



NOVA

IMS

Information
Management
School

MGI

Mestrado em Gestão de Informação

Master Program in Information Management

INFLUENCERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE CONSUMER'S PURCHASE INTENTION

THE LUXURY INDUSTRY

Mariana Inês Baptista

Dissertation Proposal presented as partial
requirement for obtaining the Master's degree in
Information Management, with a specialization in
Marketing Intelligence

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

2022

Influencers and their impact on the consumer's purchase intention:
The Luxury Industry

Mariana Inês Baptista

MGI



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

**INFLUENCERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE CONSUMER'S PURCHASE
INTENTION:
THE LUXURY INDUSTRY**

by

Mariana Inês Baptista

Dissertation Proposal presented as partial requirement for obtaining the Master's degree in
Information Management, with a specialization in Marketing Intelligence

Advisor: *Professor Diana Orghian*

September 2022

ABSTRACT

In a world where being online is part of the daily lives of most consumers, a brand's online presence is of even greater importance. Companies are seen to be increasingly investing on several tools provided by social media marketing, particularly in Influencer marketing. Despite its great adoption, this supposedly new strategy in the area of marketing is still lacking research concerning its application. Therefore, the aim of this dissertation is to investigate how brand prominence in products promoted by an Influencer impacts the consumer's perception of a luxury product and its purchase intention. Thus, the present study reflects confirmatory research, specifically an experimental design, where quantitative data was gathered through an online survey. The research results not only revealed that brand prominence had a marginally significant positive impact on perceived social status of the product, but it also became clearer that when the number of positive attributes that a SMI has increases, the purchase intention for the luxury product he/she is sponsoring also increases. Moreover, if the number of matters where the respondent and the SMI are similar rises, the purchase intention for the luxury product he/she is sponsoring also rises. Likewise, the match between the SMI and the product is indeed positively correlated with purchase intention, and perceived social status associated with the product was also proved to lead to higher purchase intention. Ultimately, the present dissertation sought to provide greater knowledge to the current state of the art, contributing in a managerial and academic manner, as well as to the field of marketing.

KEYWORDS

Social Media Marketing; Social Media Influencers; Influencer Marketing; Brand Prominence; Purchase Intention; Electronic Word-of-Mouth; Luxury Industry; Luxury Products

RESUMO

Num mundo onde estar online faz parte da vida cotidiana da maioria dos consumidores, a presença online de uma marca reveste-se de uma importância ainda maior. As empresas têm vindo a investir cada vez mais em vários instrumentos fornecidos pelo marketing das redes sociais, particularmente, no marketing de influência. Apesar da sua grande adoção, esta estratégia supostamente nova na área do marketing ainda carece de investigação no que diz respeito à sua aplicação. Como tal, o objetivo da presente dissertação é investigar como a proeminência da marca em produtos promovidos por um Influenciador impacta a perceção do consumidor acerca de um produto de luxo bem como a sua intenção de compra. Assim, o presente estudo reflete uma pesquisa confirmatória, mais especificamente um desenho experimental, onde os dados quantitativos foram reunidos por meio de um questionário online. Os resultados da pesquisa revelaram não só que a proeminência da marca teve um impacto marginalmente significativo e positivo na perceção do status social do produto, mas também ficou ainda mais claro que quando o número de atributos positivos que um *SMI* possui aumenta, a intenção de compra do produto de luxo que ele/ela está a patrocinar também aumenta. Além disso, se o número de matérias em que o respondente e o *SMI* são semelhantes aumenta, aumenta também a intenção de compra do produto de luxo que está a ser patrocinando. Da mesma forma, a correspondência entre o *SMI* e o produto está positivamente correlacionada com a intenção de compra, e o status social percebido associado ao produto também mostrou levar a um aumento na intenção de compra do mesmo. Em última análise, a presente dissertação procurou proporcionar um maior conhecimento ao atual *state of the art*, contribuindo de forma académica, bem como para a área de gestão e do marketing.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Marketing das redes sociais; Influenciadores das redes sociais; Marketing de influência; Proeminência da Marca; Intenção de Compra; Passa-a-palavra eletrónico; Indústria do luxo; Produtos de luxo

INDEX

1. Introduction	1
2. Literature Review	4
2.1. Luxury Industry	4
2.2. Social Media Marketing	6
2.2.1. Influencer Marketing	9
2.3. Word-of-Mouth	12
2.4. Status	14
2.5. Purchase Intention	17
2.6. Considerations	20
2.6.1. Research Hypothesis	20
3. Methodology	21
3.1. Research Objectives	21
3.1.1. Main Objective	21
3.1.2. Specific Objectives	21
3.2. Research Approach	22
3.3. Design and Creation of the Questionnaire	23
3.3.1. Questionnaire Design	23
3.3.2. Measurement Scales	25
3.4. Procedure	26
3.5. Universe and Sample	27
3.5.1. Demographics	27
4. Data Analysis and Results	29
4.1. Descriptive Statistics	30
4.2. Inferential Statistics	31
4.2.1. Hypotheses Testing	31
5. Discussion	35
6. Conclusions	39
6.1. Management and Marketing Implications	40
6.2. Academic Implications	41
6.3. Limitations and Future Research Recommendations	41
7. References	43
8. Appendix	48
8.1. APPENDIX A – Profiles and Brand Logo Visibility	48
8.1.1. Extravagant Brand Logo Visibility and with #LuxuryBrand	48
8.1.2. Subtle Brand Logo Visibility and with #LuxuryBrand	49

8.1.3. Product without Brand Logo and with #LuxuryBrand	50
8.1.4. Product without Brand Logo and without #LuxuryBrand.....	51
8.2. APPENDIX B – Survey.....	52
8.3. APPENDIX C – Survey Flow	61

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Exemplification of the Influencer Profiles.....	23
Figure 2. Professional Status distribution	28
Figure 3. Education Level distribution.....	28
Figure 4. Number of Followed Influencers.....	31
Figure 5. Areas of Interest promoted in the profiles of the followed Influencers.....	31
Figure 6. Descriptive Plot referring to H1	32
Figure 7. Descriptive Plot referring to H2	32
Figure 8. Descriptive Plot referring to H3	33

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Measures 26
Table 2. Top 3 of the Most mentioned Digital Platforms..... 30
Table 3. Hypothesis Validation Summary 34

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

B2B	Business to Business
eWOM	Electronic Word-Of-Mouth
IM	Influencer Marketing
PI	Purchase Intention
RM	Relationship Marketing
SIT	Social Influence Theory
SLT	Social Learning Theory
SM	Social Media
SMI	Social Media Influencer
SMM	Social Media Marketing
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
UGC	User Generated Content
UGT	Uses and Gratifications Theory
WOM	Word-Of-Mouth

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, having an online presence has become part of the daily lives of most consumers. Companies have acknowledged that this type of presence has truly become a critical success factor rather than just a mere competitive advantage for their business. Nevertheless, there are several setbacks that companies face when going online, since the online environment requires adaptation and continuous development due to its constant metamorphosis.

With the ever-growing technological advances, consumers have now a greater access to a larger volume of information, which enables them to be better informed, more sophisticated, and far less controlled by brands. Strategies that were once effective for firms may no longer work today. Recently, marketers have seen a rise in the usage of social media, a two-way communication platform (Patria Laksamana, 2018) that provides them with a better space to interact with customers (Hasan & Sohail, 2021).

The increasing presence of customers in social media platforms poses both opportunities and challenges for marketers, since, for instance, purchase decisions are based on peer interactions in social media (Hasan & Sohail, 2021). Furthermore, to help in their buying-decision processes, consumers make special use of social media platforms – such as *Facebook*, *Instagram* and *Youtube* –, which might influence their comments and recommendations on products and services (Martínez-López et al., 2020). Many of the traditional types of online advertising have seen their effectiveness reduced due to the use of ad blocks, which increased the communicating barrier between brands and its consumers, and this is where Influencer marketing plays a major role.

Influencer marketing is a new strategy that is being increasingly adopted by companies, which comprises the use of Influencers (opinion leaders) – celebrities or non-celebrities – that have several followers on social media platforms, to somewhat foster positive attitudinal and behavioural responses in consumers (Martínez-López et al., 2020). Consumers are found to be quite reticent about content provided by brands, hence the importance of Influencer marketing, which is seen by consumers as being more personal, less commercial, more reliable and less controlled by brands (Haenlein et al., 2020). Nonetheless, selecting the Influencer that fits best a company's purposes is the biggest challenge in working with Influencers online (Valsesia et al., 2020).

The Influencer appears as a new form of celebrity endorser, used by brands to indirectly control the conversation on the internet about their products and offers, as these individuals are seen as being credible intermediaries. Influencers can be found at every social level, in all professions, age groups and across genders (Valsesia et al., 2020). When considering to include Influencers in a brand strategy

not only does the cost of reaching the target audience is reduced, but it also provides several benefits for the message to be conveyed (Martínez-López et al., 2020).

In 2021, two-thirds of brands were expected to increase the amount spent on Influencer marketing, 80% of which intended to spend at least 10% of their marketing budget on it (Haenlein et al., 2020). The IM industry was expected to reach a value of \$9.7 billion by 2021, making up to 5% of the total online advertising market.

With the ever-growing adoption of Influencer marketing, there has been an increase of studies in this field since it keeps raising doubts and questions among practitioners and scholars. The literature regarding this new topic in the area of marketing is divided into three main research fields, i.e., identifying social media Influencers (SMIs) and boosting influence, managing online presence and influence, and understanding the impact of SMIs on consumer behaviour (Conde, 2019). Thus, to better understand the latter field – i.e., the impact of social media Influencers on the consumer's purchase behaviour – it is rather important to research about which aspects are inherent to the effectiveness of SMIs as brand endorsers, as well as to explore how those aspects might impact not only the consumer's perception of the product, but also their purchase intention (De Veirman et al., 2017).

Bearing in mind the literature limitations and future research recommendations about IM and its relevance to the field of marketing, it is utterly important to explore the impact of social media Influencers on the consumer's purchase intention for different types of industries (Botelho, 2019), specially for the luxury industry, given that it has not yet been addressed in further studies. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this research gap and explore the impact of SMIs as well as of brand prominence on the consumer's purchase intention of a luxury product, by assessing whether the perception of the products promoted by an Influencer shifts when the visibility of a luxury brand logo is manipulated. As a result, this study aims to address the following research question:

- How does brand prominence in products promoted by an Influencer affect the consumer's perception of a luxury product and its purchase intention?

The present dissertation is divided into six main chapters, beginning with the introduction. The second chapter considers the current state of the art (i.e., the theoretical framework), presenting a comprehensive literature review on the Luxury Industry, Social Media Marketing, Influencer Marketing, Word-of-Mouth, Status, and Purchase Intention. Accordingly, the aim of this chapter is to bridge the gap found in the literature, as well as to support the objectives of the study.

The third chapter refers to the research objectives (i.e., the main and specific ones), the research approach, the design and creation of the questionnaire (i.e., questionnaire design and measurement scales), the procedures and the data collection process, and finally it includes a description of the universe and sample (i.e., the participants). Thus, this study reflects confirmatory research, specifically an experimental design, where quantitative data was gathered through an online survey.

In the fourth and fifth chapters, the research findings resulting from the statistical analysis of the collected data as well as their discussion are presented.

Lastly, the sixth chapter summarises the present research, putting forward a briefing of the main findings and contributions of the study, as well as the academic and managerial implications, ending with its limitations and later future recommendations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. LUXURY INDUSTRY

Considered as an important and growing part of the global economy, by 2020 the global sales of luxury products were estimated to reach more than \$300 billion (Romaniuk & Huang, 2020). The luxury sector is greatly known to be hesitant to adopt widespread advertising so as to avoid making the brand too mass, and thus losing the ever-important factor of scarcity that makes luxury brands so desirable. Nevertheless, luxury brands are nowadays progressively adopting social media technologies in their retailing landscape as these platforms reinforce the relationship between firms and consumers (Park et al., 2021).

The definition of luxury varies in time and space since it is a topic of subjective interpretations. However, a common definition of luxury refers to it as the combination of quality and value, which is the outcome of the core qualities it wishes to communicate to the target consumers (Park et al., 2021). Typically, six key characteristics are said to contribute to the luxury brand prototype, namely, a history of heritage, exclusivity, higher prices, higher quality, being highly symbolic, and being associated with dreams/desires (Romaniuk & Huang, 2020). Luxury products are specially characterized not only by their level of scarcity, which makes them attractive to individuals who wish to attain a high level of uniqueness (Shao et al., 2019), but also by being perceived as high price (Park et al., 2021). Here, the willingness to pay a premium price for a luxury product is defined as the amount a customer is willing to pay for a particular brand rather than another (Godey et al., 2016).

Product category presents itself as an important criterion to define luxury products, so much so that in their article Lee & Watkins (2016) refer the eight luxury product categories proposed by Chevalier and Mazzalovo (2008), i.e., fashion, jewellery, cosmetics, wine, automobile, hotel, tourism, and private banking. Particularly, luxury fashion products include apparel, handbags, shoes, and accessories, whose consumption in front of others brings prestige to its holders (Chan et al., 2015). Scholars have also recognized fashion products to display high aesthetic and hedonic values (Lee & Watkins, 2016). Moreover, when deciding on what products to purchase, consumers tend to make use of their senses, and the first impression that a potential purchaser has of a given product is the sight of the packaging design (Li-Chun Yang & Kuan-Nien Chen, 2015).

Consumers often buy luxury products as gifts, and although differences in purchasing motivations might exist, the brand is still the primary vehicle for connecting with the customer (Godey et al., 2016). In order to better understand individual customers, luxury brands must take into account consumer demographic characteristics such as age, gender, income, and education, as these traits might impact

the consumer's behavioural intentions (Park et al., 2021). Luxury brands need to be recognized as luxurious by consumers, as they are not naturally luxurious by themselves, hence managing consumer's perceptions is of particular importance for them. There are three main sources from which brand perceptions arise: direct brand experience (i.e., purchasing the brand and experiencing its retail outlets); word-of-mouth conveyed by other individuals; and advertising or other marketing communications exposure and events (Romaniuk & Huang, 2020). Of these, direct brand experience associated with being a customer of the brand is thought to be the greatest source of brand perceptions, since that customer is two to three times more likely to hold on to perceptions about that brand than non-customers, as brand experiences are linked with loyalty and satisfaction. In the luxury literature, brand loyalty is considered to be the extent to which consumers proclaim they have purchased a particular brand or will be purchasing it in future (Godey et al., 2016).

In their article, Park et al. (2021) state that the overall luxury value of a product is evaluated by consumers in relation to financial, functional, and social dimensions, truly reflecting the individual's luxury value perception. Thus, consumer value perception is an utterly subjective concept, which tends to impact the intention to share information and also to promote the value of the product/service. Perceived quality entails the consumer's evaluation of the overall excellence of a brand solely based on intrinsic and extrinsic cues. Likewise, in a luxury framework consumers describe quality as the materials, components, physical performance, workmanship, and durability of the product. Regarding social value dimensions, here we find the conspicuousness and prestige values (i.e., the attainment of perceived utility of products/services that individuals recognize within social groups), which are the driving forces of the consumption of luxury brands and that have a significant tendency towards the brand selection.

Luxury consumption is believed to be driven by extrinsic motivations (i.e., wealth, status and success) or intrinsic motivations (i.e., quality and own pleasure) (Shao et al., 2019), hence the future of luxury brands resides in the balance between these two types of motivations. Additionally, this balance might be different depending on the studied geographical areas, namely between countries where luxury products are traditionally produced and consumed and those countries where luxury brands are a recent phenomenon (Godey et al., 2016). On the one hand, intrinsic motivation – which reflects the fulfilment and pleasure resulting from engaging/undertaking an activity for its own sake – is linked to high levels of self-determination. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation – where behaviour is viewed as a means to an end – depends on external rewards/demands and is greatly associated with lower levels of self-determination (Shao et al., 2019).

The luxury literature considers five relevant attributes to a brands' luxury status. The first attribute, known as being recognizable, refers to the capturing of the perceived prominence of the product's link to a luxury brand. Superior quality/craftsmanship, the second attribute, wishes to reflect the tangible quality of the creation process of the luxury product. The following attribute, superior customer experience, regards the performance of the interaction experience with the brand's representatives in the sales and service process – in person and online. The fourth attribute, related to the self-image-building motives of the consumer, resonates with how he/she sees himself/herself. Lastly, the fifth attribute is the uniqueness a luxury brand has when compared with main-stream brands (both luxury and non-luxury), being considered a crucial luxury brand success factor so as to attain a premium price (Romaniuk & Huang, 2020).

Even though many consumers still prefer luxury brands with explicit brand marks, the demand for sophistication and subtle luxury brand marks is now increasing. Wealthy consumers, for instance, might be willing to pay a premium price for subtly branded products which only they and a few others are able to recognize, consequently facilitating interactions with others "in the know" (Shao et al., 2019). What is more, higher income consumers are rather comfortable with spending more for expensive goods/services than lower income consumers. Bearing this in mind, it is assumed that different income levels lead to different perceptions towards luxury values (i.e., social, personal, and functional) and behaviours (i.e., social media WOM engagement) (Park et al., 2021). More importantly, Millennials are amongst the most valuable consumers who purchase luxury fashion products online, accounting for nearly 30% of luxury buyers, a number that is expected to rise until 45% by 2025 (Zollo et al., 2020).

2.2. SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

The nature of the relationships between consumers and sellers has drastically changed with the ever-growing role of the Internet in the shopping behaviour of consumers and firms' value chain activities (Yang & Che, 2020). There has been an increase in the number of times individuals spend searching online for information about products/services, engaging with brands, and even communicating with other consumers. As of January 2020, it is stated that approximately 4.54 billion people are active internet users, which encompasses nearly 59% of the global population (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Social media usage has become an important part of the daily lives of many people across the world. In Portugal, for instance, almost 64% of the population uses social media (R. V. Rodrigues, 2021). Described as a virtual community which connects individuals across the world through several platforms – i.e., blogs and social networks such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube –, social media

have a superior capacity to reach mass audiences, which is why it is somewhat replacing traditional media. Hitherto, Facebook has been at the top of the most used social media platforms worldwide, followed by Youtube, Whatsapp and Instagram. Being one of the fastest growing platforms in the last couple of years, Instagram has stated that they have reached almost 1.3 billion active users worldwide this year (2022)¹, and its engagement is said to be higher than Facebook, Pinterest and Twitter, which is why it is the social platform where brands invest the most (F. Rodrigues, 2021).

Known for its uniqueness, social media marketing provides both challenges and opportunities for companies, as it strengthens the social ties between consumers and sellers through daily interactions (Yang & Che, 2020). Evolving from a single marketing tool to a crucial marketing intelligence source, with SMM companies are now able to observe, analyse, and predict customer behaviours (F. Li et al., 2021), thus achieving their marketing objectives at a relatively low cost (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Furthermore, social media marketing is now being used across sectors, and it involves the use of social media technologies, software, and channels to build, communicate, provide, and exchange valuable offerings for an organization's stakeholders (Jacobson et al., 2020).

Regarding the several types of virtual consumer environments, such as blogs, websites, and digital commerce platforms, scholars have pointed out the importance of the so-called online social media brand communities, where individuals who share similar interests about a brand are able to connect with each other over computer-mediated communications (Zollo et al., 2020). As consumers autonomously decide not only to follow brands on social media communities, but also agree to receive promotional messages from them, these platforms must be considered as rather beneficial. SM offer marketers the opportunity to almost effortlessly identify consumers who are far more interested in the brand, and thus engaging them in digital conversation.

As referred in their article, Jacobson et al. (2020) stated that interactivity, perceived relevance, perceived usefulness, and organizational reputation impact the attitudes of the consumers towards social media marketing. Relationship marketing and SMM are frequently associated but the concept of customer engagement is rooted in RM (Lou et al., 2019). That being said, rather than only trying to sell their products, with social media marketing brands also desire to connect with consumers (R. V. Rodrigues, 2021). Lou et al. (2019) highlight Vivek, Beatty, and Morgan (2012) definition of customer engagement, which is *"the intensity of an individual's participation in and connection with an organization's offerings or organization activities, which either the customer or the organization*

¹ <https://wearesocial.com> (visited on July 2022)

initiates". Additionally, on social media this type of connection has been measured by engagement metrics such as viewing, liking, sharing, and commenting.

Depending on the size and type of company, scholars have identified differences in the attitude towards SM, since, for instance, B2B companies often see social media as a lower effective marketing channel compared to other communication models, regarding it as a less important tool when it comes to relationship building (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Nevertheless, many small businesses make use of social media marketing due to their perceived economic benefits, sense of control, ease of use and perceived usefulness. SMM has both positive and negative outcomes for companies (R. V. Rodrigues, 2021), specifically as positive effects it is said that it improves customer retention as well as a company's brand, which entails brand meaning, equity, loyalty and sustainability (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

In general, it is considered that there are two main kinds of SMM, namely user-generated based SMM content and social-based SMM (Yang & Che, 2020). On the one hand, UGC based SMM relies on the use of social media networks – i.e., microblogs, Twitter, online brand communities and online forums –, which aim to be informative medias and relatively easy to integrate into commercial behaviours. More importantly, UGC is defined as *"any material created and publicly shared online by all end users who are non-media professionals, for example through pictures, videos, reviews, or comments. UGC is usually perceived as trustworthy and described as an unbiased, useful, and objective source of information."* (R. V. Rodrigues, 2021). On the other hand, social-based SMM enables instant communication via social media platforms, such as WeChat, and it has also become a popular shopping channel (Yang & Che, 2020).

To explain why customers engage in SMM activities we must consider the Uses and Gratifications (UGT) theory coined by Katz and Blumler (1974). In this theory, consumers are said to be drawn to SMM activities to satisfy cognitive, social, personal, and hedonic motivations, and also affective, sensory, behavioural, and intellectual (user) experiences (Zollo et al., 2020). According to Yang & Che (2020), two basic motivations are stressed in social interactions, those being expressive motivation and instrumental motivation, which are then driven by two forms of relational utilities, i.e., intrinsically rewards and extrinsically rewards. Individuals who are intrinsically reward motivated usually consider social relationships as the goal, whereas extrinsically reward driven actors mainly consider the instrumental interaction. Bearing in mind that all social interactions consume time and efforts of the participants, intrinsically and extrinsically rewards could be increased by strong social ties. What is more, the trade-off between the expectation of intrinsically and extrinsically rewarding from social interactions is reflected by the consumers' attitude towards SMM (Yang & Che, 2020). In order to build

and maintain strong brand-consumer relationships in SM environments, brands should align their SMM activities with visuals, sentiments, problem-solving, and bodily experiences (Zollo et al., 2020).

Known to be digital natives committed to social media, Millennials contrast with the Baby Boomers' generation – i.e., individuals born from 1944 to 1964 –, as well as with the Generation X consumers' – i.e., individuals born from 1965 to 1980 –, since these generations are far less “techno-savvy” and have fewer consistent interactions with brands (Zollo et al., 2020). Likewise, Millennials expect brands to form brand loyalty through social media by establishing dialogues with them, and thus building long-term relationships. To do so, marketers are now making use of publicly available social media data with three main purposes, those being opinion mining, targeted advertising, and customer relations (Jacobson et al., 2020). Firstly, with opinion mining marketers are able to improve their knowledge and insights about their customers, as well as to decipher their “behavioural” patterns derived from structured and unstructured data. Secondly, the use of SM has provided companies with the opportunity to communicate, collect data, as well as to offer personalized solutions for their target audiences. Lastly, SM is also a tool for customer relations, as it can be used to lure individuals with user-generated content, and thus promote a two-way social interaction between brands and their customers. Additionally, although individuals still appreciate using social media platforms as a source of entertainment and information, they are greatly becoming aware of the use of such platforms as major data warehousing. Therefore, currently companies face the major challenge of how to mitigate privacy concerns whilst increasing the perceived benefits of using SM data for marketing.

2.2.1. Influencer Marketing

Nowadays, the social media environment is crowded with individuals who have experience in many different areas. These personalities, greatly known as Influencers, are known to be key opinion leaders who not only have influence over potential buyers (Lou et al., 2019; Rodrigues, 2021), but have also established likable personalities due to their regular content creation and dissemination, thus amassing a large following through the use of inspirational photos and hashtags. According to Saima & Khan (2021), Influencers “regularly create and post photos, videos and other updates related to their topic of expertise on their social media pages/profiles, and other users follow them for their content if they are interested in that particular topic”. Unlike traditional mass media celebrities, Influencers might have a small number of followers (micro-influencer) – i.e., with follower counts of ten thousand followers – or a larger number of followers (macro-influencer) – i.e., with follower counts of several hundred thousand (Pittman & Abell, 2021). Because micro-influencers reach an overall lower number of individuals, the fees charged by them are significantly lower than those charged by macro-influencers. Nevertheless, micro-influencers are usually considered to be more trustworthy and

authentic, despite studies stating that higher follower counts are rather beneficial in terms of Influencer likeability (Pittman & Abell, 2021).

When compared with traditional media and celebrity endorsements, providing content through IM is slightly more cost-effective as well as easier to produce (Lou et al., 2019). By 2022, the Influencer marketing industry is predicted to reach \$15 billion, where key metrics to evaluate possible influencers to convey a brand's message are the index of stickiness – which measures the level of WOM generated on a given topic –, customer influence effect – namely, the degree of influence an individual has over a customer regarding a relevant topic –, and customer influence value – which encompasses an individual's influence on other customers and prospects (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Even though most Influencers are said to be industry experts, content creators in a specific area, and indeed thought leaders, some of them might even be traditional music, film or television celebrities who have a substantial social media following (Pittman & Abell, 2021). Most consumers think *“that endorsements made in the context of SMIs' personal lives make brands more relevant”*, allowing brands to magnify their messages and increasing the level of adoption of their products (Ki & Kim, 2019). When deciding on what products to purchase, consumers tend to make use of their senses, (Li-Chun Yang & Kuan-Nien Chen, 2015). Nonetheless, the first impression that a potential purchaser has of a given product is the sight of the packaging design, which is why Influencers place a great importance on showing the product to their audience when promoting it.

The literature on SMM highlights the importance of selecting the right type of Influencers to promote the products/services of a brand (Dwivedi et al., 2021), emphasising that the number of followers is purely an indicator for popularity rather than influence (De Veirman et al., 2017). What is more, consumers are known to show cultlike appreciation for Influencers' product sharing, demonstrating great involvement in the products displayed on those advertisements (Lou et al., 2019). Bearing in mind the products they wish to endorse, Influencers might be considered more trustworthy if they have fewer followers, and because there are almost nine times as many micro-influencers to choose from as macro-influencers, brands opt for this type of Influencers as they have a greater chance to find customers who are authentically aligned with their brand values (Pittman & Abell, 2021). Creating short-form content, blogging, and also vlogging allows Influencers to provide their followers with a glimpse of their personal everyday lives, as well as their experiences and opinions (De Veirman et al., 2017).

Scholars divide IM into two types, namely earned Influencer marketing and paid Influencer marketing (R. V. Rodrigues, 2021). The first type of IM considers the voluntary advertising of brands through recommendations or mentions of products as a result of a “pre-existing” relationship between the

brand and the Influencer. On the contrary, the second type of IM refers to the promotion of the products of a brand being directly or indirectly paid. Notwithstanding, earned Influencer marketing is the most common form of IM. However, the success of an Influencer's advertising relies on the ability to deliver adverts which are in line with a user's interests (Y.-M. Li et al., 2012). Influencers have the ability to impact a great number of individuals through their posts on social media, initiating a somewhat of a cascade of influence through their followers, which is why 75% of marketers are now using Influencer marketing (De Veirman et al., 2017). Furthermore, their motivation for posting messages on social media can not be inferred, distinguishing themselves from brands where a post's motivation can almost always be connected with their willingness to lure consumers (Boerman et al., 2017).

Regarding the endorsement of Influencers, when performed by unqualified providers it has negative effects, failing to provide benefits, destructing value, and increasing transaction costs (Dwivedi et al., 2021). According to Lou et al. (2019), *"40% of Twitter users have made a purchase at some point because of an influencer's recommendation, and 70% of teenage YouTube users reported that they consider YouTube influencers "more like one of us" and relate to them more than they do to traditional celebrities"*. Instagram is said to have a greater engagement potential than other platforms – for instance, Facebook, Twitter, or Pinterest –, providing unique affordance in which they can tag a brand's shoppable product in photos and videos. Firstly, this SM platform has added even more tools, such as creator accounts and paid partnership tags, which make IM even more transparent. Secondly, its tools aid social media Influencers to display their everyday lives (Ki & Kim, 2019). Everyone is able to freely choose who to follow without needing the other's permission – not making the other person feel obliged to follow him/her back –, and that combined with their number of followers – which encompasses the number of accounts a person follows – may affect one's perceptions of the impact of an Influencer (De Veirman et al., 2017).

Considering the theories that help explain the interaction between consumers and Influencers (Nascimento, 2019), Kelman (1958) developed the social influence theory which explains that individuals engage in different processes while adopting an induced behaviour, those being compliance – i.e., when an individual embraces influence from another person expecting to attain a positive reaction from him/her –, identification – which refers to the acceptance of influence from another individual aiming to adopt the behaviour associated with a satisfying self-defining relationship to this individual –, and internalization – which occurs when a person approves influence as the induced behaviour is consistent with his values, and also being intrinsically rewarding. Designed by Bandura (1963), the social learning theory (SLT) states that when an individual is exposed to socialization agents – either directly or indirectly – he/she gets motivation, resulting in the display of

favourable attitudes (Nascimento, 2019). Scheer and Stern's (1992) influence framework explains how an Influencer persuades an individual to engage in a specific action, for instance, purchasing a product/service in four main stages, namely, an Influencer's influence attempts, the target's attitudinal response to the influence, the target's desire to comply, and, lastly, the target's behavioural outcomes (Ki & Kim, 2019). Highlighting the importance of the desire to mimic, the consumer's doppelganger effect helps to explain why consumers make certain product decisions. Here, it is described how consumers intentionally mimic other individuals' consumption behaviour with the desire to look/behave similarly to those they are modelling (Ki & Kim, 2019). Moreover, the megaphone effect coined by McQuarrie et al. (2012) depicts how social media enables individuals to win over audiences on SM platforms by demonstrating their personal taste, proposing that anyone can use this effect to try and persuade a great number of followers if the showcased aesthetic taste is appreciated (Ki & Kim, 2019).

2.3. WORD-OF-MOUTH

Together with the technological advancements, the business environment is changing like never seen before, which is why it is unquestionably important to track any emerging changes to guide the future. The so-called communication platforms are now undergoing a transition from physical spaces to digital ones, since individuals are known to use several channels – both online and offline – to become familiar with the products they intend to purchase. Moreover, social media platforms – which are virtual communities that have no geographical boundary – have enabled individuals to share information on products/services through recommendations and opinions with only a click of a mouse (Verma & Yadav, 2021). With social networking sites individuals not only wish to increase and maintain their social capital, but they also seek to attain social acceptance, satisfy their need for entertainment, engage in social interactions, as well as to promote collective action about a given topic (Levy & Gvili, 2015).

In order to engage with their target customers, brands can use a plethora of ways, such as brand adverts, word of mouth (WOM), social media adverts, and so forth (Lou et al., 2019). Kim & Yoo (2020) defined the concept of word-of-mouth as "*opinions freely generated among consumers without any formal restrictions*", corroborating the thought that WOM communication is an interpersonal interaction which is perceived as a rather important mean for influencing consumer buying decisions (Levy & Gvili, 2015).

The media channels' and Web 2.0 emergence transformed what was as originally word-of-mouth into electronic word-of-mouth, as the dynamics of WOM communication changed allowing individuals to

connect with each other via e-mail, online forums, wikis, blogs, social networking sites, recommendation sites, and virtual-reality community sites (Levy & Gvili, 2015). Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) refers to a customer's opinion – actual, formal or even potential consumers –, regarding a product/company posted on the internet (Verma & Yadav, 2021), which encompasses both positive and negative statements and is made available to several people/institutions through the Internet (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2011). Likewise, the recommendation source as well as the tie strength between the parties – i.e., closeness of the relationship – can be attributed to the WOM communication effects. Direct personal experience is said to be the main reason why consumers engage in WOM communication (Levy & Gvili, 2015), together with emotional regulation – for instance, writing bad reviews about a product/service –, social bonding – i.e., sharing information as a means of establishing relationships (Bond et al., 2019) –, opinion leading, originality, and also product-involvement (Chen et al., 2011). By the same token, consumers' online reviews are said to be one way they can signal their social status or expertise.

Individuals are far more likely to share WOM information about interesting products, and according to Kim & Yoo (2020) *“20–50% of consumers are affected by WOM when they make purchase decisions”*, which is why consumers prefer to choose, for instance, a film that several people positively evaluate. Therefore, in the long term (e)WOM is considered to be an utterly effective marketing tool rather than most traditional marketing activities, such as advertising, even though the two might have an indirect impact on each other. What is more, in the long run consumers who are attracted by (e)WOM bring higher value as unconsciously they spread more (e)WOM that will help to attract new customers (M. Kim & Yoo, 2020).

Scholars highlight the major role of eWOM as a mean to influence the several stages of the consumer decision-making process, as well as their purchase intentions (Verma & Yadav, 2021). Additionally, eWOM is known to be more relevant, prevalent, and in the case of the services sector, for instance, it is much needed due to its intangible characteristics. Bearing in mind that content is becoming easier and easier to upload, eWOM information available online is significantly increasing. However, the quality of the shared knowledge is decreasing, which strengthens the idea that only a small portion of the information shared online is actually robust, which is why the overall quality of eWOM may drop (Levy & Gvili, 2015).

The adoption of eWOM by brands can yield both significant benefits and challenges (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Numerous key properties and capabilities of the communication channel are said to influence an audience's judgment of eWOM messages, namely, social tie – i.e., the personal believability, trust, and personal acquaintance existing in the relationship between the message sender and the receiver

–, information intensity – i.e., the volume of communications and the respective number of contacts –, and also the interactivity – which are the channels in terms of online settings where eWOM works best (Levy & Gvili, 2015). As it has been noticed, with the adoption of eWOM communication brand loyalty, trust, the purchase intention, and information adoption might be significantly affected, so much so that peer recommendations are an example of how a customer’s trust and brand loyalty can be affected by eWOM, since negative recommendations can result in damaged reputation, a decrease in sales, as well as negative consumer attitudes towards the brand (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Nevertheless, consumers tend to positively respond to a brand’s prompt reply to negative SM posting.

As stated by Kim & Yoo (2020), three main characteristics are generally highlighted so as to measure WOM effects on a product’s performance, those being volume – which refers to how many times a consumer is exposed to WOM communication about a certain product, stressing that the higher the WOM volume, the higher the credibility that is formed around that product –, valance – which is an index for measuring the level of customer satisfaction about a product, and thus the higher the valence of WOM, the higher the product sales –, and variance – which refers to the level of opinion heterogeneity among individuals, hence the higher the variance of WOM, the lower the future product adoption choice by consumers. Considering in particular WOM valance, this characteristic is overall classified into three types, namely, positive – which due to a higher consumer satisfaction with that product, it can be used as a way of measuring a product’s quality –, negative – which given a lower consumer satisfaction with a product, it most certainly affects the future sales of that product – and neutral – which refers neither to a favourable nor an unfavourable position in relation to a product (M. Kim & Yoo, 2020). Besides, in their article Kim & Yoo (2020) present a new type of WOM variable, WOM volatility, which “*measures the pattern of the advertising investment within a certain period of time*”, stressing that in order to increase a product’s performance its WOM must be less volatile. Consequently, so as to maximize the well-known WOM effects, marketers must pay close attention to WOM volatility, since, for instance, given that consumers quite often experience information overload, negative WOM volatility impacts future product preference. Note that, WOM content’s credibility lowers with highly volatile WOM.

2.4. STATUS

The concept of status is said to have its roots in ancient society, where every individual had a position in the social hierarchy, which led the concepts of wealth and social status to be intimately linked since then (Han et al., 2010). Further, according to the theory of the leisure class (1899) coined by Thorstein Veblen, building up wealth is not actually what confers status but instead the evidence of wealth is what truly bestows status – this evidence requires a rather wasteful exhibition, a behaviour the

sociologist describes as conspicuous consumption. Scholars have recognized that individuals make assumptions about others considering their possessions, so much so that Han et al. (2010) mentioned in their article that these inferences are known to reflect one's success, and that the *"objects that symbolize success tend to be high priced in absolute terms or expensive relative to the average cost of items in the product category"* – i.e., status goods such as cars (e.g., Rolls-Royce), fashion (e.g., Prada), and jewellery (e.g., Tiffany & Co.) –, even though a brand's status is not merely defined by price itself. Additionally, a brand's symbolic meaning is considered to derive from the associations between the brand and its type of consumers/users, which explains why individuals are influenced by who they aspire to mimic, their own group, as well as who they wish to avoid being associated with.

In order to differentiate individuals in terms of social positions we must consider the three main criteria in use, namely, membership in a social group, relative position in a hierarchy, and also an individual's socially defined function in a certain organised group. Furthermore, these criteria are based on the three fundamental types of social position as claimed by Benoit-Smullyan (1944), that is, the terms status – which today equates to social position –, situs – as designated by its neologism, which refers to the membership in a given social group –, and locus – which encompasses the socially standardised function that an individual plays in an organised group.

Nowadays, it is impossible to escape from the so-called upward comparisons to more successful and wealthier individuals, as consumers are even more preoccupied with signalling and gaining status (Goor et al., 2021). Bearing in mind that luxury products are described as symbols of status due to their scarcity and exclusivity, it is simple to understand why consumers' motivations regarding this type of products has often been linked to the desire of power and status, since, for instance, individuals who aspire a higher status display a stronger desire for luxury products (Wang et al., 2021). Further, according to Schwartz's (1992) value framework, the advertising of status is consistent with self-enhancement values – that is, hedonism, achievement, power –, but inconsistent with self-transcendence values – which encompass benevolence, social concerns, concerns with nature –, openness to change – i.e., self-direction and stimulation –, and even conservation – i.e., tradition, security and conformity –, and these values have strong implications on social behaviour. Thus, social status is defined as the rank an individual has in a social hierarchy (e.g., society), and is acknowledged that the higher the social status the higher the power and admiration that others will have for that person (Wang et al., 2021). However, social status is a rather subjective concept as an individuals' rank in a social hierarchy greatly depends on the relative power/resources of others in that group, which is why an individual might reveal a higher social status in a certain group and display a lower social status in a different group.

Another interesting topic concerning the present issue is the well-known tendency to purchase goods just for the status they confer, i.e., status consumption which refers to a *“motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolize status both for the individual and surrounding significant others”* (Pino et al., 2019). What is more, the clarification of O’Cass and McEwen (2004) about the important difference between conspicuous consumption and status consumption states that *“status consumption tendencies emphasize the personal nature of owning status-laden possessions, which may or may not be publicly demonstrated, whereas conspicuous consumption focuses more towards putting wealth or position in evidence, whereby possessions are overtly displayed”*. Hence, the greater the status a brand conveys, the greater the likelihood that this brand will be used in a conspicuous manner. Likewise, brand prominence refers to the magnitude of visible elements – that is, logos, patterns, marks (Pino et al., 2019) – which help consumers to recognise a given brand. For that reason, brands manufacture either products with loud branding – that is, conspicuous branding – or products with discreet branding – that only consumers *“in the know”* recognise – so as to reach and appeal to different types of consumers. Consumer’s desire to be associated with a given group does not suggest that they wish to dissociate from opposing groups – for instance, a consumer of Harley-Davidson many times does not abhor Suzuki or Kawasaki consumers’ (Han et al., 2010).

As described in the article of Han et al. (2010), as well as by Pino et. al (2019), scholars developed a taxonomy that divides consumers into four groups according to their need for status and wealth, and these groups are known to be the four Ps of luxury. The first group are the *“patricians,”* which refer to individuals who possess a substantial amount of wealth, and that pay a premium price for inconspicuously branded products only known by other patricians, which is why their main concern is to be associated with other patricians. The second group, the *“parvenus,”* are known to possess significant wealth but not the needed knowledge to detect subtle brand signals/marks, which is why this group of consumers is worried about dissociating themselves from the *“have nots”* while also associating themselves with other *“haves”* – which for them are both the patricians and other parvenus. The third set of consumers are the *“poseurs,”* who do not have the financial means to afford authentic luxury goods – hence their buying of counterfeit luxury goods –, which is why they are said to pretend to be something they are not, but even so they wish to be associated with those who they recognise as parvenus. Lastly, the fourth type of consumers are the *“proletarians,”* who are not so wealthy consumers and that are also less status conscious, which is why they do not wish to be associated with the upper class nor to dissociate from other individuals from the same humble means as them.

Resulting from upward comparisons, and to cope with a status threat, individuals engage in compensatory consumption, which is the *“purchasing and displaying status-related products and brands that signal success and affluence”* (Goor et al., 2021). As such, Goor et al. developed the concept of status pivoting which highlights that when a consumer experiences a status threat he/she tries to identify another domain where he/she is far more successful when comparing with a higher status person. Moreover, status-indifferent consumers are less willing to incur in higher costs than status-seeking consumers (Balabanis & Stathopoulou, 2021), who purchase luxury brands so as to display their ability to “waste” money and achieve the so desirable attribute of status, all of this because social status is not directly observable during social interactions. This line of thought only proves that individuals might avoid “bargain” brands and replace them with more expensive ones because of the high levels of public self-consciousness. A market’s maturity might also influence the tendency to purchase goods that externalise social standing, since in emerging markets individuals are keen on flaunting wealth so as to differentiate themselves from less wealthy individuals, whereas in mature markets individuals no longer feel the need to display wealth to disassociate themselves from the masses, and instead wish to be associated with their in-groups (Pino et al., 2019).

2.5. PURCHASE INTENTION

Nowadays, social media is recognized for having more and more influence in all aspects of our daily lives, so much so that individuals are now much more behaviourally and perceptually involved in the so-called social media platforms – namely, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, Google+, Twitter, and so forth –, hence the changes seen in the nature of their interactions both with their friends/family and with public and private companies.

There are numerous marketing practices which brands may employ regarding social media platforms, such as advertising, eWOM, branding, and customer relationship management (Alalwan, 2018). These two-way communication platforms not only enable users to interact with each other online through the sharing of information and points of view, but they also allow brands to introduce themselves as well as to provide information while casually interacting with their customers. Customers and brands are now engaging with each other with no restriction in time, medium, or place whatsoever. A great example of brands trying to interact with their customers through SM platforms is found within the luxury goods community, where brands such as Chanel, Gucci, Ralph Lauren, and Donna Karen joined forces with Apple so as to develop their iPhone applications (A. J. Kim & Ko, 2010). It is simple to understand why the importance of SM is said to lie in the ever-important interaction between the community and customers, as well as in the easiness of its interactive, immediate, and low-cost communications.

Another key aspect to consider is the rise of smartphones mostly due to the smartphone industry. These electronic devices are said to influence how individuals communicate with each other, since they have been considered to be a necessity both in the professional and private life of the consumers. That being said, smartphones can be used for social networking purposes, as well as for playing games, answering e-mails, reading e-books, and sending messages (Boerman et al., 2017). The Mobile Marketing Association has defined mobile advertising as *“a form of advertising that transmits advertisement messages to users via mobile phones or other wireless communication devices”*. Therefore, retailers, manufactures and service providers are able to design even more dynamic campaigns and offers if they decide to incorporate mobile advertising practices in their communications strategies. Particularly, since its introduction, it is truly visible that advertisements on smartphones are becoming more sophisticated than ever before as they have been adapted to suit most mobile screens, avoiding in this way the inability to display traditional advertising – that is, pop under, pop up, display ads and video – on these devices.

Remembering the increasing relevance of social media platforms in people’s lives, individuals are believed to be developing actual emotional connections with their favourite (social media) brands (Hasan & Sohail, 2021). What is more, social media advertisements are without doubt the cutting-edge of brand-customer communications given their interactive and modern approach, since when comparing this type of advertising with traditional mass media advertising firms recognise that they can now convey in more informative and interactive ways with their customers. Consequently, brands are able to achieve many of their marketing aims, namely, building customers’ knowledge, motivating customers to actually purchase their products, creating customers’ awareness, shaping customers’ perception, but most importantly influencing the consumer’s decision-making process (Alalwan, 2018). Likewise, customers are empowered to engage even more with the targeted advertisements on social media through re-sharing, liking, posting, commenting, and learning, hence the higher odd for them to pay greater interest to such ads. On the contrary, customers are less likely to pay interest to social media advertisements if they sense a degree of privacy concern. Bearing this in mind, and as referred by Chetioui et al. (2020), the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) developed by Ajzen (2011) ought to be considered. Being an extension of the theory of reasoned action coined by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), TPB considers that subjective norms, attitude, and behavioural control impact the intention of an individual to perform a specific behaviour, which is why they considered intention as the mediating variable between behaviour and the consumers’ personal dynamics – in this particular case, intention is considered to be the predecessor to behaviour. Moreover, subjective norms are said to reflect the perception an individual has of common social pressure – that is, when an individual perceives what behaviours are approved (or disapproved) by others, he/she will be far more (or less) likely to display

that behaviour –, hence the greater the positive attitudes regarding a certain behaviour, the greater the individual's intention to display it (Chetioui et al., 2020).

It has been recognized that consumers have to cope with a considerable amount of information overload as never seen before, which is a consequence of their constant buying decisions and the various available options in the market. In agreement with A. J. Kim & Ko (2010) and Patria Laksamana (2018), purchase intention is defined as the possibility of a consumer to purchase a product/service in the near future. Adding to this definition, PI can also be considered as the *“combination of consumers' interest in and the possibility of buying a product”* (Nascimento, 2019). Considering that understanding the consumer's purchasing behaviour allows brands to retain and even attract new customers, and that PI is known to be influenced by the consumer's attitude towards a brand, perceived price, perceived value, perceived quality, and customer satisfaction, it might well be used to estimate the future profits of a brand (A. J. Kim & Ko, 2010). Likewise, Tauber (1972) and Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) also referred that own satisfaction, socialization, simply wasting time, aesthetic, feelings, emotions, and enjoyment are many of the other factors which are able to influence the purchase intention of the consumer (Nascimento, 2019). Thus, and in line with Rodrigues, R. V. (2021) definition *“purchase intention corresponds to the consumer's desire to fulfil certain needs and wants by purchasing a particular product or service after evaluation”*.

Regarding the consumer's preference to purchase goods from a given brand, if an individual is constantly choosing to acquiring goods from that specific brand, he/she is seen to display what is known to be brand loyalty. The concept of brand loyalty relies on the premise of an individual being keen on paying more for his/her desired brand even if other brands are available, as well as his/her willingness to recommend that same brand to other people (Hasan & Sohail, 2021). At this point, it is interesting to consider the impact of local and non-local brands on the consumer's purchase decision. Local brands are considered to either originate from an individual's home country or only being available within a specific geographic region, whereas non-local brands are either those which are available in several countries and regions or that are part of multinational firms (Hasan & Sohail, 2021). On the one hand, some studies state that individuals prefer non-local brands over local ones as they are thought to provide better customer value as well as holding a prestigious international image and having far more competitive advantages over most products. On the other hand, fewer other studies have concluded that individuals prefer local brands because of the strong connections they have created with them, due to the major role of the local culture in defining consumer behaviour and their individual identity.

2.6. CONSIDERATIONS

2.6.1. Research Hypothesis

Taking into account the literature review, and the proposed general and specific objectives of the present dissertation, seven key research hypotheses were developed regarding brand prominence, social media Influencers and their characteristics, perceived social status, SMIs and product match-up, and purchase intention, which led to the following hypotheses:

H1: Brand prominence has a positive impact on luxury purchase intention.

H2: Subtle luxury brand marks have a more positive impact on purchase intention than explicit luxury brand marks.

H3: Brand prominence has a positive impact on perceived social status of the product.

H4: SMIs characteristics (more positive attributes) will positively impact purchase intention.

H5: SMIs characteristics (high similarity with the respondent) will positively impact purchase intention.

H6: The match between the SMI and the product is positively correlated with purchase intention.

H7: Perceived social status associated with the product will lead to higher purchase intention.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

3.1.1. Main Objective

The main objective of the present study focuses on understanding if and how brand prominence can impact the perception about a luxury product and its purchase intention. In order to achieve this goal, a main **research question** was developed: How does brand prominence in products promoted by an Influencer affect the consumer's perception of a luxury product and its purchase intention?

Additionally, in the literature other concepts that are equally relevant to address in this investigation were found. As a result, it is also important to understand whether the following concepts are required to explain the impact that brand prominence has on the purchase intention of a luxury product:

1. What characteristics of SMIs affect the consumer's purchase intention, and which of those have a higher impact?
2. What types of luxury products are more susceptible to Influencer Marketing?
3. How is it possible for eWOM of an Influencer to enhance a product?
4. Can eWOM conveyed by an Influencer affect the connection of a consumer with a brand?
5. What types of social media platforms do consumers use the most, and which of those have the greatest impact on the consumer?
6. Is status associated with luxury brands a pivotal point in the consumer's decision-making process when deciding to purchase a luxury product?

3.1.2. Specific Objectives

Bearing these queries in mind, the specific study objectives aim to provide a clear and reasoned answer to the different questions previously listed. Accordingly, we define the specific objectives of the present study as follows:

1. Understand the concept of luxury, social media marketing, Influencer marketing, (e) word-of-mouth, status, and purchase intention.
2. Highlight the main characteristics of a social media Influencer that affect the consumer's purchase intention and the types of luxury products that are more susceptible to it.

3. Perceive which aspects of SMIs as endorsers have an effect on consumer perception about the endorsed product.
4. Ascertain if consumer perception about a luxury product impacts consumer purchase intention.
5. Determine if brand prominence impacts the purchase intention of a luxury product.

3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH

Considering the objectives of the present study, as well as to develop its hypothesis, a comprehensive online research was conducted based on scientific articles, index databases of important academic journals and others. In what concerns the types of approaches which can be employed when conducting a research, Saunders et al. (2009) explained that there are three types which can be considered, namely, exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory.

On the one hand, exploratory research entails the in-depth analysis of a problem which has yet to be studied, thus considering the collection and analysis of primary data using questionnaires, individual interviews, or even focus groups. On the other hand, descriptive research aims to provide a comprehensive point of view on a matter which has been analysed in the past and where there is space to do empirical generalisations about the relationship between the variables, all based on secondary data using quantitative methods. Lastly, explanatory research seeks to define a causal relationship between the variables considering the theoretical insights, which is why the formulated hypotheses are put to the test employing primary data collection and quantitative research.

The main purpose of this dissertation is to understand how Influencers can manipulate the way an individual sees a luxury brand/product and if that impacts their purchase intention or not. As such, the first step to develop the constructs was to do research taking into account secondary data from previous studies. The following step involved the creation of the questionnaire to gather primary data.

This dissertation is confirmatory research, more specifically an experimental design, where quantitative data was gathered through an online survey. Likewise, this study somewhat considers the three types of approaches, exploratory research given that the impact of SMIs on Instagram users is yet to be further studied, descriptive research since it will be grounded on quantitative research, and explanatory research due to the theoretical insights used to define the causal relationship between the variables to be studied.

3.3. DESIGN AND CREATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

3.3.1. Questionnaire Design

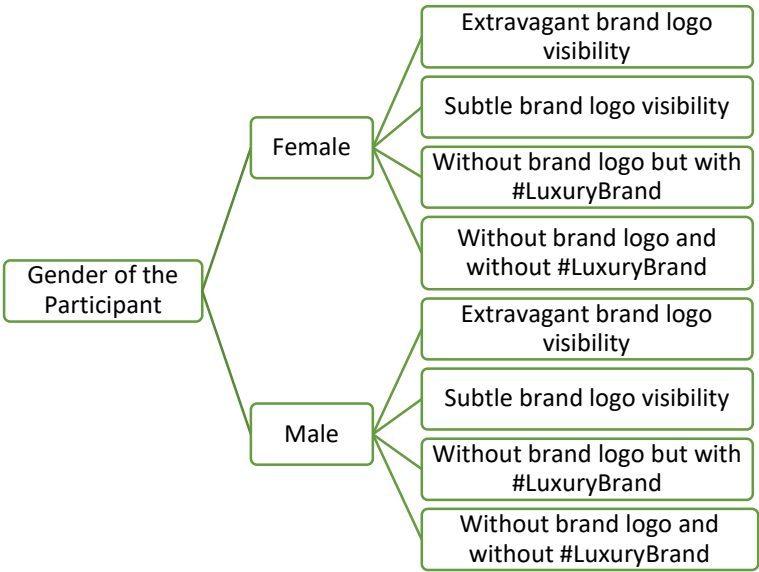
Considering that conducting an online self-administrated questionnaire allows researchers not only to gather standardized and easily comparable data from a substantial population, but also to do it in a quick and economical manner (R. V. Rodrigues, 2021), the present dissertation relied on the online platform *Qualtrics* to develop an experimental study for its data collection.

Firstly, it was important to understand what types of luxury product categories exist to define the one that fits best to test the pre-formulated investigation hypothesis. Accordingly, considering the eight luxury product categories proposed by Chevalier and Mazzalovo (2008) – i.e., fashion, jewellery, cosmetics, wine, automobile, hotel, tourism, and private banking –, the luxury fashion products category was the chosen one – e.g., bags, shoes, belts, sunglasses.

Taking in consideration the articles of Han et al. (2010) and Pino et. al (2019), where consumers were divided into four groups according to their need for status and wealth, eight Influencer profiles were created – four for each participant’s gender – to understand how an individual responds to a given variable in different scenarios. The study sought to test the same product (e.g., a bag for females and a scarf for males) but with distinct brand logo visibility – which was object of manipulation – as found further down (Figure 1). More importantly, each participant was randomly presented with only one of the four Influencer profiles assigned to his/her gender. It was agreed that only pictures of Influencers whose face could not be recognised at first glance – even if it is a popular Influencer in a given country, e.g., Germany – and where the product had a greater prominence could be used.

Figure 1

Exemplification of the Influencer Profiles



The research questionnaire is composed of four main sections, namely, (i) Socio-demographic Data (ii) General Questions regarding Social Media, (iii) Questions about Social Media Influencers and (iv) Testing the Profile of the Influencer.

The first group considers the respondent's sociodemographic questions, namely, gender, age, nationality, professional status, and education level. Thus, by asking these questions first we were able to split the participants by surveys considering their gender.

The second group encompasses six questions which aim to filter respondents to exclude those who either do not use social media platforms whatsoever or who do not have a user account on Instagram. Likewise, participants are also asked to state the social media platforms they use, which one they use the most, if they use digital platforms as a tool to search for information about brands/products, and also if they have ever discovered a new product/brand through digital platforms.

In the third group, respondents are provided with a definition of Influencer to assure that they can answer knowledgeably about this type of endorsers, specifically SMIs on Instagram. Therefore, participants are asked: if they follow (or have followed) any sort of Influencer on Instagram – if the answer is negative the survey ends; on average, how many Influencers do they follow; and which areas of interest are promoted in the Influencers' profile that they follow.

Included in the fourth and final group are questions about one of four types of Influencer profiles depending on how visible the logo of the luxury brand is on their post, namely, an extravagant display of the luxury brand's logo, a subtle display of the luxury brand's logo, a post where the luxury brand's logo is not displayed but where #LuxuryBrand is mentioned, or a post where the luxury brand's logo and #LuxuryBrand are not displayed. Thus, the study is a between subject experimental design where the prominence of the brand is manipulated. A seven-point Likert Scale varying from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7) was thought to be the most appropriate for this group, as it enables to observe and somewhat understand the positions of the participants for each question (R. V. Rodrigues, 2021). Moreover, in this section there are six subgroups, namely two with general questions about the displayed Influencer, one about the Influencer and the product promoted by him/her, another regarding the perception of the product, which is followed by the subgroup of the perceived social status of the product, and, lastly, the subgroup regarding the questions about the purchase intention of the respondent for that specific product.

3.3.2. Measurement Scales

Even though the present study was performed in Portugal, some of the respondents could have been foreigners (e.g., International Students), hence all the questionnaire items were both translated to Portuguese and English, always assuring that their original meaning would not be different (Appendix B) – i.e., it was not altered/modified. Prior to the launch of the main questionnaire, a pretest was run not only to confirm the adequacy of the translation, but also to assess its easiness, clearness, and relevance.

The questionnaire will consider five measurement scales corresponding to the main constructs, as detailed below.

Social Media Influencer Characteristics Section

The Social Media Influencer characteristics section was measured considering eleven items which evaluated four dimensions, namely, SMI credibility (3 items), interactivity (3 items), similarity (4 items), and, lastly, likeability (1 item).

Regarding the SMI credibility dimension, it was designed based on the seven-point semantic differential scale advanced by Ohanian (1990). Influencer credibility was assessed using three items which evaluate the trustworthiness dimension.

In what concerns the SMI interactivity dimension, based on the extant literature, three items were adapted from the seven-point Likert scale used by Alalwan (2018) which considered the questionnaire of Jiang et al. (2010).

To measure the SMI similarity dimension, four items were adapted from those considered by Whittler and Dimeo (1991) in their study. Here, an adaptation of the five-point Likert scale questionnaire compiled by Chun et al. (2018) was made.

Finally, the SMI likeability dimension, corresponding to the sub-dimension of the personality, was where one item was adapted based on the seven-point semantic differential scale applied by Dimofte et al. (2003).

Product Match-up Section

In what concerns the product match-up section, three items were adapted from the nine-point semantic differential scale employed by Till and Busler (2000).

Consumer perception about the product Section

In order to determine the consumer's perception about the product, four items were adjusted and measured on a seven-point Likert scale based on the six-item questionnaire used by Qureshi et al. (2012).

Perceived Social Status conveyed by the product Section

To evaluate the construct of perceived social status conveyed by the product two items were adapted based on the research of Park et al. (2021) and measured on a seven-point Likert scale.

Purchase Intention Section

Ultimately, for the purchase intention section three items were adapted from Alalwan (2018), which were then evaluated on a seven-point Likert scale.

A summary of the scales chosen to evaluate the constructs under study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Measures

Constructs	Number of Items	Sources
SMI Characteristics	Credibility (Trustworthiness)	3 items (Ohanian, 1990)
	Interactivity	3 items (Alalwan, 2018)
	Similarity	4 items (Whittler & DiMeo, 1991)
	Likeability (Personality)	1 item (Dimofte et al., 2003)
Product match-up	3 items	(Till & Busler, 2000)
Consumer perception about the product	4 items	(Qureshi et al., 2012)
Perceived Social Status conveyed by the product	2 items	(Park et al., 2021)
Purchase Intention	3 items	(Alalwan, 2018)

3.4. PROCEDURE

The questionnaire was shared through a link posted on several social media platforms, namely, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, as well as being sent individually through WhatsApp. The participants were assured that the questionnaire respects the indications of the GDPR, as the collected data is exclusively used for academic purposes and treated in a completely anonymous and confidential manner.

In the interest of assessing the duration and feasibility of the questionnaire, a pretest with ten significant participants of the population was prepared prior to the implementation of the survey. The feedback collected from the pretest helped to improve and modify the questionnaire design before

the data collection, so much so that some questions were better formulated, others were added, and the images were also improved for a greater outcome. More importantly, the ten pretest respondents were not considered in the final and main survey.

3.5. UNIVERSE AND SAMPLE

3.5.1. Demographics

The questionnaire was shared through different platforms (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, or WhatsApp), as well as being distributed amongst family, friends, and university students, hence responses encompass different age groups.

If the participant does not use digital platforms they are immediately removed from the study, since social media platforms are the main means of communication for Influencers. Additionally, if the respondent does not use Instagram, this person is also out of the study, as it is the preferred social media platform for Influencers and brands to promote products/services. Finally, in the case of the participant not following any Influencers, he/she is also removed from this study considering that the present dissertation aims to understand the impact Influencers may have on the purchase intention, namely, of a luxury product. These restrictions narrowed the number of valid answers as well as the sample which was analysed.

In what concerns the gender of the participants, 75% of the respondents were women and 25% were men.

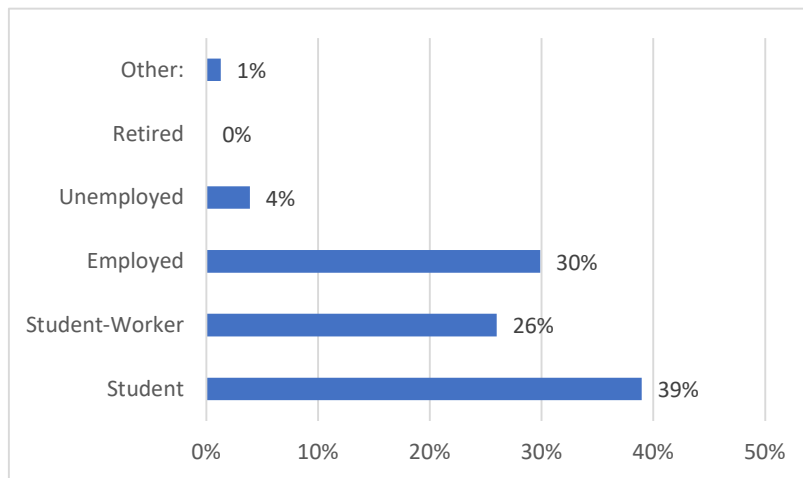
Regarding the age of the participants, the average age was 24 years old as the questionnaire was mainly shared between university students, where 83% of the participants had ages between 18 and 24 years old, 12% between 25 and 34 years old, 3% between 35 and 44 years old, and, finally, 3% with 45 years old or more.

As for the nationality, 96% of the participants were Portuguese and 4% had other nationalities.

In terms of professional status (Figure 2), 39% of the respondents were students, 30% were employed, 26% were student-workers, 4% were unemployed, and a smaller number of respondents wished not to reveal their professional status (1%).

Figure 2

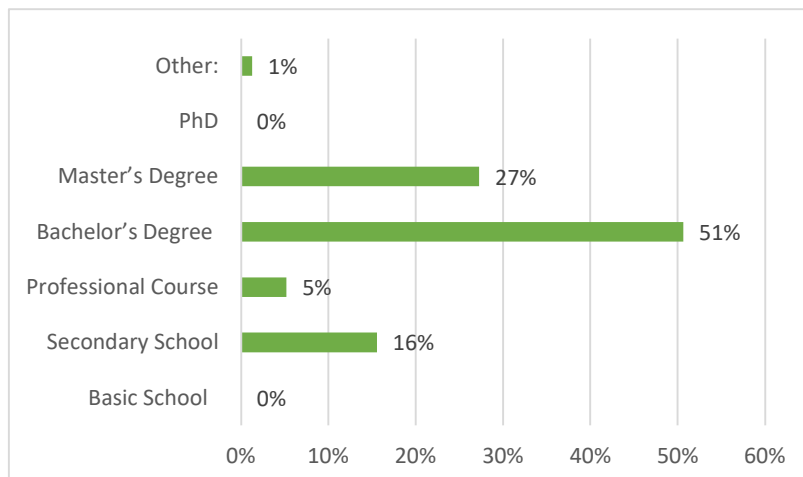
Professional Status distribution



Concerning the education level (Figure 3), more than half of the participants have a Bachelor's Degree (51%), 16% completed Secondary school, 5% achieved a Professional Course, and 27% have a master's degree. Only a rather small number of participants preferred not to reveal their education level (1%).

Figure 3

Education Level distribution



4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The data collected through the questionnaire was cleaned prior to the start of the analysis, since the larger the survey the more difficult it is to obtain complete and valid data. For that reason, of the 201 participants who started the questionnaire, only 127 completed 100% of the study, and of these solely 77 were considered valid. Three criteria were used to validate their answers, namely, if they use digital platforms or not, if they use Instagram, and, finally, whether or not they follow (or have ever followed) Influencers. Moreover, *JASP 0.16.3.0* – developed by the Department of Psychological Methods of the University of Amsterdam – was the chosen program to evaluate the results of the present study.

In order to analyse the data, an average was calculated between distinct questions (see Appendix B). Regarding the value presented by the variable "perceived social status", for example, an average was calculated between two questions (If the product confers social status; If by using this product the respondent will be seen as having a higher social status). The same happened for the variable "purchase intention" where an average was made among three questions (If being interested in the product the respondent will look for more information; If there is the intention to purchase the product; If the respondent will actually purchase the product). Furthermore, to simplify the analyses, the average was determined for each gender as well as for each one of the conditions associated with the visibility of the luxury brand logo (i.e., extravagant, subtle, without the logo but with #LuxuryBrand, without both the logo and the #LuxuryBrand).

Considering the research hypotheses, different One-way ANOVA's were performed – for instance, for the first and third hypotheses –, as well as a T-test – specifically for the second hypothesis –, and also correlation analyses – e.g, for the last research hypotheses. These statistical tests sought to assess the relationship between certain variables, i.e., the relationship between SMIs characteristics (more positive attributes) and purchase intention, the link between SMIs characteristics (high similarity with the respondent) and purchase intention, the match between the SMI and the product against purchase intention, and, ultimately, perceived social status associated with the product and purchase intention. The option to use One-way ANOVA's is related to the fact that each participant has only seen one of the four Influencer profiles created for each gender (i.e., extravagant logo, subtle logo, without the logo but with #LuxuryBrand, without both the logo and the #LuxuryBrand). It is possible to state that there is one independent variable, Brand Prominence (Extravagant, Subtle, Without the logo but with #LuxuryBrand, Without the logo and the #LuxuryBrand), and five measures, specifically, SMIs Characteristics (divided between two variables More positive attributes and High similarity with the respondent), SMIs Product Match-up, Perceived Social Status, and Purchase Intention. Bearing in mind

the different analyses, a significant value (p-value) of $p \leq 0.05$ – considering the Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity – was statistically assumed.

4.1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Taking into account the sample, 100% of the participants affirmed that they use digital platforms with great frequency, i.e., several times a day.

Regarding the digital platforms used by the respondents, 18% said they use Instagram, 17% mentioned WhatsApp, followed by Youtube with 16%, Facebook with 12%, LinkedIn with 11%, TikTok with 9%, Pinterest with 8%, Twitter with 6%, and, finally, Snapchat with 2%. Moreover, considering their most used social media platforms, 71% of the participants stated Instagram, followed by Youtube with 9%, TikTok reaching 8% (Table 2), Twitter with 5%, other social media platforms achieving 4% – for example, WhatsApp –, and, lastly, Facebook with 3%.

Table 2
Top 3 of the Most mentioned Digital Platforms

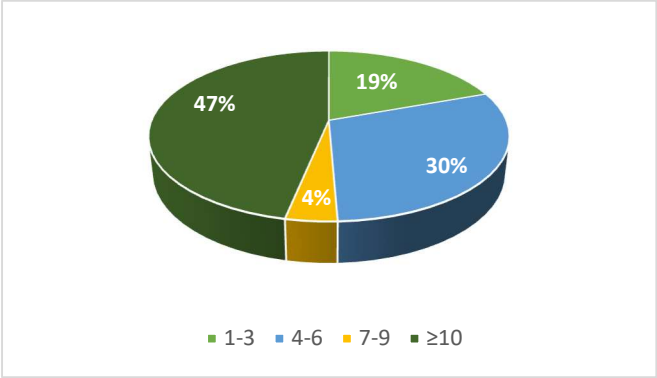
	Digital Platform	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Instagram	55	71
2	Youtube	7	9
3	TikTok	6	8

When asked if they consider social media platforms as a tool to search for information about brands/products 90% of the respondents said “Yes”, whereas when questioned if they had ever discovered a new product/brand through social media platforms 100% of the participants said “Yes”.

Bearing in mind the number of followed Influencers (Figure 4), the average number of SMIs that the respondents followed was 14, where 19% of the participants stated that they followed between one and three Influencers, 30% between four and six, 4% between seven and nine, and lastly 47% followed ten or more Influencers.

Figure 4

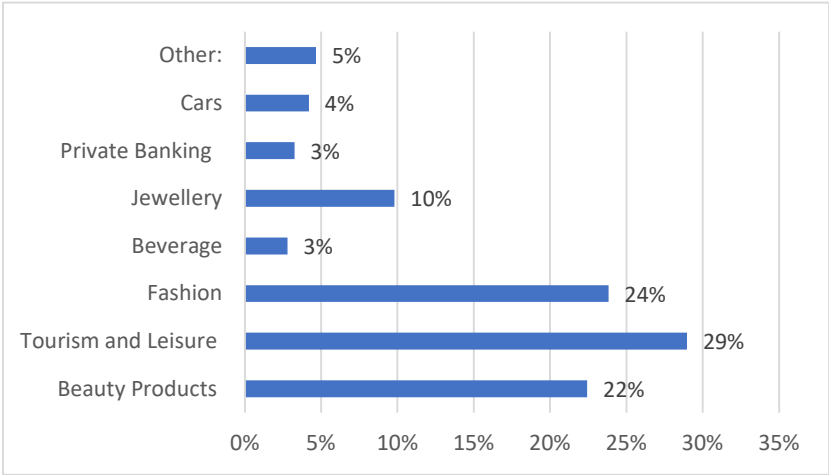
Number of Followed Influencers



Considering the areas of interest promoted in the profiles of the Influencers the respondents followed (Figure 5), 29% stated Tourism and Leisure, followed by Fashion with 24%, Beauty Products reaching 22%, Jewellery with 10%, other areas of interest achieving 5% – e.g., Fitness, Sustainability, Sports, Sports Bets, Books and Philosophy, Lifestyle – Cars with 6%, and, lastly, Private Banking and Beverage both reaching 3%.

Figure 5

Areas of Interest promoted in the profiles of the followed Influencers



4.2. INFERENCE STATISTICS

4.2.1. Hypotheses Testing

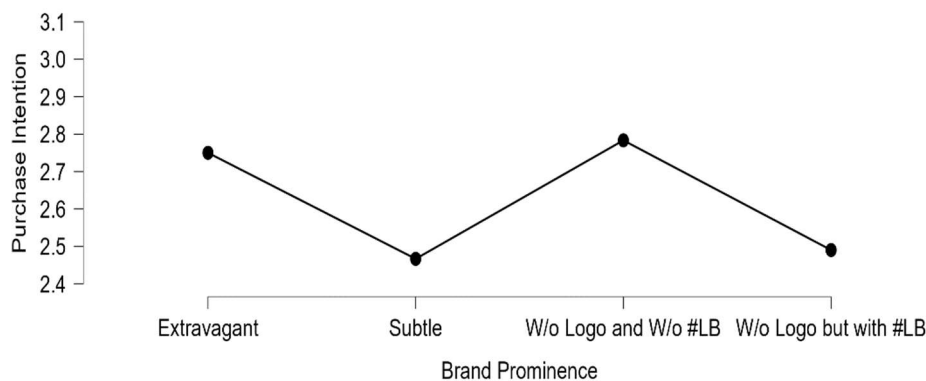
H1: Brand prominence has a positive impact on luxury purchase intention.

Regarding the results of the ANOVA for the first research hypothesis, we did not find a significant effect of brand prominence on purchase intention, $F_{(3,73)} = 0.31, p = 0.820$, hence this hypothesis was **not**

supported. The means of the conditions of brand prominence for the dependent variable purchase intention are very similar (Extravagant: $M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.28$; Subtle: $M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.14$; Without the logo but with #LuxuryBrand: $M = 2.49$, $SD = 1.26$; Without both the logo and the #LuxuryBrand: $M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.58$; see also Figure 6). Moreover, the η^2 effect size estimate indicates a rather small effect that brand prominence has on purchase intention ($\eta^2 = 0.01$).

Figure 6

Descriptive Plot referring to H1

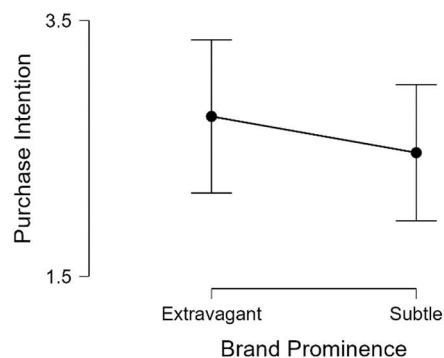


H2: Subtle luxury brand marks have a more positive impact on purchase intention than explicit luxury brand marks.

In what concerns the results of the T-test for the present hypothesis, it was clear that the difference between purchase intention for the extravagant display of the luxury brand logo ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.28$) is not statistically significant from the purchase intention for the subtle display of the luxury brand logo ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 1.14$), $t_{(38)} = 0.74$, $p = 0.463$, thus the present hypothesis was **not supported**. Additionally, in Figure 7 it is possible to see how the dependent variable purchase intention acts regarding the extravagant and subtle brand prominence conditions, where only a small difference in behaviour is verified.

Figure 7

Descriptive Plot referring to H2

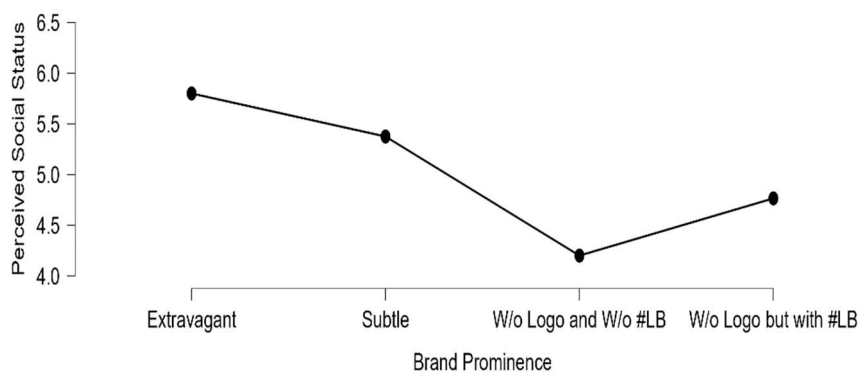


H3: Brand prominence has a positive impact on perceived social status of the product.

The results of the ANOVA for the third research hypothesis showed a marginally significant effect of brand prominence on perceived social status, $F_{(3,73)} = 2.68$, $p = 0.053$, consequently this hypothesis was **partially supported**. The means associated with the conditions of brand prominence for the dependent variable perceived social status are pretty similar. Nevertheless, as expected the condition where the luxury brand logo was extravagantly displayed was the one which achieved the highest mean ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 1.78$), whereas the condition where both the luxury brand logo and the #LuxuryBrand were not displayed was the one which reached the lowest mean ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.95$) – see also Figure 8 below. Furthermore, the η^2 effect size estimate indicates somewhat of a medium effect that brand prominence has on perceived social status ($\eta^2 = 0.1$).

Figure 8

Descriptive Plot referring to H3



H4: SMIs characteristics (more positive attributes) will positively impact purchase intention.

Considering the Pearson Correlation Matrix for the present hypothesis, it was possible to observe that there was a significant moderate positive correlation between these two constructs, $r = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$, hence this hypothesis was **supported**. Thus, when the number of positive attributes – for example, being more trustworthy and authentic – a SMI has increases, the purchase intention for the luxury product he/she is sponsoring also increases.

H5: SMIs characteristics (high similarity with the respondent) will positively impact purchase intention.

In what concerns the fifth hypothesis, the Pearson Correlation Matrix showed that there was a significant moderate positive correlation between these two constructs, $r = 0.56$, $p < 0.001$, accordingly the fifth hypothesis was **supported**. What is more, when the number of matters where the respondent and the SMI are similar – for instance, having the same values – increases, the purchase intention for the luxury product he/she is sponsoring also increases.

H6: The match between the SMI and the product is positively correlated with purchase intention.

The Pearson Correlation Matrix for the sixth research hypothesis revealed that there was a significant moderate positive correlation between the two constructs, $r = 0.21$, $p < 0.05$, and so the present hypothesis was **supported**. Taking this into account, when the number of matches between SMI and the product – e.g., the SMI being an expert on the product he/she is sponsoring – increases, the purchase intention for the luxury product he/she is sponsoring also increases.

H7: Perceived social status associated with the product will lead to higher purchase intention.

Regarding the last research hypothesis, the Pearson Correlation Matrix explained that there was a significant moderate positive correlation between the two constructs, $r = 0.23$, $p < 0.05$, hence the seventh hypothesis was **supported**. Therefore, when the perceived social status of the product increases, the purchase intention for the luxury product also increases.

In conclusion, in Table 3 there is a summary of the results of the analyses of all the research hypotheses.

Table 3

Hypothesis Validation Summary

Research Hypothesis	Conclusion
H1: Brand prominence has a positive impact on luxury purchase intention.	Not Supported
H2: Subtle luxury brand marks have a more positive impact on purchase intention than explicit luxury brand marks.	Not Supported
H3: Brand prominence has a positive impact on perceived social status of the product.	Partially Supported
H4: SMIs characteristics (more positive attributes) will positively impact purchase intention.	Supported
H5: SMIs characteristics (high similarity with the respondent) will positively impact purchase intention.	Supported
H6: The match between the SMI and the product is positively correlated with purchase intention.	Supported
H7: Perceived social status associated with the product will lead to higher purchase intention.	Supported

5. DISCUSSION

The main objective of this chapter is to evaluate the results of the present study against the state of the art (i.e., the literature review) (Romaniuk & Huang, 2020), as well as to understand whether the results obtained in the questionnaire are in accordance with it or not. The literature on SMM highlights the importance of selecting the right type of Influencers to promote the products/services of a brand, since they should opt for the Influencers who are authentically aligned with their brand values. Moreover, authors such as De Veirman et al. (2017) acknowledge that the number of followers is often used to discover social media Influencers, yet it is also of great importance to emphasise the fact that this number is mostly seen as an indicator for popularity rather than influence.

Knowing that Influencer marketing is hitherto a topic where little research and studies have been made, and that there is still space for greater knowledge to be shared, this dissertation sought to fill the existing research gap and explore the impact of social media Influencers as well as of brand prominence on the consumer's purchase intention of a luxury product by assessing whether the perception of the products promoted by an Influencer changes when the visibility of a luxury brand logo is manipulated.

The first research hypothesis focused on how brand prominence, which is the magnitude of visible elements – such as logos, patterns and marks (Pino et al., 2019), that enable consumers to recognise a given brand –, would impact the purchase intention of a luxury product.

H1: Brand prominence has a positive impact on luxury purchase intention.

To the best of our knowledge, there is still scarce literature which has investigated the interaction between these two ever-important variables. Based on the five relevant attributes to a brands' luxury status put forward by Romaniuk & Huang (2020), the present hypothesis specifically considered the first attribute – i.e., known as being recognizable –, which refers to the capturing of the perceived prominence of the product's link to a luxury brand. Therewithal, the second attribute refers to superior quality/craftsmanship, which wishes to reflect the tangible quality of the creation process for the luxury product. The following attribute, superior customer experience, regards the performance of the interaction experience with the brand's representatives in the sales and service process – in person and online. The fourth attribute, related to the self-image-building motives of the consumer, resonates with how he sees himself. Lastly, the fifth attribute is the uniqueness a luxury brand has when compared with main-stream brands (both luxury and non-luxury).

When looking at the results of the ANOVA for this first research hypothesis, it is possible to state the participants consider that the prominence of the brand is not sufficiently relevant to impact the purchase intention of a luxury product. Moreover, the condition where both the brand logo and the #LuxuryBrand were not displayed was the one which achieved the highest values for this dependent variable, which refutes what has been considered so far in the literature.

Therefore, the results were not consistent with the first research hypothesis, hence it was **not supported**.

H2: Subtle luxury brand marks have a more positive impact on purchase intention than explicit luxury brand marks.

As stated by Shao et al. (2019), although there are several consumers which still prefer luxury brands with explicit brand marks, there has been a rise on the demand for sophistication and subtle luxury brand marks. Apart from that, wealthy consumers, for instance, are far more willing to pay a premium price for subtly branded products which only they and a few others can recognize, which facilitates the interactions with others “in the know”.

The second research hypothesis sought to test whether subtle luxury brand marks had a higher and more positive effect on purchase intention than explicit luxury brand marks, considering what was previously declared by Shao et al. (2019).

The results of the T-test for the present hypothesis showed that there was no difference between purchase intention for the extravagant display of the luxury brand logo and the purchase intention for the subtle display of the luxury brand logo, since only a small difference in behaviour was verified. This rather small difference was a consequence of an overall higher rating achieved by the brand prominence condition where the luxury brand logo was extravagantly displayed.

Herewith, the results were not consistent with the second research hypothesis, hence it was **not supported**.

H3: Brand prominence has a positive impact on perceived social status of the product.

The third hypothesis was based on Wang et al. (2021), who claimed that luxury products are described has symbols of status due to their scarcity and exclusivity, which is why consumers’ motivations regarding this type of products has often been linked to the desire of power and status, as, for instance, individuals who aspire a higher status display a stronger desire for luxury products.

By analysing the results of the ANOVA for the current hypothesis it was perceptible that the participants considered that the prominence of the brand is somewhat relevant to impact the perceived social status of a luxury product. Furthermore, the condition where the luxury brand logo was extravagantly displayed was the one which was better rated than the rest of the conditions.

By this means, the results were not consistent with the third hypothesis, which was why it was **partially supported**.

H4: SMIs characteristics (more positive attributes) will positively impact purchase intention.

As R. V. Rodrigues (2021) mentioned in her thesis, SMIs characteristics such as source credibility, source attractiveness and product match-up were seen to positively influence purchase intention, hence the development of the present study hypothesis.

Considering the Pearson Correlation Matrix, it was possible to observe that there was a significant moderate positive correlation between these two constructs, which means that when the number of positive attributes – for example, being more trustworthy and authentic – a SMI has increases, the purchase intention for the luxury product he/she is sponsoring also increases.

Therefore, the results were consistent with the fourth research hypothesis being **supported**.

H5: SMIs characteristics (high similarity with the respondent) will positively impact purchase intention.

Botelho (2019) provided evidence in her thesis that SMIs which are perceived as being similar and familiar with the target consumer led to higher purchase intentions. Thereby, if an individual has similar psychological traits and a similar appearance to the Influencer that is sponsoring a luxury brand, that individual is far more likely to purchase a luxury product endorsed by that SMI.

Here, the Pearson Correlation Matrix showed that there was a significant moderate positive correlation between these two constructs. What is more, when the number of matters where the respondent and the SMI are similar – for instance, having the same values – increases, the purchase intention for the luxury product he/she is sponsoring also increases.

Consequently, the results were consistent with the fifth research hypothesis being **supported**.

H6: The match between the SMI and the product is positively correlated with purchase intention.

Lou et al. (2019) and Pittman & Abell (2021) mentioned an interesting finding which referred that consumers are known to show cultlike appreciation for Influencers' product sharing, demonstrating

great involvement in the products displayed on their advertisements. By finding the perfect match between the SMI and the product to be later endorsed by them, brands have a greater chance to find customers who are aligned with their brand values and who wish to purchase their products.

The Pearson Correlation Matrix for the sixth research hypothesis revealed that there was a significantly moderate positive correlation between the two constructs. Taking this into account, when the number of matches between SMI and the product – e.g., the SMI being an expert on the product he/she is sponsoring – increases, the purchase intention for the luxury product he/she is sponsoring also increases.

Ultimately, the results were consistent with the sixth research hypothesis being **supported**.

H7: Perceived social status associated with the product will lead to higher purchase intention.

Regarding the last research hypothesis, Pino et al. (2019) studied the well-known tendency to purchase goods just for the status they confer, i.e., status consumption, hence the development of the seventh hypothesis. Here, they emphasized the fact that status consumption is related to accentuating the personal need of owning status-laden possessions, that might or might not be publicly exhibited.

The results of the Pearson Correlation Matrix explained that there was a significant moderate positive correlation between the two constructs. Thus, when the perceived social status of the product increases, the purchase intention for the luxury product also increases.

Herewith, the results were consistent with the seventh research hypothesis, hence it was **supported**.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Nowadays, the business environment is constantly changing, where almost every second new ideas are generated, new trends easily appear to shake what was previously taken for granted and new theories are discovered. What is more, understanding their target consumers, their motivations, desires, and needs must unquestionably be the main priority of any business manager, so much so that the greater the attention paid to these factors, the greater the success that any company will achieve.

Despite the increase in the number of studies concerning Influencer marketing, hitherto there is still no consensual definition for this new type of viral content creators. Nevertheless, they are well-known to be key opinion leaders who not only have influence over potential buyers (Lou et al., 2019; Rodrigues, 2021), but have also established likable personalities due to their regular content creation and dissemination, thus amassing a large following using inspirational photos and hashtags. Albeit the endorsement of Influencers is the cutting-edge of marketing strategies, it is rather important for companies to wisely chose which SMIs to work with as the actions of these individuals can impact the way a brand is seen.

An experimental study was carried out to understand how brand prominence in products promoted by an Influencer could affect the consumers' perception of a luxury product as well as their purchase intention.

On the one hand, the results of this study strengthened the idea that almost everyone uses social media platforms several times a day, which is why they have become a great part of our personal daily lives. Instagram, Youtube and TikTok were the most mentioned digital platforms by the participants of the online questionnaire, and thus these platforms should be given due consideration when advertising a brand or a product. Therewithal, it is also important to mention that social media platforms are also said to be used as a tool not only to seek more information about a product or brand, but also to find new products or brands.

On the other hand, the findings of the survey were not consistent with the thought of brand prominence having a positive impact on luxury purchase intention (H1), nor with the belief that subtle luxury brand marks have a more positive impact on purchase intention than explicit luxury brand marks (H2). However, the expectation that brand prominence had a positive impact on perceived social status of the product was partially supported (H3). It became clearer that when the number of positive attributes – for instance, being more trustworthy and authentic – a SMI has increases, the purchase intention for the luxury product he/she is sponsoring also increases (H4), and also if number of matters where the respondent and the SMI are similar – for instance, having the same values or even interests

– rises, the purchase intention for the luxury product he/she is sponsoring also rises (H5). Moreover, evidence also showed that the match between the SMI and the product is indeed positively correlated with purchase intention (H6), which means that if the number of matches between SMI and the product – e.g., the SMI being an expert on the product he/she is sponsoring – increases, the purchase intention for the luxury product he/she is sponsoring will also increase. Lastly, perceived social status associated with the product was also proved to lead to higher purchase intention (H7), hence when the perceived social status of the product increases, the purchase intention for the luxury product also increases.

6.1. MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this research aimed and proved to be valuable for managers, academics and professionals in the field of marketing management, and thus contributing with greater knowledge to the current state of the art. It is now clearer how brand prominence in products promoted by an Influencer can affect the consumer's perception of a luxury product and its purchase intention. In other words, not only have managers greater tools to choose from when it comes to deciding which SMIs are better aligned with the values of their company – i.e., to represent their brand and work with –, but SMIs have also a better perspective on how to improve their impact on the purchase intention, and evidently academics have too further insights concerning social media marketing, influencer marketing and purchase intention.

The results of the questionnaire demonstrated that individuals spend a lot of time using social media platforms, not only to discover new brands and products, but also to get information about them. This reinforces the idea that SM platforms should definitely be taken into account as a way to endorse a brand or product. However, it is of great importance to understand in what and where to invest for brands to successfully convey their message on social media.

When brands and professionals in the area of marketing are looking for the ideal social media Influencer to partner up with, characteristics such as being trustworthy, credible, authentic, approachable, being similar to the target consumer or even being willing to interact with them, are seen to be some of the important factors to consider during that choosing process.

On the one hand, the number of likes, followers or comments that a SMI has on digital platforms is not the most relevant characteristic that affects purchase intention, since factors such as being similar to the target audience of a brand and being knowledgeable in the field of the sponsored product are some of the examples which have a greater impact on purchase intention rather than those metrics. On top of that, it is extremely crucial to know well who the target of a brand is, what they need, like

and appreciate to assure the success of the marketing campaign of the endorsed SMI. On the other hand, these quantitative characteristics are still aspects that should be part of the decision-making process when looking for the right type of Influencer.

6.2. ACADEMIC IMPLICATIONS

Nowadays, Influencer marketing has seen an increase in the number of researches performed in that area of study, where, for instance, the way a SMI conveys a message on their digital platforms or even how they affect the perception of a brand are some of the most common topics of investigation. Notwithstanding, there was still no study which explored how brand prominence in products promoted by an Influencer affects the consumer's perception of a luxury product and its purchase intention. Therefore, the present dissertation brought new valuable findings which might be the onset of further research on the subject matter.

6.3. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

As with any study, it is important to recognise its limitations – regardless of the attempts to avoid bias – and make recommendations for future investigations in that research area.

Firstly, the sample size of the questionnaire. Albeit the fact that the sample size was enough for a normal distribution to be assumed as well as to design the database, if the collected sample was larger not only would the reliability of the study improve, but it would also be far more representative of the population. Along with this, when cleaning the database, it was noticeable that some values were missing, not to mention that not all of the participants followed or had followed SMIs – for the analysis it was solely considered the percentage which who followed or have followed this type of endorsers – , hence decreasing the final size of the sample. What is more, women made up the majority of the participants, and for each gender only one category of luxury product – there are eight luxury product categories as proposed by Chevalier and Mazzalovo (2008), i.e., fashion, jewellery, cosmetics, wine, automobile, hotel, tourism, and private banking – was displayed – namely, a scarf for men and a bag for women –, thus it could be interesting for future research to investigate which category of luxury products has the highest impact on each gender.

The second issue was the sampling method. A non-probability sampling method was the one chosen for this research. This sampling method is known to have some constraints, those being the fact that the results may well not be representative of the population and universe, and probably only being thought about in the context of the sample under analysis.

Thirdly, a quantitative analysis was achieved by developing an online survey on *Qualtrics*. Assuming that there were no money or time constraints whatsoever, a qualitative analysis using, for instance, the so-called focus groups should have also been considered, as it would boost the value of the present research. Besides, this type of survey has some limitations attached to it, since there is always the risk that participants make bad interpretations of its questions/concepts due to the lack of time spent reading the questions and their options.

Despite the research limitations previously mentioned, valuable findings were put forward. As it was aimed since the very beginning of this study, a contribution to improve the knowledge on how brand prominence in products promoted by an Influencer impacts the consumer's perception of a luxury product and its purchase intention was made not only to the social media marketing area, but also to the Influencer marketing industry. Anyhow, there is still space for further investigations on SMM and IM subjects.

Considering that the industry chosen for this research was the luxury one, it is also truly relevant to understand if similar conclusions might be withdrawn for other industries regarding the purchase intention aspect.

Ultimately, the present study considered general content, not stating if it was organic or paid, hence it would be interesting for future research to investigate if there are differences in terms of purchase intention of a luxury product when the content is paid and when it is organic, and how each one of them could affect its purchase intention.

7. REFERENCES

- Alalwan, A. A. (2018). Investigating the impact of social media advertising features on customer purchase intention. *International Journal of Information Management*, 42, 65–77. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2018.06.001>
- Balabanis, G., & Stathopoulou, A. (2021). The price of social status desire and public self-consciousness in luxury consumption. *Journal of Business Research*, 123, 463–475. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.10.034>
- Boerman, S. C., Willemsen, L. M., & Van Der Aa, E. P. (2017). “This Post Is Sponsored”: Effects of Sponsorship Disclosure on Persuasion Knowledge and Electronic Word of Mouth in the Context of Facebook. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 38, 82–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2016.12.002>
- Bond, S. D., He, S. X., & Wen, W. (2019). Speaking for «Free»: Word of Mouth in Free- and Paid-Product Settings. *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)*, 56(2), 276–290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022243718821957>
- Botelho, M. F. M. (2019). THE IMPACT OF INFLUENCERS IN THE CONSUMER’S PURCHASE INTENTION: THE COSMETIC INDUSTRY. *Repositório Do ISCTE-IUL*, 92.
- Chan, W. Y., To, C. K. M., & Chu, W. C. (2015). Materialistic consumers who seek unique products: How does their need for status and their affective response facilitate the repurchase intention of luxury goods? *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 27, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2015.07.001>
- Chen, Y. (1), Fay, S. (2), & Wang, Q. (3). (2011). The Role of Marketing in Social Media: How Online Consumer Reviews Evolve. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 25(2), 85–94. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2011.01.003>
- Conde, R. A. A. (2019). *MICRO, MACRO E MEGAINFLUENCERS NO INSTAGRAM: O EFEITO DO NÚMERO DE SEGUIDORES E DA RELAÇÃO PARASSOCIAL COM A AUDIÊNCIA NO PODER DE PERSUAÇÃO*. 106.
- De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). Marketing through Instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), 798–828. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035>

Dimofte, Mark R. Forehand, & Rohit Deshpandé. (2003). Ad Schema Incongruity as Elicitor of Ethnic Self-Awareness and Differential Advertising Response. *Journal of Advertising*, 32(4), 7–17. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4622175>

Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Hughes, D. L., Carlson, J., Filieri, R., Jacobson, J., Jain, V., Karjaluoto, H., Kefi, H., Krishen, A. S., Kumar, V., Rahman, M. M., Raman, R., Rauschnabel, P. A., Rowley, J., Salo, J., Tran, G. A., & Wang, Y. (2021). Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research: Perspectives and research propositions. *International Journal of Information Management*, 59, 102168. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102168>

Godey, B., Manthiou, A., Pederzoli, D., Rokka, J., Aiello, G., Donvito, R., & Singh, R. (2016). Social media marketing efforts of luxury brands: Influence on brand equity and consumer behavior. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(12), 5833–5841. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.181>

Goor, D., Keinan, A., & Ordabayeva, N. (2021). Status Pivoting. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 47(6), 978–1002.

Haenlein, M., Anadol, E., Farnsworth, T., Hugo, H., Hunichen, J., & Welte, D. (2020). Navigating the New Era of Influencer Marketing: How to be Successful on Instagram, TikTok, & Co. *California Management Review*, 63(1), 5–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0008125620958166>

Han, Y. J., Nunes, J. C., & Drèze, X. (2010). *Signaling Status with Luxury Goods: The Role of Brand Prominence*. 16.

Hasan, M., & Sohail, M. S. (2021). The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumers' Purchase Decision: Investigating the Effects of Local and Nonlocal Brands. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 33(3), 350–367. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08961530.2020.1795043>

Jacobson, J., Gruzd, A., & Hernández-García, Á. (2020). Social media marketing: Who is watching the watchers? *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 53, 101774. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.03.001>

Ki, C. «Chloe», & Kim, Y. (2019). The mechanism by which social media influencers persuade consumers: The role of consumers' desire to mimic. *Psychology & Marketing*, 36(10), 905–922. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21244>

Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2010). Impacts of Luxury Fashion Brand's Social Media Marketing on Customer Relationship and Purchase Intention. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 1(3), 164–171. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20932685.2010.10593068>

- Kim, M., & Yoo, S. (2020). The 4th V? The effect of word of mouth volatility on product performance. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 44, 101016. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2020.101016>
- Lee, J. E., & Watkins, B. (2016). YouTube vloggers' influence on consumer luxury brand perceptions and intentions. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(12), 5753–5760. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.171>
- Levy, S., & Gvili, Y. (2015). How Credible is E-Word of Mouth Across Digital-Marketing Channels? *Journal of Advertising Research*, 55(1), 95–109. <https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-55-1-095-109>
- Li, F., Larimo, J., & Leonidou, L. C. (2021). Social media marketing strategy: Definition, conceptualization, taxonomy, validation, and future agenda. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 49(1), 51–70. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-020-00733-3>
- Li, Y.-M., Lee, Y.-L., & Lien, N.-J. (2012). Online Social Advertising via Influential Endorsers. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 16(3), 119–154. <https://doi.org/10.2753/JEC1086-4415160305>
- Li-Chun Yang & Kuan-Nien Chen. (2015). Cosmetic scents by visual and olfactory senses versus purchase intention. *International Journal of Market Research*, 57(1), 125–143. <https://doi.org/10.2501/IJMR-2014-039>
- Lou, C., Tan, S.-S., & Chen, X. (2019). Investigating Consumer Engagement with Influencer- vs. Brand-Promoted Ads: The Roles of Source and Disclosure. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 19(3), 169–186. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2019.1667928>
- Martínez-López, F. J., Anaya-Sánchez, R., Fernández Giordano, M., & Lopez-Lopez, D. (2020). Behind influencer marketing: Key marketing decisions and their effects on followers' responses. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 36(7/8), 579–607. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2020.1738525>
- Nascimento, J. (2019). *Understanding the role of influencers' credibility in social media and its impact on consumers' purchase intentions*. 107.
- Ohanian, R. (1990). Construction and validation of a scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(3), 39–52. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1990.10673191>
- Park, J., Hyun, H., & Thavisay, T. (2021). A study of antecedents and outcomes of social media WOM towards luxury brand purchase intention. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 58, 102272. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102272>

- Pino, G., Amatulli, C., Peluso, A. M., Natarajan, R., & Guido, G. (2019). Brand prominence and social status in luxury consumption: A comparison of emerging and mature markets. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 46, 163–172. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2017.11.006>
- Pittman, M., & Abell, A. (2021). More Trust in Fewer Followers: Diverging Effects of Popularity Metrics and Green Orientation Social Media Influencers. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2021.05.002>
- Qureshi, I. M., Khan, M. A., & Ahmad, H. M. (2012). MEASURING THE EFFECT OF E-MARKETING STIMULI ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION: A SCALE DEVELOPMENT STUDY. *ACTUAL PROBLEMS OF ECONOMICS*, 2, 8.
- Rodrigues, F. (2021). *Big two theory and the impact of digital influencers on consumer's perceptions*. <https://run.unl.pt/handle/10362/123242>
- Rodrigues, R. V. (2021). *The impact of social media influencers on consumer perception about the product and purchase intention*. <https://run.unl.pt/handle/10362/129605>
- Romaniuk, J., & Huang, A. (2020). Understanding consumer perceptions of luxury brands. *International Journal of Market Research*, 62(5), 546–560. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470785319891109>
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students*. Pearson Education.
- Shao, W., Grace, D., & Ross, M. (2019). Consumer motivation and luxury consumption: Testing moderating effects. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 46, 33–44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.10.003>
- Till, B. D., & Busler, M. (2000). The match-up hypothesis: Physical attractiveness, expertise, and the role of fit on brand attitude, purchase intent and brand beliefs. *Journal of Advertising*, 29(3), X–13. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2000.10673613>
- Valsesia, F., Proserpio, D., & Nunes, J. C. (2020). The Positive Effect of Not Following Others on Social Media. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 57(6), 1152–1168. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022243720915467>
- Verma, S., & Yadav, N. (2021). Past, Present, and Future of Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM). *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 53, 111–128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2020.07.001>

Wang, Y., John, D. R., & Griskevicious, V. (2021). Does the devil wear Prada? Luxury product experiences can affect prosocial behavior. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 38(1), 104–119. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2020.04.001>

Whittler, T. E., & DiMeo, J. (1991). Viewers' Reactions to Racial Cues in Advertising Stimuli. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 31(6), 37–46.

Yang, R., & Che, T. (2020). Do social ties matter for purchase frequency? The role of buyers' attitude towards social media marketing. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 110, 106376. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106376>

Zollo, L., Filieri, R., Rialti, R., & Yoon, S. (2020). Unpacking the relationship between social media marketing and brand equity: The mediating role of consumers' benefits and experience. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 256–267. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.05.001>

8. APPENDIX

8.1. APPENDIX A – PROFILES AND BRAND LOGO VISIBILITY

8.1.1. Extravagant Brand Logo Visibility and with #LuxuryBrand

1) Female Influencer



2) Male Influencer



8.1.2.Subtle Brand Logo Visibility and with #LuxuryBrand

1) Female Influencer



2) Male Influencer



8.1.3. Product without Brand Logo and with #LuxuryBrand

1) Female Influencer



2) Male Influencer



8.1.4. Product without Brand Logo and without #LuxuryBrand

1) Female Influencer



2) Male Influencer



8.2. APPENDIX B – SURVEY

The following survey was shown to each participant, with one of the eight images presented before (Appendix A) depending on the gender of the respondent. Moreover, the questions presented in group 4 are asked to all the participants, where the only difference resides in the type of product mentioned to be promoted by the Influencer – i.e., a bag if the respondent is a female, and a scarf if the respondent is a male.

Introduction

Caro(a) participante,

Agradeço desde já a sua disponibilidade para responder ao presente estudo.

Este questionário visa compreender o impacto dos Influencers na intenção de compra do consumidor. A presente análise é efetuada no âmbito de uma Dissertação de Mestrado em Gestão de Informação com especialização em Marketing Intelligence.

Peço-lhe que responda com honestidade, visto que os dados recolhidos ao longo do questionário serão utilizados exclusivamente para fins de académicos, sendo tratados de forma totalmente anónima e confidencial.

Demorará cerca de 7 minutos a responder ao questionário. Se não tiver a certeza sobre a sua resposta, escolha aquela que mais se aproxima à sua avaliação inicial. Não existem respostas certas ou erradas.

Caso tenha alguma questão ou curiosidade, por favor contacte: m20200115@novaims.unl.pt

Obrigada!

Formulário de Consentimento Informado: Declaro que tenho pelo menos 18 anos e que concordo em participar no presente estudo. Declaro que fui informado de que a minha participação neste estudo é voluntária, podendo sair do mesmo a qualquer momento sem penalidade, e que todos os dados recolhidos são confidenciais. Entendo que não existem riscos graves associados ao presente estudo.

- Sim, concordo em participar.
- Não, não concordo em participar.

If the respondent clicks on “Não, não concordo em participar” the survey must end.

Secção 1 - Dados Sócio-demográficos

Em primeiro lugar, necessitamos de saber algumas informações demográficas sobre si.

I. Por favor, indique o seu género:

- Feminino
- Masculino
- Outro

If the respondent clicks on “Outro” the survey must end.

(Bearing in mind that the image to be displayed in section 4 depends on the respondent's gender, if he/she does not select one of the first two options the questionnaire must end.)

II. Por favor, indique a sua idade:

III. Qual a sua nacionalidade?

- Portuguesa
- Outra:

IV. Qual a sua ocupação profissional?

- Estudante
- Trabalhador - Estudante
- Empregado(a)
- Desempregado(a)
- Reformado(a)
- Outro:

V. Qual o seu nível de escolaridade?

- Ensino Básico
- Secundário
- Curso Profissional
- Licenciatura
- Mestrado
- Doutoramento
- Outro:

Secção 2 - Questões Gerais sobre Social Media

VI. Utiliza Plataformas Digitais?

- Sim
- Não

If the respondent clicks on “Não” the survey must end.

VII. Com que frequência utiliza Plataformas Digitais?

- Várias vezes ao dia
- Uma vez por dia
- 1 a 3 vezes por semana
- Menos de 1 a 3 vezes por semana

VIII. Que Plataformas Digitais utiliza? (Selecione todas as opções relevantes).

- Facebook
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Pinterest
- Tumblr
- Twitter
- Snapchat
- WhatsApp
- Youtube
- LinkedIn
- Outro:

If the respondent doesn't select “Instagram”, the following question comes up.

VIII.I Este questionário destina-se a utilizadores do Instagram. Confirma que **não utiliza** a plataforma digital Instagram?

- Confirmo que não utilizo Instagram.
- Afinal, confirmo que utilizo Instagram.

IX. Qual a Plataforma Digital que mais utiliza?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Pinterest
- Tumblr
- Twitter
- Snapchat
- Youtube
- LinkedIn
- Outro:

X. Utiliza as Plataformas Digitais como ferramenta para procurar informações sobre marcas/produtos?

- Sim
- Não

XI. Alguma vez descobriu um(a) novo(a) produto/marca através das Plataformas Digitais?

- Sim
- Não

Instructions

As seguintes perguntas destinam-se a avaliar a percepção sobre Influencers.

Considere a seguinte definição.

Influencers: líderes de opinião e criadores de conteúdo viral - geralmente online -, que têm alta visibilidade nas plataformas digitais e podem exercer influência sobre seus seguidores, promovendo e recomendando marcas e ofertas de mercado nas suas redes sociais.

Secção 3 - Questões acerca de Social Media Influencers

XII. Segue (ou já seguiu) algum(a) Influencer no Instagram?

- Sim
- Não

XIII. Em média, quantos Influencers segue? (Caso não tenha informação suficiente para responder, indique um número aproximado).

XIV. Que áreas de interesse são promovidas no perfil dos Influencers que segue? (Selecione todas as opções relevantes)

- Produtos de Beleza (Maquilhagem, Perfumes, Cosméticos, etc.)
- Turismo e Lazer (Viagens, Hotéis, Restaurantes, etc.)
- Fashion (Malas, Sapatos, Cintos, Óculos, etc.)
- Beverage (Vinho, Bebidas Espirituosas, Espumante, etc.)
- Joalheria (Relógios, Anéis, Pulseiras, Colares, etc.)
- Private Banking (Pacote de serviços, Qualidade serviços, Branding, etc.)
- Automóveis (Desportivos, Luxo, Clássicos, etc.)
- Outro:

Instructions

De seguida será apresentada uma imagem de um(a) Influencer do Instagram. Tendo por base essa imagem ser-lhe-á feito um conjunto de perguntas.

Secção 4 - Teste ao Perfil do(a) Influencer (Example)

Instructions

Por favor, preste atenção à **imagem** que aparece de seguida analisando-a com cuidado. **Foque-se** em especial na **mala promovida** pelo(a) Influencer.

Tome o tempo que precisar, mas não demore mais do que um minuto.

(Depending on the gender of the respondent, one of four images of the same Influencer comes up. Note that the questions made to the respondents are the same for both genders.)

Subsecção 4.1 - Teste ao Perfil Influencer (Example)

Tendo em conta a imagem, responda às seguintes questões. (Caso não tenha informação suficiente para responder, utilize a sua **intuição**.)

XV. Considero que o(a) Influencer apresentado(a) é **confiável**.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XVI. Considero que o(a) Influencer apresentado(a) é **credível**.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XVII. Considero que o(a) Influencer apresentado(a) é **autêntico(a)**.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XVIII. Considero que é **fácil entrar em contacto** com o(a) Influencer apresentado(a).

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XIX. Considero que o(a) Influencer apresentado(a) é **acessível**.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XX. Considero que o(a) Influencer apresentado(a) **estaria disposto(a) a interagir comigo**.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Subsecção 4.2 - Teste ao Perfil Influencer Continuação (Example)

(The image associated with the previous Influencer appears again)

XXI. Considero que o meu **estilo de vida geral** é semelhante ao do(a) Influencer.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XXII. Considero que o meu **background cultural** é semelhante ao do(a) Influencer.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XXIII. Considero que os meus **valores** são semelhantes aos do(a) Influencer.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XXIV. Considero que os meus **interesses** são semelhantes aos do(a) Influencer.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XXV. Em geral, e com base nas informações apresentadas na imagem, quanto é que gosta deste(a) Influencer? (Caso não tenha informação suficiente para responder, utilize a sua intuição).

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Subsecção 4.3 - Influencer e o produto (Example)

Focando-se de novo na **mala promovida** pelo(a) Influencer, responda às seguintes questões.

(The image associated with the previous Influencer appears again)

XXVI. Considero que o(a) Influencer é **apropriado(a)** para promover este tipo de produtos.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XXVII. Considero que o(a) Influencer se **enquadra bem** neste tipo de produtos.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XXVIII. Considero que o(a) Influencer é **competente** para promover este tipo de produtos.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Subsecção 4.4 - Perceção sobre produto (Example)

(The image associated with the previous Influencer appears again)

XXIX. Trata-se de um produto **útil**.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XXX. Trata-se de um produto que **satisfaz uma necessidade**.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XXXI. Trata-se de um produto que **resolve um problema**.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XXXII. O produto **combina/enquadra-se comigo**.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Subsecção 4.5 - Perceived Social Status do produto (Example)

(The image associated with the previous Influencer appears again)

XXXIII. O produto confere **status social**.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XXXIV. **Utilizando** este produto serei visto como tendo um maior **status social**.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Subsecção 4.6 - Purchase Intention para o produto (Example)

(The image associated with the previous Influencer appears again)

XXXV. **Estando interessado(a)** neste produto, **irei procurar mais informação**.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XXXVI. Tenho a **intenção** de adquirir este produto.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XXXVII. Irei **adquirir** este produto.

1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo Moderadamente	3 - Discordo um pouco	4 - Não concordo, nem discordo	5 - Concordo um pouco	6 - Concordo Moderadamente	7 - Concordo Totalmente
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Instructions

Agradecemos a sua participação neste inquérito.

A sua resposta foi registada.

8.3. APPENDIX C – SURVEY FLOW

