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What more influences the followers? The effect of digital influencer attractiveness, homophily and credibility on followers' purchase intention

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Abstract

Recent changes in the digital environment have led to changes in consumer behavior, particularly regarding the process of decision-making. Consumers active on social media use non-brand-controlled sources of information, such as digital influencers who create content and share it with their followers. In this article we investigate how the digital influencer characteristics, namely influencer physical and social attractiveness, as well as perceived homophily, influence the influencer credibility and social media users' purchase intention. We focus our research on the digital influencers on Instagram in the perception of Portuguese respondents (n=133). To test the proposed hypothesis partial least squares method of structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was applied. The findings indicate that influencer social attractiveness positively influences influencer credibility and negatively influences the purchase intention. Interestingly, the influencer physical attractiveness revealed not to affect followers' purchase intention. This study also shows a strong positive relationship between influencer credibility and social media users purchase intention.

Keywords: digital influencers, influencer attractiveness, homophily, influencer credibility

Introduction

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of Internet users from 1 billion in 2005, in 2021 the number of internet users worldwide was estimated at 4.9 billion, rising up from 4.6 billion in the previous year (Statista, 2021). Allied to this growth, there has been a great interest in social media, particularly in social networks such as Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook (Sokolova & Kefi, 2019). In accordance with Statista (2022) social networking sites are estimated to reach 3.96 billion users in 2022 and these numbers are still projected to grow as mobile device and mobile social networks usage continue to raise.

According to a study carried out by Business Insider in 2018, investments related to social networks and digital influencers will increase by 38% by the end of 2022, especially in the areas of fashion, beauty, motherhood, and tourism. Social networks such as Instagram, Facebook or YouTube have changed traditional communication habits, since consumers spend a lot of their time-consuming content on these digital platforms. The age of social media users also seems to matter. Previous studies shed light on several distinctions in social media use by generation (e.g., Berezan et al., 2018). According to a survey of global

internet users conducted in the fourth quarter of 2020, 33% of respondents aged between 16 and 23 years old (Gen Z) and 36% of Millennials reported following brands they purchased from, or they were thinking of purchasing from, on social media. Also, 28% of Gen Z respondents and 23% of Millennials reported following influencers and other experts on social media (Statista, 2021).

Comparably, while analyzing the Google trends through the popularity of terms ‘digital influencers’ and ‘social media influencers’ the growth is significant since 2014 and applies predominantly to the world’s more developed regions of North America, Brazil, Europe, Asia, and Australia (see figure 1 to 3).

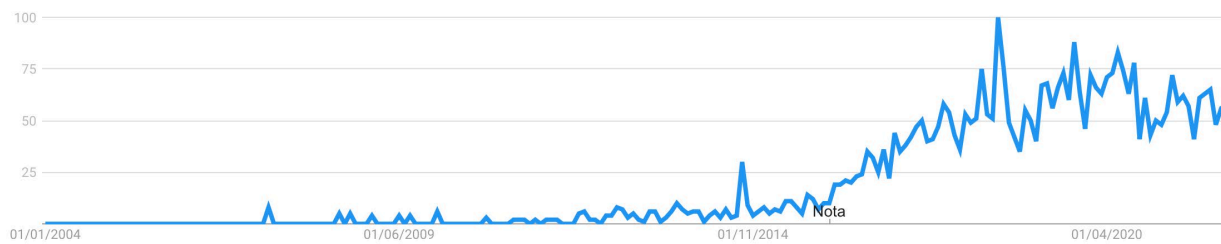


Figure 1: ‘Digital influencers’ Google trends 2004-present (2022)



Figure 2: ‘Social media influencers’ Google trends 2004-present (2022)



Figure 3: ‘Social media influencers’ Google trends popularity per region 2004-present (2022)

As social media have evolved exponentially in recent years, this evolution is also visible through the growth in the number of content creators as well as the increase in investment by brands in this sector.

But there is another, recently seen face of social media. In accordance with Kubcco.com, 72% of people reported increasing their social media consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic what have brought new considerations. Recent research starts to show the potential dark side of social media which seem to influence individuals' psychological well-being predominantly among Generation Z (Liu et al., 2021). Liu et al. (2021) suggest that because of pandemic lockdown and the increased use of social media, the users start to feel the information overload, leading to fatigue and social media discountenance intention.

Considering the popularity, the growth of users and the recent perceptual changes as it comes to social media usage this area gives many opportunities for inquiry. The present study aims to address the continuously shifting role of digital influencers while analyzing how their attractiveness and credibility affect the consumer purchase intention.

Conceptual background

From user-generated content to digital influencers

In addition to the posts shared by brands, nowadays, consumers themselves actively generate and publish content where they share their opinions about products and brands, transforming the traditional Word of Mouth (WOM) into Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) (Sokolova & Kefi, 2019). Through this eWOM, brands and their consumers have the possibility to share knowledge and exchange information, allowing for greater engagement between them. This also allows users to be active content creators rather than mere spectators. These users start to share online content about their ideas, criticisms, opinions, feelings, and their personal stories (Chau & Xu, 2012). This communication between social media users (also called 'user-generated content') is seen as much more effective when compared to traditional advertising (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011), since by sharing their experiences on SM platforms, these users can become opinion leaders and influence other consumers (Smith et al., 2007). These opinion leaders, called digital influencers, have the ability to spread their messages faster while reaching a greater number of people (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014). Santiago et al. (2020) claimed that digital influencers "play an important role in the information dissemination process, many times leading to product acquisition" (p.107). The content shared by them involves providing information, evaluations and opinions about certain products or brands according to their personal experiences (Ponte, 2017).

This new trend is leading consumers to increasingly seek opinions and information about the products they intend to buy through the publications of these digital influencers (Constantinides, 2009). According to Ponte (2017), the reviews that these opinion leaders share with their followers are seen by them as more credible and reliable in relation to the information presented to them directly by brands. In this way, the publications that opinion leaders share are considered a very effective communication channel as they allow consumers to make informed decisions (Ponte, 2017).

Lincoln and Robards (2016) characterized digital influencers as individuals who are present in the online environment and who have the power to stimulate the mindsets of their followers and affect their purchase decisions, through their knowledge or position. that have in the online environment. This definition is in line with that presented by Keller and Fay (2016) who described digital influencers as ordinary consumers who share information with their followers and recommend certain products and brands to them.

Digital influencers are present in all sectors, such as fashion, beauty, food, health, sports, technology, among others, and establish trends within their areas of activity (O'Neil-Hart & Blumenstein, 2016;

Sokolova & Kefi, 2019). Influencers can establish trends as they connect with their followers, conveying to them the idea of a close and exclusive personal relationship (Rebelo et al., 2017). In contrast to traditional media, publications shared by digital influencers are considered more casual, as they give followers the possibility to interact, both with influencers and brands, in a faster, more intimate way. and individual (Boyd, 2007).

Influencer attractiveness

For Li and Sakamoto (2014), attractiveness is one of the dimensions that has the greatest impact on consumer attitudes towards digital influencers. Attractiveness is described by Nunes et al. (2018) as a set of positive associations that are attributed to people, according to their physical or psychological and personality characteristics. In this way, the level of attractiveness depends a lot on the perceptions and associations that the consumer has in relation to the influencer. A positive association between the influencer and the consumer makes the latter pay more attention to the message transmitted, increasing the probability of making a future purchase (Li & Sakamoto, 2014). In other words, and according to Forbes (2019), followers/consumers who confer some level of attractiveness to a particular influencer are more likely, in the future, to acquire and use products from a particular brand rather than another because the influencer has recommended or used that same brand. One of the main indicators to measure the attractiveness level of a digital influencer is the number of followers he/she has (Jin & Phua, 2014). An influencer who manages to reach a certain level of prestige is more easily considered credible and attractive by his community of followers and, as a consequence, has a greater impact on the behavior of those same followers (Abidin, 2016; Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014).

Influencer physical attractiveness

Physical attractiveness has been a relevant topic of research in social sciences (Kahle & Homer, 1985). Source attractiveness increases the impact of communication as it is generating more attention and engagement (Mills & Aronson, 1965). It is worth to be mentioned that most (but not all, e.g., Kim & Kim, 2021) studies claim that a physically attractive source facilitates the change of attitude and generates more trust. Giles (2002) stated that the relationship between users and influencers is built based on several factors, including the physical attractiveness of the influencer. For Sokolova and Kefi (2019), physical attractiveness defines people's characteristics as being pleasant, attractive, aesthetic, and beautiful, and these characteristics may vary depending on the cultures and time periods under study. The fact that influencers are perceived as physically attractive leads to personality traits such as social and intellectual competence, integrity, and concern for others (Till & Busler, 2000). According to Sokolova and Kefi (2019), influencers who are perceived as physically attractive are also perceived as credible. Accordingly, it is proposed that **there is a positive relationship between influencer physical attractiveness and his credibility (H1a)**, and also, the **influencer physical attractiveness affects positively the followers' purchase intent (H1b)**.

Influencer social attractiveness

Social attractiveness can be described as the influencer's degree of sympathy which has an impact on the consumers decision-making, since the consumer, when perceiving influencers as their peers, creates a positive relationship with them (Sokolova & Kefi, 2019). Millennials are the generation that most often identifies with digital influencers - they imagine themselves to have a similar lifestyle as the influencers and normally share similar tastes and values (Peter, 2004). Thus, this generation is more likely to purchase a product or service suggested by someone that matches their self-image (Sukhdial et al., 2002). In this way, when consumers perceive the influencer as someone they can trust personally, they are more likely to follow the trends addressed by them (Sokolova & Kefi, 2019). This goes in pair with self-categorization theory, in the light of which through the process of categorization, individuals estimate the accessibility of

a group and the potential of adopting to the standards of the specific group which influences their information processing, memory and behavior (Korte, 2007). According to Sokolova and Kefi (2019), the social attractiveness of an influencer is related to the way consumers estimate the potential of having a connection with those influencers outside the digital environment. The way how the influencers are perceived does not consider so much the quality of information they share, but reflects the personal characteristics that followers associate with influencers. Accordingly, if a follower feels that the influencer could become his friend, the recommendations made by influencer, will be better accepted and can have an impact on the follower's future decision making. Consequently, is postulated that **there is a positive relationship between influencer social attractiveness and his credibility (H2a), as well as followers purchase intent (H2b).**

Perceived homophily

In accordance with Eyal and Rubin (2003) homophily is 'the degree to which people who interact are similar in beliefs, education, social status, and the like' (p.80). Regarding the perceived homophily, it can be defined as a friendship that is formed between people who are similar in certain aspects (Lee & Watkins, 2016), that is, people maintain a relationship because they are connected by what they have in common: culture, education, social status, beliefs, among others (Xiang et al., 2016). One of the basic principles of interpersonal communication is related to the fact that similar people are those who communicate with each other more often (Jacob & Wonneberger, 2017). In this way, it is more likely that friendships will develop between people who have the same habits and tastes (Xiang et al., 2016). This also happens in the online environment, with influencers and their followers, the more similarities the influencer shows to have in common with the followers, the more interaction there will be between them. It is also important to mention that users of social media platforms tend to follow digital influencers who, according to their perception, have the same tastes and similar goals as yours (Lee & Watkins, 2016). In this way, homophily is considered a determining factor in the perception of credibility of an influencer, since it is related to the perception of similarities between followers and influencers (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Based on the above, it is suggested that **influencer perceived homophily influences positively influencer credibility (H3a) and follower purchase intent (H3b).**

Influencer credibility

In the digital environment, any opinion or recommendation is more easily adopted by the consumer if he perceives the source of information as credible (Bae & Lee, 2011). Thus, the more credible the source, the greater the probability that the receiver will adopt the content of the transmitted message (Zhang & Watts, 2008). Thus, it is essential that the digital influencer be as transparent as possible (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011). We can then define the perceived credibility of a digital influencer as the way in which the consumer perceives the influencer as someone trustworthy and an expert in their field of activity (Goldsmith et al., 2000). These two key dimensions are intrinsic to the influencer and have a major effect on consumer attitudes towards their purchase intentions (Fogg et al., 2001, Goldsmith et al., 2000). Specialization has to do with the experience, knowledge, and competence that the source has regarding the content addressed, while trust is related to the perception of an attitude of honesty and objectivity on the part of the sender, who is often defined as well-meaning, impartial, truthful, and holding moral principles (Fernandes & Inverneiro, 2017, Fogg et al., 2001).

The perception of credibility is related to the consumer's response attitude, so the greater the perceived credibility of an influencer, the greater will be his persuasive ability to induce a positive attitude on the part of the consumer regarding the content of the message transmitted (Fernandes & Inverneiro, 2017; Ponte, 2017; Zernigah & Sohail, 2012). Thus, the credibility of the digital influencer will have an impact on consumers and will later influence their attitudes (Goldsmith et al., 2000).

Purchase intention

Balakrishnan et al. (2014) aggregated several concepts and defined purchase intention as a subjective evaluation by consumers of a particular product or service and subsequently the conviction they have to purchase those products or services. In the context of SM platforms, purchase intention is defined as the predisposition that a consumer has to buy a certain product in the near future, before or after being exposed to a criticism (Correia & Medina, 2014; Xu et al., 2015). Purchase intention can also be defined as the probability of consumers planning to purchase a product in the future, and as such it is considered as an antecedent of a purchase (Blackwell et al., 2008; Wu et al., 2011). The opinions of digital influencers, when considered useful and credible, reduce the risk perceived by the followers in their evaluation of the product or service and later influence the purchase decision. Thus, followers/consumers search for information on social media platforms to assure their informed purchase intentions (Zhang et al., 2014). Accordingly, it is proposed that **there is a positive effect of influencer credibility on followers’ purchase intention (H4).**

Conceptual model

The conceptual model applied in this study derives from the adaptation of Sokolova and Kefi’s (2019) model. In this adaptation (see figure 4), we test the relationship between the influencer characteristics, namely physical and social attractiveness, perceived homophily; influencer credibility and social media users’ purchase intention.

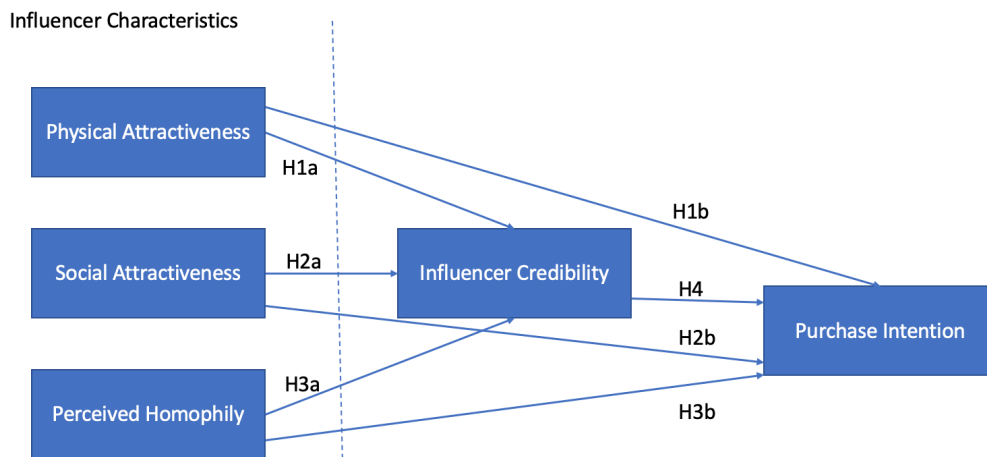


Figure 4: Conceptual Model

Methods

Study unit

Among the most popular social media platforms, Instagram with 1.4 billion monthly active users in 2021 ranked at the fourth place (placing after Facebook with 2.7 billion monthly active users, YouTube with approx. 2.3 billion users, and WhatsApp with 2 billion active monthly users) (Statista, 2022). Interestingly, the popularity of Facebook tends to decline as teenagers are not using Facebook as much as Millennials and Gen Xers (Business Insider, 2018). On its side, Instagram shows a growth of 47.9% in terms of the adhesion of companies, as well as a growing increase in the number of advertisers (Chaykowski, 2016). On Instagram, these opinion leaders are called ‘Instagrammers’ and they often turn their profile and even themselves into brands (Latiff & Safiee, 2015). They become known due to the large number of followers,

who are essentially attracted by the content they publish. These users prefer to follow influencers that convey positive messages and that foster engagement and proximity between them and their followers (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). The habits of consumption of content on the Internet have been changing as users are exposed, daily, to a large amount of information that is spread much faster. This makes it essential to reduce the text in favor of the image (Pereira, 2017). Instagram fills this need and is a very advantageous platform for both brands and influencers, as it gives them the possibility to explore their creativity through image and video (Hughes, 2017). Most influencers present on Instagram have a number of followers much higher than that of many famous celebrities (Rashidi et al., 2016). However, Weinswig (2016) argued that the power of digital influencers is not directly linked to the number of followers they have, but rather to their ability to influence other consumers.

Data collection

To collect the data the survey by questionnaire was built with the use of Qualtrics online survey tool and distributed using a non-probabilistic convenience sample. Before the questionnaire release, a pre-test was conducted to test the applied research instrument (n=15). After the pre-test (which resulted with some grammatical corrections), the questionnaire was published online. To obtain a greater number of responses, the questionnaire was shared on social networks such as Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn.

In total, the questionnaire consisted of six sections: 1) eligibility to respond to the questionnaire (respondents had to follow an influencer on Instagram in able to answer the questionnaire); 2) characteristics of influencers: physical attractiveness, homophilic attitude and social attractiveness; 3) perceived credibility of influencers; 4) intention to purchase the products promoted by influencers; 5) frequency of use of Instagram, content consumed and motivations to follow an influencer (respondents were also ask about their associations with influencers and the influencers' cahracteristics that they value the most), and finally 6) respondents sociodemographic data. All questions were closed-ended and only filter questions had mandatory answers.

The measures used in this study were adapted from Sokolova and Kefi (2019) which have based their operationalization on previous research. The original research instrument comprehended 5 questions on a 7-point Likert agreement scale (see, Table 1).

Table 1: Scales used in the study

Dimension	Items	Scale
Physical Attractiveness	PhysicalAttract1	<i>I think this influencer is quite handsome.</i>
	PhysicalAttract2	<i>I find this influencer very attractive physically.</i>
Social Attractiveness	Social Attract1	<i>I think this influencer could be a friend of mine.</i>
	SocialAttract2	<i>I would like to have a friendly chat with this influencer.</i>
Perceived Homophily	Homophily1	<i>This influencer thinks like me.</i>
	Homophily2	<i>This influencer shares my values.</i>
Influencer Credibility	Credibility1	<i>I find this influencer expert in his domain.</i>
	Credibility2	<i>I find this influencer efficient in his job.</i>
	Credibility3	<i>I find this influencer trustworthy.</i>
	Credibility4	<i>I think this influencer cares about his followers.</i>
	Credibility5	<i>This influencer updates regularly his content.</i>
Purchase Intention	Purchase1	<i>I would purchase the products promoted by this influencer in the future.</i>
	Purchase2	<i>I would encourage people close to me to buy the products promoted by this influencer.</i>

Sample Characterization

As for the sample, the questionnaire counted with 249 responses of which only 133 were completed and considered for this study. Of these 133 respondents, 75.9% were female and only 24.1% were male. Most respondents were aged between 18 and 24 years (48.1%) and with education at the undergraduate level (52.6%). All the respondents originated from Portugal and were mostly resident in the district of Lisbon (41.4%) and in the district of Portalegre (28.6%) (South Portugal). Table 2 reassumes the sample characterization.

Regarding the number of hours of internet use, 33.6% of respondents claimed to spend less than an hour consuming content produced by digital influencers, 35.3% admitted spending between 1 and 2 hours, 21% respondents claimed spending between 3 to 4 hours and 6% of respondents admitted spending more than 4 hours consuming this type of content. As it comes to the reasons to follow digital influencers respondents indicated that they seek mostly for entertainment, in the aim of personal learning and to discover more about influencers' personal lives. Regarding the reasons that make respondents follow chosen influencers, the characteristics indicated with most frequency were: 'talented', 'honest', 'trustworthy', 'understanding' and 'sincere'.

Table 2: Sample characterization

Sample Characterization	Options	%
Gender	Woman	75,9
	Man	24,1
Age	< 18	9,0
	18 - 24	48,1
	25 - 44	35,3
	45 - 54	6,8
	> 55	0,8
Professional Situation	Unemployed	4,5
	Student	31,6
	Working student	13,5
	Self-employed/Freelancer	12,0
	Working for others	38,4
Education (the highest level completed)	Primary	1,5
	Secondary	27,1
	Vocational school	6,8
	Bachelor's degree	52,6
	Master's degree	12,0
Net monthly individual income	< 500€	11,3
	500€ - 1000€	33,1
	1001€ - 1500€	18,0
	1501€ - 2000€	5,3
	2001€ - 2500€	0,8
	> 2500€	0,8

Results

Measurement Model Assessment

To understand the influencer physical attractiveness, homophily and social attractiveness effect on influencer credibility and customers’ purchase intentions, partial least squares method of structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was applied and assisted by SmartPLS 3.3.3 software. The choice of using PLS methodology was motivated by the advantages that it carries: it works well with small sample size and doesn’t require the normality of data and constructs may be measured by less than four items, which is not a case in SEM (Davari & Rezazadeh, 2013).

As it comes to reliability and validity of the research model, table 3 describes the indicator loadings, the Cronbach’s alpha, consistent reliability (Rho_A), the composite reliability (CR), and the average variance extracted (AVE) of each latent variable.

Table 3: Measurement Model Table

	Items	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Physical Attractiveness	PhysicalAttract1	0.981	0.890	0.899	0.948	0.901
	PhysicalAttract2	0.979				
Social Attractiveness	Social Attract1	0.896	0.760	0.761	0.893	0.807
	SocialAttract2	0.901				
Perceived Homophily	Homophily1	0.902	0.803	0.812	0.910	0.835
	Homophily2	0.925				
Influencer Credibility	Credibility1	0.830	0.914	0.919	0.936	0.746
	Credibility2	0.907				
	Credibility3	0.911				
	Credibility4	0.849				
	Credibility5	0.818				
Purchase Intention	Purchase1	0.981	0.960	0.961	0.980	0.961
	Purchase2	0.979				

The results support the reliability of the measurement indicators. Outer model loadings indicate the latent variable reliability as they are above .70 (Henseler et al., 2012). The Cronbach’s alphas are all above 0.7. The composite reliability (CR) values are also higher than the recommended minimum of 0.7 (Gefen et al., 2000), indicating that all constructs have adequate internal consistency. The consistent reliability coefficient represents the desired values (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015). The average variance extracted (AVE) of each indicator is grater that the expected minimum consistency what ensures convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The inner VIF values which show that there is no indication of multicollinearity.

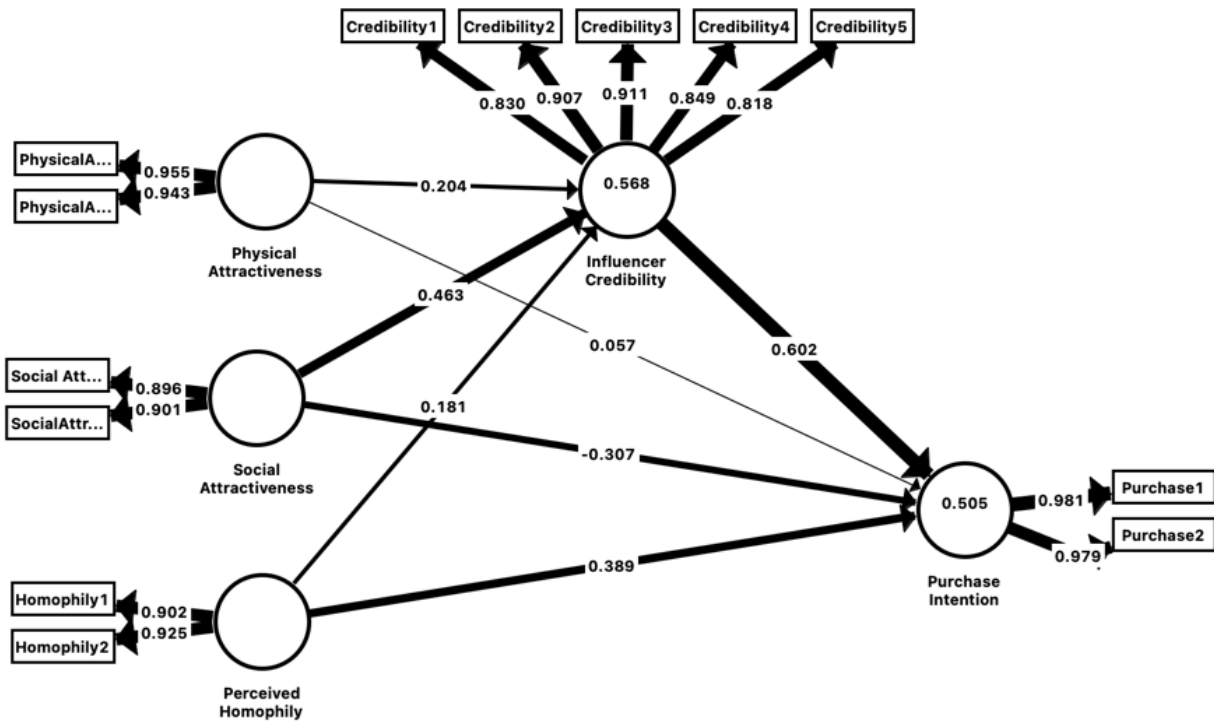


Figure 5: PLS Algorithm Model

Figure 5 exhibits the structural model that shows the beta values of all coefficients, the outer model loadings and the R² adjusted for the dependent variables. The highlighted paths use relative values to illustrate the strongest connections. Table 4 represents the estimated model fit. As the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is lower than .10, we can assume that the model has a good fit (Henseler et al., 2014).

Table 4: The Algorithm Model Fit

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Influencer Credibility	0.568	0.558
Purchase Intention	0.505	0.490
	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.053	0.053
d_ ULS	0.255	0.255
d_ G	0.362	0.362
Chi-Square	298.555	298.555
NFI	0.796	0.796

Hypotheses Testing: Bootstrapping Direct Effect Results

PLS-SEM uses a nonparametric bootstrap procedure to test the significance of estimated path coefficients with two-tails significant level of 5 per cent (Hair et al., 2014). To evaluate the direct effects of all the hypothesized relationships the bootstrapping analysis was applied with a resample of 5,000 iterations. It is assumed that if t-value is greater than the critical value ($t\text{-value} > 1.96$) and p-value is smaller than 0.05, the statistical significance of hypothesis is accepted. Table 5 presents the means, standard deviations, t statistics and p-values of the outer loadings after running the bootstrapping (with the confidence of 95%).

Table 5: Summary of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Relation	Path Coefficient (β)	t value	p value	Decision
H1a	Physical Attractiveness -> Influencer Credibility	0.204	2.431	0.015	<i>Supported</i>
H1b	Physical Attractiveness -> Purchase Intention	0.057	0.462	0.644	<i>Not Supported</i>
H2a	Social Attractiveness -> Influencer Credibility	0.463	4.424	0.000	<i>Supported</i>
H2b	Social Attractiveness -> Purchase Intention	-0.307	2.672	0.008	<i>Supported</i>
H3a	Perceived Homophily -> Influencer Credibility	0.181	1.788	0.074	<i>Not Supported</i>
H3b	Perceived Homophily -> Purchase Intention	0.389	3.798	0.000	<i>Supported</i>
H4	Influencer Credibility -> Purchase Intention	0.602	5.532	0.000	<i>Supported</i>

In accordance with the results, it was not possible to prove the relationship of the perceived homophily and influencer credibility and the effect of influencer physical attractiveness on purchase intention ($t\text{-value} < 1.96$, $p\text{-value} > 0.05$). All the other hypotheses were supported, and influencer credibility showed to have the biggest impact on purchase intention ($\beta=0.602$). The second strongest relation showed to be the one of influencer social attractiveness and influencer credibility ($\beta=0.463$). Interestingly, the influencer physical attractiveness revealed to have a negative effect on purchase intention.

Conclusions

This study has brought interesting findings. In analogy with the research of Sokolova and Kefi (2020), the results of the present study do not support the relationship between the influencer physical attractiveness and purchase intention. Also, similarly to Sokolova and Kefi (2020), we observe that the credibility of the influencer has a positive impact on followers’ purchase intention and is enhanced by both physical and social attractiveness of the influencer. In dissonance from the mentioned study, here we could not support the effect of homophily on influencer credibility. Although homophily advocates that creating an affective link with an influencer comes through shared values, mostly among the young generation, it was not confirmed in the present study.

This study has some limitations related to sampling procedure and the sample size. Although social science recommends not to use forced-choice questions, it influenced the number of complete responses and limited

the study sample. Also, the focus on a population located in Portugal restricted the generalization of findings.

It might be interesting to mention that both the study of Sokolova and Kefi (2020) and the present research were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, and while the data in the study of Sokolova and Kefi (2020) was collected during the initial phase of lockdowns, the data in this research was collected with some of the pandemic restrictions already loosened but at the moment when the first signals of fatigue and social media overload have been detected (Liu et al., 2021). This might have influenced the results of this inquiry, as in accordance with social cognitive theory, people adapt to life circumstances (Bandura, 2005). Accordingly, it would be interesting to replicate this study as the world's situation changes to track the possible raise or fall of social media influence and the perceptions of social media users.

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