main 2017). Influencer marketing has become more and more appealing to marketers since these influencers are typically seen as more reliable and genuine than traditional celebrities (Enberg 2018). These effects are also present in travel and tourism fields since influencer marketing shows promise as a way for Destination Management Organizations to reclaim travelers' attention, set themselves apart from the competition, and possibly regain some degree of control over the internet propagation of destination-relevant information (de Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017).

Align to the use of influencers comes a strong cultural sense of social media sharing. Oliveira (2020) found that sharing travel content is perceived to be fun and entertaining, since perceived enjoyment is the most important motive in explaining why travelers share their travel experiences online, using Social Media for personally meaningful and rewarding goals. This perceived enjoyment increases the use of social media as an information source in travel planning (Kang & Schuett, 2013). The experience sharing allows other users to retain a destination image, which conveys different meanings for tourists with different experience expectations, powered by visual communication tools carry objects and notions that can stimulate people's imagination and perception about the tourism experience (Ye & Tussyadiah, 2011).

H1: Micro and Macro influencers influence the destination perception differently.

2.2. SOCIAL CREDIBILITY THEORY

The level of persuasion ingrained in the conveyed information has a significant impact in the communication process with target segments. Credibility is a multifaceted notion that particularly affects the attitudes, intentions, and behavior of the consumer. Since credibility is closely related to information, it might be considered a component of the message communication (Eisend, 2006). The credibility of the source is crucial to the success of an endorsement, and the appeal of influencers depends on how much of their own work goes into developing their own personal brands.

Social Credibility Model was first proposed by Ohanian (1990) as a scale to integrate and measure endorsers perceived attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness, incorporating the two large models from existing literature: source attractiveness (familiarity, likeability and similarity dimensions) and source credibility (expertise and trustworthiness). Therefore, it states that the value of a message can be influenced by the level of appeal, thrust and expertise regarding an influencer or endorser (Chekim et al., 2020). Furthermore, not only does attractiveness influence perception, but it also has impact on the persuasiveness of a message, as well as an expert source that is viewed as trustworthy can, in fact, induce opinion change (Seiler & Kucza, 2017). The three dimensions of credibility, which combine social media influencer expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness, are very important in the advertising process (Sertoglu et al., 2014) and the success of the shared message is fundamentally dependent on the acknowledged level of the influencer's trustworthiness and expertise, which is associated across literature with the perceived credibility of influencers.

Physical attractiveness is one of the most influential source characteristics on advertising effectiveness measures, including brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Likeability is important within the Attractiveness dimension because it is believed to have positive effects when transferred from the influencer to the product, as Social Media influencers are more persuasive when they are likeable (Taillon et al., 2020). Therefore, attractiveness is an important factor for communication effectiveness (Eisend & Langner, 2010).

Expertise translates has an important factor since has a strong and direct impact on consumer, being a key element for credibility, as choosing highly credible influencers or at least creating highly credible posts should be beneficial for brand's image and behavioral intentions reported by potential customers (Breves & Liebers, 2019). Yuan & Lou (2020) found that only those who deliver accurate and valuable information to their followers are expected to have a positive impact on followers' interests when promoting a specific product.

Wiedmann (2020) found that the most important requirement for a social media influencer success in online campaigns is trustworthiness. According to Loggerenberg, Waldt & Wehmeyer (2009), large part of trustworthiness lies in the likeability of the influencer. This dimension is an important variable explaining why influencers are more effective endorsers than celebrities, as they must elicit trust to be effective (Schouten et al., 2020). Viewers will be more receptive to influencers advice and the brands or products they support if they believe them to be more reliable. Contrarily, customers would presume traditional celebrities' commercial motives since they frequently feature in advertisements for different businesses (Bailey, 2007). Due to consumers trust in influencers, these are perceived as more relatable and approachable (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Trust is also connected to audiences' perceptions of the source's dependability. As a result, social media influencers may raise the degree to which audiences consider the source to be someone who can substantiate and provide more information about the content being sent (Labrecque, 2014).

H2: The Social Credibility Model Dimensions mediate the relationship between influencers and destination perception:

> **H2a:** Attractiveness mediates the relationship between influencers and destination perception.
>
> **H2b:** Trustworthiness mediates the relationship between influencers and destination perception.
>
> **H2c:** Expertise mediates the relationship between influencers and destination perception.

2.3. CONGRUENCE

Taillon (2020) found out that perceived similarity between the endorser and consumer was related to advertising attitudes being that higher similarity leads to more positive attitude evaluations. In the same research, similarity was found to increase purchase intentions with consumers who perceived themselves to be more similar with the salesperson. Also, a good fit between an influencer and the product should encourage followers to consider the product as a match with their ideal selves as well, influencing their subsequent evaluations and behavioral intentions because followers strive to be like influencers (Campbell & Farrell, 2020).

According to earlier studies (Choi and Rifon, 2012; Casaló et al., 2020), the similarity of an influencer's image to their followers' interests is a potential determinant. Casaló et al. (2020) observed the impact of consumer-influencer fit on followers' behavioral intentions to ascertain what characteristics constitute a person as an influencer on Instagram, finding that a stronger match motivates followers to emulate or follow influencers advise. On the other hand, Kim and Kim (2020) alter the product-influencer fit and demonstrated how a better fit encourages more favorable product views among customers and lessens their impressions that the promotion is advertising.

Regarding the travel sector, influencer congruence positively contributes to visit intentions towards the promoted destination, both in an influencer-consumer and influencer-destination congruence (Xu (Rinka) & Pratt, 2018). Furthermore, this research states that when selecting Social Media Influencers, endorsers should possess values and characteristics that target customers they admire and pursue. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the level of influencer impact considering congruence since, as in comparison to celebrities, which have a large number of followers, influencers are perceived as more relatable and approachable (Djafarova and Rushworth 2017), so the same effect may happen within different levels of SMI.

Pictures of tourist destinations are more difficult to change than images of other consumer commodities. Therefore, engaging an influencer or celebrity as an ambassador can be an effective strategy to highlight a destination's uniqueness. For instance, the relationship between the celebrity

who was born locally, and the location is special, making it a selling advantage that other locations are unable to provide (van der Veen & Song, 2010).

Furthermore, research has shown that the consumer perception of overall fit (POV) with destination is impacted by the tourist-destination personality similarity (TDPS), which is defined as being the congruence between tourist perceptions of their own personality and their idea of the travel destination, therefore influencing the final perception of it (Bekk et al., 2016).

H3: Perceived Congruence mediates the relationship between Influencers and Destination Perceptions.
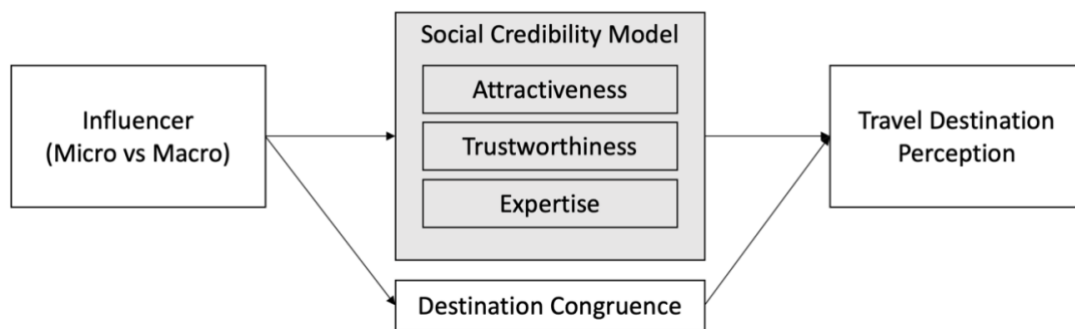

Figure 1 – Theoretical Model

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. DATA COLLECTION

This study employed quantitative research of different categories and variables accountable in previous studies in the travel marketing area. Since the aim was to explore the emotional and visual perception of a destination when advertised in Social Media platforms, the final sample was composed only by Social Media users, specifically Instagram.

Respondents were approached using a convenience sampling method, since the questionnaire was disseminated on major social media channels (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn). Due to this method, it was expected that the range of responder's characteristics were young, active digital users and have already travelled in the past, therefore being more aware and conscious of the topic being study.

The data collection method was designed to check the impact of micro vs macro influencers on destination dimensions. The destination dimensions in testing were based on the work of Li (2015) that resumed the different aspects of a travel location according to categories (Figure 4). For the purpose of this research and given, it is only being tested dimensions retrieved form "Atmosphere of the Place", "Political and Economic Factors", "Tourist Infrastructure" and "Tourist Leisure and Recreation" categories.

The questionnaire was composed of four main sections. First, participants were showed an Instagram post made by an Influencer promoting a specific travel destination and one of two possible descriptions regarding the post, one referencing a micro influencer and its characteristics and another referencing a macro influencer.

Post Description 1: This post was made by a micro influencer, with 50k followers, that has an average of 20k likes per post, promoting this travel destination.

Post Description 2: This post was made by a macro influencer, with 500k followers, that has an average of 80k likes per post, promoting this travel destination.

The second section intended to test the impact of influencer characteristics on the destination and check the differences between a micro and a macro one. Therefore, it was used the adapted model from Ohanian (1990), the social credibility scale, that allows to measure different standards within the Ohanian original model – Trustworthiness, Expertise and Attractiveness. These measures were used to understand viewers' perception of the influencer on the selected post and what type and amount of impact can it have on the destination perception and creation of a virtual destination visual image that will, in the future, affect travel consumers expectation.

Trustworthiness	Expertise	Attractiveness
• Not Dependable - Dependable • Dishonest – Honest • Unreliable – Reliable • Insincere – Sincere • Untrustworthy - Trustworthy	• Not Expert – Expert • Inexperienced – Experienced • Unknowledgeable – Knowledgeable • Unqualified – Qualified • Unskilled - Skilled	• Unattractive – Attractive • Not classy – Classy • Ugly – Beautiful • Plain – Elegant • Not Sexy - Sexy

Figure 2 – Social Credibility Scale, Adapted from Ohanian (1990)

The third section relates with destination-endorser congruence and measures the perceived visual fit of the influencer on the paid promotion post, using the same dimensions as (Xu & Pratt, 2018). The final section is used for checkpoints to make sure the respondents were clear of what their post was and understand the demographics of the sample, namely nationality, age and gender.
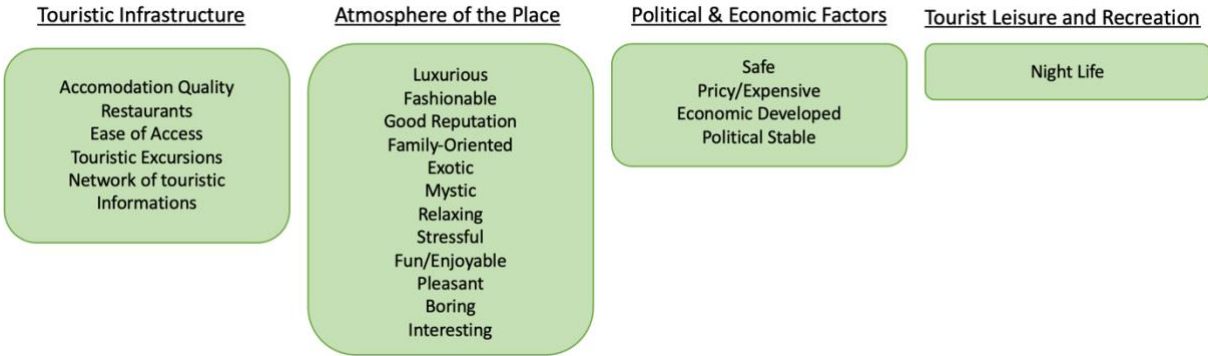
Figure 3 – Dimensions determining the perceived destination image, adapted from Li & Ali (2015)

3.2. SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

The sample that responded to the questionnaire counted 185 individuals. When proceeding data cleaning, 63 answers were excluded from the study, either due to not responding on full to the essential questions or by failing in the check points. The sample includes mainly young respondents, with 55% aging from 21 to 24 years old. 70 Respondents have from 20 to 25 years and 23 respondents have more than 40. This distribution of ages is important as this study is mainly focused on a digital usage perspective where young respondents are more familiar with technological platforms and with the concept of influencer marketing and promotion.

By reaching mainly to a younger audience, the study ensures a more robust view and perception of how this generation analyzes and validates paid content on social and digital platforms, without disregarding the opinion and contribution older generations may have and affect how travel influencers produce content.

Distribution of Respondents' Age
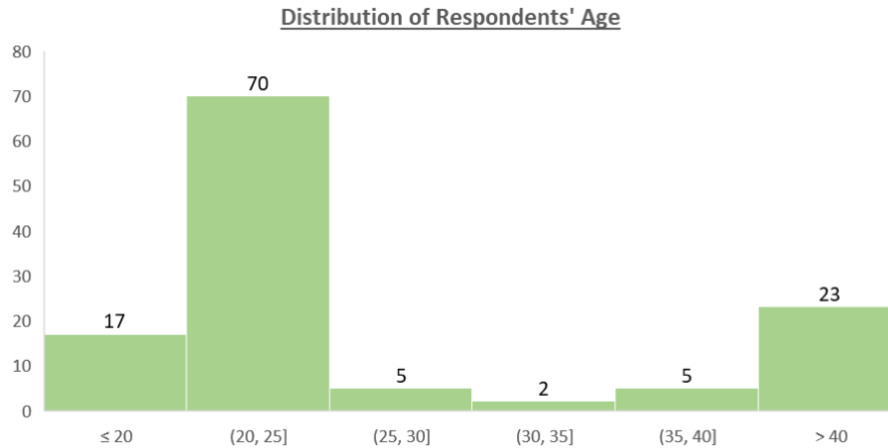
Figure 4 – Respondents' age Distribution

Furthermore, the sample is composed by 62 Females and 49 Males, corresponding to 91% of the responses obtained regarding Gender (Figure 6). As of Nationality, the questionnaire was mainly answered by Portuguese, adding up to 95% of the total responses.

Gender

■ Female   ■ Male   ■ Prefer not Say   ■ Did not Respond
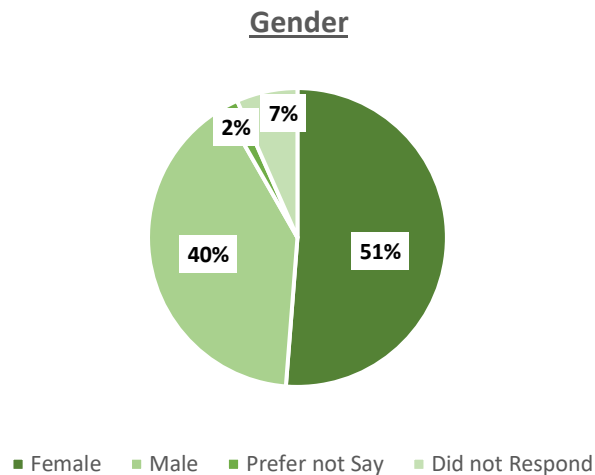
Figure 7 – Gender Distribution

The sample was splitted into two groups, one with respondents who had seen the Post and Micro Influencer discription, and the other with those who had seen the Macro discription. A multi-group analysis (MGA) was employed to study the differences between the groups, the main purpose being to detect differences (should they exist) regarding the destination perception as well as influencer characteristics and congruence-matching with it.

4. STRUCTURAL MODEL ASSESSMENT

Since that was not defined a declared independent variable in the questionnaire for respondents to rate, it was calculated using the average of every destination dimension rating for each respondent. Therefore, the Y variable correspondents to the average rating, consider every single destination dimension being tested from the different blocks of Li & Ali board, of Cappadocia perception. The variable was named "Destination Overall Assessment". An OLS model was used to estimate this variable at a 0.05 significance level. The same model accounted as dependent variables the mediators of the theoretical model, calculated all together in the regression, allowing to understand the impact these variables have on the destination perception, whether is it in a form of negative or positive effect or how much of them combined explained the statistical variance. Secondly, the same model was calculated using two different datasets: the macro influencer post group and the micro influencer post group, showing statistical differences on significance and effect levels, since that for macro posts only trustworthiness and congruence seem to be statistically relevant, as on the micro attractiveness is the only variable that stands out. Furthermore, when it comes to influencers with many followers, attractiveness seems to have a negative effect on the destination perception. Finally, the chow test was applied to check if the differences between micro and macro datasets were relevant. This test allows to understand if the regression coefficients are statistically different on split sets of data.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study deepens the understanding of travel destinations perceptions in social media. The findings contribute to the literature by evaluating many destination dimensions and the mediating influencer factors that affect them. In this scenario, it is incorporated social credibility theory that allows to explain how influencers characteristics and attributes support the destination rating or evaluation prior to a travel, expectation or in this case, perception. Regarding the destination dimensions, respondents have classified the study selected location as Exotic, Pleasant, Interesting and Relaxing, since these were the higher average dimensions. On the other side, the lowest dimensions were Boring and Stressful, contrasting with the above mentioned. Furthermore, respondents have shown concerns regarding how family oriented the destination is as well as how politically stable is it. This may be related to the geographical location of the site, or the activities being displayed in the post. Also, ease of access was one of the lowest averaging dimensions which indicates that the destination image influences perception, since through the post it does seem a more off the grid location when there are in fact a variety of options to get to the travel destination being displayed.

Furthermore, when establishing the correlations among destination dimensions (Table 1) it is possible to check the relation between different variables, specifically the strongest connections. Therefore, with this model, it is clear the positive relationship between Luxurious and Fashionable as luxury places tend to be perceived being more fashionable. The same happens for Exotic and Mystic who were expected to be positive correlated. Interesting appears to be one of the most important dimensions since it has stronger relations with Fun, Enjoyable, Pleasant and Boring, with this last one being negative correlated. When evaluating different type of aspects that fall under Economic factors or Tourist Infrastructure, being a destination that is economic developed is very important when evaluating other characteristics, such as Stability, Accommodation Quality, Restaurants or even Accessibility. Finally, the mutual relations between having nice hotels or accommodations and nice restaurants seems to be of higher importance when rating a destination.

	Luxurious	Fashionable	GR	FO	Exotic	Mystic	Relaxing	Stressful	Fun	Enjoyable	Pleasant	Boring	Interesting	Safe	Pricy	ED	PS	AQ	Restaurants	Night Life	EA	TE	NTI
	1																						
	0,43	1																					
	0,3	0,39	1																				
	-0,02	0,03	0,26	1																			
	0,19	0,36	0,29	-0,02	1																		
	0,08	0,23	0,22	0,11	0,43	1																	
	0,02	0,09	0,26	0,13	0,27	0,4	1																
	-0,04	-0,21	-0,19	0	-0,08	-0,09	-0,38	1															
	0,14	0,17	0,29	0,25	0,2	0,11	0,26	-0,05	1														
	0,02	0,17	0,3	0,11	0,09	0,08	0,51	-0,24	0,46	1													
	0,07	0,17	0,36	0,09	0,22	0,15	0,5	-0,36	0,5	0,76	1												
	0,05	-0,14	-0,18	-0,07	0,01	-0,02	-0,14	0,34	-0,2	-0,27	-0,38	1											
	0,04	0,33	0,4	0,12	0,14	0,25	0,35	-0,19	0,44	0,54	0,56	-0,44	1										
	0	0,01	0,2	0,41	0,04	-0,03	0,23	-0,27	0,26	0,19	0,2	-0,07	0,27	1									
	0,37	0,28	0,15	0,16	0,28	0,09	0,09	-0,1	0,25	0,1	0,19	0,14	0,18	0,25	1								
	0,11	-0,06	0,13	0,24	-0,06	-0,05	0,09	-0,02	0,28	0,25	0,23	0,07	0,22	0,38	0,32	1							
	0,03	-0,01	0,05	0,23	0,01	0,12	0,08	-0,13	0,13	0,07	0,16	0,08	0,06	0,4	0,07	0,56	1						
	0,23	0,11	0,23	0,17	0,2	0,1	0,15	-0,14	0,21	0,29	0,37	0,09	0,28	0,27	0,26	0,43	0,37	1					
	0,2	0,03	0,29	0,27	0,2	0,12	0,15	0,02	0,33	0,29	0,34	0,03	0,34	0,29	0,31	0,4	0,26	0,64	1				
	0,2	0,1	-0,03	0,07	0,09	0,13	-0,04	0,01	0,08	0,01	0,03	0,19	-0,02	-0,04	0,13	0,2	0,14	0,27	0,4	1			
	0,09	-0,09	-0,01	0,27	-0,03	0,13	0,19	0,08	0,08	0,07	0,11	0,21	0,11	0,22	0,19	0,45	0,37	0,35	0,37	0,44	1		
	0,15	0,26	0,21	0,13	0,25	0,06	0,29	-0,4	0,24	0,22	0,3	-0,22	0,21	0,18	0,17	0	0,03	0,12	0,11	-0,06	0,02	1	
	0,16	0,15	0,24	0,03	0,18	0,07	0,19	-0,09	0,23	0,22	0,24	-0,05	0,24	0,14	0,13	0,03	0,01	0,21	0,29	0,11	0,23	0,62	1

Table 1 - Correlation Matrix

The research evaluates how impactful are the influencers characteristics and if they are relevant for the destination perception. Therefore, when running the OLS model (Table 2) it is possible to check that all influencer dimensions positively influence the destination overall assessment and therefore its perception, with Trustworthiness having the biggest weight. These mean that if any of the variables increase the overall destination perception by the user will also increase. Although, only Congruence and Trustworthiness seem to be approved at certain significance level (p-value < 0.05), suggesting that these are the most important influencer characteristics to have in mind when making a post promoting a travel location, allowing to reject hypothesis H2a and H2c regarding Attractiveness and Expertise. Hypothesis H2b and H3 are supported. Therefore, when working with influencers for destination promotions, companies should choose highly trustable and respected influencers, as well as address the fit of those influencers with the background design of the destination image.

	Estimate	Std. Error	t Value	P(>|t|)
Attractiveness	0.04941	0.04686	1.054	0.2938
Trustworthiness	0.14799	0.05941	2.491	0.0141*
Expertise	0.04847	0.06609	0.733	0.4648
Congruence	0.09638	0.04664	2.067	0.0410*

Table 2 - OLS Model Results

Furthermore, the same model was conducted but with different datasets, applying group distinctions between micro and macro posts responses. The differences detected are not only on the weight of the variables, but also on the way they influence the perception.

5.1. PEOPLE WHO WERE ASKED ABOUT MACRO POST

	Estimate	Std. Error	t Value	P(>|t|)
Attractiveness	-0.05716	0.06128	-0.933	0.3551
Trustworthiness	0.18892	0.08635	2.188	0.033*
Expertise	0.00389	0.10235	0.038	0.9698
Congruence	0.26603	0.08452	3.147	0.0027**

Table 3 - OLS Results Macro Post

Regarding Macro Post respondents the results are similar to the general testing. Here, for a 0.05 significance level, only Trustworthiness and Congruence are supported, showing that these are the most relevant features to be accountable when using a Macro influencer for a digital campaign. Also, Attractiveness has a negative effect on the destination assessment, indicating that a more physically attractive influencer may lead to poorly destination ratings. Finally, this regression R^2 is much higher than the general one (R^2= 0.4267), suggesting these 4 variables combined largely explained a large perception variance for a macro influencer.

5.2. PEOPLE WHO WERE ASKED ABOUT MICRO POST

	Estimate	Std. Error	t Value	P(>|t|)
Attractiveness	0.16910	0.0672	2.497	0.0154*
Trustworthiness	0.06173	0.07642	0.808	0.4225
Expertise	0.02733	0.08250	0.331	0.7416
Congruence	0.01649	0.05226	0.315	0.7536

Table 4 - OLS Results Micro Post

On the other hand, respondents who were showed a micro post present a different perspective. In this dataset, all 4 variables positively influence the destination assessment and consequently its perception. Therefore, as in the general testing, if the impact of one of them increases, the overall assessment will consequently increase as well. Furthermore, only attractiveness was proved to be statistically significant suggesting that influencers with lower number of followers need to be more attractive to make a better impact when promoting the destination, which can also be connected to how endorser fit looks in a specific promotion (Janssen, 2022).

5.3. CHOW TEST

In this study, the Chow test was applied to understand if there were differences between micro and macro dataset models. This test allows to check whether the coefficients in two different models on different datasets are equal or not. In here, two different models were constructed: one being the restricted model and other with the structure for the chow test linear regression. Furthermore, the difference between both was checked for statistical significance. The results suggest the built model is supported, which allows to conclude that there are significant differences between Micro and Macro influencer posts. This way, H1 is supported, showing that companies must take the factor of influencer category into account when choosing their partners for online campaigns.

5.4. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Theoretically, this research makes important contributions for the tourism as well as social media literature. It not only extends previous research on different topics such as tourism, destination marketing or social media influencers, but also makes several contributions and findings that have previously not be attained for. These findings increase and solidify a strong literature on influencer topics as well as providing a bridge between them and travel destination perceptions that have not been studied in the past. Furthermore, the findings can be applied in an academic perspective for further background on the topics, as well as in a more practical way that allows companies to fundament their social media influencer choices.

First, it extends the work of (Xu & Pratt, 2018) related with endorser and destination congruence in the travel sector, since it confirms that similarity and fit of the influencer with the destination image presented in a social media post is a significant factor and has a positive influence on the relation with the increased perception, also by adding that this is mainly important for macro influencers, implying that as bigger the influencer is the more relevant is this variable.

Secondly, it also extends the research of Eisend & Langner (2010) since the attractiveness variable shows only a higher statistical significance for micro influencers, instead of being applied to every influencer type, therefore implying that physical looks of an influencer may provoke no reaction or at least may not have a higher degree of relevance when it comes to larger followed social media personalities.

Thirdly and contrary to several research, such as Breves & Liebers (2019), the expertise factor on travel destinations does not seem to be a relevant feature for social media users when viewing posts promoting travel locations, whether being micro or macro influencers, therefore not being so important regarding the perception created by the user. This may be due to users associating the use of influencers and paid promotions to any type of influencer and not somebody specific only to the travel sector.

Finally, it adds to the work of Wiedman (2020) of influencer trustworthiness being extremely relevant for a well created destination perception. Although, this effect seems to only be significant when applied to bigger influencers (macros). Aligned with the work of Schouten (2020), trust seems to be a central factor for an effective communication and engagement with the social media user for influencers with many followers, which may grow in importance with the level the influencer is considered to be at. However, this does not seem relevant for micro influencers, which may be due to a higher trust already embedded by more loyal followers (Janssen, 2022).

Academically, this study can be a starting point for deeper research on social media destination images, a topic that lacks information on a theoretically applied perspective, fundamentally due to the

importance of an inter-relation between the background and design of a travel post and the influencer presence on it.

5.5. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This research has several managerial implications, both for Influencer and social media / Digital Strategy as well as travel and destination promotion and perception. First, extending the idea of previous research that the use of social media influencers creates an impact on destination ads, it suggests that it differs between the type of influencer used on such campaigns, whether it has more or fewer followers. Therefore, when using micro influencers travel companies should bear in mind that physical attractiveness is the point that matters the most since it is usually a way to get more attention to the ad. On the other hand, macro influencers appear to have more than a superficial influence and therefore companies should focus on points such as trustworthiness as well as the congruence and fit of the promoted destination with that endorser. Still on this regard, enterprises should have the knowledge that using a more attractive macro influencer may backfire, suggesting that the attention focus would shift from the destination to the influencer itself.

Secondly, the idea of establishing a destination image and perception is molded by the type of influencer and its own personal characteristics, which should be considered when planning a digital campaign. For instance, the use of popular travel influencers may be an option instead of building campaigns with influencers from other fields of work, as this would create a higher confidence for the post.

Finally, it is important to note that the destination features matter for the user perception and that the visual images shown should be eye appealing as well as consider the relations between those features to better create a standout perception that will captivate social media viewers. Therefore, the fit between the endorser and the represented destination is important to consider, as this will implicate the perceived destination image.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this study provides significant and important insights on destination perception and how influencer marketing impacts that view, there are also limitations that should be accounted in future research. The demography of respondents in the study is unbalanced, with most respondents to be less than 25 years old. A better distribution of ages throughout the survey could have provided better and more diverse insights on how different generations view paid travel content, allowing to study those differences among them.

Another limitation for the study is the selected destination dimensions, since not every travel dimensions from Li & Ali (2015) are being accountable and under research. More dimensions among the destination evaluation would allow to have a more robust and thorough understanding of the overall assessment. Furthermore, this assessment was contained in a linear model, but further research can explore the connection between the destination perception and the binary intention to travel to that destination.

This study is also very specific since the responses obtained are subjected to the destination choice used on the research. A different destination may lead to different conclusions, so an expectation for the research conclusions aligned with the location and post should be defined prior to the study application. One can also evaluate if the conclusions are the same for different Social Media posts and destinations.

Future research can also assess the impact of other demographics, such as the level of education or area/sector of work in order to evaluate if that segmentation has impact on how the individuals view paid content as well as how influencers produce destination posts.

Finally, the influencer characteristics in the study rely heavily on the Ohanian model (1990) but discoveries from other research may be integrated to better solidify Influencer marketing impact on destination promotions.

7. CONCLUSION

This research extends previous findings focusing on the influencer characteristics to enhance and affect destination perception. It contributes to the existing literature gap, offering a conceptual framework that considers not only the classic Ohanian influencer model, but also the impact of congruence and fit between the destination and the endorser. Furthermore, it completes a gap by comparing different levels of influencer regarding the same attributes, namely micro and macro influencers. This study illustrates two main conclusions. First, Trustworthiness and Congruence are the most important features when creating a good perception for the user. Secondly, there are significant differences between micro and macro influencers, which is also verified on the endorser variables, since for micro posts Attractiveness is the most relevant feature, whether in macro posts it resembles the general classification.

The findings here reported are important and have implications for tourism managers as well as social media and marketing teams, helping them understand how to leverage influencers posts to get a better destination perception and consequently engagement. Theoretically, it adds contributions for both tourism and marketing research by presenting a new framework to help sustain business and social media campaigns decisions.

8. REFERENCES

Hamilton, R., Ferraro, R., Haws, K. L., & Mukhopadhyay, A. (2021). Traveling with Companions: The Social Customer Journey. Journal of Marketing, 85(1), 68–92.

Li, F., Larimo, J., & Leonidou, L. C. (2021). Social media marketing strategy: definition, conceptualization, taxonomy, validation, and future agenda. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 49(1), 51–70.

Appel, G., Grewal, L., Hadi, R., & Stephen, A. T. (2020). The future of social media in marketing. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 48(1), 79–95.

Gretzel, U. (2018). Influencer marketing in travel and tourism. Advances in Social Media for Travel, Tourism and Hospitality, January, 147–156.

Ye, H., & Tussyadiah, I. P. (2011). Destination visual image and expectation of experiences. Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 28(2), 129–144

Taillon, B. J., Mueller, S. M., Kowalczyk, C. M., & Jones, D. N. (2020). Understanding the relationships between social media influencers and their followers: the moderating role of closeness. Journal of Product and Brand Management, 29(6), 767–782.

Xu (Rinka), X., & Pratt, S. (2018). Social media influencers as endorsers to promote travel destinations: an application of self-congruence theory to the Chinese Generation Y. Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 35(7), 958–972.

Femenia-Serra, F. & Gretzel, U. (2020). Influencer Marketing for Tourism Destinations: Lessons from a Mature Destination. In J. Neidhardt and W. Wörndl (Eds.), Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2020 (pp. 65–78).

Tham, J. Mair & G. Croy (2019): Social media influence on tourists' destination choice: importance of context, Tourism Recreation Research.

Lim, X. J., Mohd Radzol, A. R. bt, Cheah, J.-H. (Jacky), & Wong, M. W. (2017). The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Purchase Intention and the Mediation Effect of Customer Attitude. Asian Journal of Business Research, 7(2), 19–36.

Shupei Yuan & Chen Lou (2020): How Social Media Influencers Foster Relationships with Followers: The Roles of Source Credibility and Fairness in Parasocial Relationship and Product Interest, Journal of Interactive Advertising, DOI: 10.1080/15252019.2020.1769514

Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K., & Freberg, L. A. (2011). Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality. Public Relations Review, 37(1), 90–92.

Bakker, D. (2018). Conceptualising Influencer Marketing. Journal of Emerging Trends in Marketing and Management, I(1), 79–87.

Pandowo, M. H. C. (2019). Millennial Trust Through Endorser Credibility on Local Influencer Endorsement on Instagram. Jurnal EMBA: Jurnal Riset Ekonomi, Manajemen, Bisnis Dan Akuntansi, 7(3), 3818–3826.

Duh, H. I., & Thabethe, T. (2021). Attributes of Instagram influencers impacting consumer brand engagement. International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising, 15(5), 1.

Ibáñez-Sánchez, S., Flavián, M., Casaló, L.V., and Belanche, D. (2021). Influencers and brands successful collaborations: a mutual reinforcement to promote products and services on social media, Journal of Marketing Communications, forthcoming.

Breves, P., & Liebers, N. (2019). The Perceived Fit between Instagram Influencers and the Endorsed Brand How Influencer – Brand Fit Affects Source Credibility and Persuasive Effectiveness. Journal of Advertising Research. December.

Hughes, Christian, Vanitha Swaminathan, and Gillian Brooks (2019), "Driving Brand Engagement Through Online Social Influencers: An Empirical Investigation of Sponsored Blogging Campaigns," Journal of Marketing, 83 (5), 78–96.

McGuire, W.J. (1985) 'Attitudes and attitude change', in Lindzey, G. and Aronson, E. (Eds.), The Handbook of Social Psychology, 2nd ed., Erlbaum, Hillsdale, New Jersey, pp. 262–276.

Ohanian, R., (1990) 'Construction and Validation of a Scale to Measure Celebrity Endorsers' Perceived Expertise, Trustworthiness and Attractiveness', Journal of Advertising, Vol.19, No.3, pp. 39-52

Chung, S. and Cho, H. (2017) 'Fostering Parasocial Relationships with Celebrities on Social Media: Implications for Celebrity Endorsement', Psychology & Marketing, Vol. 34, No.4, pp. 481–495

Amos, C., Holmes, G. and Strutton, D. (2008) 'Exploring the relationship between celebrity endorser effects and advertising effectiveness', International Journal of Advertising, Vol.27, No.2, pp.209-234

Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer Marketing: How Message Value and Credibility Affect Consumer Trust of Branded Content on Social Media. Journal of Interactive Advertising, 19(1), 58–73.

Santos, A. L., Barros, F., & Azevedo, A. (2019). Matching-up celebrities' brands with products and social causes. Journal of Product and Brand Management, 28(2), 242–255.

Eisend, M., & Langner, T. (2010). Immediate and delayed advertising effects of celebrity endorsers attractiveness and expertise. International Journal of Advertising, 29(4), 527–546.

Schouten, A. P., Janssen, L., & Verspaget, M. (2020). Celebrity vs. Influencer endorsements in advertising: the role of identification, credibility, and Product-Endorser fit. International Journal of Advertising, 39(2), 258–281.

Match-Up-Hypothesis–An Integrated Model. Journal of International Scientific Publications, 11(1314–7242), 1–15.

De Veirman, M., V. Cauberghe, and L. Hudders. 2017. Marketing through instagram influencers: the impact of number of followers and product divergence on Brand attitude. International Journal of Advertising 36, no. 5: 798–828.

Djafarova, Elmira and Rushworth, Chloe (2017) Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users. Computers in Human Behavior, 68. pp. 1-7. ISSN 0747-5632.

Nouri, Melody, "The Power of Influence: Traditional Celebrity vs Social Media Influencer" (2018). Advanced Writing: Pop Culture Intersections. 32.

Wiedmann, K.-P. and von Mettenheim, W. (2021), "Attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise – social influencers' winning formula?", Journal of Product & Brand Management, Vol. 30 No. 5, pp. 707-725.

Li, J. J., & Ali, F. (2015). Reexamination of the role of destination image in tourism : An updated literature review. October.

Bekk, M., Spörrle, M., & Kruse, J. (2016). The benefits of similarity between tourist and destination personality. Journal of Travel Research, 55, 1008–1021. doi: 10.1177/0047287515606813

Edwards, Steven M. (2011), "A Social Media Mindset," Journal of Interactive Advertising, 12 (1), 1–3.

Couture, A., Arcand, M., Sénécal, S., & Ouellet, J. (2015). The influence of tourism innovativeness on online consumer behavior. Journal of Travel Research, 54(1), 66-79. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287513513159

Ekinci, Y., & Hosany, S. (2006). Destination personality: An application of brand personality to tourism destinations. Journal of Travel Research, 45(2), 127–139.

Albert, N., Ambroise, L., & Valette-Florence, P. (2017). Consumer, brand, celebrity: Which congruency produces effective celebrity endorsements? Journal of Business Research, 81(SupplementC), 96–106.

Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K., & Freberg, L. A. (2011). Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality. Public Relations Review, 37(1), 90–92.

Zeng, B., & Gerritsen, R. (2014). What do we know about social media in tourism? A review. Tourism Management Perspectives, 10(SupplementC), 27–36.

Choi, S. M., and Rifon, N. J., (2012), "It is a match: The impact of congruence between celebrity image and consumer ideal self on endorsement effectiveness", Psychology & Marketing, vol. 29, no. 9, pp. 639-650.

Kahle, L. R., and Homer, P. M., (1985), "Physical attractiveness of the celebrity endorser: A social adaptation perspective", Journal of Consumer Research, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 954-961.

Booth, N. and Matic, J.A. (2011), "Mapping and leveraging influencers in social media to shape corporate brand perceptions", Corporate Communications: An International Journal, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 184-191.

Kowalczyk, C.M. and Pounders, K.R. (2016), "Transforming celebrities through social media: the role of authenticity and emotional attachment", Journal of Product & Brand Management, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 345-356.

Silvera, D.H. and Austad, B. (2004), "Factors predicting the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement advertisements", European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 38 Nos 11/12, pp. 1509-1526.

Till, B.D. and Busler, M. (2000), "The match-up hypothesis: physical attractiveness, expertise, and the role of fit on brand attitude, purchase intent and brand beliefs", Journal of Advertising, Vol. 29 No. 3, pp. 1-13.

Wang, S.W. and Scheinbaum, A.C. (2018), "Enhancing brand credibility via celebrity endorsement: trustworthiness trumps attractiveness and expertise", Journal of Advertising Research, Vol. 58 No. 1, pp. 16-32.

Wallace, E., Buil, I. and de Chernatony, L. (2014), "Consumer engagement with self-expressive brands: brand love and WOM outcomes", Journal of Product & Brand Management, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 33-42.

Silvera, D.H. and Austad, B. (2004), "Factors predicting the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement advertisements", European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 38 Nos 11/12, pp. 1509-1526.

Woodside, A.G. and Davenport, J.W. Jr, (1974), "The effect of salesman similarity and expertise on consumer purchasing behavior", Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. 11 No. 2, pp. 198-202.

Keller, E. and Fay, B. (2012), "Word-of-mouth advocacy: a new key to advertising effectiveness", Journal of Advertising Research, Vol. 52 No. 4, pp. 459-464.

Kapitan, S. and Silvera, D.H. (2016), "From digital media influencers to celebrity endorsers: attributions drive endorser effectiveness", Marketing Letters, Vol. 27 No. 3, pp. 553-567.

Joseph, W.B. (1982), "The credibility of physically attractive communicators: a review", Journal of Advertising, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 15-24.

Booth, N. and Matic, J.A. (2011), "Mapping and leveraging influencers in social media to shape corporate brand perceptions", Corporate Communications: An International Journal, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 184-191

Glucksman, M. (2017) 'The Rise of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Lifestyle Branding', Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications, Vol.8, No.2, pp. 77-88.

Shan, Y., Chen, K. and Lin, J. E (2019) 'When social media influencers endorse brands: the effects of self-influencer congruence, parasocial identification, and perceived endorser motive', International Journal of Advertising, DOI: 10.1080/02650487.2019.1678322

Knoll, J., & Matthes, J. (2017). The effectiveness of celebrity endorsements: A meta-analysis. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 45(1), 55–75.

Main, S. (2017). Micro-Influencers Are More Effective with Marketing Campaigns Than Highly Popular Accounts. Retrieved from https:// tinyurl.com/moww4p4.

Enberg, J. (2018). Global Influencer Marketing. Retrieved from https:// tinyurl.com/y7srumpm

Fehrer, J. A., Woratschek, H., Germelmann, C. C., & Brodie, R. J. (2018). Dynamics and drivers of customer engagement: Within the dyad and beyond. Journal of Service Management, 29(3), 443–467.

Liu, B., Norman, W. C., & Pennington-Gray, L. (2013). A flash of culinary tourism: Understanding the influences of online food photography on people's travel planning process on Flickr. Tourism, Culture & Communication, 13(1), 5–18.

Bakr, G. M. W. A., & Ali, I. E. H. (2013). The role of social networking sites in promoting Egypt as an international tourist destination. South Asian Journal of Tourism and Heritage, 6(1), 169–183.

Tussyadiah, I. S. P., Kausar, D. R., & Soesilo, P. K. M. (2018). The effect of engagement in online social network on susceptibility to influence. Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 42(2), 201–223.

van der Veen, R., & Song, H. (2010). Exploratory study of the measurement scales for the perceived image and advertising effectiveness of celebrity endorsers in a tourism context. Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 27(5), 460–473

C. Campbell, J.R. Farrell (2020). More than meets the eye: The functional components underlying influencer marketing. Business Horizons, 63 (4) (2020), pp. 469-479, 10.1016/j.bushor.2020.03.003

L.V. Casaló, C. Flavián & S. Ibáñez-Sánchez (2020). Influencers on Instagram: Antecedents and consequences of opinion leadership. Journal of Business Research, 117 (2020), pp. 510-519, 10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.07.005

D.Y. Kim & H.Y. Kim (2020). Influencer advertising on social media: The multiple inference model on influencer-product congruence and sponsorship disclosure. Journal of Business Research (2020), 10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.02.020

Eisend M. 2006, Source Credibility Dimensions in Marketing, Communication – A Generalized Solution, Journal of Empirical Generalisations in Marketing, 2006, page 3

Van der Waldt, D., van Loggerenberg, M., & Wehmeyer, L. (2009). Celebrity endorsements versus created spokespersons in advertising: A survey among students. South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences, 12(1)

S. Venus Jin, Aziz Muqaddam, Ehri Ryu, (2019) "Instafamous and social media influencer marketing", Marketing Intelligence & Planning, https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-09-2018-0375

Labrecque, L.I. (2014), "Fostering consumer–brand relationships in social media environments: the role of parasocial interaction", Journal of Interactive Marketing, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 134-148.

Bailey, A.A. (2007), "Public information and consumer skepticism effects on celebrity endorsements: studies among young consumers", Journal of Marketing Communications, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 85-107.

Loes Janssen, Alexander P. Schouten & Emmelyn A. J. Croes (2022) Influencer advertising on Instagram: product-influencer fit and number of followers affect advertising outcomes and influencer evaluations via credibility and identification, International Journal of Advertising, 41:1, 101-127.

Anexes

Questionnaire

Introduction:

Dear participant,

This is a survey to ask you about your perceptions on social media influencers endorsements for promoting travel destinations.
You will see an Instagram post/ad promoting a certain location.
Please pay close attention to the scenario described and respond sincerely!
There is no risk involved in answering any of the following questions. Remember that your participation in this survey is voluntary, which means that you are free to participate or not, as well as give up at any time. However, your responses are very important, completely anonymous, and will be used only for academic purposes.p

Informed Consent Form
I declare that I am 18 or over 18 and agree to participate in this research. I declare that I was informed that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I can leave this survey at any time without penalty, and all data is confidential. I understand that I will evaluate responses and that this study does not offer serious risks.

◯   I agree to participate

◯   I do not agree to participate

Part1: Micro vs Macro Influencer

Option1: This post was made by a micro influencer, with 50k followers, that has an average of 20k likes per post, promoting this travel destination.

Option 2: This post was made by a macro influencer, with 500k followers, that has an average of 80k likes per post, promoting this travel destination.

P1 – Please rate your opinion regarding the destination.

	1. Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7. Strongly Agree
Luxurious	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Fashionable	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Good Reputation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Family-Oriented	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Exotic	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mystic	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Relaxing	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Stressful	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Fun/Enjoyable	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pleasant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Boring	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Interesting	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Safe	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pricy/Expensive	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Economic Developed	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Political Stable	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

P1 – Please rate your opinion regarding the destination.

P2 - Please rate your opinion regarding your perception of the destination… (1 being the worst and 7 the best)

	1.	2	3	4	5	6	7.
Accommodation Quality	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Restaurants	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Night life	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ease of Access	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Touristic excursions	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Network of touristic information	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Part2 Mediators:

Q1. Attractiveness. Please rate your opinion regarding the influencer:

	1. Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7. Strongly Agree
Attractive	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Classy	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Beautiful	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Elegant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sexy	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q2. Trustworthiness. Please rate your opinion regarding the influencer:

	1. Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7. Strongly Agree
Dependable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Honest	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Reliable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Sincere	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Trustworthy	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q3. Expertise. Please rate your opinion regarding the influencer:

	1. Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7. Strongly Agree
Expert	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Experienced	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Knowledgeable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Qualified	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Skilled	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Part3 Congruence as a Moderator:

Please indicate your perceived congruence between the influencer and the endorsed destination:

	1. Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7. Strongly Agree
Compatible	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Good Fit	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Relevant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Good Match	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Checks. Tell us about the post.

	1. Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7. Strongly Agree
"This post was made by a micro influencer"	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"This influencer has millions of followers"	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"It promotes a travel destination"	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"This influencer has hundreds of thousands of likes per post"	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Generic questions:

Gender

○ Male

○ Female

○ Non-binary

Age (please insert numbers only)

_____

Nationality

○   Portuguese

○   Other

Sources:

Destination perception: Li, J. J., & Ali, F. (2015). *Reexamination of the role of destination image in tourism : An updated literature review*. October.

Social Media Influencer dimensions (Social Credibility Scale): Ohanian, R., (1990) 'Construction and Validation of a Scale to Measure Celebrity Endorsers' Perceived Expertise, Trustworthiness and Attractiveness', Journal of Advertising, Vol.19, No.3, pp. 39-52

Congruence: Xu (Rinka), X., & Pratt, S. (2018). Social media influencers as endorsers to promote travel destinations: an application of self-congruence theory to the Chinese Generation Y. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, *35*(7), 958–972.