



The influence of social media feedback on consumers' self-esteem and purchasing behaviour

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation not only aims to explore whether social media feedback influences the consumer's purchasing decision, specifically on the preferences for products that are more or less threatening to the self, as to how social media influences their self-esteem, well-being, mood, feelings of depression and anxiety, self-affirmation and self-threat.

Does social media influence consumers and their purchasing decision? According to Catriona Harvey-Jenner (2017), social media provides a short-term hype followed by a crashing low, meaning that, for example, it influences positively people to connect with others at a faster rate (Amedie, J., 2015; Subramanian, K., 2017), but its excessive usage time can become self-threatening (Park & Maner, 2009). When it comes to purchasing luxury goods, consumers feel the need to justify themselves, maybe due to their feelings of guilt (Okada, 2005); thus, when its purchase is based upon a moral act, it reduces its negative self-attribution. Based on previous research, social media influences consumers' purchasing behaviour, for example, reading online customer reviews on hedonic or utilitarian products makes them buy more.

As such, to assess how social media influence consumers, two different studies from Khan and Dhar (2006) were conducted. In both studies, participants were required to complete a task on the "number of likes" on a post. Additionally, in Study 1, they had to imagine themselves purchasing a pair of designer jeans and a vacuum cleaner (hedonic and utilitarian products, respectively) and, in Study 2, they were between two different pairs of sunglasses (hedonic and utilitarian).

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RESUMO

Esta tese visa investigar como é que o feedback nas redes sociais influenciam o comportamento de compra dos consumidores, especificamente na preferência por produtos que ameacem mais, ou menos, a identidade, como também em como influenciam a sua autoestima, bem-estar, humor, depressão, ansiedade, afirmação e ameaça à identidade.

As redes sociais influenciam os consumidores e a sua decisão de compra? De acordo com Catriona Harvey-Jenner (2017), as redes sociais fornecem um entusiasmo a curto prazo seguido de uma quebra, significando que, por exemplo, influenciam as pessoas a se conectarem umas às outras mais rapidamente (Jacob Amedie, 2015; Krishnaswamy Subramanian, 2017) no entanto, o seu uso excessivo, pode tornar-se numa ameaça à identidade (Park & Maner, 2009). Quando se trata de comprar bens de luxo, os consumidores sentem a necessidade de se justificar por se sentirem culpados (Okada, 2005); mas, quando a compra é baseada numa ação moral, a negatividade sobre a sua autoimagem é reduzida.

Segundo estudos anteriores, os meios de comunicação social influenciam o comportamento de compra dos consumidores, por exemplo através de críticas online, fazendo com que estes comprem mais. Como tal, para avaliar este efeito, foram realizados dois estudos diferentes Khan e Dhar (2006). Em ambos os estudos os participantes realizaram uma tarefa sobre o “número de likes” numa publicação. Adicionalmente, no Estudo 1 tiveram de se imaginar a comprar umas calças de marca e um aspirador (produto hedónico e utilitário, respetivamente) e, no Estudo 2, estavam entre dois pares de óculos de sol (hedónico e utilitário).

Título: A influência do feedback nas redes sociais na autoestima e no comportamento de compra dos consumidores

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Palavras-chave: Redes sociais; Autoestima; Bem-estar; Humor; Depressão; Ansiedade; Afirmação à identidade; Ameaça à identidade; Autoimagem; Comportamento de compra; Produtos hedónicos vs utilitários

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, humans are expected to be subjective and frequently swayed by preconceived views. On the one hand, as Dey et al. (2020) suggest opinions in every domain of human civilisation significantly impact modern human societies. As a result, Sentiment Analysis (SA) of views can be viewed as a key tool for analysing the individuals' mood and disposition concerning any product or service published on their social media platforms, blogs, web reviews, among others, being them able to connect with others easily. However, on the other hand, opinions and reviews may not be easily shared thanks to the widespread availability of the Internet and smartphones, even when considering any emerging nation. Examining all posts and reviews and incorporating them into meaningful orientation may be somewhat challenging from mining such data and opinionated text content (Dey et al., 2020). As a result, to complement this field of study, this research assesses how a high or low number of positive reactions on a post impacts one's self-esteem, mood, anxiety, depression, and others.

According to Scholz (2008) and Allen (2012), social media applications are not new and may be dated back to years before 2005. Nonetheless, these technologies were not widely used in the 90s and have just recently gained popularity. Following Fuchs (2021), social media contains a technology level of artefacts that permit and restrict a social level of human actions that create information produced, distributed, and consumed. Social media plays an important role in everyone's lives, whether to shop, email, keep up with the news, or connect with others, where such platforms transform one's lifestyle. As Samuel and Shamili (2017) suggest, with the emergence of social media platforms, these have become a daily routine for all, transforming one's lifestyle. Among several definitions, according to Siddiqui and Singh (2016), social media is "the many relatively inexpensive and widely accessible electronic tools that facilitate anyone to publish and access information, collaborate on a common effort, or build a relationship". This subject not only enables individuals to flexibly social network, as it is known for being the most reliable source of news, marketing, education and entertainment.

1.1. Problem Statement and Research Questions

This dissertation focuses on understanding how social media may influence consumers and their purchasing behaviour and why this subject plays such a vital role in everyone's day to day lives. The current research project targets those who use social media more often, whether to keep up with the latest trends, news, email, check its networks, or spend time on other leisure

activities. Therefore, this research project focuses on explaining how social media influences the consumer, how they will behave towards it (consequently understanding the possible effects of such platforms on the consumer's purchasing behaviour), exploring the advantages and disadvantages of its usage and how the number of positive reactions on a post shared by them can influence their psychological self and, finally, how such platforms influence the consumer's purchasing behaviour. As a result, to assess its effects, two individual studies manipulating the purchase of two different types of products (hedonic vs utilitarian) were conducted: a pair of designer jeans vs a vacuum cleaner; two types of sunglasses (Khan & Dhar, 2006). Additionally, some specific variables were manipulated to examine whether they impact the consumers' social network usage in terms of their: self-esteem, mood, appearance, stress, anxiety and depression. Hence, this study aims to answer the following: "The influence of social media feedback on consumers' self-esteem and purchasing behaviour".

The following research questions can be used to break down this problem, such as:

- **RQ1: How does social media influence consumers?**

With this first research question, we will be able to study the influence of social media on consumers following a more specific path. As it is known, social media is a fast-growing industry, and, as such, consumers now have a highly extended offer of platforms. So, we will investigate under what conditions receiving positive reactions on a post shared by them affects their purchasing behaviour, more specifically their preferences for hedonic or utilitarian products.

- **RQ2: How does the number of positive reactions on a post influence consumers daily?**

The second research question will make us explore how and why consumers feel the need to have a high or low number of likes on a post they share. Additionally, it aims to understand how this influences consumers daily and how it can affect their self-esteem, mood, anxiety, and others.

- **RQ3: How does social media influence consumers' purchasing behaviour?**

With this third question, we will examine how social media influences purchasing behaviour. This one is related to the previous one, therefore it will be examined whether consumers purchase more or fewer hedonic or utilitarian products according to the number of positive reactions their posts have. Additionally, since consumers will have to choose between two

products, hedonic or utilitarian, it will also be possible to evaluate if their response is directly affected by the previous condition.

1.2. Dissertation Structure

The present research project is organised into five main chapters. The first one is the introduction, which summarises the study's main ideas and includes the main research questions. Then, a second chapter follows and concerns the conduction of the literature review, where all the relevant topics are covered, including the hypothesis. The methodology is presented next, involving some demographic information, materials utilised and a description of the adopted procedures. Afterwards, a result section is presented, showing all the examined study's data. Subsequently, a section with the study's main findings is discussed, along with their implications for businesses. Finally, some limitations to the current research and potential directions for future research are discussed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a deep analysis of how social media influences individuals (benefits and negative aspects), particularly how the number of reactions on a post may influence them, how that reflects on their purchasing behaviour, and on individuals' motivational processes (e.g., how do these self-affirmation processes, in this case, a reaction on a post, influence consumers' judgments and purchasing decisions), according to the existing relevant literature. Moreover, it will be analysed whether social media's effect on individuals' psychological self and purchasing behaviour is significant by manipulating two types of products (hedonic vs utilitarian).

The concept of social media, explored in the lens of Carr and Hayes (2015), refers to a variety of internet-based networks that allow interactions among its users. At least 92% of teenagers use social media daily, whereby the age group of 13 to 17 is highly active on social media networks, where 87% of them have access to a computer and 58% to any tablet device. Still, almost three-quarters of adolescents aged 15 to 17 use smartphones, whereas 68% are aged 13 to 14 (Lenhart et al., 2015).

2.1. Consumer Behaviour

Consumers are often seen as individuals who buy and use goods or services constantly, being unaware of the threats that these outcomes may have in their lives. Therefore, they should always be aware of how they behave.

Solomon et al. (2006, pp. 6) defines consumer behaviour as "the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires". This kind of contemporary research contemplates various factors that influence the consumer, acknowledging an extensive scope of consumption activities outside purchasing. The consumer decision-making process follows five stages, viz.: problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, choice, and outcome evaluation (Erasmus et al., 2001; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007).

According to Engel et al. (1995), impulsive buying main characteristics are the state of psychological disequilibrium (feel out of control) and minimal objective evaluation (emotions). As such, when people feel down, with low self-esteem, they are involved in a high sense of emotions that make them purchase goods or services they do not need to make up for that disequilibrium. On the other hand, based on what Engel affirmed, people also tend to have

impulsive buying when they feel extremely happy, wanting to purchase everything that will keep their self-esteem high.

2.1.1. Impact of Social Media on Consumer Decisions

The ease of instant access to information makes consumers use social media (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). By accessing this instant technology, social media helps consumers decide what, when and where to buy, learning more about new products, brands or services (Powers et al., 2012). Individuals are limited in their ability to digest large amounts of data, being difficult to assess all possible options thoroughly (Karimi, 2013), as social media provides a wide range of information (Powers et al., 2012).

Following on from the findings of Ashman et al. (2015), such online platforms make it possible for like-minded individuals to connect and share information with others, request opinions and rate specific products, brands, services or activities. Yayli and Bayram (2012) ideals are directly linked with Zhou et al. (2013) and Zhang et al. (2014) since all conclude that online customer reviews influence consumers' product choice and purchasing behaviour. However, these have a considerable beneficial impact on the consumers' purchase intentions due to their perceived informativeness, persuasiveness of the online product evaluations and perceived quantity of reviews.

2.1.2. Self-Threat VS Self-Affirmation on Individuals

Consumers seek affirmation, assistance, support and reassurance from others when they feel threatened (Schachter, 1959; Zimbardo & Formica, 1963; Bowlby, 1969; Kulik & Mahler, 1989; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Taylor et al., 2000; Maner, DeWall, Baumeister, & Schaller, 2007), particularly from close friends (Clark & Reis, 1988). As a result, when consumers feel that their self is being threatened, they might seek out social interaction, mainly with those who give them more support and reassurance, as such contacts could help protect their self and create a feeling of social acceptance (Park & Maner, 2009). Excessive time spent social interacting when an individual's self is threatened can be viewed as a source of reflection and negative judgment rather than a source of positive support. Hence, individuals may respond to self-threat by wishing to avoid social contact, fearing that it may intensify self-doubt and lead to emotions of rejection (Park & Maner, 2009). People with low self-esteem have themselves in low regard, having more negative self-views (Campbell, 1990; Blaine & Crocker, 1993), affecting their self-concept and mood, resulting in greater emotional instability and developing sensations of

shame and humiliation (Kernis, Brockner, & Frankel, 1989; Campbell, Chew, & Scratchley, 1991; Brown & Dutton, 1995). Since they perceive themselves as having minor good attributes, they are less prone to seek affirmation when facing threats (Swann, Griffin, et al., 1987; Spencer, Josephs, & Steele, 1993).

On the other hand, people may respond to self-affirmation when their levels of self-esteem are high, being capable of holding enough motivation, energy, skills and resources to boost their self-esteem when facing threats (Brockner, Derr, & Laing, 1987; Dodgson & Wood, 1998; Brown, Dutton, & Cook, 2001; Heimpel, Wood, Marshall, & Brown, 2002). Additionally, individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to feel loved and accepted by others and less concerned about feeling rejected than those with low self-esteem (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). For example, like Murray et al. (1998) claim, individuals do not hesitate to turn to their closed ones when they feel threatened due to their social comfort, whereas participants on self-threat wouldn't behave in that way.

2.2. Social Media Influence on Individuals

Social media plays an important role in everyone's lives, becoming a routine to some, ending up impacting our knowledge on several matters, like culture or economy. Following Jacob Amedie (2015) finding, social media brings people together, being seen as a virtual channel where people connect, discuss ideas, mobilize for a cause, seek advice and guide each other.

As Amedie (2015) stated, social media has brought several benefits to the world, influencing positively the population, such as connecting us with friends who live nearby or far away from us, breaking borders and cultural barriers and, for example, keeping up with the world's news. Social media is also known for spreading information much faster than any other traditional form of media, as newspapers. According to Subramanian (2017), social media's negativity over people balances well with positive aspects, including the capacity to communicate with a more significant number of people over long distances and, consequently, at a faster rate. Social media was created to expand our means to interact with thousands of people worldwide, enabling us to share opinions with a much larger audience, providing a sense of freedom on the way we wish to speak and being able to send uncensored opinions or messages. Additionally, the author describes as a benefit the fact that this creation came to bring people together in a broader platform aiming to achieve a specific common goal, being a critical factor to a constructive change in today's society. (Subramanian, 2017)

In contrast to what was said before, Amedie (2015) affirmed that social media also impacts its user lives negatively. For instance, sometimes people are so focused on social networking that they end up isolating themselves, losing their ability to think independently, favouring texting over making phone calls, chatting online rather than in person, and posting more, making them feel a false sense of being loved by online users. As Ortiz-Ospina and Roser (2020) suggest, social networking is essential for an individual's physical and mental well-being. As well, they affirm that simple correlations across social media and well-being can be misleading, complex and reciprocal over time. Orben et al. (2019) published a paper based on the UK Household Longitudinal Study 2009-2016, demonstrating that the higher the use of social media, the lower the life satisfaction; while the lower the life satisfaction, the higher is the use of social media predicted to be. However, that is precisely the problem of social media. It provides a short-term hype followed by a crashing low (Harvey-Jenner, 2017).

2.2.1. Depression and Anxiety on Social Media Users

Stephen Buckley explains that low self-esteem is directly linked with developing a mental health problem, namely depression. Therefore, it is critical to use social media responsibly and recognize when it is having a detrimental effect on people's mental health. Consequently, individual's train themselves psychologically to become reliant on positive reinforcement from online sources, which has an impact on their mood and behaviour (Harvey-Jenner, 2017). According to Steger and Kashdan (2009), social media can easily impact an individual's self-esteem and mood, influencing those who suffer from depression or anxiety. Using social media networks may increase one's exposure to unpleasant social interactions, having a detrimental influence on their mood and mental health (Best et al., 2014). Nonetheless, when used properly, having a social engagement or merely being noticed on any network will naturally increase one's mood. However, individuals must never forget that they are constantly being observed and that, occasionally, they will face challenges that will test their mood, relationships and health.

Virtual connections are not only taking the place of human interaction but also physical and emotional support that people have once received. Several researchers have proposed that social media, in fact, ends up causing psychological problems, such as depression, on the ones who use them the most since it requires constant engagement from its users. Individuals who tend to spend more time on social media platforms, such as Facebook or Instagram, are trying to stay connected with their friends and family while seeking for everyone's acceptance. Yet, this

kind of depression can put social media users at risk, isolating themselves and making them turn to risky Internet sites that promote substance abuse, unsafe sexual practices, and self-destructive behaviour, like O’Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011) defended.

Not only can social media cause depression on people, as its excessive usage can also develop anxiety. Davila and Starr (2009) have conducted a study among teenage girls on the excessive usage of social media networks, in this case, on Facebook. As a result, both concluded that the sample group was at an increased risk of revealing signs of depression and anxiety. Likewise, the two authors’ study proved that not only did the discussion of problems among friends online focused on negative emotions, showing higher levels of depression and anxiety, as was the girls who were actively living a romantic life, as Starr (2009) stated “We know that being romantically active in adolescence can be challenging or stressful for young girls. So, girls may be co-ruminating about their romantic experiences, and doing that, rather than problem-solving, may increase their risk for feeling depressed.”.

Depression and anxiety are the two most frequent disorders in both children and adolescents (Stansfeld et al., 2016). Jacobs (2018) supports that those who are constantly seeking for unrealistic and unachievable insights of perfection onto their social media networks, like showing off their perfect marriage or perfect life, end up feeling more depressed and socially anxious than the ones who don’t behave that way, as Curran and Hill (2019) state, “This finding suggests that young people are perceiving that their social context is increasingly demanding, that others judge them more harshly, and that they are increasingly inclined to display perfection as a means of securing approval.”.

2.2.2. Social Media Addiction on Users

With the spread of digital and mobile technology, social media has become a favoured medium for communication. Such proliferation happened that individuals are becoming accustomed to avoiding face-to-face communication in favour of texting, as Paul Booth confirms by saying: “There has been a shift in the way we communicate; rather than face-to-face interaction, we’re tending to prefer mediated communication,”; and “We’d rather e-mail than meet; we’d rather text than talk on the phone.”. Under Paul Booth, Subramanian’s (2017) article defends that technology may be seen as an addiction since it has changed the way people interact with each other, causing a sense of dependency on social media networks. It implies that the time spent on face-to-face interactions have been overtaken by a simple interaction on social media networks. Having this said, not only does the author affirm that people rely too much on these

networks, being unconscious of the lack of awareness on privacy it carries, as O’Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011) also believe that sharing too much or posting wrong information on them may be putting one’s lives at risk.

2.3. Social Media Influence on Individuals’ Purchasing Behaviour

As Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) claim, social media can divide itself into five levels, from the lowest to the highest: collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia), content communities (e.g., YouTube), social networking applications (e.g., Facebook), virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft) and, lastly, virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life).

Social media made interactions and discussions among customers faster and easier (Powers et al., 2012). Even though some connections on social media are from strangers, their influence on products and services rapidly increases, influencing opinions in the offline world (Smith, 2009).

2.3.1. Word-Of-Mouth (WOM)

As it is known, the concept of Word-of-Mouth (WOM) is identified as an influence on consumers’ purchasing decisions by shaping their attitudes, behaviours, perceptions and expectations of brands, products and services (Kimmel & Kitchen, 2014). Arndt (1967) characterized WOM as “person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial regarding a brand, product, or service.”. WOM can be transmitted in an online or electronic form (eWOM), where internet users leave reviews on websites, products, brands and services (Bronner & Hoog, 2010). Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) describe it as “any positive or negative statements made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet”.

2.3.2. Consumer Purchasing Behaviour

As it is known, consumers’ prior actions can influence their preferences towards something (Dhar & Simonson, 1999; Novemsky & Dhar, 2005) by triggering their goals, leading to later decisions. By comparing these two different products, luxury and necessity, it will be possible to assess if the purchase of luxury products is strongly associated with the feelings of guilt and responsibility (Dahl, Honea, & Manchanda, 2003). Whenever consumers purchase a luxury product, they feel the need to justify themselves, being at a disadvantage since it is more

difficult to justify their purchasing decision, leading to a negative self-attribution, than when they acquire a necessity good (Okada, 2005). However, previous research has shown that reducing the responsibility associated with those purchases can increase the chances of buying.

Khan and Dhar's article (2006) was fundamental to the development of this dissertation since it shows us that if there is an external attribution to a virtuous act, the consumer's preference for purchasing a luxury product reduces their feelings of guilt. This prior virtuous act enhances the significant self-concept, mediating the desire for hedonic products. Having this said, Study 1 and Study 2 examined the impact of a prior intent to commit a virtuous act on the following preference between two products, where one is characterized as being more self-indulgent and the other as more utilitarian. As such, they predicted that the participants would rather pick a luxury product if their previous decision allowed them to appear altruistic by committing a virtuous act, showing that simply stating a desire to do something good is enough to allow for a more self-indulgent product. Therefore, as the authors conclude, committing to a virtuous act might improve a positive self-concept, reduce negative self-attribution related to a hedonic item, and enhance its chance of being chosen. (Khan & Dhar, 2006)

2.4. Motivational Processes

As Neil Patel (2022) defends, individuals shouldn't judge themselves for the number of reactions their posts get since these have no monetary value, and their obsession with them can impact their well-being. Social media users feel more valued and influential when they are associated with having many followers and reactions on their posts, as they believe it gives them a certain status (Appel et al., 2020; Bunnnett, 2021). Not only can they become stressed, anxious or feel like they failed if the number of reactions is not up to their expectations, but when the opposite occurs it can motivate them and put them in a better mood (Jiang & Ngien, 2020; Robinson & Smith, 2021).

Courtney Seiter (2016) claimed that social media usage can become an addiction due to two chemicals produced by the human's brain, namely: dopamine and oxytocin. On the one hand, dopamine is known for causing people to seek, desire and search, creating the need of "want". As the author affirms, social media consumers feel more pleased when their friends and followers react positively to their posts (Seiter, 2016). Meaning that, the higher the number of positive reactions they get, the more dopamine their brain produces and the happier it makes them feel. On the other hand, oxytocin is known for being the "cuddle chemical". Its levels can rise to 13% with only a usage of ten minutes on any social media network, reducing stress levels

and increasing levels of trust, generosity, empathy and love. Therefore, as a consequence of dopamine and oxytocin, social networking not only provides positive feelings as, thanks to its addiction, it becomes harder to quit (Seiter, 2016).

Harvey-Jenner (2017) and Kenny (2017) agree that getting likes on social media makes people feel happy, giving them a natural physiological high. Following that way of thinking, Kenny claims: "It's a reward cycle, you get a squirt of dopamine every time you get a like or a positive response on social media". Actually, Sherman et al. (2016) revealed that the same brain circuits triggered when people eat chocolate or earn money are also often stimulated when they see a significant number of reactions.

Tait (2021) launched a poll in The New Statesman UK Edition intending to understand how a one-click interaction may impact our everyday lives and, consequently, moods. The author concluded that 89% of the respondents admit that getting many likes on social media makes them pleased and that after receiving many reactions, 12.5% of them feel cheerful for around an hour, 10.2% for the entire day and 3.1% for a week. As proven before, it seems evident that if receiving a significant number of reactions on a post makes people happy, receiving a small number, or none, makes them unhappy and with a low self-esteem. However, only 32.6% said that receiving few likes would make them upset, while most claimed that it did not (Tait, 2021). Not only do people feel sad for having a small number of likes, as some of them end up deleting their post if it didn't reach a minimum number considered as acceptable (about 42.1%), feel jealous when someone else's post gets a higher number (about 55.4%), ask for others to like their posts (approximately 28.8% of them) or being asked to like someone else's post, 64.1% of them. Finally, when asked whether participants wanted more, fewer or the same number of reactions on their posts, 67.4% claimed they wanted more, 32.4% claimed they wanted the same, and only one person said it wanted less (Tait, 2021).

2.5. Hedonic vs Utilitarian Consumption

Dhar and Wertenbroch (2000) claim that both hedonic and utilitarian factors influence consumer decisions. As it is known, hedonic consumption is associated with luxury, and its purchase is strongly related to guilt and feelings of responsibility (Dahl, Honea, & Manchanda, 2003; Khan & Dhar, 2006). Also, it is primarily motivated by aesthetics, pleasure, emotion, happiness and enjoyment (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Following Dhar and Wertenbroch's study (2000), when people were given a choice between giving up a product for pleasure or use, products for pleasure were given up first. On the other

hand, utilitarian consumption is associated with necessity. It aims to justify basic needs or to accomplish a functional task (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998), providing functional benefits, being rational, practical, goal-oriented and representing people's cognitive preferences (Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998; Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000; Voss et al., 2003; Okada, 2005).

The main difference between these two types of products is the time set to achieve a specific goal. Whereas hedonic products buyers are concerned with the satisfaction of simply achieving their goal, being only worried about the experience of its purchase and the emotion associated with it (Mikalef et al., 2013), experiencing a short-term pleasure, utilitarian products' users are associated with experiencing long-term pleasure since these are more concerned with the process of achieving their goals (Brown et al., 2005; To et al., 2007; Mikalef et al., 2013). Besides, since hedonic options are harder to justify and consumers feel guilty (Okada, 2005; Khan & Dhar, 2006), they tend to shift their preferences to utilitarian options, according to the studies of Dhar and Wertenbroch (2000) and Okada (2005).

2.6. Hypothesis Development

H1: Receiving positive feedback or “high number of likes” leads to a higher self-esteem than negative feedback or “lower number of likes”

Hypothesis one proposes that individuals who tend to have a higher number of likes and, consequently, a positive feedback have a higher self-esteem than those who have a lower number of likes.

H2: It is expected that receiving a higher number of likes leads to a greater preference for the purchase of hedonic products

Hypothesis two proposes that individuals who get a higher number of likes are expected to show a greater preference for purchasing hedonic products over utilitarian products.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The primary purpose of this study is to understand the influence social networks have on their users and how it influences their psychological and purchasing behaviour by taking into account two different types of products, hedonic and utilitarian. Therefore, this section aims to present the research methods used throughout this dissertation. As a result, in this study, four different conditions, two studies, were conducted to analyse the hypothetical influence of social media networks on its users, among other purposes. Both studies were built under an online scenario-based survey.

3.2. Study 1

In Study 1, participants were requested to complete an online scenario-based survey in which they were randomly and equally assigned to one of the two existing studies. In this case, all Study 1's participants were required to share their emotions, thoughts and reactions, using different scales, on one of the two following conditions: how they would react if a post they had shared on their favourite social media platform reached a high (425), or a low (12), number of positive reactions. Regarding the study itself, Study 1 showed a hypothetical purchasing decision that participants had to make between a hedonic and a utilitarian product, such as buying a pair of designer jeans or a vacuum cleaner, both priced the same. A brief description of both products and a matching image was provided to the participants to better imagine the scenario. Afterwards, some general questions on their purchasing decision were made.

3.2.1. Participants

As mentioned previously, this study was built under an online survey, where all participants who volunteered were given their right to remain anonymous. Also, the participants were randomly assigned to one of the two studies and to one of the four different conditions. To spread and collect data from participants in a faster and more effective way, I shared the survey on my personal social media platforms, namely Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, and on the messaging platforms I use the most, specifically WhatsApp and Messenger. Besides, participants were urged to share the survey with others to boost the number of people who responded, i.e., resulting in the snowball technique.

All in all, a total of 131 responses were gathered using the previously described data collection procedure. However, only 90 responses were considered as valid, since the others 41 were excluded for being unfinished. According to demographic data, 65.6% of the participants are female while 34.4% are male. Regarding age, the respondents' average is between 18 and 24 years old (51.1%). As expected, the great majority of participants currently live in Portugal (96.7%). More than half of the participants hold a bachelor's degree (58.9%). In terms of occupation, 46.7% of the participants are currently employed, 31.1% are students, 13.3% are working-students, 5.6% are self-employed and 2.2% are already retired.

3.2.2. Research Materials

3.2.2.1. Independent Variables

Two independent variables were manipulated to test the previously mentioned hypotheses. Likewise, two conditions of a “number of likes on a post” were created (high number of positive reactions on a post; low number of positive reactions on a post), and two different hedonic and utilitarian products had to be chosen (a pair of designer jeans vs vacuum cleaner).

On the one hand, in the “number of likes on a post” condition participants were requested to imagine themselves either having a “high number of positive reactions on a post” they had shared (425), or a “low number of positive reactions on a post” they had shared (12). It was manipulated by asking them to think and rate their emotions and thoughts and asked whether that number of positive reactions on their post was in line with what they were used to having. Moreover, if requested to imagine themselves having a “high number of likes on a post” they had shared, participants were given the following description: “I am interested in understanding your social media habits. I thus ask you to imagine that you are considering posting a picture or a text on your favourite social media platform. Now, take a moment and imagine that your post received **425 positive reactions** and how that would make you feel.” However, when participants were requested to imagine themselves having a “low number of likes on a post” they had shared, the following description was presented: “I am interested in understanding your social media habits. I thus ask you to imagine that you are considering posting a picture or a text on your favourite social media platform. Now, take a moment and imagine that your post received **12 positive reactions** and how that would make you feel.” (See [Appendix A – Block 2](#)).

Figure 1 - High Number of Positive Reactions on a Post

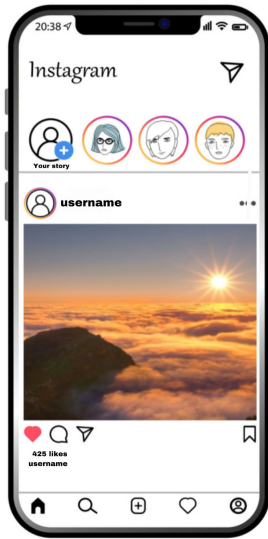
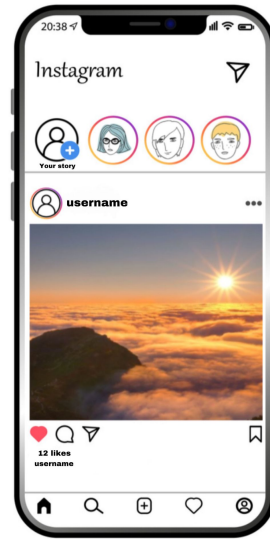


Figure 2 - Low Number of Positive Reactions on a Post



On the other hand, the hedonic and utilitarian product's condition was presented to participants through a hypothetical situation, one of the two possible ones. This condition was being manipulated by asking participants to choose between purchasing a pair of designer jeans (hedonic product) or a vacuum cleaner (utilitarian product), as shown below, both priced the same, and requesting them to answer to some statements to test their self-esteem and mood, on both products.

Figure 3 - Pair of Designer Jeans



Figure 4 - Vacuum Cleaner



3.2.2.2. Dependent Variables:

- Self-Esteem

To measure self-esteem, participants were requested to fill-in a self-esteem questionnaire task taken from the Rosenberg self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, M., 1965). This ten-item scale is used to determine the participants' overall self-worth by assessing both positive and negative aspects about themselves, using a four-point Likert scale, from 1 ("Strongly Agree") to 4 ("Strongly

Disagree”). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Gray-Little, B. et al., 1997) evaluates a commonly used self-report instrument for assessing an individual’s self-esteem. Also, to measure the participants’ self-esteem, they had to complete a task where they were asked how they would react (confident and good about themselves or empowered) if the post they had shared on their favourite social media had a high or low number of positive reactions, on a scale from 1 (“Not at all”) to 7 (“Totally”).

- **Mood**

To measure participants’ mood, they were asked to complete a task where the “number of positive reactions on a post” was manipulating their self-esteem and mood. Participants were asked to think about that situation for as long as they wanted and rate several statements on their happiness, energy, motivation and anger, on a scale from 1 (“Not at all”) to 7 (“Totally”).

- **Appearance**

To check if social media interfered with an individuals’ appearance, a sociocultural attitudes towards appearance rating task was proposed to participants. As such, they were asked several questions on how social media impacts their appearance on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”).

- **Stress, anxiety and depression**

In accordance with the two conditions under analysis, “number of positive reactions on a post” and hedonic vs utilitarian products, not only was self-esteem being manipulated as other variables were also being. To that end, participants were requested to specify how stressed, anxious and depressed they felt on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”).

3.2.3. Procedure

To gather, in a short amount of time, all the necessary data to proceed with this dissertation, an online survey-based experimental study on Qualtrics (see [Appendix A](#)), characterized as being a widely used online survey platform, was conducted. This platform was chosen to host such a research project due to its effectiveness, being shared on several social media streams, as mentioned previously, to reach a wider audience and to solve the research questions created throughout this study’s process.

Participants were randomly and equally assigned to one of the two conditions. They needed to deliberate whether to purchase a pair of designer jeans or a vacuum cleaner, both priced the same, and were requested to imagine themselves posting something on their favourite social media platform and reaching a considerably high or low number of likes. However, before starting to perform the tasks, a brief explanation of both scenarios was provided to the participants, alongside with a corresponding image, so that they could readily imagine themselves making judgments based on it (see [Appendix A – Block 4](#)).

In addition, participants were given the chance to conduct the survey in English or Portuguese. Since Qualtrics' default language is English, I translated the survey to Portuguese to get more responses. The survey is distributed into seven different blocks, specifically:

Block 1: Introductory Message

As the block's title explains itself, this one focused on welcoming the participants and clarifying the survey's main scope. General information on the survey was given to participants, including the estimated time to complete it and that their responses would be collected anonymously. Finally, and as told before, the survey was presented in two languages, English or Portuguese, allowing participants to choose the one that fitted them the most.

Block 2: Manipulation of reactions on a post (higher and lower number)

Subsequently, participants were randomly and equally allocated to one of two different scenarios. They were requested to imagine themselves posting something on their favourite social media platform, where half of them had a higher number of positive reactions on their post than the other half. Additionally, and in order for the participants to better imagine themselves in that specific situation, an image with a description of the scenario was provided to them. Also, participants were asked to think about their emotions, thoughts and reactions and rate several statements in terms of confidence, empowerment, happiness, energy, motivation, anxiety and stress.

Block 3: Self-Esteem

In this section, participants were requested to provide their opinion, accordingly to the Rosenberg Scale (Rosenberg, M., 1965) from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 4 (“Strongly Agree”), on how they felt about themselves. This block aimed to better understand how participants saw themselves and how they subjectively evaluated their own worth, assessing the following

variables: satisfaction, not good at anything, have good qualities, do things as well as others, doesn't feel proud, feels useless, feels valued, have respect for oneself, failure and have a positive attitude towards oneself.

Block 4: Condition Study 1

Afterwards, participants were also randomly allocated to one of two different scenarios. They were requested to imagine themselves shopping at their local mall, during sales season, in between buying two different products priced the same, a pair of designer jeans or a vacuum cleaner. As previously mentioned, a brief description of the task and a matching image were provided to participants to think and better imagine themselves in that specific situation. They were also asked to answer several statements on how they felt in terms of happiness, confidence, willingness to pay for that particular product, among others.

Block 5: Social Media Addiction, Social Media Effects, Sociocultural Attitudes

Afterwards, participants were requested to answer several statements on their addiction to social media, its effects, and how it may impact their appearance, opinions, and usage of its platforms.

Block 6: Social Media Usage

The main goal of this block is to better understand the participants' social media usage habits, namely what social media networks, messaging platforms and dating applications they use. Also, how much time, on average, do they spend on them daily and for what reasons (keep up with the news, entertainment, among other reasons).

Block 7: Demographics

To conclude the survey, a block with demographic information was included to collect data from participants, such as gender, age, country of residence, level of education and current occupation (see [Appendix A – Block 7](#) for more details). This block was designed to evaluate the participants' influence throughout the survey.

3.2.4. Design

The present study was built according to a 2x1 between-participant design, as shown in Table 1, including the two independent variables: Study 1 (Pair of designer jeans; Vacuum cleaner) and Number of Positive Reactions on a Post (High; Low). As mentioned before, participants were requested to imagine themselves shopping on their local mall, on sales season, to buy

either a pair of designer jeans or a vacuum cleaner, where both items were equally priced, and to also imagine themselves on a scenario where the post they had shared on social media had a high, or low, number of likes. In each task, they would need to rate statements on how they felt about their purchasing decision and the number of positive reactions their post had.

Table 1 – Study 1 Design

		Number of Positive Reactions on a Post	
		High	Low
Study 1	Pair of designer jeans vs Vacuum cleaner	(Pair of designer jeans vs Vacuum cleaner; High number of positive reactions on a post)	(Pair of designer jeans vs Vacuum cleaner; Low number of positive reactions on a post)

3.3. Study 2

In Study 2, participants were asked to complete an online scenario-based survey in which they were randomized, equally, to one of two existing studies. In this scenario, Study 2’s participants were asked to express their emotions, thoughts and reactions according to their individual situation, by using use different scales, being assigned to one of two conditions: how they would react if a post they had shared on their favourite social media platform reached a high (425), or a low (12), number of positive reactions. Concerning the study itself, Study 2 showed a hypothetical purchasing decision that participants had to make between a hedonic and a utilitarian product, such as two sunglasses with different characteristics and different prices. Additionally, a brief description of both sunglasses was provided to participants to better imagine the scenario. Afterwards, some general questions on their purchasing decision were made.

3.3.1. Participants

As previously stated, this study was conducted using an online survey, where all participants identity was kept anonymous. The survey was published on my own social media networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, as well as the messaging platforms I use the most, WhatsApp and Messenger, to promote it and gather data from participants more quickly and effectively. Furthermore, participants were encouraged to share the survey with others to increase the number of individuals who responded, a strategy known as the snowball effect.

All in all, a total of 138 responses were gathered using the previously described data collection procedure. However, only 98 responses were considered as valid, since the others 40 were excluded for being unfinished. According to demographic data, 69.4% of the participants are female, 29.6% are male and only 1% would rather not specify their gender. Regarding age, the respondents' average is between 18 and 24 years old (45.9%). As expected, the great majority of participants currently live in Portugal (93.9%). More than half of the participants hold a bachelor's degree (58.2%). In terms of occupation, 45.9% of the participants are currently employed, 26.5% are students, 14.3% are working-students, 10.2% are self-employed and 3.1% are currently unemployed.

3.3.2. Research Materials

3.3.2.1. Independent Variables

To test all hypotheses, two independent variables were manipulated. Correspondingly, two different hedonic and utilitarian products had to be chosen (Sunglasses A vs Sunglasses B), and one of the two different conditions of the “number of positive reactions on a post” (high number; low number) was allocated.

On the one hand, participants were requested to imagine themselves having either a “high number of positive reactions on a post” they had shared (425), or a “low number of positive reactions on a post” they had shared (12), in the number of likes on a post condition. This condition was manipulated by asking them to think and rate their emotions and thoughts, as well as whether the number of positive reactions on their post matched their expectations. (For more details on its descriptions please check [Appendix B – Block 2](#))

The hedonic and utilitarian products condition, on the other hand, was presented to participants through a hypothetical situation. They were requested to choose between the hedonic and utilitarian sunglasses and answer some statements to assess their self-esteem and mood, on both products. In addition, participants were asked to pick between two distinct styles of sunglasses (Sunglasses A: hedonic and more expensive; Sunglasses B: utilitarian and cheaper), both of which were priced differently.

Table 2 - Sunglasses A vs Sunglasses B characteristics

Sunglasses A	Sunglasses B
Italian designer frames	American frames
Highly resistant to scratch and impact	Resistant to moderate impact and scrape
Ultra-lightweight with adjustable temples and nose pads	Regular weight fixed temples and nose pads
Average customer rating: 5 out of 5	Average customer rating: 4 out of 5
Price = \$110	Price = \$69

3.3.2.2. Dependent Variables

- Self-Esteem

Participants were asked to answer some statements on a four-point Likert Scale to gauge their self-esteem. They were asked to rate their overall self-worth on a scale from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 4 (“Strongly Agree”), taking into consideration both positive and negative feelings about themselves (Rosenberg, M., 1965). Moreover, on a scale from 1 (“Not at all”) to 7 (“Totally”), participants were asked to answer how they would react (confident and good about themselves or empowered) if the post they had shared on their favourite social media had a high or low number of positive reactions.

- Mood

Participants were requested to complete a task where the “number of positive reactions on a post” was manipulating their self-esteem and mood. By proposing them to think about this situation for as long as they wanted and rate its respective statements in terms of their happiness, energy, motivation and angeriness, on a scale from 1 (“Not at all”) to 7 (“Totally”), it would be possible to measure the participants’ mood.

- Appearance

Participants were asked several questions on how social media impacts their appearance on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”), to check if social media interfered with their appearance.

- **Stress, anxiety and depression**

Ranging from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”), on a five-point Likert scale, participants were requested to specify how stressed, anxious and depressed they felt when the two conditions under analysis, “number of positive reactions on a post” and hedonic vs utilitarian products, were manipulating their self-esteem and other variables.

3.3.3. Procedure

Study 2’s procedure was similar to Study 1’s, for further information please check [3.2.3. Procedure](#) chapter. (See [Appendix B](#) for more details)

Participants were randomized to one of two existing conditions. They had to choose between Sunglasses A (more hedonic, hence more costly) and Sunglasses B (more utilitarian, therefore less expensive), as well as imagine themselves posting something on their favourite social media network and receiving a significant high or low number of likes, both conditions equally divided. However, before starting to perform the tasks, participants were given a brief description of both scenarios so that they could easily visualize themselves making judgements based on them (see [Appendix B – Block 4](#) for more details on its descriptions).

Block 1: Introductory Message

Study 2’s Block 1 is identical do Study 1’s, please check [Block 1: Introductory Message](#) chapter to know more.

Block 2: Manipulation of reactions on a post (higher and lower number)

Study 2’s manipulation of reactions on a post block is similar to the one presented in Study 1, please check [Block 2: Manipulation of reactions on a post \(higher and lower number\)](#) for better understanding on its goal.

Block 3: Self-Esteem

Study 2’s section of self-esteem is alike to Study 1’s, please check [Block 3: Self-Esteem](#) to know more about it.

Block 4: Condition Study 2

Subsequently, participants were assigned randomly to one of two situations. In this case, they were requested to imagine themselves choosing between two different pairs of sunglasses, one of which was described as more utilitarian (Sunglasses B) and the other as more hedonic

(Sunglasses A), both with different pricing. As previously stated, participants were given a brief description of the activity to think about and better visualize themselves in that precise situation. They were also asked to answer a series of statements on their feelings about happiness, confidence, willingness to pay for that product, among others.

Block 5: Social Media Addiction, Social Media Effects, Sociocultural Attitudes

Again, Study’s 2 block of social media addiction, effects and sociocultural attitudes is similar to Study 1’s [Block 5](#), please check for further details.

Block 6: Social Media Usage

This social media usage block is alike to Study 1’s [Block 6](#), please check to better understand its objective.

Block 7: Demographics

Finally, Study 2’s demographics section is also similar to Study 1’s. Therefore, for better understanding of its structure please check [Block 7: Demographics](#).

3.3.4. Design

As shown in Table 2, the current study was built under a 2x1 between-participant design, with two independent variables: Study 2 (Sunglasses A vs Sunglasses B) and Number of Positive Reactions on a Post (High; Low). Participants were asked to imagine themselves in a situation where they were choosing between two different types of sunglasses with various characteristics and pricing, as well as a scenario in which a post they had shared on social media had a high, or low, number of likes. For each task, they would have to rate several statements based on how they felt about their purchase decision and the number of positive reactions their post received.

Table 3 – Study 2 Design

		Number of Positive Reactions on a Post	
		High	Low
Study 2	Sunglasses A	(Sunglasses A vs Sunglasses	(Sunglasses A vs Sunglasses
	vs	B; High number of positive	B; Low number of positive
	Sunglasses B	reactions on a post)	reactions on a post)

4. RESULTS

In this chapter, a deep analysis of the surveys' results will be analysed by performing a series of independent sample t-tests, and, consequently, these will be described and explained. Additionally, both studies were subjected to the same statistical analysis.

4.1. STUDY 1

4.1.1. Demographics

In this analysis, only two conditions are under study, respectively: “buying a pair of designer jeans or a vacuum cleaner; high number of positive reactions on a post” and “buying a pair of designer jeans or a vacuum cleaner; low number of positive reactions on a post”. This first analysis counted a total of 131 participants however, only 90 completed it and 41 candidates were excluded due to the lack of responses. In addition, 50 participants were under the circumstance “high number of positive reactions on a post”, while 40 candidates were under the “low number of positive reactions on a post” condition.

Table 4 - Study 1: Demographics

		Absolute Value	Percentage
Gender	Male	31	34.4%
	Female	59	65.6%
	Non-binary	0	0%
	Prefer not to say	0	0%
Age	Under 18	1	1.1%
	18-24	46	51.1%
	25-34	15	16.7%
	35-44	6	6.7%
	45-54	14	15.6%
	55-64	8	8.9%
	Above 65	0	0%
	Prefer not to say	0	0%
Country	Portugal	87	96.7%
	Germany	1	1.1%
	Croatia	1	1.1%
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	1	1.1%
Education	Less than High School	0	0%

	High School	8	8.9%
	Bachelor's Degree	53	58.9%
	Master's Degree	24	26.7%
	PhD	1	1.1%
	Post Graduate	4	4.4%
	Other	0	0%
Occupation	Student	28	31.1%
	Working-student	12	13.3%
	Employed	42	46.7%
	Unemployed	0	0%
	Self-employed	5	5.6%
	Retired	2	2.2%
	Other	1	1.1%

4.1.2. Analysis

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

High vs Low Number of Positive Reactions

Confidence

Participants on the condition of high number of likes experienced more confidence ($M = 8.48$; $SD = 1.764$) than participants on the condition of low numbers of likes ($M = 7.18$; $SD = 2.881$; $t(88) = 2.644$; $p = .010$).

Empowerment

Participants on the condition of high number of likes experienced more empowerment ($M = 7.20$; $SD = 2.770$) than participants on the condition of low numbers of likes ($M = 6.38$; $SD = 3.264$; $t(88) = 1.297$; $p = .198$).

Feeling good & Happiness

Participants on the condition of high number of likes felt better and happier with themselves ($M = 7.77$; $SD = 2.167$) than participants on the condition of low numbers of likes ($M = 7.18$; $SD = 3.012$; $t(88) = 1.089$; $p = .279$).

Energized and motivated

Participants on the condition of high number of likes felt more energized and motivated ($M = 7.60$; $SD = 2.483$) than participants on the condition of low numbers of likes ($M = 6.90$; $SD = 3.062$); $t(88) = 1.198$; $p = .234$.

Upset

Participants on the condition of high number of likes felt less upset with themselves ($M = 6.74$; $SD = .569$) than participants on the condition of low numbers of likes ($M = 6.10$; $SD = 1.845$); $t(75) = 2.241$; $p = .028$.

Expected number of likes

Participants on the condition of high number of likes experienced a more significant agreement in the number of likes they are used to having ($M = 3.76$; $SD = 1.975$) than participants on the condition of low numbers of likes ($M = 1.93$; $SD = 1.526$; $t(88) = 4.833$; $p < .001$).

Table 5 - Study 1: Independent Variable (Independent Sample T-Tests)

	Number of Positive Reactions	Mean \pm SD	p - value
Confidence	High	8.48 \pm 1.764	$p = .010$
	Low	7.18 \pm 2.881	(Significant)
Empowerment	High	7.20 \pm 2.770	$p = .198$
	Low	6.38 \pm 3.264	(Not significant)
Feeling good & Happiness	High	7.77 \pm 2.167	$p = .279$
	Low	7.18 \pm 3.012	(Not significant)
Energized and motivated	High	7.60 \pm 2.483	$p = .234$
	Low	6.90 \pm 3.062	(Not significant)
Upset	High	6.74 \pm .569	$p = .028$
	Low	6.10 \pm 1.845	(Significant)
Expected number of likes	High	3.76 \pm 1.975	$p < .001$
	Low	1.93 \pm 1.526	(Significant)

Self-Esteem

We tested the effect of receiving high or low number of likes on this measure ($\alpha = .873$), and found that this measure indicates a high level of internal consistency. All in all, on average,

participants who completed the “number of likes on a post” they had shared task while imagining themselves having a “high number of positive reactions” on it felt lower in self-esteem ($M = 3.07; SD = .496$) than those who imagined themselves having a “low number of positive reactions on a post” ($M = 3.27; SD = .411$). This difference, $-.20$, was verified to be statistically significant, $t(88) = -2.139; p = .035$.

Hedonic vs Utilitarian Products

For this study, participants were allocated to choose one of the two products (Hedonic: Pair of designer jeans; Utilitarian: Vacuum cleaner) and to assess their purchasing decision for the both of them. Overall, participants would rather purchase a pair of designer jeans rather than a vacuum cleaner ($M = 2.83; SD = 1.956$).

In reference to the pair of designer jeans product, participants who went through the “high number of positive reactions on a post” condition, on average: slightly intended to purchase them less ($M = 6.18; SD = 2.430$) than those on the “low number of likes” condition ($M = 6.68; SD = 1.940$), although this difference, $-.50$, is non-significant ($t(88) = -1.048; p = .297$); were less satisfied purchasing them, therefore didn’t take much pleasure with its consumption ($M = 6.56; SD = 1.550$) in comparison to those on the “low” condition ($M = 7.09; SD = 1.554$), being this difference, $-.53$, also not significant $t(88) = -1.615; p = .110$; were not as confident with their purchasing decision as those on the “low” condition ($t(88) = -2.185; p = .032$); finally, would not recommend this hedonic product to a friend ($M = 6.54; SD = 2.092$) as much as those on the “low number of likes” condition ($M = 6.85; SD = 1.981$), being this difference, $-.31$, not significant, $t(88) = -.715; p = .476$. In sum, participants in the “high likes” condition tend to expect less value from hedonic consumption options than participants who received fewer social media likes.

On the other hand, regarding the vacuum cleaner product, participants who went through the “high number of positive reactions on a post” condition, on average: presented no differences in their intention to purchase when compared to those on the “low number of likes” condition ($t(88) = -.356; p = .722$); were happier and more satisfied purchasing them, taking therefore more pleasure with its consumption ($M = 5.30; SD = 1.890$) than those on the “low” condition ($M = 5.15; SD = 2.184$), although this difference, $.15$, is also not significant, $t(88) = .349; p = .728$; were more confident with their purchasing decision ($M =$

5.92; $SD = 2.239$) than those on the “low” condition ($M = 5.43$; $SD = 2.541$), being this difference, .49, not statistically significant, $t(88) = .981$; $p = .329$; finally, would not recommend this utilitarian product to a friend as much as those on the “low number of likes” condition ($t(88) = -.393$; $p = .695$).

In sum, there are no differences between the high and low number of likes conditions in how much value participants expect from utilitarian consumption options since these utilitarian products are not at all significant. However, there are clear tendencies to pick hedonic products, even though practically all the comparisons did not reach the significance level. Though participants under the high number of likes conditions were more likely to purchase the hedonic product, in this case, a pair of designer jeans, we concluded that their self-esteem was low and their preference for hedonic options seemed to be reduced. Baumeister (1993) supports this phenomenon by clarifying that since consumers with low self-esteem tend to be more insecure and disbelieve of their likability and capability, they are substantially less likely to participate in compensatory behaviours (Vandellen et al., 2011). That is, Stuppy et al. (2020) suggest that individuals with a low self-esteem opt for the purchase of utilitarian products, in this case a vacuum cleaner.

Social Media Addiction, Social Media Effects, Sociocultural Attitudes

Regarding the participants social media addiction level, on average, they felt sometimes dependent to it ($M = 3.17$; $SE = 1.144$), they rarely try to reduce its usage ($M = 2.81$; $SE = .923$), feel the need to use more social media networks ($M = 2.77$; $SE = 1.028$), think about it nor plan its use ($M = 2.36$; $SE = 1.221$), rarely use social media to get over their problems ($M = 2.32$; $SE = 1.047$), they rarely become impatient and angry if its networks go down ($M = 2.79$; $SE = 1.353$) or if they can no longer use them ($M = 2.70$; $SE = 1.302$), and its usage does not affect negatively their work or studies ($M = 1.96$; $SE = 1.101$).

According to the social media effects, on average, participants do not feel anxious when social media is running slower than usual ($M = 2.68$; $SE = 1.253$), they do not care much about being judged by the content they share ($M = 2.91$; $SE = 1.260$), they do not worry much if the content they share negatively influences their professional or academic life ($M = 2.90$; $SE = 1.366$), they do not tend to open a social media app after just closing one out of annoyance ($M = 3.06$; $SE = 1.377$), participants were not sure whether they felt sad if their

friends shared on their social media that they were gathered and had not invited them ($M = 2.93; SE = 1.428$), they do not think their life is boring after seeing posts from others doing different activities ($M = 2.64; SE = 1.292$), and they do not feel frustrated if they do not get likes, comments or reactions on their posts ($M = 2.57; SE = 1.299$).

Concerning the sociocultural attitudes towards appearance, participants, on average, did not think about looking happy ($M = 2.22; SE = 1.243$), did not think about looking athletic or on doing things to look more athletic, ($M = 2.32; SE = 1.169$) and ($M = 2.18; SE = 1.128$) respectively, at times spent more time on taking care of themselves to improve their appearance ($M = 3.13; SE = 1.210$), did not feel at all pressure from their family or friends to improve their appearance, ($M = 1.97; SE = 1.136$) and ($M = 1.81; SE = .982$) respectively, however felt some pressure from social media ($M = 2.38; SE = 1.329$). Participants have not thought much about aesthetic procedures to improve their appearance ($M = 2.49; SE = 1.424$), not even when comparing themselves with others on social media ($M = 2.02; SE = 1.390$), they also do not feel that the idea they have of their body is strongly associated with what they see on social media nor with what other people tell them, ($M = 2.63; SE = 1.386$) and ($M = 2.71; SE = 1.283$) respectively. Additionally, participants do not make, at all, decisions about their bodies according to what they see being accepted on social media ($M = 2.08; SE = 1.144$), they have abstained themselves from posting something for fear of being judged on their appearance or on their opinions, ($M = 2.87; SE = 1.455$) and ($M = 2.71; SE = 1.292$) respectively, and, finally, do not spend much time pondering on what to share on their social media networks ($M = 2.56; SE = 1.515$).

Social Media Usage

Social media networks participants use the most and its reasons

Regarding the social media networks participants use the most, Instagram and WhatsApp are the most used ones, representing 18.7% and 18.5% of all participants, respectively. Facebook is used by 16%, while YouTube is used by 12.5%, TikTok by 8.5%, LinkedIn by 7.7%, Twitter and Pinterest by 5.8% each, Snapchat by 4% and 1.5% of the participants do not use social media. Finally, the least used social media networks are Tinder and Tumblr, representing .6% and .4% of all participants, respectively.

On average, participants who were exposed to this Study considered that they spent less than an hour on social media daily ($M = 2.76; SE = .928$). Additionally, they also considered that

their usage of social media networks derived a lot from keeping up with the news ($M = 8.30; SE = 2.175$), interacting and keeping up with friends and family ($M = 8.14; SE = 2.086$) and ($M = 7.57; SE = 2.597$) respectively, due to academic or professional reasons ($M = 6.22; SE = 2.747$) and from following influencers/famous people on their networks ($M = 5.36; SE = 3.025$). Finally, the main reason for which they use their social media the most is for entertainment ($M = 8.86; SE = 1.952$), and the minor one is for meeting new people ($M = 3.51; SE = 2.523$).

4.2. STUDY 2

4.2.1. Demographics

On the other hand, in Study 2, two conditions are under analysis, respectively: “buying Sunglasses A or Sunglasses B; high number of reactions on a post” and “buying Sunglasses A or Sunglasses B; low number of reactions on a post”. A total of 138 responses were collected, but only 98 participants completed the survey successfully, being 40 participants excluded for the lack of responses. Moreover, 52 participants were exposed to the condition “high number of likes on a post”, while 46 candidates were under the “low number of likes on a post” condition.

Table 6 - Study 2: Demographics

		Absolute Value	Percentage
Gender	Male	29	29.6%
	Female	68	69.4%
	Non-binary	0	0%
	Prefer not to say	1	1%
Age	Under 18	2	2%
	18-24	45	45.9%
	25-34	19	19.4%
	35-44	4	4.1%
	45-54	20	20.4%
	55-64	7	7.1%
	Above 65	1	1.1%
	Prefer not to say	0	0%
Country	Portugal	92	93.9%
	Germany	4	4.1%

	Estonia	1	1%
	Italy	1	1%
	Less than High School	0	0%
	High School	15	15.3%
	Bachelor's Degree	57	58.2%
Education	Master's Degree	21	21.4%
	PhD	0	0%
	Post Graduate	5	5.1%
	Other	0	0%
	Student	26	26.5%
	Working-student	14	14.3%
	Employed	45	45.9%
Occupation	Unemployed	3	3.1%
	Self-employed	10	10.2%
	Retired	0	0%
	Other	0	0%

4.2.2. Analysis

Independent Variable

High vs Low Number of Positive Reactions

Confidence

Participants on the condition of high number of likes experienced more confidence ($M = 8.23; SD = 1.875$) than participants on the condition of low numbers of likes ($M = 6.80; SD = 2.579; t(96) = 3.157; p = .002$).

Empowerment

Participants on the condition of high number of likes experienced less empowerment ($M = 6.02; SD = 3.134$) than participants on the condition of low numbers of likes ($M = 6.28; SD = 3.009; t(96) = -.423; p = .673$).

Feeling good & Happiness

Participants on the condition of high number of likes felt better and happier with themselves ($M = 7.70; SD = 2.037$) than participants on the condition of low numbers of likes ($M = 7.07; SD = 2.600; t(96) = 1.357; p = .178$).

Energized and motivated

Participants on the condition of high number of likes felt more energized and motivated ($M = 6.94; SD = 2.782$) than participants on the condition of low numbers of likes ($M = 6.80; SD = 3.0742$); $t(96) = .233; p = .816$.

Upset

Participants on the condition of high number of likes felt less upset with themselves ($M = 6.82; SD = .441$) than participants on the condition of low numbers of likes ($M = 6.30; SD = .837$); $t(77) = 3.589; p < .001$.

Expected number of likes

Participants on the condition of high number of likes experienced a more significant agreement in the number of likes they are used to having ($M = 3.63; SD = 2.151$) than participants on the condition of low numbers of likes ($M = 2.37; SD = 1.925$); $t(96) = 3.051; p = .003$.

Table 7 - Study 2: Independent Variables (Independent Sample T-Tests)

	Number of Positive Reactions	Mean \pm SD	p - value
Confidence	High	8.23 \pm 1.875	$p = .002$
	Low	6.80 \pm 2.579	(Significant)
Empowerment	High	6.02 \pm 3.134	$p = .673$
	Low	6.28 \pm 3.009	(Not significant)
Feeling good & Happiness	High	7.70 \pm 2.037	$p = .178$
	Low	7.07 \pm 2.600	(Not significant)
Energized and motivated	High	6.94 \pm 2.782	$p = .816$
	Low	6.80 \pm 3.074	(Not significant)
Upset	High	6.82 \pm .441	$p < .001$
	Low	6.30 \pm .837	(Significant)
Expected number of likes	High	3.63 \pm 2.151	$p = .003$
	Low	2.37 \pm 1.925	(Significant)

Self-Esteem

Similarly to the Study 1's condition, participants on Study 2 were also allocated to a high or a low number of likes condition to measure several specific variables, namely: satisfaction, not

good at anything, have good qualities, do things as well as others, doesn't feel proud, feels useless, feels valued, have respect for oneself, failure and have a positive attitude towards oneself.

We tested the effect of receiving high or low number of likes on this measure ($\alpha = .855$), and found that this measure indicates a high level of internal consistency. All in all, on average, participants imagining themselves having a "high number of positive reactions" on it felt lower in self-esteem ($M = 2.98; SD = .511$) than those who imagined themselves having a "low number of positive reactions on a post" ($M = 3.11; SD = .493$). This difference, $-.13$, was verified to be not statistically significant, $t(96) = -1.278; p = .204$.

Hedonic vs Utilitarian Products

For this study, participants were allocated to choose one of the two products (Hedonic: Sunglasses A; Utilitarian: Sunglasses B) and to measure their purchasing decision for the both of them. Overall, participants would rather purchase Sunglasses A, the hedonic ones, rather than Sunglasses B ($M = 2.74; SD = 1.749$).

In reference to the hedonic sunglasses, participants exposed to the "high number of positive reactions on a post" condition, on average: slightly intended to purchase them less ($M = 6.15; SD = 1.934$) than those on the "low number of likes" condition ($M = 6.72; SD = 1.655$), although this difference, $-.57$, is non-significant, $t(96) = -1.539; p = .127$; were less satisfied purchasing them, therefore didn't take much pleasure with its consumption in comparison to those on the "low" condition ($t(96) = -2.215; p = .029$); were not as confident with their purchasing decision as those on the "low" condition ($t(96) = -2.475; p = .015$); finally, would not recommend this hedonic product to a friend as much as those on the "low number of likes" condition ($t(96) = -2.148; p = .034$). In sum, participants in the "high likes" condition tend to expect less value from hedonic consumption options than participants who received a fewer social media likes.

On the other hand, regarding the utilitarian sunglasses, participants exposed to the "high number of likes on a post" condition, on average: presented no differences in their intention to purchase when compared to those on the "low number of likes" condition ($t(96) = -.761; p = .448$); were less satisfied purchasing them, therefore didn't take much pleasure with its consumption

in comparison to those on the “low” condition ($t(96) = -2.215; p = .029$); present no differences in its confidence with its purchase when compared to those on the “low” condition ($t(96) = -1.077; p = .284$); finally, present no differences when recommending these sunglasses to a friend when compared to those on the “low number of likes” condition ($t(96) = .695; p = .489$). As in Study 1, in Study 2 there are also no differences between the high and low number of likes conditions in how much value participants expect from more utilitarian consumption options since these utilitarian products are practically all not significant.

Social Media Addiction, Social Media Effects, Sociocultural Attitudes

Regarding the participants social media addiction level, on average, they felt sometimes dependent to it ($M = 3.13; SE = 1.081$), sometimes tried to reduce its usage ($M = 2.98; SE = .974$), rarely felt the need to use more social media networks ($M = 2.82; SE = .998$), think about it nor plan its use ($M = 2.30; SE = 1.237$), rarely use social media to get over their problems (professional or personal) ($M = 2.21; SE = 1.115$), rarely become impatient and angry if its networks go down ($M = 2.43; SE = 1.175$) or if they can no longer use them ($M = 2.37; SE = 1.097$), and its usage does not affect negatively their work or studies ($M = 2.26; SE = 1.213$).

According to the social media effects, on average, participants do not feel anxious when social media is running slower than usual ($M = 2.84; SE = 1.146$), they do not care much about being judged by the content they share ($M = 3.02; SE = 1.377$), they do not worry much if the content they share negatively influences their professional or academic life ($M = 2.87; SE = 1.375$), they might open a social media app after just closing one out of annoyance ($M = 3.18; SE = 1.522$), participants were not sure whether they felt sad if their friends shared on their social media that they were gathered and had not invited them ($M = 3.23; SE = 1.361$), they do not consider their life is boring after seeing posts from others doing different activities ($M = 2.85; SE = 1.263$), and they do not feel frustrated if they do not get likes, comments or reactions on their posts ($M = 2.82; SE = 1.255$).

Concerning the sociocultural attitudes towards appearance, participants, on average, did not think about looking happy ($M = 2.60; SE = 1.360$), did not think about looking athletic or on doing things to look more athletic, ($M = 2.60; SE = 1.337$) and ($M = 2.35; SE = 1.277$) respectively, spent more time on taking care of themselves to improve their appearance

($M = 3.19; SE = 1.052$), they did not feel at all pressure from their family or friends to improve their appearance, ($M = 1.82; SE = 1.029$) and ($M = 1.79; SE = 1.018$) respectively, however felt some pressure, not much, from social media ($M = 2.49; SE = 1.394$). Participants have not thought much about aesthetic procedures to improve their appearance ($M = 2.50; SE = 1.423$), much less when comparing themselves with others on social media ($M = 2.01; SE = 1.248$), they also do not feel that the idea they have of their body is strongly associated with what they see on social media nor with what other people tell them, ($M = 2.66; SE = 1.414$) and ($M = 2.60; SE = 1.375$) respectively. Additionally, participants do not make decisions about their bodies according to what they see being accepted on social media ($M = 2.30; SE = 1.364$), they at times abstain themselves from posting something for fear of being judged on their appearance or on their opinions, ($M = 3.12; SE = 1.494$) and ($M = 2.98; SE = 1.268$) respectively, and, finally, they do not spend much time pondering on what to share on their social media networks ($M = 2.97; SE = 1.453$).

Social Media Usage

Social media networks participants use the most and its reasons

Regarding the social media networks participants use the most, WhatsApp and Instagram are the most used ones, representing 18.7% and 18.5% of all participants, respectively. Facebook is used by 14.3%, while YouTube is used by 11%, LinkedIn by 9.4%, TikTok by 6.7%, Pinterest by 4.6%, Twitter by 4.2%, Snapchat by 2.3% and only .4% of the participants use Tinder. Finally, the least used social media networks are Tumblr and Grindr, each representing .2% of all participants.

On average, participants who were exposed to this Study considered that they spent less than an hour on social media daily ($M = 2.94; SE = 1.034$). Additionally, they also considered that their usage of social media networks derived a lot from keeping up with the news ($M = 8.23; SE = 2.564$), interacting and keeping up with friends and family ($M = 8.56; SE = 2.381$) and ($M = 7.42; SE = 2.720$) respectively, due to academic or professional reasons ($M = 5.94; SE = 2.903$) and from following influencers/famous people on their networks ($M = 4.73; SE = 3.051$). Finally, the main reason for which they use their social media the most is for entertainment ($M = 8.94; SE = 2.163$), and the minor one is for meeting new people ($M = 3.45; SE = 2.721$).

Regarding the social media networks participants use the most, WhatsApp and Instagram are the most used ones, representing 18.7% and 18.5% of all participants, respectively. Facebook is used by 14.3%, while YouTube is used by 11%, LinkedIn by 9.4%, TikTok by 6.7%, Pinterest by 4.6%, Twitter by 4.2%, Snapchat by 2.3% and .4% of the participants use Tinder. Finally, the least used social media networks are Tumblr and Grindr, each representing .2% of all participants.

5. GENERAL DISCUSSION

This final chapter discusses the main findings and results from both studies. Likewise, the limitations and suggestions for future research are also presented.

5.1. Academic Implications

The main goal of this dissertation, as previously stated, is to understand the influence of social media on human beings, on their psychological self and, consequently, on their purchasing behaviour, by analysing several factors. Previous research assumed that social media likes influence a consumer's purchasing decision, i.e., consumers with a “high number of likes” on a social media post feel more influenced to purchase hedonic products, while those with fewer likes tend to purchase, in general, more utilitarian ones (Bhattacharyya & Bose, 2020). However, these findings somehow contradict the results taken from this dissertation. Throughout this dissertation, two studies assessing two different conditions each were conducted, increasing the study's credibility and amplifying the reliability of the results since the preference for hedonic or utilitarian products is measured in multiple ways. According to the results obtained, it was possible to conclude that participants, in either condition, showed a greater preference for purchasing hedonic products.

H1: Receiving positive feedback or “high number of likes” leads to a higher self-esteem than negative feedback or “lower number of likes”

To assess the hypothetical effect of the first hypothesis, participants were assigned to the two different conditions under analysis, so it was possible to compare how the high and low number of likes and, consequently, the positive or negative feedback, influenced their self-esteem. Bearing in mind the different variables and manipulations of the consumers' self-esteem, having a higher number of likes and positive feedback seems to lead to the participant's high self-esteem, supporting the first hypothesis proposed.

Study 1

According to Study 1, participants who were asked to imagine themselves having a “high number of likes” felt more confident, empowered, better and happier, energized and motivated and less upset than those on the “low number of likes” condition. However, on average, they felt lower in self-esteem than participants who received a lower number of likes, making the difference between the two groups statistically significant ($p = .035$).

Study 2

In the second study, participants who were asked to imagine themselves having a “high number of likes” felt more confident, better and happier, more energized and motivated but less empowered and more upset than those on the “low” condition. However, even though on average participants on this study also felt lower on self-esteem, their overall performance in this task was not statistically significant ($p = .204$). All things considered, even though both studies seem to converge on the idea that some well-being measures seem to have a positive effect when having a higher number of likes, self-esteem appears to be negatively influenced by the high number of likes condition. Therefore, we can conclude that we might be in the presence of a self-affirmation effect.

As Dunning (2007) states, if people are concerned about what they show to others, then affirming the self should reduce their concern on those matters, i.e., servicing the needs of self-esteem first may lead to people making decisions with less regard for stigma later on. Sherman and Cohen (2006), along with Steel (1988), emphasized that people pondered several aspects about themselves that made them proud before being challenged to make esteem-threatening decisions. Affirmations assist in replacing those negative thoughts with positive ones. Steele's self-affirmation theory supports that people are driven to affirm their beliefs to regard themselves as competent and rational persons. As such, when one's self-integrity is challenged, confirming a main part of one's identity helps restore integrity and reduce the person's self (Steele, 1988). On the whole, Dunning (2007) highlights that self-affirmation seems to reduce the intensity with which people defend their sacred beliefs about themselves.

H2: It is expected that receiving a higher number of likes leads to a greater preference for the purchase of hedonic products

To assess the second hypothesis, participants were assigned to one of the two conditions under analysis, “high number of likes” and “low number of likes”, and were presented with two different products (one hedonic and one utilitarian). All in all, there were no differences across both studies regarding the participants' preferences on hedonic consumption options. Therefore, it was possible to conclude that, in both studies, participants would rather purchase the hedonic product over the utilitarian one, not corroborating with this hypothesis.

Study 1

In the first study, there were marginally significant variations ($p = .089$) in purchasing the hedonic product across the participants under the high and low number of likes. However, even though all participants would rather purchase the hedonic product under appraisal than the utilitarian one, a pair of designer jeans instead of a vacuum cleaner respectively, those under the “high number of likes” condition were keener in buying the hedonic product. Likewise, even though participants under both conditions preferred to purchase the hedonic product, those under the higher number of likes intended to purchase them slightly less, were less satisfied purchasing them, didn’t take much pleasure from its consumption, were not confident with their purchasing decision and would not recommend them as much as those under the lower number of likes condition.

Study 2

In contrast to Study 1, in Study 2 there were not statistically significant variations ($p = .314$) in purchasing the hedonic product between participants under the high and low number of positive reactions. However, even though participants under both conditions would rather purchase the hedonic sunglasses, those under the “high number of likes” intended to purchase them slightly less, were less satisfied purchasing them, didn’t take much pleasure with its consumption, were not much confident with their purchasing decision and would also not recommend them as much as those in the lower number of likes condition. All things considered, both studies seem to converge on the idea that having a high or low number of likes does not entirely impact the consumers' purchasing decisions since they tend to be influenced by hedonic products. However, there are tendencies that should not be ignored, such as when there are moral licensing and self-affirmation effects.

As Dunning (2007) states, people gain license to act in ways that might violate the idea of some sacred attribute possession if they have enough evidence that they do, meaning that when people are allowed to display their greater natures, they feel freer to be self-indulgent afterwards. Dunning (2007) uses Khan and Dhar’s Licensing Effect in Consumer Choice article as an example, defending that when people are given the opportunity of donating to a charity later on, they are more likely to purchase a pair of designer jeans over a vacuum cleaner or an expensive pair of sunglasses rather than a cheap pair. As such, simply intending to perform virtuously in the future allows people to engage in self-indulgence now (Dunning, 2007).

Regarding the self-affirmation effect, although affirming an individual's sense of self minimises the desire for hedonic products, disaffirming it does not affect their purchasing decision (Townsend and Sood, 2012). If we consider that hedonic products give us a higher status under a self-affirmation effect (high number of likes), then we believe that the one's self is protected. In that case, the consumer won't feel the need to purchase many products that verify their status. As it outcomes, participants who receive a higher number of likes get lower self-esteem, as if they are under self-threat, making them not desire more hedonic products since these are harder to justify over utilitarian ones (Okada, 2005).

5.2. Contributions

The present research contributes with significant evidence on how social media influences consumers and affects their self-esteem and purchasing behaviour, showing strong evidence that individuals who receive a high and a low number of likes express their preference for hedonic products. As Subramanian (2017) defends, social media is barely a decade old so, since the COVID-19 pandemic and, consequently, the widespread of social media usage, these findings seem particularly relevant to approach. This dissertation aims to explore a practical untouched subject and also go deepen on the effects of social media on people.

By implementing a managerial perspective, it becomes critical to figure out what practices may restrict or nurture social media's influence on individuals' self-esteem and purchasing behaviour. While having a "high number of likes" seems to improve an individual's self-esteem, having a "low number of likes" appears to negatively impact their self-esteem, hence it is important to understand why it happens and how it can be countered. Additionally, it is crucial to understand why individuals with a high or a low number of likes still prefer purchasing hedonic products.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

Due to the lack of information on how social media influences people, their psychological self and, consequently, their purchasing behaviour, I believe that future research should deepen it, supporting these findings. Even though this dissertation had the purpose of contributing to a better understanding of social media impact, this has brought some inherent limitations attached to it. The first limitation regards the sample size. Concerning the first study, 131 responses were gathered, however only 60 answers were considered valid, an average of 45 answers per condition. In the second study, 138 responses were collected, but due to the manipulation check

and randomization, only 98 responses were considered valid, an average of 49 answers per condition. It is my belief that if it weren't due to time and logistics constraints, having a larger sample size would outcome a more precise result, improving its reliability. The second limitation concerns how the surveys were conducted. Because they were conducted online, participants were unable to explain their uncertainties and didn't have the time to think about their responses. Additionally, participants may not have answered honestly since it wasn't possible to recreate similar scenarios as if the survey was conducted in person. The third limitation concerns how the number of likes was attributed, this way, I believe that a pre-test should have been done to better understand the individual's average of number of likes.

For future research, there is still a lot to explore. For instance, I believe that having a more diverse and larger sample size would benefit the research project. More research can be conducted appealing to different hedonic and utilitarian products, like an iPhone and a Nokia, so that participants can better distinguish these two kinds of products. Moreover, instead of conducting online surveys, in-person interviews would be more beneficial since they would allow participants to take their time to think properly, clear their doubts and fully understand the differences between the two products. Due to the lack of previous studies on the effects of social media on individuals' self-esteem and purchasing behaviour, we could have reported other variables that would also significantly impact this possible effect. Besides, other variables like the influence of age or country of residence of participants could be explored. Since we would be adding more variables, more questions would be made, and the more reliable the results would be. Therefore, a more in-depth research on this could be helpful, both academically and professionally.

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7. APPENDICES

Appendix A

Survey – Study 1 Conditions A & B (English Version)

Start of Block 1: Introduction

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to open and answer this survey. This research aims at understanding how social media can be a threat to consumers and how it can influence their self-esteem. The present survey will contribute to the conclusion of the Master's Thesis of the researcher.

Your participation in this study is completely anonymous and voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, therefore I kindly ask you to answer as honestly as possible.

This study should take between **5 to 8 minutes** to conclude. You will be able to select the language of this survey (English or Portuguese) by clicking on the drop-down in the top right corner of this page.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Catarina Dias

End of Block 1: Introduction

Start of Block 2: Manipulation of Likes – High Number (Condition A)

Q1) I am interested in understanding your social media habits. I thus ask you to imagine that you are considering posting a picture or a text on your favourite social media platform.

Now, take a moment and imagine that your post received **425 positive reactions** and how that would make you feel.



-----Page Break-----

Q2) Please take a moment to think about how you would feel if your post received **425 positive reactions**. Think about the different emotions, thoughts and reactions to your social media post and rate the following:

	Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	Totally 7
How confident do you feel about yourself?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How empowered do you feel?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How good do you feel about yourself?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How happy do you feel with this post?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How energized and motivated do you feel?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How upset do you feel with this post?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

-----Page Break-----

Q3) Are **425 positive reactions** on your post a lower or a higher number than what you are used to?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Definitely a lower number than what I am used to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Definitely a higher number than what I am used to

End of Block 2: Manipulation of Likes – High Number (Condition A)

[or]

Start of Block 2: Manipulation of Likes – Low Number (Condition B)

Q1) I am interested in understanding your social media habits. I thus ask you to imagine that you are considering posting a picture or a text on your favourite social media platform.

Now, take a moment and imagine that your post received **12 positive reactions** and how that would make you feel.



-----Page Break-----

Q2) Please take a moment to think about how you would feel if your post received **12 positive reactions**. Think about the different emotions, thoughts and reactions to your social media post and rate the following:

	Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	Totally 7
How confident do you feel about yourself?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How empowered do you feel?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How good do you feel about yourself?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How happy do you feel with this post?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How energized and motivated do you feel?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How upset do you
feel with this
post?

-----Page Break-----

Q3) Are 12 positive reactions on your post a lower or a higher number than what you are used to?

1 2 3 4 5 6

Definitely a lower
number than what
I am used to

Definitely a
higher number
than what I am
used to

End of Block 2: Manipulation of Likes – Low Number (Condition B)

Start of Block 3: Self-Esteem

Q4) What is your level of agreement with the following statements?
From 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 4 (“Strongly Agree”)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Overall, I am satisfied with myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes I feel like I'm not good at anything	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I have good qualities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I can do things as well as other people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I don't have much to feel proud of	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes I feel useless	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I feel like I'm as much as a valued person as anyone else	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish I had more respect for myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes I find myself thinking I'm a failure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a positive attitude towards myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



End of Block 3: Self-Esteem

Start of Block 4: Pair of Designer Jeans VS Vacuum Cleaner

Q5) After checking how many likes your post received, you went out shopping.

Now take a moment and imagine that you are at your local mall, shopping on sales season, and you must choose between buying a pair of designer jeans and a vacuum cleaner. Assume now that you have been planning to purchase both products; however, you can only afford one of them right now. Both the designer jeans and vacuum cleaner are priced at \$50.

Please take a moment and analyse the two following options.

Option A: pair of designer jeans	Option B: vacuum cleaner
	

Q6) Which of the following products would you be willing to purchase?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Definitely Option A	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Definitely Option B

-----Page Break-----

Q7) Please now consider product Option A: a pair of designer jeans, as shown below, only.

We would like you to think about this product and to answer the following questions:



Option A: pair of designer jeans

Accordingly to your purchase decision, answer to the following statements:

	Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Totally 9
Please indicate your intention to purchase this product?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How happy are you with your purchasing decision?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How satisfied are you with your purchasing decision?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How confident are you that you've made a good purchasing decision?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much pleasure do you expect from this consumption?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How likely are you to recommend this product to a friend?

-----Page Break-----

Q8) Please now consider product Option B: vacuum cleaner, as shown below, only. We would like you to think about this product and to answer the following questions:

Option B: Vacuum cleaner



Accordingly to your purchase decision, answer to the following statements:

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Totally
	1									9
Please indicate your intention to purchase this product?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How happy are you with your purchasing decision?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How satisfied are you with your purchasing decision?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How confident are you that you've made a good purchasing decision?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How much pleasure do you expect from this consumption?

How likely are you to recommend this product to a friend?

End of Block 4: Pair of Designer Jeans VS Vacuum Cleaner

Start of Block 5: Social Media Addiction, Social Media Effects and Sociocultural Attitudes

Q9) What is your level of agreement with the following statements?

From 1 (“Very Rarely”) to 5 (“Very Often”)

	Very Rarely	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
I feel dependent on social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I already tried to reduce the consumption of social media networks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel the need to use social media networks more and more	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend a lot of time thinking about social media or planning its use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I use social media as a way to forget about my problems (professional / personal)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I become impatient if social media goes down	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel angry if I can no longer use social media networks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use social media networks in such a way that they have a negative impact on my work / studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

-----Page Break-----

Q10) What is your level of agreement with the following statements?
From 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel anxious if social media is running slower than usual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I care about being judged by the content I share on social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I worry that the content I share on social media may negatively influence my	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

professional / academic
life

When I close a social
media network, I open
another one out of
annoyance

I feel sad if my friends
share on social media
that they are gathered
and didn't invite me

I feel that my life is
boring when I see posts
of other people doing
different activities

I feel frustrated if I don't
get likes, comments,
reactions and / or views
on posts I share on social
media networks

-----Page Break-----

Q11) What is your level of agreement with the following statements?
From 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I think a lot about looking happy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think a lot about looking athletic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I spend a lot of time
doing things to look
more athletic

I spend a lot of time
taking care of myself to
improve my appearance

I feel pressure from my
family to improve my
appearance

I feel pressure from my
friends to improve my
appearance

I feel pressure from
social media to improve
my appearance

I have already
considered aesthetic
procedures to improve
my appearance

I have already
considered aesthetic
procedures for
comparing myself to
other people on social
media

I feel that the idea I have
of my body is strongly
associated with what I
see on social media

I feel that the idea I have
of my body is strongly

associated with what
other people tell me

I make decisions about
my body according to
what I see being
accepted on social media

I have already abstained
myself from posting
something on my social
media for fear of being
judged on my
appearance

I have already abstained
myself from posting
something on social
media for fear of being
judged on my opinions

I spend a lot of time
pondering what I should
and shouldn't post on
social media

End of Block 5: Social Media Addiction, Social Media Effects and Sociocultural Attitudes

Start of Block 6: Social Media Usage

Q12) What social media networks do you use? (You may select one or more options)

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- WhatsApp
- YouTube
- Twitter
- TikTok
- Snapchat
- Pinterest
- Tumblr

- Tinder
- Grindr
- I do not use social media
- Other

-----Page Break-----

Q13) How much time, on average, do you spend per day on social media?

- I do not spend any time on social media
- Less than one hour
- Between one and two hours
- More than two hours

-----Page Break-----

Q14) To what extent do the following reasons drive your use of social media?

Keep up with the news

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not drive my social media usage at all Completely drives my social media usage

Interact with friends and family

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not drive my social media usage at all Completely drives my social media usage

Keep up with friends and family's lives

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not drive my social media usage at all Completely drives my social media usage

Entertainment

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not drive my social media usage at all Completely drives my social media usage

Professional / Academic reasons

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not drive my social media usage at all Completely drives my social media usage

Meet new people

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not drive my social media usage at all Completely drives my social media usage

Follow influencers / famous people

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not drive my social media usage at all Completely drives my social media usage

End of Block 6: Social Media Usage

Start of Block 7: Demographic

Q15) Please indicate your gender.

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

Q16) Please indicate your age.

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- Above 65
- Prefer not to say

Q17) Please indicate your country of residence.

↓	Afghanistan ... Zimbabwe
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Q18) Please indicate your highest level of education.

- Less than High School
- High School

- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD
- Postgraduate
- Other

Q19) Please indicate your current occupation.

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

End of Block 7: Demographic

End of Survey:

Thank you for your time spent taking this survey!

If you have any questions regarding your participation or feedback, feel free to contact me via e-mail: s-cirdias@alunos.lisboa.ucp.pt.

Appendix B

Survey – Study 2 Conditions A & B (English Version)

Start of Block 1: Introduction

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to open and answer this survey. This research aims at understanding how social media can be a threat to consumers and how it can influence their self-esteem. The present survey will contribute to the conclusion of the Master's Thesis of the researcher.

Your participation in this study is completely anonymous and voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, therefore I kindly ask you to answer as honestly as possible.

This study should take between **5 to 8 minutes** to conclude. You will be able to select the language of this survey (English or Portuguese) by clicking on the drop-down in the top right corner of this page.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Catarina Dias

End of Block 1: Introduction

Start of Block 2: Manipulation of Likes – High Number (Condition A)

Q1) I am interested in understanding your social media habits. I thus ask you to imagine that you are considering posting a picture or a text on your favourite social media platform.

Now, take a moment and imagine that your post received **425 positive reactions** and how that would make you feel.



-----Page Break-----

Q2) Please take a moment to think about how you would feel if your post received **425 positive reactions**. Think about the different emotions, thoughts and reactions to your social media post and rate the following:

	Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	Totally 7
How confident do you feel about yourself?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How empowered do you feel?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How good do you feel about yourself?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How happy do you feel with this post?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How energized and motivated do you feel?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How upset do you feel with this post?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

-----Page Break-----

Q3) Are **425 positive reactions** on your post a lower or a higher number than what you are used to?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Definitely a lower number than what I am used to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Definitely a higher number than what I am used to

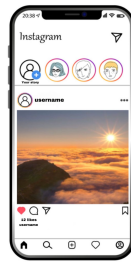
End of Block 2: Manipulation of Likes – High Number (Condition A)

[or]

Start of Block 2: Manipulation of Likes – Low Number (Condition B)

Q1) I am interested in understanding your social media habits. I thus ask you to imagine that you are considering posting a picture or a text on your favourite social media platform.

Now, take a moment and imagine that your post received **12 positive reactions** and how that would make you feel.



-----Page Break-----

Q2) Please take a moment to think about how you would feel if your post received **12 positive reactions**. Think about the different emotions, thoughts and reactions to your social media post and rate the following:

	Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	Totally 7
How confident do you feel about yourself?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How empowered do you feel?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How good do you feel about yourself?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How happy do you feel with this post?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How energized and motivated do you feel?

How upset do you feel with this post?

-----Page Break-----

Q3) Are 12 positive reactions on your post a lower or a higher number than what you are used to?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Definitely a lower number than what I am used to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Definitely a higher number than what I am used to

End of Block 2: Manipulation of Likes – Low Number (Condition B)

Start of Block 3: Self-Esteem

Q4) What is your level of agreement with the following statements?
From 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 4 (“Strongly Agree”)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Overall, I am satisfied with myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes I feel like I'm not good at anything	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I have good qualities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I can do things as well as other people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I feel like I don't have much to feel proud of	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes I feel useless	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I'm as much as a valued person as anyone else	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish I had more respect for myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes I find myself thinking I'm a failure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a positive attitude towards myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block 3: Self-Esteem

Start of Block 4: Sunglasses A VS Sunglasses B

Q5) After checking how many likes your post received, you went out shopping for sunglasses.

Now take a moment and imagine that you are considering buying a pair of sunglasses. One pair of sunglasses is characterized as being more expensive and hedonic, while the other pair of sunglasses is less expensive and more utilitarian.

Please take a moment and analyse the two following options.

Sunglasses A	Sunglasses B
Italian designer frames	American frames
Highly resistant to scratch and impact	Resistant to moderate impact and scrape
Ultra-lightweight with adjustable temples and nose pads	Regular weight fixed temples and nose pads
Average customer rating: 5 out of 5	Average customer rating: 4 out of 5
Price = \$110	Price = \$69

Q6) Which of the following products would you be willing to purchase?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Definitely Option A	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Definitely Option B

-----Page Break-----

Q7) Please now consider product Sunglasses A, as described below, only.

We would like you to think about this product and to answer the following questions:

Sunglasses A
Italian designer frames Highly resistant to scratch and impact Ultra-lightweight with adjustable temples and nose pads Average customer rating: 5 out of 5 Price = \$110

Accordingly to your purchase decision, answer to the following statements:

	Not at all 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Totally 9
Please indicate your intention to purchase this product?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How happy are you with your purchasing decision?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How satisfied are you with your purchasing decision?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How happy are you with your purchasing decision?

How satisfied are you with your purchasing decision?

How confident are you that you've made a good purchasing decision?

How much pleasure do you expect from this consumption?

How likely are you to recommend this product to a friend?

End of Block 4: Pair of Designer Jeans VS Vacuum Cleaner

Start of Block 5: Social Media Addiction, Social Media Effects and Sociocultural Attitudes

Q9) What is your level of agreement with the following statements?

From 1 (“Very Rarely”) to 5 (“Very Often”)

	Very Rarely	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
I feel dependent on social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I already tried to reduce the consumption of social media networks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel the need to use social media networks more and more	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend a lot of time thinking about social media or planning its use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use social media as a way to forget about my problems (professional / personal)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I become impatient if social media goes down	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel angry if I can no longer use social media networks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use social media networks in such a way that they have a negative impact on my work / studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

-----Page Break-----

Q10) What is your level of agreement with the following statements?
 From 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel anxious if social media is running slower than usual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I care about being judged by the content I share on social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I worry that the content I share on social media may negatively influence my professional / academic life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I close a social media network, I open another one out of annoyance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel sad if my friends share on social media that they are gathered and didn't invite me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that my life is boring when I see posts of other people doing different activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel frustrated if I don't get likes, comments, reactions and / or views on posts I share on social media networks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11) What is your level of agreement with the following statements?
From 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I think a lot about looking happy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think a lot about looking athletic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend a lot of time doing things to look more athletic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend a lot of time taking care of myself to improve my appearance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel pressure from my family to improve my appearance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel pressure from my friends to improve my appearance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel pressure from social media to improve my appearance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have already considered aesthetic procedures to improve my appearance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I have already considered aesthetic procedures for comparing myself to other people on social media

I feel that the idea I have of my body is strongly associated with what I see on social media

I feel that the idea I have of my body is strongly associated with what other people tell me

I make decisions about my body according to what I see being accepted on social media

I have already abstained myself from posting something on my social media for fear of being judged on my appearance

I have already abstained myself from posting something on social media for fear of being judged on my opinions

I spend a lot of time pondering what I should

and shouldn't post on
social media

End of Block 5: Social Media Addiction, Social Media Effects and Sociocultural Attitudes

Start of Block 6: Social Media Usage

Q12) What social media networks do you use? (You may select one or more options)

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- WhatsApp
- YouTube
- Twitter
- TikTok
- Snapchat
- Pinterest
- Tumblr
- Tinder
- Grindr
- I do not use social media
- Other

-----Page Break-----

Q12) How much time, on average, do you spend per day on social media?

- I do not spend time on social media
- Less than one hour
- Between one and two hours
- More than two hours

-----Page Break-----

Q14) To what extent do the following reasons drive your use of social media?

Keep up with the news

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not drive my
social media usage
at all

Completely drives my
social media usage

Interact with friends and family

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not drive my
social media usage
at all

Completely drives my
social media usage

Keep up with friends and family's lives

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not drive my
social media usage
at all

Completely drives my
social media usage

Entertainment

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not drive my
social media usage
at all

Completely drives my
social media usage

Professional / Academic reasons

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not drive my
social media usage
at all

Completely drives my
social media usage

Meet new people

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not drive my
social media usage
at all

Completely drives my
social media usage

Follow influencers / famous people

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not drive my
social media usage
at all

Completely drives my
social media usage

End of Block 6: Social Media Usage

Start of Block 7: Demographic

Q15) Please indicate your gender.

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

Q16) Please indicate your age.

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- Above 65
- Prefer not to say

Q17) Please indicate your country of residence.

↓	Afghanistan ... Zimbabwe
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Q18) Please indicate your highest level of education.

- Less than High School
- High School
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD
- Postgraduate
- Other

Q19) Please indicate your current occupation.

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

End of Block 7: Demographic

End of Survey:

Thank you for your time spent taking this survey!

If you have any questions regarding your participation or feedback, feel free to contact me via e-mail: s-cirdias@alunos.lisboa.ucp.pt.