

The role of Influencers in purchase intention along the context of product involvement

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Abstract

Influencers have captured the attention of many brands who are looking to drive sales through digital communication sources, thus achieving higher returns on their investments. Although it is not a new concept, influencer marketing is still a fast growing market. Despite the fact that many marketers are spending high portions of their budget on influencer marketing, there is currently lack of insight on the substantial impacts of Influencers on consumer attitudes. Notwithstanding, many researchers have explored this concept under distinct scopes. Still, there is a need to further investigate this research topic in novel contexts, particularly under the light of different product categories. Hence, this research study intends to understand the impact of Influencers' perceived expertise and their effectiveness as an information source in consumers' purchase intention, by integrating the moderating role of product involvement.

In order to reach conclusions regarding consumer's decision-making process and attitudes towards Influencers, the study analyses the responses of 267 survey participants through descriptive analysis and multiple linear regression models.

The results show evidence that Influencer's perceived expertise is an important determinant of purchase intention on both the high and low involvement products elected for this research. Additionally, it is concluded that Influencer sponsorships show influence on purchase intention of both products. High involvement moderates the relationship between Influencer's perceived expertise and purchase intention, whereas low involvement is not a moderator of this relationship. Thus, when it comes to planning influencer marketing campaigns, this dissertation advises companies to take into consideration the product being marketed, its price point, and the choice of an Influencer aligned with the company's industry and with expertise in the endorsed product.

Keywords: Influencers; Influencer's perceived expertise; purchase intention; information sources; product involvement; coffee pods; mobile phones.

JEL Classification System: M31; M37

Resumo

Os Influenciadores têm vindo a captar a atenção de muitas marcas que procuram impulsionar vendas através de fontes de comunicação digital, obtendo assim um maior retorno sobre os seus investimentos. Embora não seja um conceito novo, o marketing de influência é ainda um mercado em rápido crescimento. Apesar dos altos investimentos em marketing de influência, há atualmente uma falta de perceção relativamente aos impactos concretos dos Influenciadores nas atitudes do consumidor. Não obstante, muitos estudos têm vindo a explorar este conceito em variados âmbitos. Ainda assim, existe a necessidade de investigar mais profundamente este tema em novos contextos, particularmente sob a esfera de diferentes categorias de produtos. Consequentemente, esta investigação pretende compreender o impacto da especialidade percebida dos Influenciadores e da sua eficácia como fonte de informação na intenção de compra dos consumidores, integrando o papel moderador do envolvimento com o produto.

De modo a chegar a conclusões sobre o processo de decisão de compra do consumidor e as suas atitudes em relação a Influenciadores, o estudo analisa as respostas de 267 participantes do questionário por via de análise descritiva e modelos de regressão linear múltipla.

Os resultados mostram evidências de que a especialidade percebida dos Influenciadores é um determinante significativo da intenção de compra nos produtos de alto e baixo envolvimento eleitos nesta investigação. Adicionalmente, conclui-se que os patrocínios de Influenciadores têm efeito na intenção de compra de ambos os produtos. O alto envolvimento modera a relação entre a especialidade percebida dos Influenciadores e a intenção de compra, enquanto o baixo envolvimento não é moderador da relação. Desta forma, no que toca ao planeamento de campanhas de marketing de influência, esta dissertação aconselha as empresas a ter em consideração o produto comercializado, o seu preço e a escolha de um Influenciador alinhado com a indústria da empresa e especialista no produto promovido.

Palavras-chave: Influenciadores; especialidade percebida dos Influenciadores; intenção de compra; fontes de informação; envolvimento com o produto; cápsulas de café; telemóveis.

JEL Sistema de Classificação: M31; M37

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Glossary of abbreviations

IPEX = Influencer's perceived expertise

PIN = Purchase intention

IS = Information sources

PI = Product involvement

CPI = Coffee pods involvement

MPI = Mobile phones involvement

CDJ = Consumer decision journey

FMCG = Fast moving consumer goods

KPI = Key Performance Indicator

WOM = Word of mouth

PCA = Principal components analysis

PC = Principal component

KMO = Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

TOL = Tolerance

VIF = Variance inflation factor

1. Introduction

In recent years, most brands have unraveled the power of influencer marketing and consider it to be one of the more strategic and effective forms of communicating with their target audience. It has been stated that partnering with Influencers has generated a lot more return on investment for brands than communication through traditional media (Chetioui, Benlafqih, & Lebdaoui, 2020).

Expertise influences the brand-influencer partnership, as past studies (Ye, Hudders, de Jans, & de Veirman, 2021; Martínez-López, Anaya-Sánchez, Fernández Giordano, & Lopez-Lopez, 2020) have showed that not only there must be a congruent connection between the brand and the brand endorser, but also that the degree of congruence is dependent on the Influencer's degree of expertise in the product or service being promoted. The Influencer's opinions, beliefs and experiences with the product will impact the perceived credibility of the endorsement (Martínez-López et al., 2020).

This implies that the higher the perceived credibility and expertise of the Influencer, the more likely they are to influence consumers' purchase decisions (Chetioui et al., 2020).

In spite of the potential persuasiveness of Influencer endorsements, there are many sources of information and factors than can influence consumers' purchase intentions. Studies have shown that Influencers have a greater impact when consumers are searching for products, however, when it comes to the evaluation and purchase moments, they tend to rely more on close circles (SanMiguel, Guercini, & Sádaba, 2019; Hughes, Swaminathan, & Brooks, 2019). The type of product will also have a great significance on the consumers' decision journey, as it will interfere on the involvement level of the purchase. The importance given to the sources of information and motivating factors can shift depending on the level of product involvement (Rahman, Song, & Lekhe, 2016).

Ultimately, it is compelling to explore how influencer marketing co-exists with many different factors, circumstances, and conditions, and to what degree it can affect consumers' purchase intentions. This dissertation aims to contribute to deepening the knowledge on the role played by Influencers on purchase intention under different levels of involvement.

1.1 Relevance of the topic

Influencer marketing is considered an extremely important tool for marketers (Lee, Sudarshan, Sussman, Bright, & Eastin, 2021). However, despite its undeniable success, there is a lack of strategic insights regarding the use of Influencers to promote products, according to the perspective of Ye et al. (2021).

Previous research on this topic has been emerging over the past few years, contributing to a better understanding on how Influencers shape consumers' attitudes (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Further exploring the concept of influencer marketing in novel contexts pertains a relevant investigative study considering that research on this topic has been mainly carried out in the fashion, beauty, and travel industries (SanMiguel et al., 2019; Istanina, Pratiwi, Yasmine, & Ananda, 2019; Pop, Săplăcan, Dabija, & Alt, 2021). Ye et al.'s study (2021, page 171) appoints, as a future direction in influencer marketing research, that "it can be further examined whether influencer marketing may also be effective in other product categories or sectors". Indeed, despite marketers' increasing use of Influencers as a communication channel, there is still a need to obtain insights on consumers' responses to influencer marketing actions (Martínez-López et al., 2020).

As perceived expertise seems to determine the credibility of Influencers, this can result in a positive influence on purchase intentions (Masuda, Han, & Lee, 2022). Therefore, it is crucial to understand how Influencer's perceived expertise can impact consumers' purchase intention in view of different circumstances. This research proves to be relevant once it intends to study the role played by Influencers in consumers' purchase intention, by means of their perceived expertise and their effectiveness as a source of information. Furthermore, this role will be studied along the context of high and low involvement products, in order to access if there are differences of impact between both conditions.

1.2 Problem statement

As previously stated, a high number of research studies on the topic of Influencers have been conducted, however, prior literature has yet to acknowledge and consider the role of Influencers in consumers' purchase intentions in light of two distinct levels of product involvement.

Most existing research neglect the study under the comparison of different scenarios according to the involvement level and industries. So, it is important to understand the impact of Influencers' communication on the purchase intention of several categories of products.

Previous studies mainly focused on analyzing how Influencer attributes impact overall purchase intentions with an undefined product category (Masuda et al., 2022), or considering broader industries, such as fashion (Chetioui et al., 2020; Gomes, Marques, & Dias, 2022), beauty (Istania et al., 2019) and the travel industry (Pop et al., 2021).

Studies on the impacts of Influencer's perceived expertise were mostly conducted in regard to brand control and commercial orientation (Martínez-López et al., 2020), and exclusively in the context of high involvement situations (Hussain, Adnan, & Khan, 2021).

Although, the impact of Influencers in different industries have been analyzed by several researchers (Zak & Hasprova, 2020; Bürklin & Faber, 2019; SanMiguel, et al., 2019), it has yet to be considered a comparison between two products with different levels of involvement and how this factor moderates the role of Influencers in consumers' purchase intention. In addition, when it comes to the purchase funnel, there is an absence of information on how Influencers are impacting the different stages of the consumer decision journey (Zak & Hasprova, 2020).

Thus, to this date, the affiliation between influencer marketing and product involvement has yet to be studied in the proposed context.

1.3 Research purpose

The purpose of this research study is to explore the role of Influencers in consumers' purchase intentions. This role concerns the Influencer's perceived expertise, as well as Influencer's sponsorships as a source of information. Product involvement will be introduced as a moderator of the relationship between Influencer's perceived expertise and purchase intention.

This study will distinguish itself from existing literature on Influencer marketing and purchase intention (Masuda et al., 2022; Chetioui et al., 2020; Gomes et al., 2022; Pop et al., 2021) by comparing the role played by Influencers in two distinct industries, accessing if the level of product involvement is an important determinant of the endorsement's success. Accordingly, this study intends to provide a response to the following research question:

Are there differences in the importance given to Influencers' recommendations depending on the level of product involvement and the perceived expertise of the Influencer?

This research intends to compare two distinct product categories: mobile phones and coffee pods. Regarding the degree of involvement, mobile phones are considered high involvement products given their high price and the high-risk level involved with the purchase – hence the decision process is more complex. On the other side of the involvement scale, coffee pods represent a low involvement purchase, being a common and inexpensive household product. Literature as shown that Influencer product endorsements achieve different levels of success depending on the promoted product. Fashion and skincare products have been considered more fitting for Influencer promotions than electronics and food (Zak & Hasprova, 2020). When it comes to high involvement products, such as mobile phones, consumers will most likely trust recommendations from an expert source who has experienced the product themselves. In the case of low involvement products, such as coffee pods, consumers tend to value recommendations from close circles (Rahman et al., 2016), nonetheless, the use of celebrities in the promotion of low involvement products has proven to be effective (Hussain et al., 2021). In view of this findings, it will be compelling to evaluate how Influencers' perceived expertise impacts consumers' purchase intention regarding these two product categories.

This study will contribute to current literature on the topic and potentially enable the development of new studies where other industries are compared. The present study will also guide marketers in assessing the impact of Influencers' recommendations depending on the level of product involvement, therefore helping brands shape their strategies in a way that is more profitable for them.

2. Literature Review

The following literature review is composed of three main sub-chapters, clarifying the concepts related with the referred above research question: the first is Influencer Marketing, the second is the consumer decision journey and the third is Product Involvement.

Firstly, the concept of Influencer Marketing is explained to provide context for the next sub-chapters. Afterwards, a definition of Influencer is provided, in order to deeply comprehend this phenomenon, and the different types of Influencers are analyzed. Subsequently, the effect that Influencers hold towards consumers attitudes is reviewed given that this study intends to analyze consumers' behavior and importance given to Influencers' recommendations. The effect of Influencers is also examined in comparison with the impact of traditional media. Different studies regarding the role of Influencers in distinct industries are presented to provide further insights for the two industries considered for this study. Afterwards, the most important criteria to measure the efficiency of Influencers' communication are reviewed, helping to define a framework of the characteristics that Influencers should have to achieve a successful product promotion.

The last sub-chapter of Influencer Marketing is focused on Influencer's perceived expertise, further exploring a key characteristic that can determine the credibility associated with a brand-influencer partnership.

The consumer decision journey (CDJ) is explored in order to deeply understand each stage of the journey and the challenges faced by Marketeers in the online environment. The next sub-chapter is focused on presenting the variety and dimensions of information sources, relied upon by consumers during the pre-purchase stage of the CDJ. Subsequently, the pre-purchase stage of the consumer decision journey is further explored in the next sub-chapter in regards to influencer marketing as a determinant of purchase intention.

Afterwards, the impact of Influencers on the CDJ is examined in order to evaluate the factors that drive Influencer's success across each step of the consumer journey. Lastly, the different types of decision-making are stated in order to provide further understanding of the complexity of the CDJ.

In the last chapter, the concept of Product involvement is clarified, followed by the definition and contextualization of both high and low involvement products. The factors that influence the purchase decisions of the two industries considered for this research is also explored. This contributes to the understanding of the consumer decision journey in regards to two opposite levels of product involvement.

2.1 Influencer Marketing

With the rise of social media platforms, a new marketing concept as emerged designated as influencer marketing. Influencer marketing culminates from people who have the power and act towards influencing purchase behaviours while marketing products or services (Zak & Hasprova, 2020). These individuals, commonly referred to as Influencers, are highly exposed in social networks. Due to this exposure, as well as high levels of popularity, good reputation, or even expertise, they bear a significant influence regarding consumers' purchase decisions. Influencers act as a trustworthy brand's voice by promoting products in their social media platforms and impacting their online community (Zeljko, Jakovic, & Strugar, 2018). Having said that, in order to promote trust, it is crucial that the Influencer identifies with the product that is being promoted and has had experience with it prior to the recommendation (Zak & Hasprova, 2020). When a consumer trusts an Influencer, the likelihood of trusting their recommendations increases significantly, and consequently, it can have a positive impact on the consumers' buying behaviour (Chetioui et al., 2020).

In recent years, collaborations between brands and Influencers have proven to be effective with companies increasing their influencer marketing budgets (Ibáñez-Sánchez, Flavián, Casaló, & Belanche, 2021). In fact, compared to traditional media, it has been reported that influencer marketing can generate 11 times more return on investment, making it a smart investment on the brand's side (Chetioui et al., 2020).

At the time of the research done by Hughes et al. (2019), nearly 75% of marketers were partnering with Influencers in order to promote their brands on social media. In 2020, the global Instagram influencer market practically doubled its growth from \$1.3 billion in 2018 (Nafees, Cook, Nikolov, & Stoddard, 2021). By the end of 2022, the overall Influencers' industry is expected to surpass \$15 billion (Park, Lee & Xiong, 2021).

Following this contextualization of influencer marketing, the next sub-chapter focuses on categorizing the different types of Influencers.

2.1.1 The definition of Influencer

Enke and Borchers (2019) define Influencers as “third-party actors who have established a significant number of relevant relationships with a specific quality to and influence on organizational stakeholders through content production, content distribution, interaction, and personal appearance on the social web.” (p. 261).

Influencers can also be characterized as daily Internet users who unfold their everyday lives to their followers and monetize their activities on social media through partnerships with brands (Enke & Borchers, 2019). They aim to create a personal brand for themselves and cultivate relationships with their community. By doing so, Influencers allow brands to reach a large audience, hence profiting from their popularity (Lee et al., 2021).

Therefore, the importance of Influencers is undeniable, and can easily be reflected on the connotation that is associated with the term influencer alone. Influencing is in itself a functional purpose that Influencers possess, implying the capacity to influence their followers, and it is how they make themselves relevant to an organization (Enke & Borchers, 2019). Influencers act as opinion leaders who create branded content, therefore shaping the brand awareness and purchase intention of their large audiences (Lee et al., 2021).

Furthermore, Influencers can be viewed as a socialization agent transmitting norms, attitudes, motivations and even behaviors to their followers. An individual following an Influencer on social media is susceptible to acquire, and often mimics, the Influencer’s attitudes, behaving in a way that is consistent with the Influencers’ own behavior (Nafees et al., 2021).

Accordingly, Influencers behave in a genuine and relatable manner, thereby consumers identify themselves with their authentic persona. Likewise, Influencers are viewed as role models since their followers are actively seeking for tips as well as brand information from them (Lee et al., 2021).

In Lee et al. study (2021), they observed that envy was one of the motives for following an Influencer on social media, and that in fact, higher levels of envy led to increased purchase of Influencers’ product recommendations.

One can state that the growth and success of Influencers has been impressive, nevertheless there is still the need to further research the implications of an Influencers role in modeling brand attitudes, and the mechanisms behind their impact on consumers (Nafees et al., 2021).

Following the present definition of the Influencer, the effect that Influencers hold towards consumers attitudes will be reviewed in the next sub-chapter.

2.1.2 Types of Influencers

Influencers are usually categorized according to their field of activity. Nowadays there are Influencers in all domains and industries, whether is more specific such as fashion, sports, food, electronics, fitness, or more abstract, by simply representing a set of values defended by a particular brand (Zeljko et al., 2018).

It is important to note the difference between Influencers and people who became famous due to their previous activities, which is the case with music or sport stars, as well as actors and TV personalities. These are generally referred to as traditional celebrities. Influencers, however, have gained their fame directly and originally through social media (Ibáñez-Sánchez et al., 2021) and are portrayed as self-made “microcelebrities” (Belanche, Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2021).

As regards to the difference in impact of traditional celebrities and Influencers, evidence shows that Influencer endorsements might achieve a more substantial impact on both brand attitudes and purchase intentions than celebrities (Schouten, Janssen, & Verspaget, 2019), and Influencers are in fact considered a more credible source than traditional celebrities. In essence, traditional celebrities currently have less influential power than Influencers, seeing that Influencers are recognized as more relatable and more authentic product endorsers (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Influencers can also be divided into four types according to their network size: Mega, macro, micro and nano (Berne-Manero & Marzo-Navarro, 2020).

Mega-influencers possess the largest number of followers - more than 1 million, followed by macro-influencers, while micro-influencers have between 10.000 to 100.000 followers, followed by nano-influencers.

In their research, Berne-Manero and Marzo-Navarro (2020) discovered that macro-influencers are perceived as more admirable and credible, whereas an Influencer with fewer followers (i.e., micro-influencer), is associated with a more authentic and friendly image.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Park et al. (2021) showed that micro-influencers have a higher persuasion effect on consumers than mega-influencers, reinforcing the authenticity perception endured by Influencers with fewer followers.

Once the different types of Influencers have been presented, the next sub-chapter will provide a definition for the Influencer and explore their behaviors and attributes.

2.1.3 The effect of Influencers in consumers' attitudes

It is safe to say that Influencers, whether they are traditional celebrities or self-made “microcelebrities”, act as a reference when it comes to shaping attitudes and values of an individual (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Recommendations made by Influencers are extremely important to their audiences, who not only follow their advice but also have the tendency to recommend the product or service themselves, generating even more word of mouth (Ibáñez-Sánchez et al., 2021).

Given that these individuals acquire feelings of admiration and aspiration towards an Influencer, their purchase behavior of an Influencer's recommended product is highly based on the trust they place in their idols (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Furthermore, Influencers are considered trustworthy sources of information with credibility, expertise, and authenticity (Masuda et al., 2022).

Some consumers rely on Instagram product reviews to lessen the perceived risk of making a purchase, and in fact, the findings of Djafarova and Rushworth's study (2017) show that consumers' self-esteem enhances when they purchase a product or service endorsed by an Influencer.

This is evidence to the fact that Influencers have the power to enhance consumers' materialistic tendencies, and by capitalizing on the aspiration their followers feel towards them, Influencers' content is actually promoting materialism (Lee et al., 2021).

Consumers are becoming more familiar with influencer marketing campaigns and can easily detect inauthentic endorsements, making them more skeptical to brand-influencer collaborations (Belanche et al., 2021). In reality, if consumers perceive a strict commercial motivation in the endorsement, or that the Influencer is not being genuine regarding their opinions concerning the brand or product, consumers will likely experience negative attitudes towards the brand and the Influencer promoting it (Martínez-López et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Influencers can acquire bad publicity over time, which is a relevant factor for companies to take into account. Influencers that have been involved in scandals or have engaged in controversial situations, will likely discourage consumers from purchasing products they recommend, even if the consumer was already certain about their purchase prior to the Influencer's promotion (Zak & Hasprova, 2020).

Once the effect that Influencers hold towards consumers attitudes has been reviewed, the next sub-chapter will examine the effect of Influencers in comparison with the impact of traditional media.

2.1.4 The effect of Influencers compared to traditional media

Influencers bear a persuading power due to their popularity, reputation and even expertise, hence, when they promote a brand, it is perceived as more credible and trustworthy than compared to traditional advertising, thus increasing purchase intentions (Ye et al., 2021).

On that note, when comparing influencer marketing to other forms of endorsement, such as TV ads, research shows that Influencer ads are notably more emotionally intense and memorable once they rely on the establishment of emotional connections between the Influencers and their audience (Berne-Manero & Marzo-Navarro, 2020).

Furthermore, a study conducted by Dwidienawati, Tjahjana, Abdinagoro, Gandasari, and Munawaroh (2020), revealed that influencer endorsements, particularly concerning high-end and luxury products, granted a positive impact on purchase intention, while customer reviews failed to do so.

Nonetheless, the outcome of partnerships between brands and Influencers can diverge depending on the circumstances. Findings by Ibáñez-Sánchez et al. (2021), showed that collaborations between well-known brands and Influencers produce higher purchase intentions and perceived credibility than non-renowned brand-influencer partnerships.

Kim, Duffy, & Thorson's research (2021), sheds light on the way consumers process commercials while also examining the role Influencers hold in enhancing corporate reputation. The authors observed that the perceived corporate reputation was more positive when a commercial was presented by an Influencer, than when presented by itself. However, this enhancement outcome vanished when the sponsorship was disclosed, thus demonstrating that when consumers recognize that they are being persuaded, the positive effect diverges (Kim et al., 2021). This finding contributes to the notion that Influencer's effectiveness is highly subjective and comes with its challenges.

After attaining a better understanding of the effects of Influencers, the next sub-chapter will focus on the role Influencers take in different industries.

2.1.5 The role of Influencers in different industries

One important aspect that companies should take into consideration, is “that the promotion of some products through Influencers may be more advantageous than others.” (Zak & Hasprova, p.1, 2020). Products such as clothes, shoes, cosmetics, as well as services, are more suitable for Influencer promotions, however, when it comes to food products, jewelry and electronics, consumers tend to rely on other factors to make their purchase decisions (Zak & Hasprova, 2020). With that said, the successful case of Huawei’s influencer marketing campaign disputes this finding. When Huawei launched the P10 smartphone, they partnered with Influencers to develop a storytelling campaign entitled #ShowWhatYouLove. Given that this smartphone’s main attributes are creativity and photography, and Influencers are coherent with these characteristics, this was a suited and strategic tactic in order to raise awareness. Huawei reached high levels of customer engagement and brand trust with this campaign, therefore becoming a compelling case study of Influencers promoting electronic products (Bürklin & Faber, 2019). On a different note, a study conducted by SanMiguel et al. (2019) concerning the attitudes towards Influencers amongst millennial fashion buyers, revealed that even though millennials trust their peers’ recommendations, women tend to see Influencers as a point of reference and as an indicator that something they wear is considered fashionable. On that topic, it has been shown that an Influencer promoting a fashion product should be credible and original, in order to generate a positive impact on their female followers and for them to consequently follow the Influencer’s fashion advice (Jegham & Bouzaabia, 2022). In contrast, for men, Influencers are not deemed as a provider of confidence and self-esteem. When it comes to fashion recommendations, men rely on their mothers or partners for advice (SanMiguel et al., 2019). As regards to the beauty sector, women also rely on Influencers’ recommendations and look up to them for reference of the best products and for product comparisons (Istania et al., 2019). Despite the fact that Influencers are mostly associated with fashion, food, sports or the entertainment industry, their persuasion abilities can be applied to other contexts successfully. This was the case in 2016, when TE Connectivity, a B2B leader in connectivity and sensor solutions, developed an influencer marketing campaign that granted significant returns in brand awareness and database growth (Melzer & Zech, 2018). In view of these findings, it will be interesting to provide further insights regarding the effects of influencer promotions in both FMCGs and electronics, which act as the subject industries of the present research.

Following the present examination of the role played by Influencers in distinct industries, the criteria to measure the efficiency of Influencers' communication will be reviewed in the next sub-chapter.

2.1.6 Criteria to measure Influencers' communication efficiency

Prior to selecting which Influencers will be part of their campaigns, marketers turn to the usual classification criteria, such as number of followers, content quality, prestige, occupation/industry, and interest/hobbies (Berne-Manero & Marzo-Navarro, 2020).

The criteria to which is given higher importance is the number of followers, considering that it is a good indication of the Influencer's audience reach and popularity.

Although the number of followers of an Influencer determines their maximum reach, it should be noted that social media algorithms can potentially prevent posts from reaching users, which ultimately means that the content will reach a smaller audience from their following (Gräve, 2019).

On another note, there is a growing number of consumers utilizing ad blocks which leads to a decrease of effectiveness of the traditional types of online advertising. This is a barrier that all companies face when trying to reach consumers in the online world, therefore, applying a more content focused strategy, through influencer marketing, can be highly beneficial (Martínez-López et al., 2020).

Nonetheless, in order for the company to reach its objectives and ensure effectiveness, there is a need for strategic thinking and planning from both the brand and the influencer (Zeljko et al., 2018). Marketers must acknowledge the importance of choosing the most suitable Influencers to promote their brand. If a particular Influencer does not resonate with the brand's values, the results might turn out to be ineffective (Perakakis, Mastorakis, & Kopanakis, 2019). It is important to consider Influencer traits in order to ensure that the message will come from an appropriate source. Some of the traits to be contemplated are sympathy, credibility and, mostly, transmission of emotions (Berne-Manero & Marzo-Navarro, 2020).

Accordingly, Enke and Borchers' (2019) research identifies seven external resources that companies aim to utilize when partnering with Influencers, "content production competences, content distribution competences, interaction competences, a public persona, a significant number of relevant relationships, a specific relationship quality, and the ability to influence." (Enke & Borchers, p.263, 2019).

Nevertheless, there are other complex factors to consider when selecting an Influencer to collaborate with. Researchers have found six main factors for companies to consider prior to selecting an Influencer to endorse their brand: *social attractiveness* (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017); (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020), *credibility* (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017); (Chetioui et al., 2020); (Martínez-López et al., 2020), *improved disclosure* (Lee et al., 2021), *product congruence* (Ye et al., 2021), *similarity* (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020), and *argument quality* (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Many studies on this topic have shown that one of the most determinant factors of a collaboration's effectiveness are the consumers' attitudes towards the Influencer. In order for consumers to be persuaded into purchasing the product, they need to have a substantial interest in the Influencer's life and persona (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). This factor can be described as social attractiveness. Companies should seek to understand if the Influencer is a likeable speaker once an attractive speaker has the potential to influence their audiences' attitudes through the identification process (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). To further explore the concept of social attractiveness, it is worth referencing the Halo Effect theory, which defends that "the perception of an individual can create either a positive or negative 'halo' around him/herself which can result in a blurring of their individual characteristics." (Djafarova & Rushworth, p.3, 2017). This is extremely relevant to influencer marketing due to the fact that consumers have a tendency to rank a product based on the Influencer promoting it, and depending on their perceptions of that Influencer, consumers can attribute a higher or lower rating to the product. On this premise, brands should select Influencers with an overall positive 'halo' in order to generate a favorable association with their products (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

The Halo Effect theory can be correlated with Source Credibility theories since both are based on the characteristics of the speaker and used to evaluate the credibility of the source. Source credibility can be defined as the target audience's perspective of the source regarding his or her expertise and knowledge towards a product or service. The higher a consumer rates the speaker's trustworthiness, attractiveness, and level of expertise, the higher is the source credibility. The quality of the source's argument and their persuasive strength are also argued to be relevant factors to define the source credibility (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Furthermore, it has been shown that Influencers who disclose their product reviews as brand endorsements, achieve a perception of transparency from their audiences, which ultimately is beneficial and positively impacts consumers' attitudes towards the Influencer (Lee et al., 2021).

Another important factor that can determine the success of a brand-influencer partnership is congruence between the product and the Influencer promoting it. The image, values and goals of the company should be aligned with the Influencer's traits. If this is not the case, consumers might assume the Influencer is endorsing the brand merely for financial motivations and disregard the endorsed product (Ye et al., 2021).

Not only it is necessary for the Influencer to have similarities with the endorsed brand, but also the audience needs to feel similar with the Influencer. Due to existing similarities, a sense of trust arises from the audience since the solutions proposed by the Influencer can also benefit the consumers (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

The quality of the argument is another important Influencer trait that refers to the power of persuasion when transmitting a message. Influencers with strong persuasion abilities will most likely influence more consumers into purchasing the endorsed product (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Despite the multiple factors that have been proven to enhance the success of brand-Influencer partnership, there is still limitations when it comes to determining the return on investment from Influencer endorsements, and the profitability of this implementation (Berne-Manero & Marzo-Navarro, 2020). Despite this factor and the lack of research in the field, many organizations plan to spend heavy portions of their budgets on Influencers (Dwidienawati et al., 2020).

After examining the criteria used to measure Influencers' efficiency, the next sub-chapter will further explore Influencer's perceived expertise and how it influences consumers' decisions.

2.1.7 Influencer's perceived expertise

The concept of credibility has been playing an essential role in the marketing field. It can be described as the extent of plausibility of the provided information and of their providers. Credibility has many dimensions, "pertaining to "one's ability (expertise) and willingness (trustworthiness)" (AlFarraj et al., p.358, 2021). Source expertise is the degree of understanding, knowledge and skills towards a specific matter (Hussain et al., 2021). When it comes to Influencers, the perceived level of one's expertise is correlated with the effectiveness of the message being shared (AlFarraj et al., 2021).

This indicates that a high level of expertise towards an endorsed product or service means the speaker's skills and experiences with that product are valued and they can be helpful to consumers learning about the product. Hence, the potential to influence consumers is highly

related to the Influencer's expertise with the product (Martínez-López et al., 2020). Therefore, the higher the credibility of the Influencer, the more likely they are to persuade their followers and influence consumer attitudes and purchase decisions (Chetioui et al., 2020).

The perceived expertise of an Influencer is also granted by his/her connection and congruence with the endorsed brand, as the Influencer's opinions and experiences will provide more credibility to followers. Therefore, a high level of expertise can allow consumers to reduce their perceived risk in a purchase decision (Martínez-López et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the need for competence is also associated with the concept of expertise. Studies show that this need can be fulfilled when consumers are impacted with content that features expertise, being interpreted not only as a simple Influencer personal statement but as a display of expertise (Ki, Cuevas, Chong, & Lim, 2020).

The study conducted by Martínez-López et al. (2020) shows that Influencers should be considered as experts in the endorsed product by their followers in order to provide trust and credibility in the Influencer's message. In fact, expertise has been proven to have a positive influence on purchase intentions (Masuda et al., 2022). Accordingly, AlFarraj et al.'s research study (2021) concluded that Influencer's expertise leads to higher follower engagement and increased purchase intentions.

Influencer marketing is still an intricate strategy, due to the complexity of selecting the most suitable partners, as well as the challenges behind measuring the outcomes of influencer campaigns. Therefore, there is an impending necessity for marketers to precisely evaluate an Influencer's content prior to selection and assess the effectiveness of the partnership following the campaign (Gräve, 2019).

Research conducted by Gräve (2019) aimed at understanding which metrics are being used by companies to support their influencer marketing efforts, and results show that these metrics are mostly quantitative, such as number of interactions and reach. However, his study also revealed that brand managers seem aware that the value of this quantitative metrics is somewhat unsatisfactory, and that they favor other KPI's resembling sentiment analysis of the audience. These challenges strongly indicate that companies should go through extensive processes to find the appropriate Influencers to collaborate with, always taking into account the type of product they market and access if there is congruence between the product and the Influencer (Belanche et al., 2021).

Furthermore, after selecting the most suitable Influencers, brands should aim at developing a long-term partnership with them, since consumers are becoming overwhelmed with products being endorsed by all types of Influencers on a one-time basis (Ye et al., 2021).

All factors considered, one can state that influencer marketing is a powerful tool when it comes to providing consumers with a more relevant, organic, and personalized content than traditional advertising (Zeljko et al., 2018). Additionally, it has been proven that Influencers are believed to be more trustworthy and relatable than traditional celebrities, and therefore should continue to be included in marketing efforts (Schouten et al., 2019). Nonetheless, Influencers should bear in mind that the transmission of emotions is the main driver for customer engagement, and thereby, this should be the primary focus of their role as brand ambassadors (Berne-Manero & Marzo-Navarro, 2020). The role of marketers in this context should be to allocate greater emphasis to sentiment analysis in order to properly evaluate the effectiveness of an Influencer endorsement (Gräve, 2019). On that note, there is a need to obtain customers' insights on how different types of influencer content affect their perceptions towards a specific brand (Berne-Manero & Marzo-Navarro, 2020).

This study seeks to advance the current literature by examining the role of Influencers in two distinct industries (mobile phones and coffee pods) which impacts have yet to be studied in the proposed context.

2.2 The consumer decision journey

When consumers make a purchase decision, they go through a process characterized as the consumer decision journey. This journey is comprised of key moments, also referred to as touchpoints. Marketers want to reach consumers in these moments and influence their decisions in favor of the brand's products or services (Stankevich, 2017).

These touchpoints have been manifested through the form of a funnel since consumers begin the process with many brands in mind, and this number gradually reduces when they move through the funnel, with consumers arriving at the end of the funnel with just one brand that they chose to purchase. However, the Traditional Marketing Funnel has become somewhat obsolete since it doesn't capture the evolution of buying experiences in recent years with the rise of the Internet and digital channels (Stankevich, 2017).

A new approach was needed in order to satisfy consumer demand and adapt to the new way of communication that was originating – from one-way communication (marketeers to consumers) to a two-way communication (marketers to consumers and consumers to marketers). The consumer journey had become less linear and more systematic, and this introduced a new circular model: The Consumer Decision Journey. This new dynamic model comprises four main stages: initial consideration, active evaluation, moment of purchase and post purchase experience (Stankevich, 2017). If the experience with the purchased product is positive, the customer becomes loyal to the brand, entering a loyalty loop. This is the end point that all brands seek to achieve. Taking into account the online environment, brands are constantly looking for new ways to drive purchases through social media (Lee et al., 2021). Having said that, it has been shown that while Millennials are highly present in social media platforms and therefore a key social media audience, social media doesn't easily influence their purchase decisions, and they tend to be more influenced by their peers (Stankevich, 2017).

It's safe to say that, with consumers becoming more well-informed, Marketeers are facing many challenges when it comes to impacting the different touchpoints of the consumer decision journey. In order to influence consumer's purchase behaviour, companies should take into consideration the way consumers think, feel, and select between different alternatives, as well as the consumers' environment and how it influences them – their culture, family, friends, media, among others (Stankevich, 2017).

Following the contextualization of the consumer decision journey, the next sub-chapter will focus on the information sources consumers rely on during the pre-purchase stage of the CDJ.

2.2.1 Information sources

At the pre-purchase stage of the decision-making, consumers usually rely on external sources to obtain information about their intended purchase. Scholars have classified information sources along two dimensions: “(i) personal (sales personnel, friends, family, acquaintances) versus impersonal (advertising, public relations) and (ii) marketer controlled (advertising, retailers) versus non-marketer controlled (friends, family, acquaintances, neutral third parties like experts)” (Akalamkam & Mitra, p.44, 2017).

With the rise of the Internet, a new and relevant source of information emerged, notwithstanding the continuing importance of offline sources. In addition to the previously mentioned dimensions, a third dimension is argued to be added to consumer information sources, offline

versus online. Offline sources mainly comprise TV and radio advertisements, traditional word of mouth from family, friends and acquaintances, expert reviews and instore experience – sales personnel and product packaging. Online sources include online advertisements, brands' websites, e-WOM in forums and platforms with online reviews, social media and Influencer ads. A variety of these sources are used when making a purchase decision, however, they are not equally influential. Additionally, information search is impacted by a number of factors, such as situational context, individual characteristics and product/market type (Akalamkam & Mitra, 2017).

The study conducted by Akalamkam and Mitra (2017) on consumer preference for different online and offline information sources in pre-purchase, concluded that “both product type and price have influence on consumer preference for different online and offline sources” (p. 55). This finding is particularly relevant for the present research study considering the relevancy of Influencer sponsorships as a source of information will be investigated in the context of product involvement.

In the next sub-chapter, the pre-purchase stage of the consumer decision journey will be further explored in regards to influencer marketing as a determinant of purchase intention.

2.2.2 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention pertains to the likelihood of a consumer purchasing a particular product in the near future (Chetioui et al., 2020). In the consumer decision journey, this stage represents the development of the decision in which the consumer has built up the willingness to act towards a purchase (Rebelo, 2017).

Within the context of influencer marketing, studies indicate that online recommendations made by public figures have a powerful impact on purchase intentions, with strong perceived credibility, as previously established, leading to higher purchase intention (Chetioui et al., 2020). Nonetheless, as regards to recognized personalities, literature shows that Influencers are perceived as more trustworthy than traditional celebrities, having a stronger impact on purchase intentions (Pop et al., 2021).

Furthermore, Chidiac and Bowden (2022) stated that Influencer authenticity is also positively related with higher purchase intentions, especially when there is congruence between the Influencer and the endorsed product. Truthfully, consumers' overall characterization of an Influencer will affect their behavioural intentions (Masuda et al., 2022).

Research conducted by Chetioui et al. (2020) concluded that “an influencer who is perceived as credible is more likely to influence the follower’s attitudes and purchase intention” (p. 373) and that Influencers can indeed create purchase intentions in the fashion industry. Accordingly, Rebelo’s study (2017) determined perceived credibility as an antecedent of purchase intention. Pop et al., research study (2021) indicated that trustworthy Influencers have the strongest impact in the pre-purchase stage of the CDJ, deeply contributing to consumers’ purchase intentions.

Nevertheless, one should consider other determinants of purchase intention besides influencer marketing. Bebbler, Milan, De Toni, Eberle, and Slongo’s study (2017) on the antecedents of purchase intention in the online purchase context, determined that information quality was a positive determinant of consumers’ purchase intentions, while distrust and perceived risk showed negative impacts on purchase intention. Thomas, Wirtz, & Weyerer (2019) identified many relevant dimensions associated with online purchase intention, such as quality of product reviews, reputation and expertise of the reviewer, product ratings and website reputation.

As Influencers are foreseen to generate positive outcomes among consumers, it is crucial to further explore the role of key Influencer characteristics on follower’s responses and thus, purchase intentions (Gomes et al., 2022).

Following the present examination of purchase intention, the impact that Influencers have on the consumer decision journey will be reviewed in the next sub-chapter.

2.2.3 The impact of Influencers on the CDJ

As already stated previously, nowadays opinion leaders play a critical role in the decision-making process. Whether it is by means of a direct or indirect influence, they possess the power to sway consumer attitudes through their personality, specific skills, knowledge, or expertise. Influencers are continuously setting trends and creating demand for the products they promote, and with that they can influence consumers’ thoughts and opinions, as well as their purchase behaviour (Zak & Hasprova, 2020).

Studies have shown that 54% of consumers research products and services on social media platforms, and that 49% of these consumers trust the opinions of Influencers when making purchase decisions (Chidiac & Bowden, 2022).

Despite that, there is still absence of information regarding the factors that drive the success of Influencers' product promotion at different stages of the CDJ. However, it has been shown that consumers are more receptive to recommendations from expert sources at the early stages of the CDJ, while when they are closer to the moment of purchase, consumers can either rely on less expert sources – seemingly individuals with whom they share similar characteristics (age, gender, socioeconomic status, among others) – and as well on expert sources (Hughes et al., 2019).

In their research study, SanMiguel et al. (2019) analyzed the stages of the CDJ and concluded that “Influencers have a greater role in the stage of inspiration and during the search for products. On the contrary, close circles are the ones that influence more clearly in the stages of evaluation, purchase and post-purchase.” (p. 453).

In contrast, the study conducted by Pop et al. (2021) regarding the impact of Influencers on travel decisions, observed that when a consumer trusts an Influencer, they positively influence each step of the consumer travel decision-making.

In view of these findings, it will be compelling to evaluate the impact of Influencers in the pre-purchase stage of the CDJ and how they influence consumers' purchase intention in two distinct industries (coffee pods and mobile phones).

In the next sub-chapter, the different types of decision-making will be explored in order to identify the factors that affect the consumers' decision process depending on the level of involvement associated with the purchase.

2.2.4 Different types of decision-making

The decision-making process usually diverges depending on the type of product or service being purchased. Most of the purchase decisions consumers make constitute a routine choice process. This is the case with products that are frequently purchased and often low-priced. The process is very straightforward: the consumer recognizes the problem or is triggered by a need, engages in a brief internal search, and makes the purchase (Stankevich, 2017). Having said that, there can also be external factors aiding in a low involvement decision. A study conducted by Lautiainen (2015) examined how social, personal, and psychological factors affected consumer behaviour when selecting a coffee brand, and results showed that family, friends, and neighbors were the most important factors influencing this purchase decision.

On the contrary, some products and services require a long and detailed decision-making process, including an extensive information search, brands comparison, and evaluation. (Stankevich, 2017). In this high involvement decisions, consumers tend to look for external recommendations, resulting in a complex buying process (Lautiainen, 2015).

2.3 Product Involvement

According to Rahman et al. (2016), product involvement level is the degree of information being processed and the amount of importance given to a product while being purchased by a consumer. In essence, “(...) it shows how much the customer is involved towards a product personally, socially and economically when he or she buys something.” (Rahman et al., p.98, 2016).

The extent to which a product is engaging to a consumer and the significance it plays in the consumers’ lives also defines the level of product involvement (Gruner, Vomberg, Homburg, & Lukas, 2018).

In regards to the context of product involvement, both products and services can be classified into two distinct categories: high involvement products and low involvement products (Rahman et al., 2016). In the next sub-chapters, both high and low involvement conditions will be further explored, as well as the factors that influence the purchase decisions of products in two industries with distinct levels of involvement.

2.3.1 High involvement

High involvement products usually represent a high risk level for the consumer due to, normally being expensive products and therefore, the consumer takes more time and effort in making their purchase decision (Rahman et al., 2016). When buying products that fall under this category, consumers usually go through a process of careful consideration and evaluation of different brands, as well as meticulous research and multiple inquires alongside peers (Handriana & Wisandiko, 2017).

These types of products tend to portray the consumer’s personality and lifestyle, for example, cars, computers, mobile phones, houses, among others (Rahman et al., 2016).

When relating product involvement with advertising, specifically online advertising, literature on the subject states that “(...) involvement leads to an attentive state of mind, making viewers more motivated and able to process information.” (Belanche, Flavián, & Pérez-Rueda, 2016). This indicates that when the advertised product has high levels of involvement, a consumer tends to devote more attention to the ad and process the received information more thoroughly (Belanche et al., 2016). In fact, research has coherently showed that higher product involvement will lead to an increased degree of advertising effectiveness, as well as lower ad avoidance (Van den Broeck, Poels, & Walrave, 2018).

High product involvement has also proven to minimize ad intrusiveness. When consumers are more involved with a product, they are likely to experience higher interest in the ad content and therefore, feel less disturbed by it (Belanche et al., 2016). Furthermore, regarding the conveyed message, it has been shown that under high involvement circumstances, strong arguments are more persuasive and contribute to higher brand recall (Mettenheim & Wiedmann, 2021).

In addition, studies have shown that the higher consumers are involved in a product category, the more they will display favorable attitudes towards brands from that category (Krishnamurthy & Kumar, 2018).

When it comes to purchase decision guidance in the case of a high involvement product, consumers tend to allocate higher importance to recommendations from a person who holds knowledge about the product and/or has experienced the product themselves (Rahman et al., 2016).

Research conducted by Hussain et al. (2021) regarding the effectiveness of celebrity and product match-up in contrast with non-celebrity endorsers in the case of two distinct high involvement scenarios, revealed that celebrity ads performed better. Having said that, the type of endorser has not been considered by consumers as a core element of persuasion in the case of high involvement.

When purchasing high involvement products there is a perceived risk involved with the purchase, and the types of risks associated vary according to consumers' expectations. While social risk suggests that by using the product, it can affect the way the consumer is perceived by others, psychological risk is related with the possibility of an improper fit between the product and the consumer's self-image. It has been established that celebrity endorsements have caused favorable attitudes in products associated with both social and psychological risks. On the contrary, celebrity endorsements were found unfavorable for products linked to performance risk – the likelihood of the product not functioning correctly, physical risk – the

possibility of the product causing harm to the consumer, and financial risk – the probability of monetary loss (Hussain et al., 2021).

This finding indicates that depending on the high involvement situations, having a product endorser can positively or negatively impact the consumer being contingent on the consumer's own perceived risks associated with the purchase.

2.3.2 Factors influencing mobile phones purchase decisions

As stated previously, mobile phones are considered to be a high involvement product in which the consumer puts substantial amount of time and effort in making their purchase decision (Rahman et al., 2016). Being a complex and thoughtful decision making process, there are several factors that can impact the buying decision.

A study conducted by Sata (2013) identified six critical factors that can be associated with the purchase of mobile phone devices: price, social group, product features, brand name, durability and after sales service. From these factors, it was concluded that price was the definite factor that most influences consumers' purchase decision of mobile phones, followed by product features. The least related determinants were social influence and after sales service, showing only a moderate influence in the decision.

A latest research study (Shabrin et al., 2017) identified product features as a significant factor as well. Nonetheless, the researchers also found evidence that social influence and brand image have considerable positive effects on mobile phones purchase decisions. This contradicts Sata's (2013) finding on social influence, which can lead to the assumption that, overtime, social factors are becoming more relevant to this type of high involvement purchase decision.

2.3.3 Low involvement

Low involvement products are typically characterized as routine purchases, common to make in consumers' daily lives. There is a low risk level involved, and for the most part, these products are inexpensive. In general, low involvement products are bought without prior planning, and the purchase decision takes place at the moment of purchase (Rahman et al., 2016). They don't normally depict the consumer's identity or status. A good example of this type of product is fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG): bread, coffee, or toothpaste.

A study by Rahman et al. (2016) relating product involvement with product recommendations, found that consumers tend to attach more value to recommendations from a close friend in the case of a low involvement product.

Another relevant investigative research conducted by Handriana & Wisandiko (2017), showed that when advertising low involvement products, marketers should consider the use of multiple celebrity endorsements, since it revealed to be more effective in this case. Coherently, the findings of the study carried out by Hussain et al. (2021) suggest that the use of celebrities is suitable in the case of a low involvement condition in which consumers are easily persuaded by elements that are not essential to the message.

Furthermore, Mettenheim & Wiedmann's research (2021) states that the admiration towards the source of the message is expected to have a great persuasive impact in a low involvement scenario, irrespective of the argument's strength.

Despite the fact that the studies mentioned above have proved there is a positive effect when using celebrity endorsers for low involvement products, one should note that consumers also attach great importance to peers' recommendations when making this type of purchase decision.

2.3.4 Factors influencing FMCG purchase decisions

FMCG products, also known as consumer packed goods (CPG) are considered inexpensive products that are rapidly replaced, usually purchased in small quantities. They require minimum planning effort from the consumer and are thus considered low involvement products (Verma & Rojhe, 2018). Some examples of FMCGs are ice cream, tea, dairy products, bath soaps, as well as coffee pods, which is one of the subject industries of the present research.

Given that FMCGs involve low involvement from the consumer and that the products are purchased frequently and at a low cost, it is of great importance that brands from this sector capitalize on digital media to reach more consumers. In fact, the FMCG industry has been dominating the online advertising landscape, being deemed the biggest spender in digital ads and social media marketing (Kaushik & Baliyan, 2017).

Regarding the purchase decision of FMCGs, consumers turn to multiple criteria for evaluating and selecting their products, namely price, quality, brand, packaging, advertisements, and lifestyle factors. (Verma & Rojhe, 2018). More particularly, a research study conducted by Sisodiya & Sharma (2018) analyzed the relationship between the marketing mix and buying behaviour of FMCGs, concluding that price was the factor that consumers most valued and that

most influenced their purchase behaviors towards FMCG products. Moreover, Verma & Rojhe's study (2018) observed that income was a determinant factor of this type of purchase, given that consumers with higher incomes have a tendency to favor branded products, whereas those with moderate incomes tend to choose unbranded products, also referred to as distributors' brands.

On another note, a research paper carried out by Kaushik & Baliyan (2017) regarding the impact of celebrity and non-celebrity endorsers on FMCGs purchase intentions, observed that consumers have favorable attitudes towards celebrity endorsed products in the beverages category.

In conclusion, the level of product involvement should be considered when planning marketing efforts. When evaluating advertising effectiveness, the role played by product involvement should be contemplated (Van den Broeck et al., 2016), given that the importance consumers give to an advertising message will likely depend on how much involvement the product demands from them (Gruner et al., 2018). On that premise, Handriana and Wisandiko (2017) stated that "As involvement increases, consumers will have a greater motivation to observe, understand, and elaborate information regarding their purchases." (p.293). Additionally, one can state that consumers will respond differently to product recommendations given by their peers depending on the degree of product involvement (Rahman et al., 2016).

Furthermore, given that consumers process a high involvement decision in a more complex manner, they will likely respond vigorously to a lack of congruence between the brand and the endorser. (Mettenheim & Wiedmann, 2021). In fact, it has been proven that the same celebrity can be successful in a specific product promotion while failing to do so with other products (Hussain et al., 2021). This highlights the importance of choosing the right endorser with a good product-fit in order to achieve a successful product promotion.

3. Conceptual Model and Research Hypotheses

In line with the research topics addressed in the literature review and based on the gathered findings, the conceptual model is defined as follows:

Independent variables: Influencer's perceived expertise and Information sources

Dependent variable: Purchase intention

Moderating variables: Product involvement (High/Low) and Product category (Mobile phones/Coffee pods)

The relationship among these variables studied in the literature is presupposed leading to the following hypothesis:

H1: Influencers' perceived expertise positively affect consumers' purchase intention.

The first hypothesis is based on the contribution of various studies, which have identified expertise as a determinant of positive consumer attitudes leading to higher purchase intention. AlFarraj et al. (2021) observed that the perceived level of one's expertise is correlated with the effectiveness of the shared message. Hence, the higher the expertise towards an endorsed product the more valued is the recommendation. In accordance, Martínez-López et al. (2020) found that the potential to influence consumers is highly related to the Influencer's expertise with the product. The study developed by Chetioui et al. (2020) reached similar findings, concluding that the higher the credibility of the Influencer, the more likely they are to persuade their followers and influence consumer attitudes and purchase decisions. Furthermore, a high level of expertise can allow consumers to reduce their perceived risk in a purchase decision, as stated by Martínez-López et al. (2020). Ultimately, a recent study by Masuda, et al. (2022) revealed that expertise has been proven to have a positive influence on purchase intentions.

According to these contributions, the following hypothesis are also proposed with the objective of testing the relationship between expertise and purchase intention, along the context of the two product categories considered for this research:

H1^a: Influencers' perceived expertise positively affect consumers' purchase intention of coffee pods.

H1^b: Influencers' perceived expertise positively affect consumers' purchase intention of mobile phones.

H2: Information sources positively affects consumers' purchase intention.

The second hypotheses assumes a significant relationship between information sources and purchase intention.

Akalamkam and Mitra (2017) explored the impact of different information sources in the pre-purchase stage, finding that the type of product has influence on consumer preference for distinct online and offline sources. Hence, the argument leads to the following hypothesis, accessing the role of information sources in two product types:

H2^a: Information sources positively affects consumers' purchase intention of coffee pods.

H2^b: Information sources positively affects consumers' purchase intention of mobile phones.

H3: Product involvement moderates the relationship between Influencers' perceived expertise and purchase intention.

The contribution of Rahman et al.'s (2016) study has proved that a purchase decision can produce distinct consumer attitudes depending on the involvement level. The authors stated that there is a tendency to attribute more importance to expert sources when purchasing a high involvement product. Furthermore, Handriana and Wisandiko (2017) found that, in comparison to low involvement scenarios, consumers are more observant and gather more information in high involvement purchases. In relation with opinion leaders and high involvement products, evidence has shown that commercials with celebrities achieve higher success than non-celebrity ads Hussain, et al. (2021).

Therefore, product involvement is presumed as a moderator in the relationship between Influencer's perceived expertise and purchase intention.

Subsequently, the following hypothesis are developed, with the objective of comparing two distinct levels of product involvement:

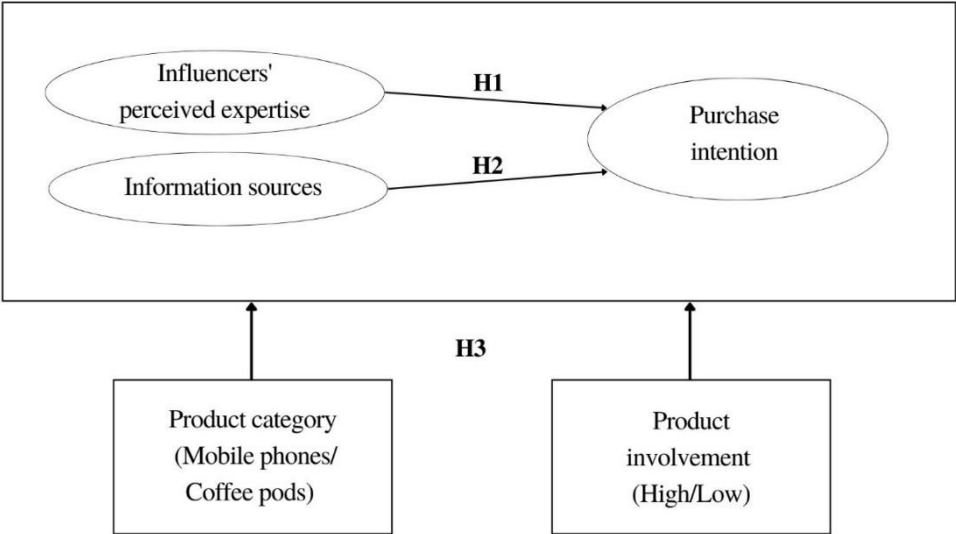
H3^a: Coffee pods involvement moderates the relationship between Influencers' perceived expertise and purchase intention.

H3^b: Mobile phones involvement moderates the relationship between Influencers' perceived expertise and purchase intention.

3.1 Research model

Following the collected information and the proposed hypothesis, the research model was developed:

Exhibit 1 – Research model



4. Methodology

The methodology of this research study is presented in this chapter. Firstly, the research approach is demonstrated, stating the decisions regarding the data. Afterwards, the data collection method is explored, and the development of the questionnaire is disclosed. Then, the pre-test results are presented, and the final sample is detailed. Finally, the analysis conducted are described and the equations uncovered by the model are presented.

4.1 Research Approach

The purpose of this research is to gather conclusions regarding the research question as well as identify similarities and discrepancies with the studied literature by means of testing the proposed hypothesis. Hence, quantitative research was conducted, in which the sample data was gathered, measured, and analysed. The chosen method was a quantitative survey given the objective of the present study is to unravel consumers' behaviour, in particular its purchase intentions, regarding Influencers. The relationship between variables was studied according to the research model, unfolding how Influencer's perceived expertise and Influencer's as a source of information affect consumers' purchase intention of a high and a low involvement product.

4.1.1 Operationalization of constructs

The current research seeks to understand the role played by Influencers in consumers' purchase intention, by means of their perceived expertise and their effectiveness as a source of information. This role will be studied along the context of product involvement and product category. A variety of studies was considered and presented in the literature review, and the following are addressed in order to examine the relevant variables contemplated in this study. Ki et al. (2020) explored how the Influencer's persona and attributes makes followers feel attached to them. Among several constructs, the authors observed that the **Influencer's perceived expertise** did not show a significant effect on satisfying the followers' need for competence. On another note, a study conducted by Masuda et al. (2022) which analyzed how Influencer attributes impact purchase intentions, concluded that perceived expertise strongly influenced purchase intention.

Chetioui et al. (2020) focused on the fashion industry and revealed that credible and trustworthy Influencers are more likely to positively impact consumer's **purchase intention**.

In order to access if the levels of **product involvement** differ significantly between the two chosen products, the scale of involvement used by Lee & Johnson (2021) will be considered in the present research. The five items measuring degree of involvement are: importance of the decision, effort, risk probability, objectivity, and basis for decision.

Lastly, considering the two industries present in this research, **product category** acts as a moderating variable. Lautiainen (2015) explored the different **information sources** affecting consumers' decision in the selection of a **coffee** brand and observed that close circles were the most influential in this purchase decision and the main reason to change coffee brands was

better taste. When it comes to **mobile phones** purchases, Shabrin et al. (2017) research identified product features as the most significant factor, while also showing evidence that social influence has considerable positive effects on mobile phones purchase decisions.

To summarize, the exhibit below depicts each variable and its corresponding scale's authors and number of items.

Exhibit 2 – Adaptation of scales from literature

Variable	Scale's authors	Number of items
Influencers' perceived expertise	Ki, Cuevas, Chong, & Lim, 2020	3
	Masuda, Han, & Lee, 2022	2
Purchase intention	Chetioui, Benlafqih, & Lebdaoui, 2020	1
	Zeljko, Jakovic, & Strugar, 2018	5
	Gomes, Marques, & Dias, 2022	3
Product involvement	Lee & Johnson, 2021	5
	Lautiainen, 2015	3
Information sources	Shabrin, Khandaker, Kashem, Hie, & Susila, 2017	3

4.2 Data collection and sample

To collect the necessary data, an online survey was developed. The objective is to reach internet users, particularly users of social media platforms from all ages and backgrounds, hence, an online distribution is the most suited method to gather information for the present research study.

4.2.1 Questionnaire development

The questionnaire was created in Qualtrics. In the initial part, respondents are informed of the scope in which the survey is being conducted, its objective, as well as the estimated time for completion (7 minutes). The confidentiality and anonymity of the collected data is guaranteed to the respondents. The first question is regarding social media use, serving as a filter question. If respondents do not use social media platforms, the survey ends. This is due to the fact that Influencers operate on social media channels, hence it is necessary for respondents to be familiar with this environment. Afterwards, the frequency of use of social media platforms is

assessed, and a description of Influencer is provided, followed by the question “Do you follow Influencers’ accounts on social media?”. The fourth question intends to assess the Influencer’s perceived expertise. Participants should choose to agree or disagree with the five statements provided on a 7-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Subsequently, the product involvement levels perceived by respondents are tested regarding the two chosen products. A semantic differential scale is used, and participants are asked to demonstrate their perception concerning the contradictory statements. The next part of the questionnaire focuses on coffee pods, in which respondents are asked about the level of importance they attribute to certain factors in their purchase decision (price, product features, brand, brand’s page on social media, recommendation from an Influencer that you witness on social media, and recommendation from a friend or family member), from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). Furthermore, respondents are questioned about the sources from which they receive information about coffee pods’ brands (family, friends and/or neighbours, commercials on tv or radio, commercials on social media, brand’s website, reviews from consumers, and Influencers’ sponsorships) as well as the frequency in which they are impacted, from 1 (never) to 5 (always). To end this portion of the survey, respondents are asked if they would consider purchasing a brand of coffee pods promoted by an Influencer on social media and can choose one of the following options: I wouldn’t purchase, Probably I wouldn’t purchase, I would maybe purchase, Probably I would purchase, and I would purchase.

The next part of the questionnaire is regarding mobile phones, and the same questions are asked concerning purchase motivating factors, information sources, and purchase intention. Afterwards, five statements regarding purchase intention of products promoted by Influencers are provided, in which participants should choose to agree or disagree on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. In order to provide general conclusions regarding the topic of this study, participants are also asked which products they would purchase per an Influencer’s recommendation and the maximum value they would be willing to spend on an Influencer endorsed product. Finally, the last part of the questionnaire concerns demographic questions such as gender, age, level of education, professional status, and level of income.

The questions chosen for the questionnaire were developed based on the scales from previous literature, which references can be found in Table 5. The full survey can be found in the appendix, in both Portuguese (Annex A) and English (Annex B).

4.2.2 Pre-test

Prior to launching the questionnaire to the public, it was necessary to conduct a pre-test to assess if all questions were understandable, or any changes were needed. The pre-test had 17 respondents. Additionally, it was vital to confirm if the product involvement levels presumed for the two products were also being assumed by the pre-test respondents. Thus, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate if the levels of product involvement differed between the two chosen products (coffee pods and mobile phones), and if the differences were significant. The level of involvement was significantly different between the two products in all five constructs: importance of the decision ($p = .001$), effort ($p = .000$), risk probability ($p = .002$), objectivity ($p = .049$), and basis for decision ($p = .002$) (Table 6).

The most significant variance occurs in the Effort construct with a mean difference of 3.24, and the least variance happens in the Objectivity construct, in which the mean difference is 1.53, as described on Table 6.

The results support the assumed notion that pre-test respondents attribute different levels of involvement for each of the two products, and thus product involvement is an appropriate moderating variable in the model.

A reliability test was also conducted on the scales of the questionnaire, by assessing the Cronbach's α values. This test confirmed the following scales had good levels of internal consistency, with values above 0.70: Influencer's perceived expertise ($\alpha = 0.860$), Purchase intention ($\alpha = 0.854$), Product involvement (coffee pods) ($\alpha = 0.807$), and Information sources (coffee pods) ($\alpha = 0.781$). However, as shown in Table 7, the Cronbach's α values of some scales were below 0.70. The shortage in consistency in both scales, Product involvement (mobile phones) ($\alpha = 0.576$) and Information sources (mobile phones) ($\alpha = 0.553$), can be explained by the appearance of the scales. It was pointed out by the pre-test respondents as being unclear, which might have led to misrepresentation of data. As such, the look of the scales was reviewed and modified for the final questionnaire to assure a clearer visual representation.

4.2.3 Sample

The collected data was imported to IBM SPSS Statistics 27 and analysed in the same program. It was registered a total of 383 respondents and 267 complete responses. 3.6% of the respondents did not use social media platforms, hence they were excluded from continuing the questionnaire. Aside from this group, 26.6% of respondents did not conclude the survey, resulting in a 73.4% response rate.

The sample is characterized with 208 female respondents (77.9%), mainly in the age group of 25 to 44 years-old (44%), with a college degree (40.4%), master's degree (21%), or high-school education (20.2%), employed (49.1%) or self-employed (17.2%), and with a gross level of income between 501€ and 2000€ (56.9%). The full demographic information is presented in Table 8. 53.7% of respondents follow Influencers (Table 9), and the more frequently used social media platforms (every day or 2 or more times per day) are Facebook (69.7%) and Instagram (67.2%), as described on Table 10.

4.3 Data analysis methods

The following chapter depicts the methods used for the analysis. Firstly, preliminary control checks of involvement are verified. Secondly, a descriptive analysis regarding purchase intention is presented.

With the objective of estimating the hypothesis of the present research study, two multiple linear regression models are estimated, one per each product category with product involvement as a dummy variable. Prior to the regression analysis, a principal components analysis is conducted to reduce the number of variables.

The equations of the respective models are described as follows:

4.3.1 Model 1: Coffee pods model

The purpose of this model is to access the purchase intention of coffee pods per Influencers' recommendations, the impact of both Influencer's perceived expertise and information sources, as well as the moderating role of Product involvement:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Purchase Intention (coffee pods)} = & B_0 + B_1 \text{Influencer's Perceived Expertise} \\
 & \times B_2 \text{Information Sources} + B_3 \text{Product Involvement} + \varepsilon
 \end{aligned}$$

4.3.2 Model 2: Mobile phones model

The purpose of this model is to assess the purchase intention of mobile phones per Influencers' recommendations, the impact of both Influencer's perceived expertise and information sources, as well as the moderating role of Product involvement:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Purchase Intention (mobile phones)} = & B_0 + B_1 \text{Influencer's Perceived Expertise} \\
 & \times B_2 \text{Information Sources} + B_3 \text{Product Involvement} + \varepsilon
 \end{aligned}$$

The dummy variable **Product involvement** (1 = high and 0 = low) is measured by the level of involvement in a purchase decision of coffee pods and mobile phones.

Given that the Methodology of this research study is established, the next chapter focuses on presenting and discussing the obtained results.

5. Results and discussion

5.1 Preliminary control checks of involvement

Equally to the pre-test, it is crucial to confirm if the product involvement levels presumed for the two products were also being assumed by the full sample. Thus, a paired-samples t-test was once again conducted to evaluate if the levels of product involvement differed between the two chosen products (coffee pods and mobile phones), and if the differences were significant. The level of involvement was significantly different between the two products in all five constructs: importance of the decision ($p = .000$), effort ($p = .000$), risk probability ($p = .000$), objectivity ($p = .000$), and basis for decision ($p = .000$) (Table 11).

Correspondingly to the pre-test results, the most significant variance occurs in the Effort construct with a mean difference of 1.44, and the least variance happens in the Objectivity

construct, in which the mean difference is 0.71, as described on Table 11. This indicates that respondents place more thought and effort in a mobile phones purchase decision than a coffee pods decision, as previously assumed. Whereas both purchase decisions are more based on objectiveness than intuitiveness.

These results prove that respondents from the full sample also assume different levels of involvement for each of the two products, making product involvement a suitable moderating variable in the model.

5.2 Descriptive analysis

Prior to estimating the regression models, a descriptive analysis regarding purchase intention, information sources, and purchase motivating factors is presented in this sub-chapter in order to further explore the research topics of the study.

5.2.1 Purchase intention of coffee pods and mobile phones

The main objective of the present research is to investigate whether there are differences in the importance given to Influencers' recommendations depending on the level of product involvement. Given the two chosen product categories, coffee pods for low involvement and mobile phones for high involvement, it was assessed the intended purchase for both per Influencer's recommendation. In general terms, the results show evidence that participants would more likely purchase a brand of coffee pods as a result of an Influencer's recommendation, than a mobile phone brand (Table 12). However, the differences are minor ($\mu = 2.25$ for coffee pods; $\mu = 2.14$ for mobile phones). For coffee pods, most participants (56.4%) belong on the likelihood of not purchasing (which includes the items "I wouldn't purchase" and "Probably I wouldn't purchase"), while on mobile phones 64.5% answered one of these options. Merely 5.2% of respondents stated they would purchase or probably purchase coffee pods per Influencer's recommendation, with 5.8% of respondents giving one of these answers for mobile phones.

These results are coherent with Zak & Hasprova study (2020) which indicates that in regards to food products and electronics, consumers usually do not rely on Influencers' endorsements to make their purchase decision.

5.2.2 Purchase intention of other products

In order to generate overall conclusions about the purchase intention of other products per Influencer's recommendation, aside from the two product categories considered in this study, respondents were asked "Which products would you purchase from an Influencer's recommendation?". Most participants stated "None", while a large number of them answered clothes/fashion accessories, make-up, and beauty/cosmetic products. This is consistent with the findings of many previous studies (Zak & Hasprova, 2020; SanMiguel, et al., 2019; Istania, et al., 2019) regarding the positive effect of Influencer endorsements in the fashion and beauty sectors. Other products mentioned often were food, electronic equipment, mobile phones, and home appliances.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the maximum value they would be willing to spend on a product recommended by an Influencer, on a scale from 0€ to 500€, with the option of selecting more than 500€. As described in Table 13, 51.6% of participants chose a value from 0€ to 50€. Given that most respondents stated that the maximum value they would be willing to spend was 50€, this indicates a higher tendency to purchase inexpensive products endorsed by Influencers rather than more high involvement products with an increased perceived monetary risk, such as mobile phones, who generally cost over 300€. This is also in accordance with Hussain et al.'s study (2021) which points out the negative impact of celebrity ads when there is a perceived risk of monetary loss.

5.2.3 Information sources of coffee pods and mobile phones

Considering that one of the objectives of this study is to understand how information sources affect consumers' purchase intention, in particular Influencers' sponsorships, respondents were asked to indicate from which sources they receive information about coffee pods' brands and mobile phones' brands, as well as the frequency in which they are impacted.

The results show that close circles and commercials on tv or radio generally impact more respondents when it comes to coffee pods' brands, as described on Table 14. Most respondents (50.2%) stated they are never impacted by Influencer sponsorships of coffee pods brands. In regards to mobile phones brands, respondents seem to be more frequently impacted by all sources, with many stating they are occasionally impacted by close circles (40.2%), commercials on tv or radio (37%), and commercials on social media (37%). 28.6% of

participants indicated they are frequently impacted by consumer reviews of mobile phones. Similarly to coffee pods brands, several respondents (44.2%) are never impacted by Influencer sponsorships of mobile phones.

Nonetheless, there are some divergences in responses, as information sources of mobile phones' brands generate more frequent impacts on respondents. This is coherent with Akalamkam and Mitra's study (2017), which stated that product category has influence on consumer preference for distinct sources.

5.2.4 Purchase motivating factors of coffee pods and mobile phones

In order to further explore how Influencer endorsements are perceived, respondents were asked about the level of importance they attribute to certain factors in their purchase decision of coffee pods and mobile phones.

The results presented on Table 15 indicate that respondents mostly value price, product features and recommendations from close circles in a coffee pods purchase decision. The factors least important to respondents in this type of purchase are brand's page on social media and recommendation from an Influencer, with 43.3% and 48.8%, respectively, stating that these are not important determinants of their coffee pod's purchase. This is consistent with Sisodiya & Sharma (2018) study on the buying behaviour of FMCG products, which revealed price to be the most valued purchase motivating factor.

When it comes to mobile phones purchases, respondents attribute great value to price and product features with 43.3% and 48.8%, respectively, indicating that these are very important determining factors of their purchase. Furthermore, participants also consider brand and recommendations from close circles as important factors. Many respondents (40.2%) stated that recommendations from Influencers is not an important determinant of their mobile phone's purchase. Equally to past literature (Sata, 2013; Shabrin et al., 2017), price and product features remains the most significant factors of this type of purchase.

5.3 Principal components analysis

In order to estimate the multiple linear regression models, it is necessary to reduce the number of existing items for each construct. Thus, a principal components analysis (PCA) was conducted per construct. Only respondents who follow Influencers are considered in the PCA (i.e.: cases for which Do you follow Influencers' accounts on social media? = Yes are used in the analysis phase), with a total of 168 cases.

The following table describes the conducted PCA's and its respective results:

Table 1 – Principal components analysis (PCA)

Construct	KMO	Bartlett's test	Kaiser's criteria	Total variance explained	Scree plot	Component matrix	Communalities
IPEX	.820	.000	1 PC	64.4%	2 PCs	All above 0.7	All above 0.5
PIN	.713	.000	1 PC	78.1%	2 PCs	All above 0.7	All above 0.5
IS (COFFEE PODS)	.785	.000	1 PC	53.5% (1PC) 71% (2 PCs)	2 PCs	Not all above 0.7	Not all above 0.5
IS (MOBILE PHONES)	.708	.000	1 PC	45.3% (1PC) 61.4% (2 PCs) 76.2% (3 PCs)	2 PCs	Not all above 0.7	Not all above 0.5

IPEX = Influencer's perceived expertise; PIN = Purchase intention; IS = Information sources

Firstly, the suitability of data for Principal component analysis was assessed for each construct. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value exceeded the recommended value of .7 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reached statistical significance ($p = .000$) on all constructs, thus supporting the factorability of the correlation matrixes.

Once the data has proven to be suitable for Principal component analysis, the main criteria are accessed in order to determine the number of principal components to extract in this solution.

Regarding *Influencer's perceived expertise*, the results of the analysis support a one-principal component solution: the **PC IPEX**. As regards to *Purchase intention*, a solution with one principal component is also supported: the **PC PIN**

When it comes to *Information sources of coffee pods' brands*, PCA was initially performed including all of the scale items, however the Rotated component matrix revealed the presence of cross-loadings on one variable, and therefore, it was excluded from the principal components analysis and is comprised in the model as a separate variable:

1. IS1 – Coffee pods: Commercials on social media of coffee pods’ brands

Kaiser’s criterion revealed the presence of one component with eigenvalues exceeding 1. Hence, Kaiser’s criterion suggests a solution with 1 component. However, two components explain 71% of the variance, above the recommended 70% according to the Total variance explained criteria. The results described in Table 1 suggest the extraction of 2 PCs instead of 1 PC. PCA was again performed, this time with a fixed number of factors, allowing for the extraction of 2 PCs.

In the new analysis with two components extracted, all Communalities are above 0.5. Considering all the criteria a two-principal components solution is supported, composed by:

PC1 Traditional sources described by the following items with higher loadings: “Family, friends and/or neighbours as a source of information of coffee pods’ brands” and “Commercials on tv or radio as a source of information of coffee pods’ brands”.

PC2 Internet sources described by the following items with higher loadings: “Brand’s website as a source of information of coffee pods’ brands”, “Reviews from consumers as a source of information of coffee pods’ brands”, and “Influencers’ sponsorships as a source of information of coffee pods’ brands”.

Regarding *Information sources (IS) of mobile phones’ brands*, Kaiser’s criterion revealed the presence of one component with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 45.3% of the variance. Hence, Kaiser’s criterion suggests a solution with 1 component. Nonetheless, one component only accounts for 45.3% of the variance explained, while 2 PCs allow to obtain 61.4% and 3 PCs explain 76.2% of the variance, above the recommended 70% according to the Total variance explained criteria. The interpretation of the results suggest the extraction of 2 PCs instead of 3 PCs. Thus, a new PCA was performed with the extraction of 2 PCs, which could be named as:

PC1 Advertising and Promotion described by the following items with higher loadings: “Commercials on tv or radio as a source of information of mobile phones’ brands”, “Commercials on social media as a source of information of mobile phones’ brands”, “Brand’s website as a source of information of mobile phones’ brands”, and “Influencers’ sponsorships as a source of information of mobile phones’ brands”.

PC2 Recommendations described by the following items with higher loadings: “Family, friends and/or neighbours as a source of information of mobile phones’ brands” and “Reviews from consumers as a source of information of mobile phones’ brands”.

Once the number of items on each construct have been reduced, the multiple linear regression models are estimated, and the respective results are presented in the next sub-chapter.

5.4 Multiple linear regression models

With the objective of providing a response to the proposed research question: “Are there differences in the importance given to Influencers’ recommendations depending on the level of product involvement and the perceived expertise of the Influencer?” this portion is focused on presenting the results of the two estimated multiple regression models.

Concerning the dummy variable Product involvement, a two-stages procedure was conducted to create it. Given the Product involvement variable was measured by multiple items, firstly it was necessary to transform them in a unique integer variable, and secondly, transform it into a nominal variable. Therefore, in the first stage, the coffee pods’ involvement variable was obtained by calculation of the mean of the set of items. Similarly, the mobile phones’ involvement variable was obtained by calculation of the mean of the set of items. Previously to the calculation of these two variables, the Cronbach’s α values of these scales need to be assessed. As the Cronbach’s value of $\alpha = 0.778$ and $\alpha = 0.820$ were obtained for the set of coffee pods items and mobile phones items respectively, the reliability of the scales is proven. In the second stage, the dummy variable of involvement was created according to the following rule: for each item, respondents were classified as attributing high or low involvement to each product. Thus, answers equal or below 3 (the mean point of the 5-point Likert scale) were classified as low involvement (code 0 on the dummy), and answers above 3 were classified as high involvement (code 1 on the dummy).

Regarding Model 1 – Coffee pods model, in order to explain if the importance given to Influencers’ recommendations is simultaneously influenced by the previously obtained PCA scores (**PC IPEX; PC PIN; PC Traditional sources; PC Internet sources**), as well as the variable **ISI – Coffee pods: Commercials on social media of coffee pods’ brands** and **Product involvement** as a moderating variable, the following model is estimated:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Purchase Intention (coffee pods)} = & B_0 + B_1 \text{Influencer's Perceived Expertise} \\
 & + (B_{2.1} \text{Commercials On Social Media Of Coffee Pods' brands} + \\
 & B_{2.2} \text{Traditional Sources} + B_{2.3} \text{Internet Sources}) + B_3 \text{Product Involvement} + \varepsilon
 \end{aligned}$$

When estimating this model, the significance of the variable coefficients was verified. The results presented in the Table 2 indicate that Influencer's perceived expertise ($\beta = .446$) makes the strongest contribution. It is observed that the variables Influencer's Perceived Expertise (sig. = .000) and Internet sources (sig. = .016) influence the purchase intention of coffee pods. In the case of the variables Traditional sources, Commercials on social media and Coffee pods involvement, since $\text{sig} > 0.05$, they do not help to explain the importance given to Influencers' recommendations.

According to the model summary, 40.3% of the variation of Purchase intention is explained by the exploratory variables in the model ($r^2 = .403$). From analysing the ANOVA test it is possible to conclude that the linear regression model is valid, since it reaches statistical significance (sig = .000).

The development of this type of analysis presupposes the validation of multiple assumptions. Annex E presents the analysis results to assess these assumptions. The only assumption not verified concerns the residual variance that should be constant.

Table 2 – Model 1 – Coffee pods model results

	Coefficients			Collinearity statistics		Model summary			ANOVA
	Unstandardized B	β	Sig.	TOL	VIF	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Durbin-Watson	Sig.
Constant	-.648		.007			.403	.392	1.424	.000
Influencer's perceived expertise	.461	.446	.000	.797	1.254				
Traditional sources	.150	.117	.092	.478	2.094				
Internet sources	.180	.145	.016	.636	1.573				
Commercials on social media	.118	.103	.139	.468	2.137				
Coffee pods involvement	-.225	-.090	.077	.890	1.124				

Regarding Model 2 – Mobile phones model, in order to explain if the importance given to Influencers' recommendations is simultaneously influenced by the previously obtained PCA scores (*PC IPEX; PC PIN; PC Advertising and Promotion; PC Recommendations*) and *Product involvement* as a moderating variable, the following model is estimated:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Purchase Intention (mobile phones)} = & B_0 + \\
 & B_1 \text{Influencer's Perceived Expertise} + (B_{2.1} \text{Advertising And Promotion} + B_{2.2} \\
 & \text{Recommendations}) + B_3 \text{Product Involvement} + \varepsilon
 \end{aligned}$$

When estimating this model, the significance of the variable coefficients was verified. The results presented in the Table 3 indicate that Influencer's perceived expertise ($\beta = .383$) makes the strongest contribution in explaining the Purchase intention of mobile phones, while Mobile phones involvement makes the least unique contribution ($\beta = .129$). The results indicate that all variables influence the intention to purchase mobile phones: Influencer's Perceived Expertise (sig. = .000), Advertising and Promotion (sig. = .000), Recommendations (sig. = .004) and Mobile phones involvement (sig. = .005).

According to the model summary, 47.5% of the variation of Purchase intention is explained by the variation of the exploratory variables in the model ($r^2 = .475$). From analysing the ANOVA test it is possible to conclude that the linear regression model is valid, since it reaches statistical significance (sig = .000).

The development of this type of analysis presupposes the validation of multiple assumptions. Annex E presents the analysis results to assess these assumptions. The only assumption not verified concerns the residual variance that should be constant.

Table 3 – Model 2 – Mobile phones model results

	Coefficients			Collinearity statistics		Model summary			ANOVA
	Unstandardized B	β	Sig.	TOL	VIF	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Durbin-Watson	Sig.
Constant	-1.013		.000			.475	.468	1.696	.000
Influencer's perceived expertise	.395	.383	.000	.791	1.265				
Advertising and Promotion	.375	.309	.000	.682	1.466				
Recommendations	.183	.147	.004	.751	1.331				
Mobile phones involvement	.645	.129	.005	.981	1.020				

5.5 Discussion

Considering the provided results, it is possible to conclude that Influencer's perceived expertise positively affects consumers' purchase intention of coffee pods, thus supporting H1^a. Subsequently, it is also concluded that Influencer's perceived expertise positively affects consumers' purchase intention of mobile phones, thus supporting H1^b. Since both H1^a and H1^b are supported, it is assumed that H1 is also supported - Influencers' perceived expertise positively affect consumers' purchase intention. This finding is consistent with many studies on the topic (AlFarraj et al., 2021; Martínez-López et al., 2020; Chetioui et al., 2020; Masuda et al., 2022), stating that the potential to influence consumers is highly related with the Influencer's expertise of the endorsed product, which can allow to reduce consumers' perceived risk associated with the purchase, therefore showing that expertise proves to have a positive impact on purchase intentions.

Regarding the impact of information sources on consumers' purchase intention, the results indicate that not all sources influence purchase intention in Model 1 (coffee pods). Nonetheless, given that Internet sources, which includes the variable Influencer's sponsorships (coffee pods), positively impact purchase intention, H2^a is partially supported. In regards to Model 2 (mobile phones) all information sources influence purchase intention, thus H2^b is supported. Furthermore, Advertising and Promotion ($\beta = .309$), which includes the variable Influencer's sponsorships (mobile phones), makes a stronger contribution in explaining the purchase intention of mobile phones than Recommendations ($\beta = .147$). This is coherent with Dwidienawati et al. study (2020) which demonstrates that Influencers' endorsements granted

higher purchase intention as opposed to customer reviews. Considering the above, H2 is partially supported.

Coffee pods involvement is not a significant moderator in the model, hence H3^a is rejected.

However, Mobile phones involvement is a significant moderator in the model, hence H3^b is supported. Given that H3^a was rejected, H3 is only partially supported.

High involvement level is associated with greater effort regarding purchase decisions (Handriana & Wisandiko, 2017), subsequently consumers are more likely to attribute more importance to recommendations from an expert source (Rahman et al., 2016), hence the presented literature is consistent with this finding on mobile phones involvement and its moderating role in the relationship between Influencers' perceived expertise and purchase intention

Table 4 – Hypothesis results

Hypothesized relationship	Results
IPEX → PIN	H1: Supported
IPEX → PIN OF COFFEE PODS	H1 ^a : Supported
IPEX → PIN OF MOBILE PHONES	H1 ^b : Supported
IS → PIN	H2: Partially supported
IS → PIN OF COFFEE PODS	H2 ^a : Partially supported
IS → PIN OF MOBILE PHONES	H2 ^b : Supported
PI → (IPEX ↔ PIN)	H3: Partially supported
CPI → (IPEX ↔ PIN)	H3 ^a : Not supported
MPI → (IPEX ↔ PIN)	H3 ^b : Supported

6. Conclusions

6.1 Theoretical implications

This research study has approached the topic of influencer marketing under the scope of perceived expertise and its effect on purchase intentions of two distinct products, contributing as an advancement of previous literature on the subject matter.

The results have demonstrated that the perceived expertise of an Influencer has a significant and positive impact on purchase intention of both coffee pods and mobile phones. This indicates that consumers value recommendations from expert sources on the particular product being purchased. Furthermore, the research concluded that Influencer sponsorships positively affect purchase intentions of both products, more so than traditional advertising in the case of coffee pods, and reviews from consumers in the case of mobile phones. This accentuates the effectiveness of Influencers compared to other information sources. Lastly, high involvement is a significant moderator of the relationship between Influencer's perceived expertise and purchase intention, which leads to the conclusion that the source's expertise regarding mobile phones endorsements is fundamental in achieving high purchase intentions. In contrast, low involvement does not moderate this relationship, indicating that in the purchase intention of coffee pods, expertise might not be a significant factor.

With the data of 267 survey respondents, it was found that, although most respondents follow Influencer accounts, the responses were slightly divided with 46.3% stating they do not follow. Additionally, and despite the results showing some evidence of impact from Influencer sponsorships in both products, the responses show this might not be a direct influence, as most respondents stated they likely wouldn't purchase coffee pods and mobile phones per Influencer's recommendation. Equally to other research studies (Zak & Hasprova, 2020; SanMiguel, et al., 2019; Istanina, et al., 2019), respondents are more likely to purchase fashion and beauty products from an Influencer endorsement.

Furthermore, in relation with products respondents would be willing to purchase, some responses indicate they would only purchase the product if the complements felt genuine, and that they would still do their own research prior to purchasing. This leads to the conclusion that genuine opinions are highly valued in Influencer endorsements, and perceived commercial motivations will prompt negative attitudes towards the Influencer, being also consistent with Martínez-López et al. (2020) findings.

There is also a perceived risk of monetary loss when purchasing an Influencer endorsed product, which ultimately casts doubt on the effectiveness of using Influencers for particularly expensive products. This contributes to the need for source expertise in a high involvement purchase.

6.2 Managerial implications

These days, companies are investing high portions of their marketing budgets on influencer campaigns (Ibáñez-Sánchez et al., 2021), and have seen positive impacts, generating more return on investment than traditional sources of communication (Chetioui et al., 2020). This research study brings to light some conclusions that brands can benefit from when planning they're influencer marketing campaigns.

Primarily, companies should take into consideration the product category being marketed. Coherently with previous literature (Zak & Hasprova, 2020), this study shows that when it comes to food products and electronics, consumers usually do not rely on Influencer ads to make their purchase decision. Hence, if the marketed product falls under one of these categories, an intended influencer partnership should be reconsidered.

Secondly, the price point of the product is also an important factor, given that consumers are less likely to purchase an expensive product per Influencer's recommendation. Although celebrity ads have shown good performance in high involvement scenarios (Hussain et al., 2021), this research study shows all types of information sources have influence on the purchase decision of a high involvement product, in this case, a mobile phone. Thus, brands should impact consumers in all points of the decision journey, especially in high involvement products, considering the level of effort and research associated with this type of purchase.

Thirdly, the perceived expertise of the source is an important determinant of purchase intention. This indicates that for an Influencer endorsement to effectively drive sales, the Influencer needs to have knowledge about the product and has experience it in some shape or form. Companies will benefit from selecting Influencers that are aligned with the brand's image and goals (Ye et al., 2021). Furthermore, the audience should easily connect the Influencer with the company's industry, in order to be attentive and attribute more value to the recommendation. If this is not the case, the endorsement will likely be disregarded as there is no perceived clear motivation for the Influencer to promote the product.

Notwithstanding, if the objective of the brand's campaign is to raise awareness to a new product, or establish a certain positioning, the type of product and/or expertise of the chosen Influencer

might not be of great importance. However, if the campaign's goal is conversion, partnering with Influencers might not be effective for certain products, and the source's expertise will be a determinant factor of purchase intention, particularly for a high involvement product.

6.3 Limitations and future research

This dissertation makes a relevant contribution, nonetheless it is subject to various limitations. Firstly, the survey abandonment rate (26.6%) was quite high, resulting in fewer complete responses than anticipated. More survey responses would likely contribute to more definite conclusions regarding the research topics.

Additionally, many respondents do not follow Influencers on social media, thus their responses on that matter might be subject to bias and/or lack of knowledge.

Another limitation of the study is that not all assumptions of the regression models were fulfilled, making the obtained results only suited to characterize this sample.

This research mainly intended to explore the role of Influencer's perceived expertise on purchase intention, along the context of product involvement. However, another possible moderating effect to be considered would be Influencer's creativity, thus accessing the effect of the type of content. It would be an enhancement to this research to also explore Influencer traits than solely the product category being endorsed. Future research could contemplate Influencer's creativity or similar variables as moderators of Influencer's sponsorships and purchase intention.

Lastly, it would be compelling to compare other products with distinct levels of involvement in a future study, as well as to compare two products with the same level of involvement and reach more conclusions on this topic.

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8. Appendix

Annex A – Questionnaire in Portuguese

Exhibit 3 – Questionnaire (in Portuguese)

O papel dos Influencers no processo de decisão de compra

Start of Block: Block 1

O presente questionário enquadra-se numa investigação no âmbito da Dissertação de Mestrado em Marketing na ISCTE Business School. O objetivo do mesmo é compreender o processo de decisão de compra do consumidor bem como os fatores que levam à aquisição de determinados produtos. O tempo estimado de realização do questionário é de 7 minutos. É garantida a confidencialidade e anonimato dos dados recolhidos, sendo apenas utilizados para fins académicos. Solicita-se que o questionário seja respondido de forma honesta e espontânea. Obrigada pela sua colaboração.

End of Block: Block 1

Start of Block: Block 1

Q1 Utiliza redes sociais?

- Sim
- Não

Skip To: End of Survey If Utiliza redes sociais? = Não

Q2 Indique por favor a frequência com que utiliza as seguintes redes sociais.

	Nunca	1 vez por mês	2 a 3 vezes por mês	1 vez por semana	2 a 3 vezes por semana	Todos os dias	2 ou mais vezes por dia
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
YouTube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TikTok	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LinkedIn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 1

Start of Block: Block 2

Tendo em conta que Influencers são pessoas que ganharam fama através das redes sociais, que partilham o dia-a-dia com os seus seguidores e cuja fonte de rendimento são as parcerias que desenvolvem com marcas, responda às seguintes questões.

Q3 Segue contas de Influencers nas redes sociais?

- Sim
 - Não
-

Q4 Indique o seu grau de concordância com cada uma das seguintes afirmações em que 1 corresponde a Discordo totalmente e 7 a Concordo totalmente.

	Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Discordo parcialmente	Não concordo nem discordo	Concordo parcialmente	Concordo	Concordo totalmente
Quando sou impactado por um conteúdo de um/uma Influencer, constato que ele/ela é especialista	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quando sou impactado por um conteúdo de um/uma Influencer, constato que ele/ela é competente	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quando sou impactado por um conteúdo de um/uma Influencer, constato que ele/ela é conhecedor/a	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Frequentemente considero que um/uma determinado/a Influencer é especialista na sua área	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Frequentemente considero que um/uma determinado/a Influencer tem experiência suficiente para oferecer testemunhos sobre a sua área	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5 Indique a sua percepção relativamente às seguintes afirmações. Quanto mais próxima a sua seleção estiver da afirmação, o mais seguro está da sua classificação.

Para mim, comprar cápsulas de café é uma decisão...

	1	2	3	4	5	
Sem importância	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Muito importante
Que requer muito pouca reflexão	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Que requer muita reflexão
Na qual tenho pouco a perder se escolher a marca errada	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Na qual tenho muito a perder se escolher a marca errada
Intuitiva	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Essencialmente objetiva
Pouco baseada em atributos funcionais (ex.: desempenho da cápsula)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Essencialmente baseada em atributos funcionais (ex.: desempenho da cápsula)

Q6 Para mim, comprar um telemóvel é uma decisão...

	1	2	3	4	5	
Sem importância	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Muito importante
Que requer muito pouca reflexão	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Que requer muita reflexão
Na qual tenho pouco a perder se escolher a marca errada	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Na qual tenho muito a perder se escolher a marca errada
Intuitiva	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Essencialmente objetiva
Pouco baseada em atributos funcionais (ex.: performance do telemóvel)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Essencialmente baseada em atributos funcionais (ex.: performance do telemóvel)

End of Block: Block 3

Start of Block: Block 4

Q7 Suponha que é consumidor de cápsulas de café e gostaria de experimentar uma nova marca. Qual o grau de importância de cada um dos seguintes fatores na sua decisão de compra?

	Nada importante	Pouco importante	Razoavelmente importante	Importante	Muito importante
Preço	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Características do produto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marca	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Página da marca nas redes sociais	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recomendação de um Influencer que testemunha numa rede social	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recomendação de um amigo ou familiar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q8 Através de que fontes recebe informação sobre marcas de cápsulas de café? Indique para cada uma das fontes seguintes a frequência com que é impactado.

	Nunca	Raramente	Ocasionalmente	Frequentemente	Sempre
Família, amigos e/ou vizinhos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anúncios na TV ou rádio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anúncios nas redes sociais	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Website da marca	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Avaliações / reviews de consumidores	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Patrocínios de Influencers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q9 Consideraria comprar uma marca de cápsulas de café por recomendação de um/uma Influencer nas redes sociais?

- Não comprava
- Provavelmente não comprava
- Talvez comprasse
- Provavelmente comprava
- Comprava

End of Block: Block 4

Start of Block: Block 5

Q10 Suponha que tem a necessidade de adquirir um novo telemóvel. Qual o grau de importância de cada um dos seguintes fatores na sua decisão de compra?

	Nada importante	Pouco importante	Razoavelmente importante	Importante	Muito importante
Preço	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Características do produto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marca	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Página da marca nas redes sociais	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recomendação de um Influencer que testemunha numa rede social	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recomendação de um amigo ou familiar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11 Através de que fontes recebe informação sobre marcas de telemóveis? Indique para cada uma das fontes seguintes a frequência com que é impactado.

	Nunca	Raramente	Ocasionalmente	Frequentemente	Sempre
Família, amigos e/ou vizinhos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anúncios na TV ou rádio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anúncios nas redes sociais	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Website da marca	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Avaliações / reviews de consumidores	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Patrocínios de Influencers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12 Supondo que tem a necessidade de adquirir um novo telemóvel, consideraria comprar uma marca de telemóveis por recomendação de um/uma Influencer nas redes sociais?

- Não comprava
- Provavelmente não comprava
- Talvez comprasse
- Provavelmente comprava
- Comprava

End of Block: Block 5

Start of Block: Block 6

Q13 Indique o seu grau de concordância com cada uma das seguintes afirmações em que 1 corresponde a Discordo totalmente e 5 a Concordo totalmente.

	Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente
Eu tenciono comprar produtos promovidos por Influencers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eu compraria marcas de cápsulas de café promovidas por Influencers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eu compraria marcas de telemóveis promovidas por Influencers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eu compraria um produto tendo por base um conselho dado por um/uma Influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eu seguiria recomendações de marcas provenientes de Influencers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14 Quais os produtos que compraria por recomendação de um/uma Influencer?

Q15 Indique qual o valor máximo que estaria disposto a pagar por um produto que tenha sido recomendado por um/uma Influencer.

Mais de 500€

Valor em €	
------------	--

End of Block: Block 6

Start of Block: Block 7

Q16 Indique o seu género.

- Feminino
 - Masculino
 - Prefiro não responder
-

Q17 Indique a faixa etária em que se encontra.

- Menos de 18 anos
 - 18 a 24 anos
 - 25 a 34 anos
 - 35 a 44 anos
 - 45 a 54 anos
 - 55 a 64 anos
 - 65 anos ou +
-

Q18 Indique as suas habilitações literárias.

- Inferior ao 12º ano
 - 12º ano ou equivalente
 - Licenciatura/Bacharelato
 - Pós-graduação
 - Mestrado
 - Doutoramento
-

Q19 Indique a sua situação profissional.

- Estudante
 - Trabalhador/a-estudante
 - Trabalhador/a por conta de outrem
 - Trabalhador/a por conta própria
 - Desempregado/a
 - Reformado/a
-

Q20 Indique o seu rendimento mensal bruto.

- Sem rendimentos
- Até 500 euros
- Entre 501 euros e 1000 euros
- Entre 1001 euros e 1500 euros
- Entre 1501 euros e 2000 euros
- Entre 2001 euros e 2500 euros
- Entre 2501 euros e 3000 euros
- Mais de 3000 euros
- Prefiro não responder

End of Block: Block 7

Annex B – Questionnaire in English

Exhibit 4 – Questionnaire (in English)

The role of Influencers in the decision-making process

Start of Block: Block 1

The present survey is being conducted within the scope of the Master's Dissertation in Marketing at ISCTE Business School. The goal is to understand consumers' decision-making process as well as the factors that lead to the acquisition of specific products.

The estimated time for completing this survey is 7 minutes. Confidentiality and anonymity of the collected data is guaranteed, being solely used for academic purposes. Please fill the survey with honesty and spontaneity.

Thank you for your collaboration.

End of Block: Block 1

Start of Block: Block 1

Q1 Do you use social media platforms?

Yes

No

Skip To: End of Survey If Do you use social media platforms? = No

Q2 Please indicate the frequency in which you use the following social media platforms.

	Never	Once a month	2 or 3 times per month	Once a week	2 or 3 times per week	Every day	2 or more times per day
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
YouTube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TikTok	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LinkedIn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 1

Start of Block: Block 2

Considering that Influencers are people who have gained their fame directly and originally through social media, that share their day-to-day with their followers and whose source of income are partnerships with brands, please answer the following questions.

Q3 Do you follow Influencers' accounts on social media?

- Yes
- No

Q4 Demonstrate your level of agreement with the following statements, being that 1 corresponds to Strongly disagree and 7 to Strongly agree.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree
When looking at Influencer's content, I find he/she is an expert	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When looking at Influencer's content, I find he/she is competent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When looking at Influencer's content, I find he/she is knowledgeable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I frequently feel that a particular Influencer is an expert on his/her area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I frequently feel that a particular Influencer is sufficiently experienced to make assertions about his/her area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5 Demonstrate your perception regarding the following statements. The closer your selection is to the statement, the more confident you are in your classification.

To me, buying coffee pods is a decision...

	1	2	3	4	5	
That is unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	That is very important
That requires very little thought	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	That requires a lot of thought
In which I have little to lose if I choose the wrong brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	In which I have a lot to lose if I choose the wrong brand
That is intuitive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	That is mainly objective decision
That is not mainly based on functional facts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	That is mainly based on functional facts

Q6 To me, buying a mobile phone is a decision...

	1	2	3	4	5	
That is unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	That is very important
That requires very little thought	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	That requires a lot of thought
In which I have little to lose if I choose the wrong brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	In which I have a lot to lose if I choose the wrong brand
That is intuitive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	That is mainly objective decision
That is not mainly based on functional facts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	That is mainly based on functional facts

End of Block: Block 3

Start of Block: Block 4

Q7 Suppose you are a consumer of coffee pods and that you would like to try a new brand. What is the level of importance of each of the following factors in your purchase decision?

	Not important	Little important	Moderately important	Important	Very important
Price	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product features	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand's page on social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommendation from an Influencer that you witness on social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommendation from a friend or family member	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Q8 From which sources do you receive information about coffee pods' brands? Indicate for every source the frequency in which you are impacted.

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
Family, friends and/or neighbours	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commercials on tv or radio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commercials on social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand's website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reviews from consumers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Influencers' sponsorships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q9 Would you consider purchasing a brand of coffee pods as a result of an Influencer's recommendation on social media?

- I wouldn't purchase
- Probably I wouldn't purchase
- I would maybe purchase
- Probably I would purchase
- I would purchase

End of Block: Block 4

Start of Block: Block 5

Q10 Suppose you need to purchase a new mobile phone. What is the level of importance of each of the following factors in your purchase decision?

	Not important	Little important	Moderately important	Important	Very important
Price	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product features	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand's page on social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommendation from an Influencer that you witness on social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommendation from a friend or family member	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Q11 From which sources do you receive information about mobile phones' brands? Indicate for every source the frequency in which you are impacted.

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
Family, friends and/or neighbours	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commercials on tv or radio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commercials on social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand's website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reviews from consumers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Influencers' sponsorships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12 Supposing you need to purchase a new mobile phone, would you consider purchasing a brand of mobile phones as a result of an Influencer's recommendation on social media?

- I wouldn't purchase
- Probably I wouldn't purchase
- I would maybe purchase
- Probably I would purchase
- I would purchase

End of Block: Block 5

Start of Block: Block 6

Q13 Demonstrate your level of agreement with the following statements, being that 1 corresponds to Strongly disagree and 5 to Strongly agree.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I intend to purchase products promoted by Influencers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would purchase brands of coffee pods promoted by Influencers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would purchase brands of mobile phones promoted by Influencers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would purchase a product based on the advice I am given by an Influencer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would follow brand recommendations from Influencers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14 Which products would you purchase from an Influencer's recommendation?

Q15 Indicate the maximum value you would be willing to spend on a product recommended by an Influencer.

More than 500€

Value in €	
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Q16 What is your gender?

- Female
 - Male
 - I prefer not to say
-

Q17 What is your age group?

- Less than 18 years-old
 - 18 to 24 years-old
 - 25 to 34 years-old
 - 35 to 44 years-old
 - 45 to 54 years-old
 - 55 to 64 years-old
 - 65 years-old or more
-

Q18 What is your highest level of education?

- Less than High school
 - High school or equivalent
 - College degree
 - Post-graduation
 - Master's degree
 - Doctoral degree
-

Q19 What is your professional status?

- Student
 - Working-student
 - Employed
 - Self-employed
 - Unemployed
 - Retired
-

Q20 What is your monthly gross income?

- No income
- Until 500 euros
- Between 501 euros and 1000 euros
- Entre 1001 euros e 1500 euros
- Between 1501 euros and 2000 euros
- Between 2001 euros and 2500 euros
- Between 2501 euros and 3000 euros
- More than 3000 euros
- I prefer not to say

End of Block: Block 7

Annex C – Research Framework

Table 5 – Scales for operationalization of concepts

Variables	Authors	Research objectives	Reference questions	Measurement/Scale type	Product category	Population
Influencers’ perceived expertise (IPEX)	(Ki, Cuevas, Chong, & Lim, 2020)	Explore how the SMI persona and attributes makes followers feel attached to SMIs	<p><i>IPEX1</i>: When looking at [SMI]’s content, I find he/she is an expert.</p> <p><i>IPEX2</i>: When looking at [SMI]’s content, I find he/she is competent.</p> <p><i>IPEX3</i>: When looking at [SMI]’s content, I find he/she is knowledgeable.</p>	7-point Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7).	Not defined	325 U.S. respondents
	(Masuda, Han, & Lee, 2022)	Analyze how influencer attributes impact purchase intentions	<p><i>IPEX4</i>: I consider this YouTuber an expert on his/her area</p> <p><i>IPEX5</i>: I consider this YouTuber sufficiently experienced to make assertions about his/her area</p>	5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)	Not defined	313 YouTube followers in South Korea

Purchase intention (PIN)	(Chetioui, Benlafqih, & Lebdaoui, 2020)	Examine how fashion influencers contribute to consumers' purchase intention	<i>PIN1</i> : Intention to purchase products advertised by the fashion influencers I follow	5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)	Fashion category	610 respondents. 517 respondents aged under 30 years old, 93 respondents aged between 31 and 40 years old
	(Zeljko, Jakovic, & Strugar, 2018)	Explore the concept of advertising through social media	Probability of buying and purchase intention of a sponsored product or service <i>PIN2</i> : (1 – I will not buy; 2 – Probably I will not buy; 3 – I will maybe buy; 4 – Probably I will buy; 5 – I will buy)	One-choice type question	Not defined	325 respondents from Croatia
	(Gomes, Marques, & Dias, 2022)	Determine the impact of digital influencers' characteristics on purchase intention of fashion products	<i>PIN3</i> : I would purchase the fashion products promoted by this digital influencer in the future. <i>PIN4</i> : I would purchase a brand based on the advice I am given by this digital influencer. <i>PIN5</i> : I would follow brand recommendations from this digital influencer.	5-point Likert scale	Fashion category	345 respondents from Portugal

<p>Product involvement (PI)</p>	<p>(Lee & Johnson, 2021)</p>	<p>Examine the effects of self-disclosure and message sidedness on sponsored post effectiveness and the moderating role of product involvement</p>	<p>Measures of product involvement level “To me, buying skincare products/ clothes is...” <i>PI1</i>: (unimportant decision/very important decision) <i>PI2</i>: (decision requires very little thought/decision requires a lot of thoughts) <i>PI3</i>: (little to lose if I choose the wrong brand/a lot to lose if I choose the wrong brand), <i>PI4</i>: (decision is not mainly logical or objective/decision is mainly logical or objective) <i>PI5</i>: (decision is not based mainly on functional facts/decision is based mainly on functional facts)</p>	<p>7-point semantic differential scale</p>	<p>Clothes and cosmetic products</p>	<p>252 respondents from different age groups</p>
<p>Information sources (IS)</p>	<p>(Lautiainen, 2015)</p>	<p>Explore the factors affecting consumers’ decision in the selection of a coffee brand</p>	<p>ISI: Source of information about brands Family, friends, neighbors; Ads, packaging, salespeople; Handling, testing or examining the product; Internet, consumer ratings, blogs; Other source</p>	<p>Multiple-choice questions</p>	<p>Coffee</p>	<p>86 respondents from different age groups</p>

	(Shabrin, Khandaker, Kashem, Hie, & Susila, 2017)	Determine the factors influencing smartphone purchase decisions of Generation-Y	IS2: Information sources used for smartphone purchasing Social media; Websites; TV/Radio; Family/Friends; Magazine/Newspaper; Promotion	Multiple-choice questions	Smartphones	152 respondents (Generation-Y) from the Kuching region of Malaysia
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Annex D – Pre-test results

Table 6 – Product involvement - Paired-samples t-test (pre-test)

Paired Samples Statistics						Paired Samples Test	
Involvement construct	Product	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Mean difference	Sig. (2-tailed)
Importance of the decision	Coffee pods	17	3.94	2.135	0.518	2.30	0.001
	Mobile phones	17	6.24	1.147	0.278		
Effort	Coffee pods	17	2.76	1.562	0.379	3.24	0.000
	Mobile phones	17	6.00	1.541	0.374		
Risk probability	Coffee pods	17	3.35	2.344	0.568	2.59	0.002
	Mobile phones	17	5.94	1.676	0.406		
Objectivity	Coffee pods	17	3.94	2.304	0.559	1.53	0.049
	Mobile phones	17	5.47	1.700	0.412		
Basis for decision	Coffee pods	17	4.18	2.157	0.523	2.00	0.002
	Mobile phones	17	6.18	1.131	0.274		

Scale: from 1 to 7

Table 7 – Reliability test - Cronbach alpha (pre-test)

Reliability analysis		
Scale	Cronbach alpha	Number of items
Influencer's perceived expertise	0.860	5
Purchase intention	0.854	5
Product involvement (coffee pods)	0.807	5
Product involvement (mobile phones)	0.576	5
Information sources (coffee pods)	0.781	6
Information sources (mobile phones)	0.553	6

Annex E – Sample results

Table 8 - Demographic information

N = 267	Demographic	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	77.9
	Male	21.3
	Prefer not to say	0.7
Age group	<18	0.7
	18 – 24	19.1
	25 – 34	24.0

	35 – 44	19.9
	45 – 64	14.2
	55 – 64	14.2
	65 +	7.9
Education	Less than High school	3.7
	High school or equivalent	20.2
	College degree	40.4
	Post-graduation	13.5
	Master's degree	21.0
	Doctoral degree	1.1
Professional status	Student	10.5
	Working-student	8.6
	Employed	49.1
	Self-employed	17.2
	Unemployed	5.2
	Retired	9.4
Level of income (in €)	No income	10.9
	Until 500	4.5
	501 – 1000	26.2
	1001 – 1500	20.2
	1501 – 2000	10.5
	2001 – 2500	6.7
	2501 – 3000	3.7

More than 3000	6.7
Prefer not to say	10.5

Table 9 - Social media use

N = 383		Percentage (%)
Use of social media platforms	Yes	96.4
	No	3.6
Following Influencers on social media	Yes	53.7
	No	46.3

Table 10 – Social media platforms - Frequency of use

N = 336	Scale	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube	TikTok	Snapchat	LinkedIn
	Never			68.5				
	Once a month	6.8%	10.7%	%	5.4%	64.3%	86.6%	39.9%
	2 or 3 times a month	5.7%	3.9%	9.2%	9.5%	5.4%	3.3%	16.1%
	Once a week	3.9%	4.8%	3%	12.2%	4.5%	3.3%	10.1%
	2 or 3 times per week	5.1%	4.8%	3.9%	16.7%	3.3%	0.9%	8.9%
	Every day	8.9%	8.6%	6%	22.3%	5.4%	0.6%	9.5%
	2 or more times per day	40.8%	34.2%	4.5%	23.5%	10.7%	3.6%	11.6%
		28.9%	33%	5.1%	10.4%	6.5%	1.8%	3.9%

Table 11 – Product Involvement - Paired-samples t-test (full sample)

Paired Samples Statistics						Paired Samples Test	
Involvement construct	Product	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Mean difference	Sig. (2-tailed)
Importance of the decision	Coffee pods	298	3.03	1.398	0.081	1.44	0.000
	Mobile phones	298	4.47	0.800	0.046		
Effort	Coffee pods	298	2.63	1.281	0.074	1.73	0.000
	Mobile phones	298	4.36	0.995	0.058		
Risk probability	Coffee pods	298	3.11	1.443	0.084	1.16	0.000
	Mobile phones	298	4.27	1.076	0.062		
Objectivity	Coffee pods	298	3.52	1.334	0.077	0.71	0.000
	Mobile phones	298	4.23	1.026	0.059		
Basis for decision	Coffee pods	298	3.17	1.399	0.081	1.26	0.000
	Mobile phones	298	4.43	0.916	0.053		

Scale: from 1 to 5

Table 12 – Purchase intention per Influencer’s recommendation

Considering the purchase per Influencer's recommendation	Coffee pods (N = 289)		Mobile phones (N = 276)	
	Percentage (%)	Mean	Percentage (%)	Mean
I wouldn't purchase	25.3	2.25	28.6	2.14
Probably I wouldn't purchase	31.1		35.9	
I would maybe purchase	38.4		29.7	
Probably I would purchase	4.2		4.7	
I would purchase	1.0		1.1	
<i>“I would purchase brands of coffee pods promoted by Influencers”</i>			<i>“I would purchase brands of mobile phones promoted by Influencers”</i>	
N = 269	Percentage (%)	Mean	Percentage (%)	Mean
Strongly disagree	32.0	2.33	29.7	2.28
Disagree	20.1		26.8	
Neither agree nor disagree	32.7		30.5	
Agree	13.4		11.5	
Strongly agree	1.9		1.5	

Table 13 – Value willing to spend on a product per Influencer’s recommendation

Value willing to spend	Percentage (%)
0€	16%
50€	9%
100€	4.8%
0€ - 50€	51.6%
51€ - 100€	21.3%
+ 100€	27.1%

Table 14 – Information sources of coffee pods and mobile phones

<i>Frequency of impact</i>	Product	Information sources					
		Family, friends and/or neighbours	Commercials on tv or radio	Commercials on social media	Brand's website	Reviews from consumers	Influencers' sponsorships
Never	Coffee pods	11.1%	14.2%	23.5%	30.1%	27.7%	50.2%
	Mobile phones	3.6%	10.5%	14.1%	20.7%	12.7%	44.2%
Rarely	Coffee pods	20.8%	26.6%	30.4%	29.8%	26.6%	23.5%
	Mobile phones	12.7%	22.8%	23.6%	20.7%	17.4%	26.8%
Occasionally	Coffee pods	38.4%	36%	29.4%	25.6%	26.6%	16.3%
	Mobile phones	40.2%	37%	37%	27.5%	26.8%	16.3%
Frequently	Coffee pods	24.2%	19.7%	13.1%	10%	14.2%	8.3%
	Mobile phones	32.6%	22.1%	17.4%	17.8%	28.6%	8.3%
Always	Coffee pods	5.5%	3.5%	3.5%	4.5%	4.8%	1.7%
	Mobile phones	10.9%	7.6%	8%	13.4%	14.5%	4.3%

N (coffee pods) = 289

N (mobile phones) = 276

Table 15 – Purchase motivating factors of coffee pods and mobile phones

Purchase motivating factors							
<i>Level of importance</i>	Product	Price	Product features	Brand	Brand’s page on social media	Recommendation from Influencer	Recommendation from friend or family member
Not important	Coffee pods	1.7%	2.1%	13.1%	43.3%	48.8%	3.5%
	Mobile phones	0.7%	0%	2.5%	33%	40.2%	0.7%
Little important	Coffee pods	2.8%	4.2%	20.1%	27.3%	26.3%	8.3%
	Mobile phones	1.4%	0.4%	8.7%	30.1%	30.4%	7.6%
Moderately important	Coffee pods	22.5%	14.2%	28%	18.3%	14.9%	33.2%
	Mobile phones	10.9%	6.2%	25%	19.9%	18.1%	34.8%
Important	Coffee pods	43.9%	42.9%	27.7%	7.6%	7.3%	39.1%
	Mobile phones	39.5%	26.1%	34%	12.3%	6.5%	37.7%
Very important	Coffee pods	29.1%	36.7%	11.1%	3.5%	2.8%	15.9%
	Mobile phones	47.5%	67.4%	29%	4.7%	4.7%	19.2%

N (coffee pods) = 289

N (mobile phones) = 276

Table 16 – PCA IPEX – Total variance explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.219	64.377	64.377	3.219	64.377	64.377
2	.660	13.209	77.585			
3	.500	10.004	87.589			
4	.326	6.529	94.118			
5	.294	5.882	100.000			

Exhibit 5 – PCA IPEX – Scree plot

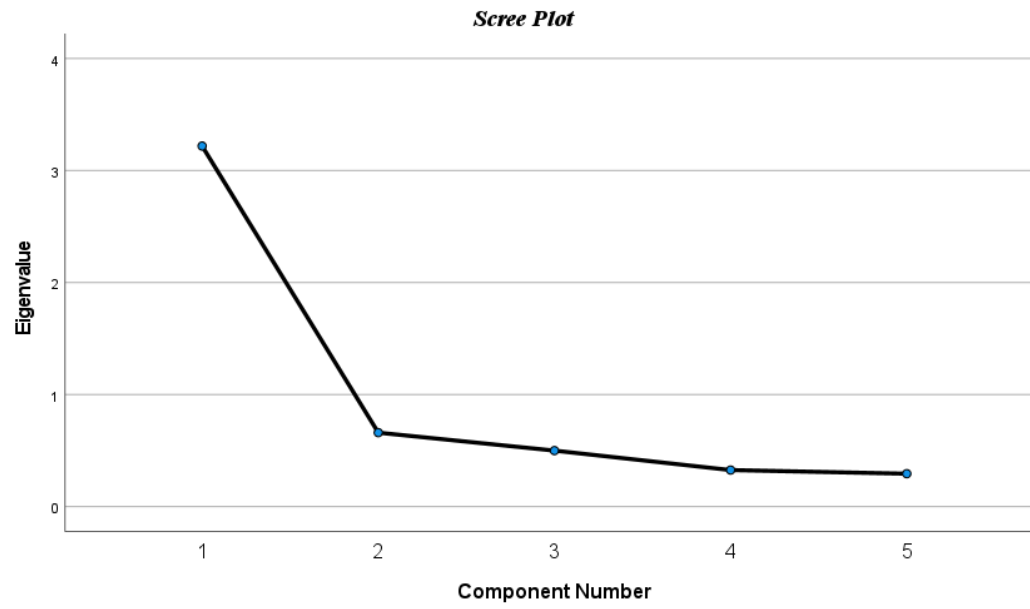


Table 17 – PCA IPEX – Component matrix and Communalities

	Component Matrix	Communalities	
	Component 1	Initial	Extraction
When looking at Influencer's content, I find he/she is an expert	.787	1.000	.620
When looking at Influencer's content, I find he/she is competent	.846	1.000	.716
When looking at Influencer's content, I find he/she is knowledgeable	.830	1.000	.690
I frequently feel that a particular Influencer is an expert on his/her area	.800	1.000	.640
I frequently feel that a particular Influencer is sufficiently experienced to make assertions about his/her area	.744	1.000	.553

Table 18 – PCA PIN – Total variance explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.342	78.059	78.059	2.342	78.059	78.059
2	.417	13.907	91.966			
3	.241	8.034	100.000			

Exhibit 6 – PCA PIN – Scree plot

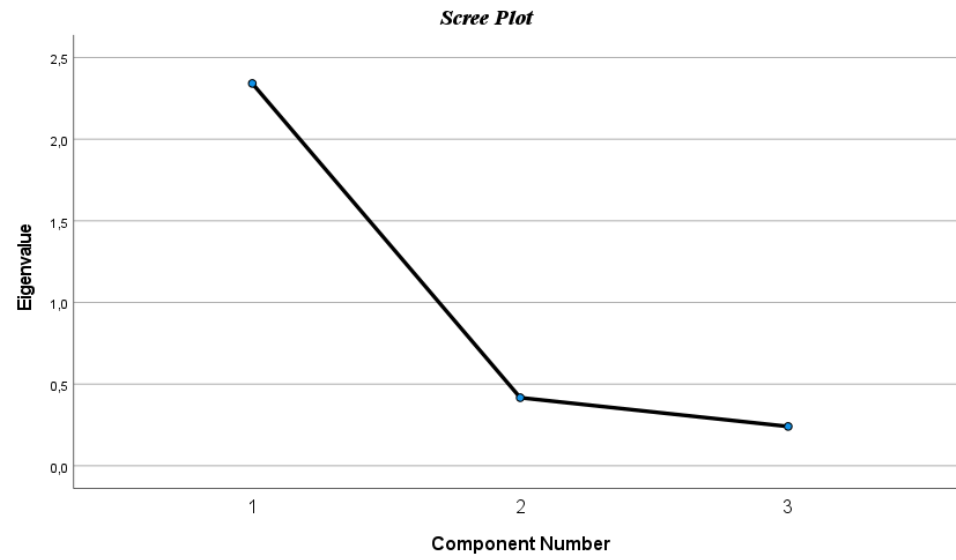


Table 19 – PCA PIN – Component matrix and Communalities

	Component Matrix	Communalities	
	Component 1	Initial	Extraction
I intend to purchase products promoted by Influencers	.844	1.000	.712
I would purchase a product based on the advice I am given by an Influencer	.895	1.000	.800
I would follow brand recommendations from Influencers	.911	1.000	.829

Table 20 – PCA IS coffee pods – Total variance explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.680	53.592	53.592	2.680	53.592	53.592
2	.872	17.440	71.033	.872	17.440	71.033
3	.572	11.447	82.480			
4	.466	9.311	91.791			
5	.410	8.209	100.000			

Exhibit 7 – PCA IS coffee pods – Scree plot

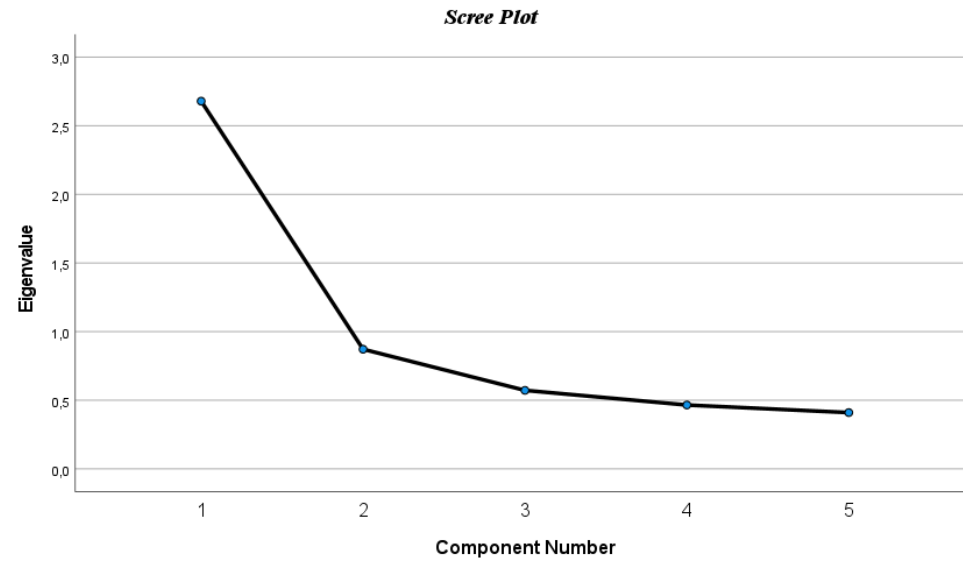


Table 21 – PCA IS coffee pods – Pattern matrix and Communalities

	Pattern Matrix		Communalities	
	Component		Initial	Extraction
	1	2		
IS2 - Coffee pods: Family, friends and/or neighbours		.989	1.000	.838
IS3 - Coffee pods: Commercials on tv or radio	.344	.550	1.000	.598
IS4 - Coffee pods: Brand’s website	.960		1.000	.782
IS5 - Coffee pods: Reviews from consumers	.803		1.000	.671
IS6 - Coffee pods: Influencers' sponsorships	.583	.358	1.000	.662

Table 22 – PCA IS mobile phones – Total variance explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.720	45.341	45.341	2.680	53.592	53.592
2	.964	16.067	61.408	.872	17.440	71.033
3	.889	14.815	76.223			
4	.619	10.311	86.534			
5	.533	8.887	100.000			
6	.275	4.579	100.000			

Exhibit 8 – PCA IS mobile phones – Scree plot

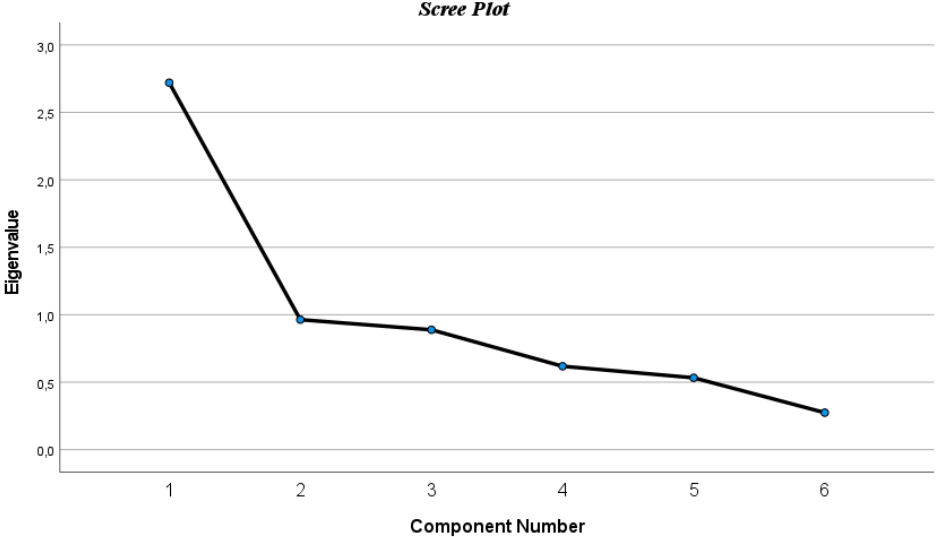


Table 23 – PCA IS mobile phones – Pattern matrix and Communalities

	Pattern Matrix		Communalities	
	Component		Initial	Extraction
	1	2		
IS1 - Mobile phones: Family, friends and/or neighbours		.902	1.000	.748
IS2 - Mobile phones: Commercials on tv or radio	.798		1.000	.616
IS3 - Mobile phones: Commercials on social media	.950		1.000	.821
IS4 - Mobile phones: Brand’s website	.616		1.000	.451
IS5 - Mobile phones: Reviews from consumers		.560	1.000	.489
IS6 - Mobile phones: Influencers’ sponsorships	.535	.368	1.000	.559

Table 24 – MLRM – Model 1 (coffee pods) - Correlations

N = 269		Purchase intention	Influencer's perceived expertise	Traditional sources	Internet sources	Commercials on social media	Coffee pods involvement
Pearson Correlation	Purchase intention	1.000	.572	.409	.410	.419	.028
	Influencer's perceived expertise	.572	1.000	.402	.361	.366	.127
	Traditional sources	.409	.402	1.000	.487	.660	.291
	Internet sources	.410	.361	.487	1.000	.568	.131
	Commercials on social media	.419	.366	.660	.568	1.000	.079
	Coffee pods involvement	.028	.127	.291	.131	.079	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Purchase intention		.000	.000	.000	.000	.324
	Influencer's perceived expertise	.000		.000	.000	.000	.019
	Traditional sources	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	Internet sources	.000	.000	.000		.000	.016
	Commercials on social media	.000	.000	.000	.000		.099
	Coffee pods involvement	.324	.019	.000	.016	.099	

Table 25 – MLRM – Model 1 (coffee pods) – Residual statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	-2.706944	1.598889	-0.739847	0.795841	269
Residual	-2.619148	2.898995	.00000000	0.968106	269
Std. Predicted Value	-2.472	2.939	.000	1.000	269
Std. Residual	-2.680	2.966	.000	.991	269

Exhibit 9 – MLRM – Model 1 (coffee pods) – Histogram

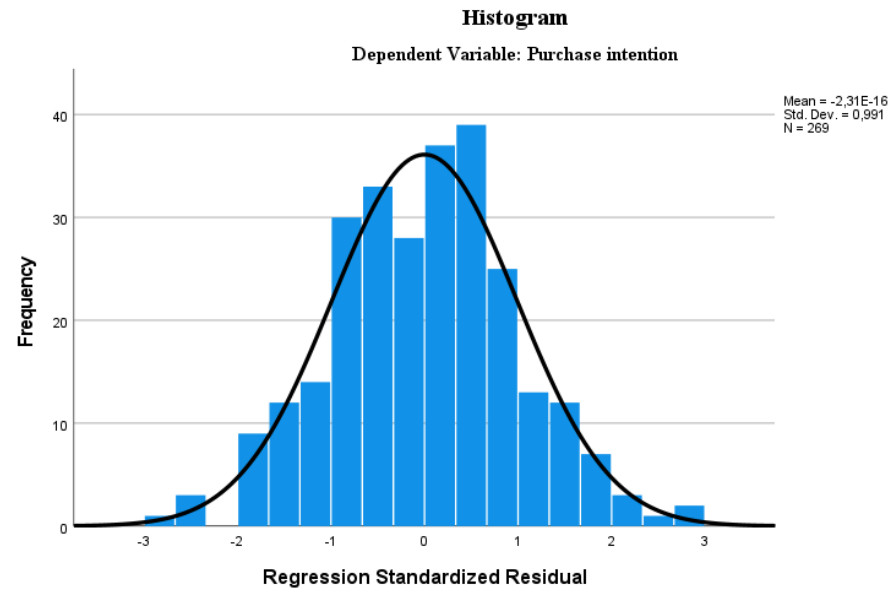


Exhibit 10 – MLRM – Model 1 (coffee pods) – Scatterplot



Table 26 – MLRM – Model 2 (mobile phones) - Correlations

N = 269		Purchase intention	Influencer's perceived expertise	Advertising and Promotion	Recommendations	Mobile phones involvement
Pearson Correlation	Purchase intention	1.000	.572	.551	.431	.176
	Influencer's perceived expertise	.572	1.000	.440	.315	.052
	Advertising and Promotion	.551	.440	1.000	.471	.026
	Recommendations	.431	.315	.471	1.000	.131
	Mobile phones involvement	.176	.052	.026	.131	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Purchase intention		.000	.000	.000	.002
	Influencer's perceived expertise	.000		.000	.000	.200
	Advertising and Promotion	.000	.000		.000	.333
	Recommendations	.000	.000	.000		.016
	Mobile phones involvement	.002	.200	.333	.016	

Table 27 – MLRM – Model 2 (mobile phones) – Residual statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	-2.825797	1.716695	-0.739847	0.864170	269
Residual	-2.475229	3.134158	.00000000	0.907635	269
Std. Predicted Value	-2.414	2.843	.000	1.000	269
Std. Residual	-2.707	3.427	.000	.993	269

Exhibit 11 – MLRM – Model 2 (mobile phones) – Histogram

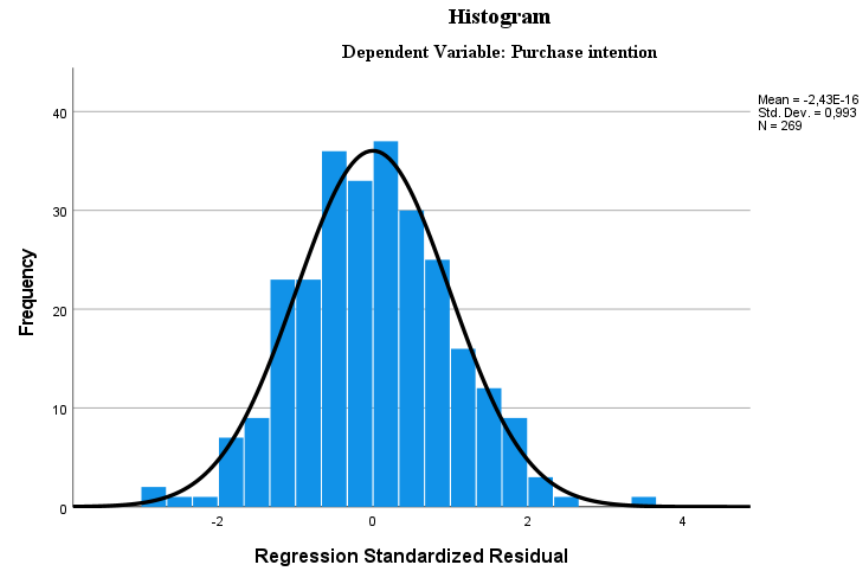


Exhibit 12 – MLRM – Model 2 (mobile phones) – Scatterplot

