

The Power of Persuasion: how Influencer Credibility, Persuasion Knowledge and Brand Attitude drive Purchase Intent

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ABSTRACT

Title - The power of persuasion: how influencer credibility, persuasion knowledge and brand attitude drive purchase intent

The digital world is constantly evolving, and with it have appear new forms of communication, like influencer marketing, that impact and alter consumer behavior. Influencers are powerful tools used by brands to endorse their products and widen their audience reach with minimum effort and in a short period of time. Along with this new marketing approach, the need to understand what makes one influencer campaign more successful than others has also raised. This research studies three variables that could answer to that question: influencer's credibility, persuasion knowledge and brand Attitude. In order to do so, this study analyses the effect they have on the final purchase intent of consumers by conducting a survey to a sample with 103 respondents. The results showed that the awareness of consumers to persuasive tactics and the positive perception towards the brand endorsed are not significant when explaining the ultimate purchase decision of consumers, while how credible and trustworthy the influencer is perceived to be is. With this evidence, this research aims to advice brands on how to achieve a successful marketing campaign by choosing the most adequate influencer and effectively increase their growth in a sustained way.

Keywords: "Influencer Marketing"; "Influencer Credibility"; "Persuasion Knowledge"; "Brand attitude"; "Purchase intent"; "Consumer Behavior".

RESUMEN

Título - El poder de la persuasión: cómo la credibilidad de los influencers, el conocimiento de persuasión y la percepción de la marca impulsan la intención de compra

El mundo digital está en constante evolución, y con él han surgido nuevas formas de comunicación, como el marketing de influencers, que impactan y modifican el comportamiento del consumidor. Los influencers son herramientas poderosas que las marcas utilizan para promocionar sus productos y ampliar su alcance de audiencia con el mínimo esfuerzo y tiempo. Junto con esta nueva estrategia de marketing, también ha surgido la necesidad de comprender qué hace que una campaña de influencers sea más exitosa que otras. Esta investigación estudia tres variables que podrían responder a esta pregunta: la credibilidad del influencer, el conocimiento de las técnicas de persuasión y la percepción de la marca. Para ello, este estudio analiza su efecto en la intención de compra final de los consumidores mediante una encuesta contestada por 103 participantes. Los resultados mostraron que el conocimiento de los consumidores sobre las tácticas persuasivas y la percepción positiva de la marca promocionada no son significativos a la hora de explicar la decisión de compra final, mientras que la credibilidad y la confianza percibidas del influencer sí lo son. Con esta evidencia, esta investigación busca asesorar a las marcas sobre cómo lograr una campaña de marketing exitosa eligiendo al influencer más adecuado e impulsando su crecimiento de forma efectiva y sostenible.

Palabras clave: “Marketing de Influencers”; “Credibilidad del Influencer”; “Conocimiento de Persuasión”; “Percepción de la Marca”; “Intención de Compra”; “Comportamiento del Consumidor”.

RESUM

Títol – El poder de la persuasió: com la credibilitat dels influencers, el coneixement de persuasió i la percepció de la marca impulsen la intenció de compra.

El món digital està en constant evolució i, amb ell, han aparegut noves formes de comunicació, com el màrqueting d'influencers, que impacten i alteren el comportament del consumidor. Els influencers són eines poderoses que utilitzen les marques per promocionar els seus productes i ampliar l'abast del seu públic amb el mínim esforç i en un curt període de temps. Juntament amb aquesta nova estratègia de màrqueting, també ha sorgit la necessitat d'entendre què fa que una campanya d'influencers tingui més èxit que d'altres. Aquest estudi analitza tres variables que podrien respondre a aquesta pregunta: la credibilitat de l'influencer, el coneixement de tècniques de persuasió i la percepció envers la marca. Per fer-ho, aquest treball analitza l'efecte que tenen en la intenció de compra final dels consumidors mitjançant la realització d'una enquesta a una mostra amb 103 persones. Els resultats van mostrar que el coneixement dels consumidors sobre les tàctiques persuasives i la percepció positiva envers la marca promocionada no són significatius a l'hora d'explicar la decisió de compra final dels consumidors, mentre que la credibilitat i la confiança que es percep cap a l'influencer són significatives. Amb aquesta evidència, aquesta investigació pretén assessorar les marques sobre com aconseguir una campanya de màrqueting exitosa triant l'influencer més adequat i augmentant eficaçment el seu creixement de manera sostinguda.

Paraules clau: “Màrqueting d’Influencers”; Credibilitat de l’Influencer; “Coneixement de Persuasió”; “Percepció de la Marca”; “Intenció de Compra”; “Comportament del Consumidor”.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social media influencers have become a dominant force in the world of digital marketing, shaping brand perceptions and consumer preferences. Their way of engaging users through personalized and authentic campaigns has led influencer marketing to be perceived as one of the most effective and successful strategies for brands. Unlike traditional advertising, they are able to reach a wider audience and increase brand awareness in a much faster and simpler way, driving brand engagement. Nevertheless, as users have become more aware of the persuasive tactics used in SMI (Social Media Influencer) campaigns, their **persuasion knowledge**, which is the ability of recognizing marketing intent, plays a key role in how audiences interpret and respond to these campaigns. Likewise, the **credibility** of the influencer, which is based on qualities such as trustworthiness, experience and authenticity, significantly impacts the purchase intent of potential consumers. Understanding how these two concepts - persuasion knowledge and source credibility - interact is essential for the development of successful marketing strategies that will enhance consumer trust and optimize the effectiveness of influencer campaigns in an increasingly competitive digital landscape. Besides these two factors, the way consumers feel towards the brand, including factors such as quality and uniqueness (*Brand Attitude: What It Is & Why It Matters* / QuestionPro, Al Masud, A), also known as **brand attitude**, and how it can be influenced by the persuasive intents of the influencer is crucial for the success of SMI campaigns.

The motivation behind this end-of-degree project is to gain valuable information for both consumers and brands by helping them understand how potential customers react to persuasive techniques and finding the optimum balance between marketing intent and trust in digital advertising. Overall, it aims to contribute to a more transparent and efficient marketing environment, where SMI campaigns align with consumer expectations and ethical standards.

Moreover, the development of this study wants to contribute to the 12th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) set by the United Nations: **Responsible consumption and production**. This is reinforced by the recommendation of promoting transparent and ethical practices in influencer marketing.

1.1 Research question and methodology

This research seeks to answer the following research question: **How do influencer credibility, consumers' persuasion knowledge and brand attitude influence purchase intent in SMI campaigns?** It aims to bridge a present research gap in existing studies related to social media influencers and assess the level of persuasion knowledge among social media users, as well as the impact that source credibility has on consumer attitudes.

For the purpose of guiding this analysis, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H1: Influencers perceived as trustworthy (high source credibility) have a positive impact on customer trust and purchase intent.
- H2: Consumers with high persuasion knowledge are more suspicious towards influencer promotions, reducing their effectiveness.
- H3: Consumers' brand perception has a positive impact on purchase intention.

Nowadays, customers challenge brands to innovate their advertising strategies, as their growing persuasion knowledge makes them more sensitive to detecting promotional content. At the same time, brands, or in this case influencers, leverage their qualities to strengthen their source credibility and gain the trust of potential consumers. The study of these three ideas and the dynamic in which they interplay, will lead us to the answer to the research question of this project and confirm or deny the hypotheses presented at the beginning of this research.

In order to do so, the study will be divided in two parts: a theoretical and a practical one. With the theoretical approach we will be able to analyze the current literature on the matter and cover the research gaps that will give answers to the aim of this TFG. We will introduce the source credibility theory and the persuasion knowledge model to get a clear insight of what these two concepts mean and the relevance they currently have in digital marketing. Following the research question, we will also analyze the impact that brand attitude has on purchase intent after being introduced to a product by an influencer and if it is positively affected by the influencer's credibility. Moreover, we will discuss the ethical implications that influencer marketing has, which must be addressed if brands want to maintain a long-term relationship with their customers.

Regarding the practical approach of this research, it will be based on an online survey designed to gather insights from people of all ages regarding their perceptions of social

media influencer marketing, with a specific focus on source credibility, persuasion knowledge and brand attitude and the effect they have on their final purchase decision

To answer our research question, we will review all the gathered information and identify the importance that the concepts studied have in digital marketing and the purchase likelihood of consumers. Finally, we will use the aforementioned conclusion to recommend brands how they can leverage their resources to elevate their marketing strategies to the next level and achieve outstanding results.

Finally, the research limitations found during this study will be discussed as well as ideas that could be used as a starting point for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

To better understand the aim of this academic paper, it is essential to first review the key concepts that support the study. This research focuses on **consumer purchase intent** and explores whether it is positively influenced by three core variables: **the credibility of the influencer**, **the consumer's persuasion knowledge**, and **the consumer's perception of the endorsed brand**. In addition, the study examines the potential relationship between the influencer's credibility and the consumer's brand perception. Before analyzing these dynamics in detail, it is important to introduce and define the main concepts and theoretical foundations that will guide the analysis of the hypotheses.

2.1. Social Media Influencers (SMI)

'Social media influencers' is an expression that has gained so much importance in the digital world in the last few decades and is expected to gain even more in the following years. First of all, to better understand this concept, it is important to define what an influencer is: an influencer is someone who has the power to affect the purchasing decisions of others because of his or her authority, knowledge, position, or relationship with his or her audience (*What Is an Influencer? – Social Media Influencers Defined* [Updated 2024]).

Once the concept of influencer is clear, it is easier to deduce what a SMI is. Social media influencers (SMIs) represent a new type of independent third-party endorser who shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media (Freberg et al., 2011).

In the past few decades, social media has revolutionized the way people interact, communicate and even shape social movements. Its origin can be traced back to 1983, when the Internet became a daily part of our lives and instant connections around the world became accessible. However, it wasn't until the early 2000s that the first social media platform appeared, and during the following years the timeline of innovations would highlight just how quickly the social media revolution advanced. Some of the first platforms to emerge were LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, all with the goal of connecting as many people as possible in real time. All of these have since then expanded to the huge platforms we know and use nowadays, boosting their influence in the digital world, and some other platforms have emerged along the way (*Social Media Impact: How Social Media Sites Affect Society* / American Public University).

With the rise of major social media platforms, certain individuals began sharing aspects of their personal lives online, such as beauty, fitness and travel content, gradually building a sense of community and emotional connection with their audiences. Even though these individuals were not initially famous, they were perceived as more authentic and relatable than traditional celebrities, which made them gain popularity through their consistency and their transparency. Later on, they started to gain significant influence over the opinions, behaviors and purchase attitudes of their followers, transforming their content creation into a powerful tool of influence. Overtime, they evolved from content creators to what we know today as social media influencers. This shift marked a new era in digital communication, where influence is not just reserved for main famous personalities, through established institutions like print media or television, but for anyone who has access to a smartphone and something to say.

Social media influencers have evolved alongside social media platforms. Early SMI were typically bloggers that started sharing their content as a hobby, out of passion. While platforms like Tik Tok and Instagram began to grow so did SMIs, and they started to specialize in niches such as fitness, beauty or food, allowing them to create more targeted audiences. The transition from casual content creators to strategic digital personalities changed the way influencers were perceived, playing now a central role in shaping trends and consumer preferences. Today, SMIs are considered professional content creators that often collaborate with brands, offering to leverage the influence they have over their followers in exchange of monetary compensation, just like any other job. This professionalization of their role has positioned influencer marketing as a highly effective digital strategy, comparable in impact to traditional advertising strategies.

2.1.1. Influencer marketing

Social media's influence goes beyond personal connections, transforming how brands engage with their consumers and how users express their identities. This new form of digital communication and the loss of efficiency of traditional advertising, especially among younger generations due to digitalization, paved the way for a new marketing approach: **influencer marketing.**

Influencer marketing is the collaboration between popular-social media users and brands to promote the brand's products and services (*What Is Influencer Marketing?* / McKinsey). This endorsement is usually done through sponsored posts, discount codes, long-term ambassadorships or unboxing/ try-on videos.

Nevertheless, influencers weren't the first individuals to use their influence to endorse products of certain brands. Celebrities had been doing so long before the emergence of social media, but instead of doing it through Instagram or TikTok, they did it through magazines and TV commercials. While celebrities are used to leverage their popularity and massively appeal the audience, influencers are seen as experts in their niche and are used by brands to leverage the trust that potential consumers have in them (*Celebrity vs. Influencer Marketing: What's Better?* | Cameo Blog).

Influencer marketing has given advertising a closer and more human tone, challenging traditional advertising techniques by blurring the line between content creation and endorsement of products, having a clear goal: increase purchase intent of potential customers. Influencer marketing works so well because influencers have built strong, trust relationships with their audiences over time through consistent, authentic content. This trust enables influencers to become social proof for the brands and companies they promote to also trust in them as its audience does. If followers see someone they look up to using or endorsing a product, it subliminally reassures them that that product is good, trustworthy, or worth buying, increasing the odds of them buying that product. This dynamic is rooted in Cialdini's (2001) principle of social proof which suggests that individuals are more likely to adopt behaviors or make decisions based on the actions and endorsements of others—particularly those they perceive as credible, relatable, or aspirational (*Social Proof* – Wikipedia). This concept increases the impact of influencer campaigns by taking advantage of not only the content, but also the speaker's perceived authority and social credibility.

As a result, influencer endorsements can significantly shape consumer attitudes and increase the likelihood of purchase intent. It is estimated that the global influencer marketing market size has more than tripled since 2020:

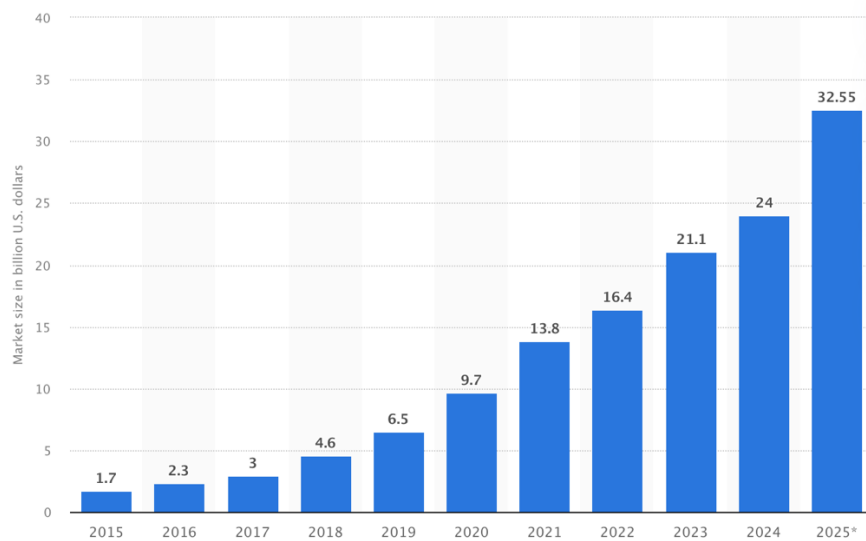


Figure 1: Influencer marketing market size worldwide from 2015 to 2025 (in billion U.S. dollars). Source: Global Influencer Market Size 2025 | Statista.

This exponential growth in the market size worldwide of influencer market in the last ten years is a vivid illustration of its increasing effectiveness as a marketing strategy in today's digital landscape. According to the graph, in just 5 years the market has tripled its size to more than 30 billion US dollars, reflecting the growing investment of brands in influencer agreements and the increasing trust that consumers have on recommendations made by these social media personalities. This data demonstrates that influencer marketing is a scalable market that is being more and more integrated as marketing strategies due to the clear impact it has on purchase intent and consumer engagement.

This enormous engagement influencers have on potential consumers can be illustrated by the AIDA model. This marketing framework defines the four stages that a consumer goes through to shape their purchase decision: attention, interest, desire and action (*AIDA Model - Understand the Steps in the AIDA Model Hierarchy*). It allows consumers to understand the cognitive process they experience from the moment they are aware of a product or brand and the moment they decide to purchase.

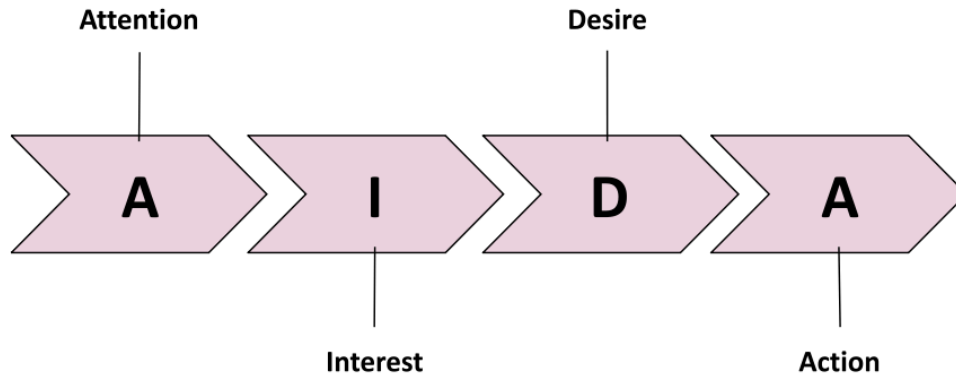


Figure 2: The AIDA model

- Attention: It is the first step of this process and the first concern of marketing experts. It includes all strategies that brands implement to call the attention of consumers, making sure they know that the product or service exists. In the case of influencer marketing, this case is simplified by just showing the product on their social media channels.
- Interest: Probably the most important stage of this process since it mainly determines the chances of consumers moving forward to the purchase decision. Once a brand has been able to catch the attention of an audience, it needs to make sure that they remain interested in the goods or services offered by the brand. In influencer marketing this step is translated into choosing an influencer that aligns with the company's values and has a well-defined targeted audience. The content during this stage should be engaging and incentivize consumers to develop a deeper connection with the brand or product endorsed, highlighting the value of what they are offering.
- Desire: During this stage brands must convince potential consumers to buy the product, even if they don't need it, by creating that need for them. The most effective content during this stage are positive reviews, motivating the audience decision to buy the product.
- Action: The ultimate goal of brands is to drive audiences to initiate actions and finally purchase the product offered. All campaigns need to be designed to generate an immediate response from consumers, creating a sense of urgency that motivates them to take action right in the moment when they see the endorsement. Tactics that are proven to work are discounts, free trials and limited special offers.

Brands are able to align enhance their communication strategies by aligning them with the AIDA model. They improve consumer engagement and message delivery, allowing brands to better connect with consumers and meet their needs at every stage of the process.

In practice, companies now use more structured and data-driven approaches to monitor and execute efficiently all their campaigns. They start defining the goals of the marketing campaign, whether it is increasing brand awareness or promoting a new product, which will allow the brand to choose the right influencer for the specific campaign (Partipost). Some companies opt for hiring influencer marketing agencies that are responsible for all contract and payment management, as well as for all the analytics and reporting like the engagement rate. Once the influencer is contracted, they must create the content agreed with the brand, although companies mainly offer certain creativity freedom to influencers to make it as authentic as possible. If the collaboration is carried through an agency, they often are the ones responsible to review the content before is posted to make sure that it aligns with the values and goals of the company.

Sporadic post collaborations are the most common form of influencer marketing, but some companies even offer long-term collaboration to enhance brand loyalty, credibility and audience trust. An example of it would be the long-term contracts that Maria Pombo, one of the most famous influencers in Spain with 3.3 million followers in Instagram (*MARIA POMBO (@mariapombo) • Fotos y Videos de Instagram*), has long-term contracts with important brands like *GHD*, *Zadig et Voltaire* and *Armani beauty*.



Figure 3: Maria Pombo's post in Instagram as an ambassador of GHD

All these sponsorships allow brands to have continuous visibility through the agreed content posted by the influencer, including posts, stories in Instagram and event appearances throughout the year, while enhancing the credibility of the influencer among its followers.

Thus, influencer marketing has become a fundamental component of modern communication and brand strategy, reshaping how companies connect with consumers in the digital era. By leveraging the authenticity, relatability and close relationships that influencers foster with their audiences, brands are able to create more engaging and personalized campaigns. Unlike traditional advertising, which often relies on one-directional and impersonal messaging, influencer marketing fosters a sense of trust and community, making promotional content feel more organic and personal.

Its growing relevance is not only evident in short-term product promotions but also in long-term brand contracts, as seen through ongoing partnerships between influencers and well-known companies. As consumer behavior continues to evolve in a media landscape dominated by social platforms, influencer marketing is likely to remain a powerful and adaptable tool, capable of reaching targeted audiences, driving engagement and influencing purchasing decisions in ways that traditional advertising can no longer achieve in the digital era we are in today.

2.1.2. Types of SMIs

Since its emerging, social media influencers have evolved to the point where they can even be classified according to different traits. For companies, as mentioned in the previous section, the choice of the right influencer to endorse their products depends on the brand's values and goals, and it is crucial to guarantee the success of the campaign.

The main classification of social media influencers is done by dividing them according to their audience size:

Influencers	Followers	Main trait	Campaign's goal
Nano	1k – 10k	Close connection with followers	Target niche
Micro	10k – 50k	Perceived as relatable	Drive engagement
Macro	100k – 1M	Professional content	Brand awareness
Mega	+ 1M	Massive reach	Maximize visibility

Figure 4: Classification of influencers according to their audience size (Types of Social Media Influencers: Mega, Macro, Nano and Micro Influencers).

They all have different characteristics and relationships with their followers, which makes them a fit for different marketing campaigns as well. For instance, mega influencers have a more distant relationship with their followers, since they have massive audiences with diverse interests, making this kind of influencers the right choice for campaigns focused on increasing brand awareness, although they are highly costly. On the other hand, nano influencers are the ones with the lowest consumer reach but the ones with the highest engagement due to the close relationships they have with their niche audience.

As we have seen in the previous section, it is key for companies to choose the right type of influencer when planning a marketing campaign. The larger the audience of the influencer, the less targeted the offer should be, and the more specific the product endorsed, the narrower the audience should be.

While the size of an influencer's audience is often the most visible and commonly considered criteria when selecting a collaborator, it is definitely not the only factor that determines the success of an influencer marketing campaign. A deeper, more strategic evaluation is required, one that takes into account not just quantitative reach but also qualitative relevance. The niche or content category that the influencer specializes in plays a vital role in shaping their audience's interests, behaviors, and expectations. For instance, an influencer who focuses on sustainability and ethical consumption will attract followers who are more conscious and value-driven, making them more suitable for eco-friendly or socially responsible brands.

Similarly, the platform an influencer operates on—whether it's Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, X or Twitch—also significantly affects the tone, format and interaction style of the content. Each platform offers different ways of engagement and is focused on distinct user demographics. For example, TikTok may be the best fit for fast, creative and trend-based campaigns, while YouTube is better suited for long-form reviews and tutorials. Therefore, brands must carefully analyze where their target audience is most active and which influencer is most effective on that platform.

Moreover, alignment in values, lifestyle and content aesthetics is crucial for maintaining brand identity. Collaborating with influencers whose personal brand aligns with the company's mission enhances authenticity, trust, and long-term brand equity. In this sense, influencer marketing becomes not just an approach but a strategic partnership, that demands alignment across multiple dimensions, not just follower count. This broad approach increases the chances of a meaningful and successful collaboration, where both the brand and the influencer mutually benefit and reinforce each other's identity.

2.2. Source Credibility Theory

Once the concept of influencer marketing is understood, it becomes essential to understand why influencers are able to impact consumer behavior so effectively. One of the most widely used theoretical frameworks to explain this phenomenon is the **Source Credibility Theory**.

This communication theory states that the effectiveness of a message highly depends on how credible the source (speaker, influencer, brand...) is perceived to be by the audience. The receivers are more likely to be persuaded by credible sources, as proved by a study carried by Hovland (1963) and Weiss (1974) where the same message was used by credible and non-credible sources to test if credible sources could influence more a change in opinions than non-credible ones. The study confirmed that credible sources tend to achieve the desired impact on the audience.

But what defines a source as credible? Many experts have tried to define what distinguishes a credible source of a non-credible source, defining it with several adjectives and traits, but the main three key dimensions of source credibility are:

- Trustworthiness: the quality of being deserving of trust and confidence.
- Expertise: perceived knowledge of the source in a specific knowledge.
- Attractiveness: includes the personality and lifestyle appeal and how much reliable the source is perceived to be.

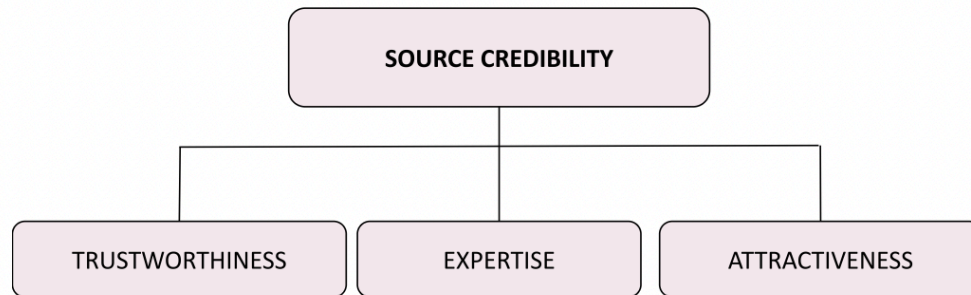


Figure 5: Dimensions of source credibility (Source Credibility Dimensions in Marketing Communication- A Generalized Solution).

According to the previous source, other traits that can be attributed to a credible source are objectivity, purpose, authority or integrity. Overall, a credible source is an individual or entity perceived by an audience as trustworthy, knowledgeable and authentic in relation to a specific topic.

The translation of the Source Credibility theory in the influencer marketing world, explains the reason why influencers are seen as credible sources not only by their knowledge in their specific niche, but because they are perceived as reliable and authentic by their followers (Ashare et al., 2024). The number of followers an influencer has, makes reference to how trustworthy it is, as users can assume that it provides truthful information to their audience and that's why many people want to listen to what they have to say. Moreover, the closer relationship in terms of values and lifestyle an influencer has with their audience, the more attractive it is perceived by its followers.

In addition, the interactive dynamic of social media - such as responding to comments, sharing personal stories or using direct-to-follower communication like Instagram stories or TikToks - enhances the sense of closeness and authenticity. This frequent and informal interaction reinforces the perception that influencers are real people rather than distant celebrities, further strengthening their source credibility and persuasive power when endorsing a product through the media.

Finally, the consistency of messaging across time and platforms also plays a crucial role in maintaining credibility. Followers tend to trust influencers who remain aligned with certain causes, products or values in all the platforms they are active in, as inconsistency may lead to skepticism or perceptions of inauthenticity.

All these techniques used in influencer marketing—such as maintaining authenticity, engaging directly with followers, and promoting products aligned with the influencer’s values—are intentionally used to ensure that the influencer remains perceived as credible by their audience. A study carried in 2020 evidenced that when consumers perceived social media influencers as credible, they were more likely to intend to buy the product (Weismueller et al., 2020), which contradicted several studies that exclusively studied endorsements of traditional celebrities. This difference is due to the disparities in the nature of the relationship between an influencer and a celebrity with their audiences. Traditional celebrities are often seen as distant, unattainable figures, admired for their fame rather than for personal connection. In contrast, influencers are perceived as more accessible, relatable, and authentic, often interacting directly with followers and sharing everyday experiences (*Celebrity vs. Influencer Marketing: What’s Better?* | Cameo Blog). This creates stronger parasocial relationships, where consumers feel emotionally connected to influencers and more receptive to their recommendations.

Moreover, influencers typically focus on specific niches, establishing themselves as experts or enthusiasts in areas like skincare, fitness, or gaming. This specialization boosts their credibility and perceived expertise. Conversely, traditional celebrities often lack this niche-specific knowledge, which can make their promotions seem less authentic, particularly for unfamiliar products. Consequently, influencer endorsements tend to come across as more sincere and trustworthy, leading to a greater impact on consumer attitudes and behavior.

The relationship between influencer source credibility and purchase intent is crucial to this research because it addresses the effectiveness of influencer marketing and gathers all information needed to later practically test our hypotheses. Understanding whether, and to what extent, an influencer’s perceived credibility (based on trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness) influences a consumer’s intention to purchase helps evaluate the true persuasive power of influencer marketing. By focusing on this relationship, the research provides valuable insight for both brands and marketing strategists. It helps determine how important it is to choose influencers who are not only popular, but also credible in the eyes of their audience. A strong, positive relationship between source credibility and purchase

intent would suggest that brands should prioritize authenticity and alignment over just follower count or fame. Additionally, this evidence contributes to the academic field by linking traditional communication theories, such as Source Credibility Theory, with contemporary marketing practices. It helps update classical frameworks to reflect the shifting dynamics of digital consumer behavior.

To conclude, the credibility of the influencer plays a critical role in shaping consumer behavior, as numerous studies have shown that when an influencer is seen as trustworthy and relatable, their recommendations can significantly influence attitudes toward the brand, increase purchase intention and even foster brand loyalty (Ashare & Hussein, 2024).

2.3. Persuasion knowledge model

Another crucial framework in consumer behavior studies is the **Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM)**. Proposed by Friestad and Wright in 1994, this model suggests that consumers develop and apply persuasion knowledge to understand, evaluate, and respond to marketers' persuasive tactics. This model highlights the dynamic interplay between consumers and marketers, emphasizing how individuals' awareness of persuasive attempts shapes their attitudes and decision-making processes (Eisend & Tarrahi, 2022).

In 1994 Friestad and Wright published an article arguing that consumers are not passive recipients of advertising and persuasive messages. Instead, they are active agents who use their own experiences and knowledge to interpret, evaluate and respond to the intended persuasion. They proposed that overtime, consumers develop “persuasion knowledge”, which is a cognitive framework that enables them to recognize easier when someone is trying to persuade them. When an individual puts its persuasion knowledge to use during an interaction, for example watching an advertisement on TV, they might adjust their behavior accordingly and become more skeptical (*View of Unveiling the Black Box of Influencer Marketing: The Moderating Role of Parasocial Interaction and Persuasion Knowledge*).

This model describes the individual attempting to persuade as the **persuasion agent**, and the individual receiving the persuasive message as the **persuasion target**. Moreover, the model establishes three types of knowledges that individuals use to evaluate and answer to persuasive attempts:

- Topic knowledge: what the persuasion target knows about the topic or subject being discussed.
- Agent knowledge: beliefs and assumptions the persuasion target holds about the individual or entity delivering the message, the persuasion agent.
- Persuasion knowledge: awareness and understanding of the persuasive tactics used.

Together, these three types of knowledge help the persuasion target interpret and react to a marketing message—deciding whether to accept, reject or question the information being presented.

Influencer marketing offers a different context in which to apply the **Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM)**, as it differs significantly from traditional advertising in both format and consumer perception. Unlike traditional advertisements that are often direct and easily identifiable, influencer marketing typically blends promotional content within personal and subtle messages, making it less immediately recognizable as a persuasive attempt. This can delay the activation of consumers' persuasion knowledge, which refers to their ability to recognize and cope with persuasive strategies (Friestad & Wright, 1994). As a result, influencer marketing may initially setback skepticism, making the message appear more authentic and trustworthy. However, as audiences become more digitally aware and familiar with sponsorship techniques—such as hashtags like #ad or ambassadorship links—their persuasion knowledge is more likely to be triggered, increasing their skepticism toward the endorsement.

Consumer skepticism is the consumer's suspect or distrust or doubt towards the claims made by the firm in relation to marketing of any product, service or communication (*What Is Consumer Skepticism* | IGI Global Scientific Publishing). Skepticism presents a challenge for marketers: if the persuasive intent becomes too obvious or misaligned with the influencer's usual content, it may backfire and reduce credibility. Still, when influencers are perceived as honest, transparent and aligned with the product, the persuasive effect can remain strong—even if the audience has an active persuasion knowledge. This highlights the importance of credibility and authenticity to moderate skepticism, allowing influencer marketing to remain an effective strategy in an increasingly aware audience landscape.

This phenomenon is crucial for this research, as it gives enough evidence to reject or not one of the main hypotheses of this study. It gives evidence on how and why consumers respond to influencer marketing, not just whether they respond. In today's digital

landscape, audiences are increasingly more aware of promotional tactics and often evaluate and question the intent behind advertising content. This model provides a framework for understanding how the awareness of persuasive techniques among consumers (persuasion knowledge) influences the perception of credibility of the source and ultimately conditions their purchase decisions.

In the context of influencer marketing, the line between unoffensive content and endorsement is often blurred and the Persuasion Knowledge model helps explain why some promotional campaigns are more effective than others. If consumers recognize the endorsement too early or perceive it as intentional content, they may activate their persuasion knowledge and respond with skepticism or resistance, weakening the desired impact of the message. However, if the influencer is perceived as credible, honest, and transparent, this can offset the negative effects of persuasion knowledge on purchase decisions and still lead to a positive purchase intent. This shows that there is also negative relationship between source credibility and persuasion knowledge, where the more credible the influencer is, the less useful the consumer's persuasion knowledge is.

By examining this model as one of the key variables influencing the success of an influencer marketing campaign, this research seeks to better understand the mechanisms behind consumer reactions. It highlights the core reasons why credibility and authenticity matter, and how they interact with persuasion knowledge to shape consumer behavior.

2.4. Brand attitude

Another core variable of this study is **brand attitude**, which refers to the overall evaluation and feelings a consumer holds toward a brand (*Brand Attitude: Definition, Importance & How To Improve It* (2025) | DesignRush). It encompasses cognitive judgments (e.g., perceived quality or reliability), emotional associations (e.g., admiration or trust) and behavioral intentions of the consumer towards the brand. This concept can be divided in three main components:

- The cognitive component includes the previous beliefs consumers have about the brand, and it is based on perceived attributes, like design or performance.
- The affective component involves all the feeling the consumer has towards the brand and is influenced by personal experiences and emotional associations.

- The behavioral component refers to the customer's intentions and actions regarding the brand, reflecting purchase intentions and brand loyalty.

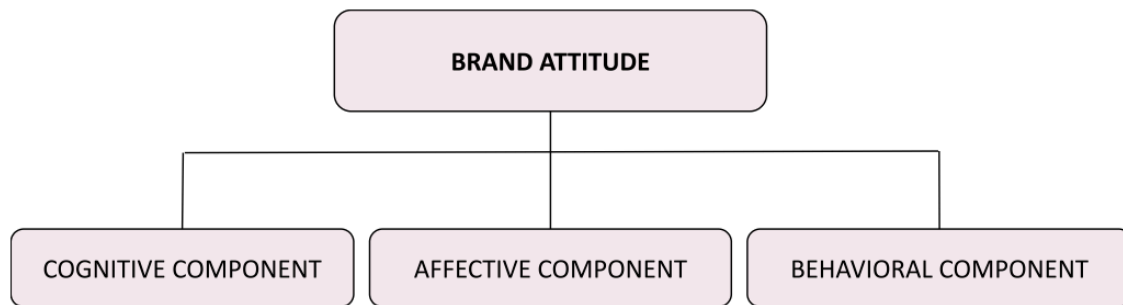


Figure 6: Components of brand attitude. (The ABC Model of Attitude | Definition, Components & Examples - Lesson | Study.Com).

All these components shape the way a brand is perceived by consumers, shaping their attitude towards the brand and ultimately their purchase behavior. Brand attitude plays a key role in shaping consumer behavior. A perceived positive brand attitude – favorable beliefs, emotional connections and constant promotional content- can lead to a higher purchase intention and brand loyalty. Consumers who perceive a brand positively are more likely to choose it over its competitors, even paying higher prices for their products, and make word-to-mouth recommendations.

In the context of influencer marketing, brand attitude plays an even more crucial role, as the effectiveness of a campaign does not only rely on the influencer's credibility, but also on how the audience perceives the brand being endorsed. Positive interactions with influencers can promote favorable associations to the advertised brand, thereby enhancing brand attitude. Conversely, if the endorsement appears inauthentic or misaligned with the influencer's usual content, it can generate skepticism and negatively impact brand perception. Therefore, understanding the impact of brand attitude is essential to evaluate the broader effectiveness of influencer campaigns and their role in shaping long-term consumer behavior.

Moreover, brand attitude can act as a mediating variable between the influencer credibility and consumer behavior, especially purchase intent. The perceived credibility of the source, in this case the influencer, does not directly lead to the purchase decision, but instead shapes the consumer behavior towards the brand which then influences their decision to buy. When an influencer is perceived as trustworthy, knowledgeable and authentic, their

endorsement can positively affect how consumers perceive the brand—strengthening brand associations, perceived quality, and emotional appeal. This positive shift in brand attitude increases the likelihood of favorable consumer behavior, including interest in the product, engagement with advertised content, and the eventual purchase. Conversely, if the influencer lacks credibility, it may negatively impact brand attitude, regardless of the product's actual characteristics. By analyzing brand attitude as a mediating factor, this research aims to gain a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms that explain how influencer marketing drives consumer decisions (*Brand Attitude: What It Is & Why It Matters* / QuestionPro).

By including brand attitude as a key variable, this study seeks to assess how influencer credibility and consumer persuasion knowledge interact not only to influence purchase intent, but also to shape the broader perception of the brand by potential consumers. While purchase intent is a direct behavioral outcome, brand attitude provides deeper insight into the cognitive and emotional responses consumers develop toward a brand after being exposed to influencer endorsement. Understanding how consumers perceive and feel about a brand as a result of influencer marketing content allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the campaign's effectiveness. This variable captures both short-term responses (such as immediate interest or curiosity to check the products of a brand) and long-term implications (such as brand trust, loyalty and preference over the competitors), making it essential for evaluating the transcendence and authenticity of influencer and brand collaborations. Moreover, exploring brand attitude as an intermediate factor helps clarify whether influencer marketing success is driven by a genuine shift in brand perception, rather than just momentary attention or click behavior.

2.5. Ethical implications of influencer marketing

While social media offers infinite possibilities for interconnection and innovation, it has also raised concerns about privacy and security (*Social Media Influencer Marketing and Deceptive Practices: Legal Strategies for Startups* - Lawfinity Solutions). The ethical implications that social media and influencer marketing carry are increasingly complex, as they shape consumer behavior and influence purchase intent. Social media is based on algorithms that collect personal data to track their behavior. They are used to optimize influencer marketing practices and target advertisements to reach the right audience. Ethical concerns arise when users are unaware of how their data is collected and processed

to shape their consumer behavior, questioning how its data security and privacy is preserved.

First of all, influencer marketing clearly lacks transparency, since consumers often have difficulties to distinguish between honest personal recommendations and paid promotions. In order to solve this issue, platforms like Instagram have implemented policies requiring influencers to explicitly disclose all promotional content, so as to promote transparency and enforce ethical standards (*Influencer Legal Hub* - European Commission). However, these intents of addressing the situation have not been enough, and influencers may still promote products they do not personally use or believe in, which can mislead followers who trust their opinions and view them as authentic sources of information. These techniques can have negatively impacted on the credibility of the influencer, the audience's perception of the brand and the consumer's ability to recognize persuasive intent. Actually, the ethical concerns raised from influencer marketing have a significant influence on the three core variables studied in this research—**source credibility**, **persuasion knowledge**, and **brand attitude**. Understanding how these moral dilemmas affect consumer behavior is necessary to evaluate the validity and long-term effectiveness of influencer-based tactics.

Persuasion knowledge refers to the consumer's ability to recognize persuasive intents of influencers or brands when evaluating marketing tactics. Influencer marketing blurs the line between daily content and endorsements, making persuasion more subtle and reducing the audience capability of identifying commercial content. This will delay the activation of their persuasion knowledge and make them more likely to favorably react towards the message or product. Therefore, influencer marketing might make consumers more susceptible to persuasive intents since their critical evaluations may be less accurate. This will lead to impulsive purchases as they will perceive the endorsement as an honest recommendation when, in reality, is a strategic commercial tactic.

Moreover, as we have seen the credibility of the influencer also play a key role in shaping consumer behavior and determining how persuasive their messages are. Their expertise, attractiveness and trustworthiness influence how credible the influencer will be perceived by the audience. In social media, these traits can be biased for many reasons. Influencers can misrepresent their expertise by recommending vitamins or exercises they are not qualified to endorse. Additionally, they can also recommend products they don't personally use just for financial gain they get in exchange, undermining their credibility while the audience remains unaware.

Brand attitude has also certain ethical implications raised by the idealized lifestyles presented by influencers. The way a brand is perceived by the audience is shaped by how influencers endorse their products. They sometimes create high and misleading expectations for a product that leads to impulsive purchases of consumers that later can be deceived by the actual qualities of the product, manipulating consumers' emotions.

All these concerns, combined with the increasing discussions on privacy and data ethics, highlight the need for stronger regulations to combat deceptive practices and guarantee safe digital platforms. It is clear that the current solutions implemented, like forcing influencers to use the label *ad*, are not enough, and researchers have thought of different techniques to try to prevent unethical marketing techniques. One of these ideas is to educate consumers on persuasive tactics with media literacy courses that can be taught in school or offering a distinctive to influencers who undertake transparency courses or ethical training within the digital landscape.

All these ideas are good, but, maybe, the most effective solution would be to make influencers accountant for their unethical errors. With the boost of influencers in the last decade, regulatory bodies have tried to be updated and make laws to ensure fair practices. Bodies like the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) (Trade Commission) and the European Union have been trying to enforce their regulations aiming to hold influencers accountable, but the implementation remains challenging. The EU has incentivized its member countries to create national regulations that foster positive practices in online platforms and positive behavior by influencers (*Influencers in the EU: Council Calls for Increased Support to Encourage Positive Impact* – Consilium). Moreover, the FTC has provided some guidelines on how to disclose endorsements correctly to stop deceptive ads.

To sum up, as the influencer world grows so do the ethical implications it carries. Countries and regulatory bodies are still trying to understand the implications influencer marketing and social media have on society in order to create and enforce the right legislation that protects consumers and promotes ethical advertisement.

3. METHODOLOGY: A SURVEY

The main objective of this study is to determine whether the factors studied in the context of influencer marketing during the development of this research have an impact on consumer's purchase intent. The following conceptual model explains the hypothesis presented:

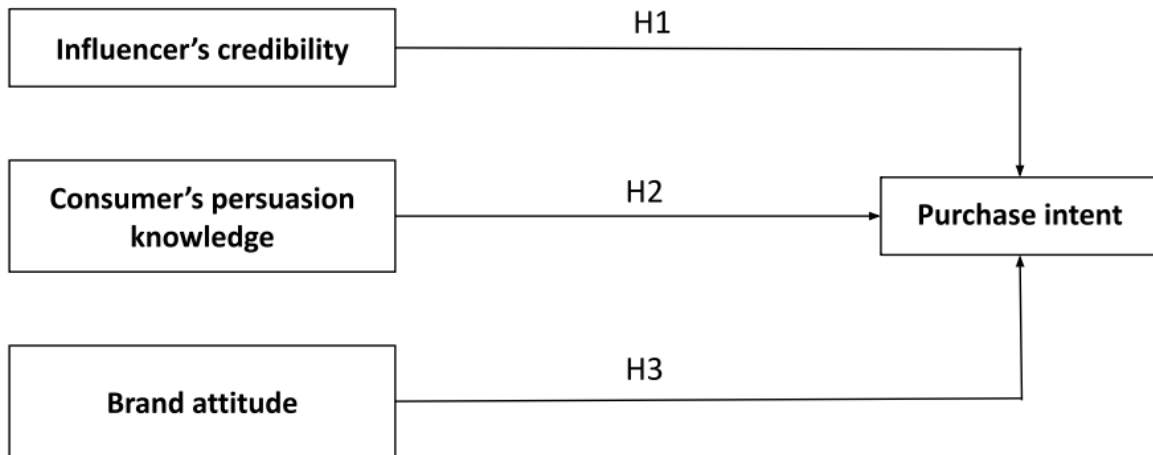


Figure 7: Conceptual model of the hypotheses

3.1. Research method

In order to assess whether the findings from the literature are applicable in real-life scenarios, a survey has been conducted. All questions asked were related to the three main variables studied and a special focus on the effect they have on our dependent variable, purchase intent. Quantitative methods are one of the most effective approaches for validating a certain theory by conducting a questionnaire with close-ended questions and analyzing the results through statistical tools.

3.2. Data collection

Along this section both the research techniques applied, and the characteristics of the sample used will be explained.

3.2.1. Primary data

In the practical part of this study, primary data has been collected through a survey using structured closed questions. A questionnaire is the best choice for collecting primary data since it allows to obtain first-hand information in a standardized way so that data is

consistent for analysis. Moreover, it enables the collection of a large amount of data with only the initial time investment required to design the questions.

3.2.2. Choice of respondents and sample size

For this research, the only forced requirement was that respondents should be minimum 18 years old; all other demographic characteristics were not predetermined. To collect the primary data of this research, a questionnaire using the platform Google Forms was created and distributed through two main online channels: WhatsApp and Instagram. A total of 103 people responded to the survey providing valuable insights that have contributed to the final findings of this study.

To better understand the results of this survey, some demographic questions were previously asked to the respondents to interpret more accurately the results. These questions included key information about their age, gender, nationality, annual income and their educational level. Ultimately, the respondents' demographic profile was as followed:

In terms of **age and gender**, the respondents represented a diverse range of demographic groups:

		Gender			
		Male	Female	Prefer not to say	Total
Age	18-25	17	29	0	46
	26-35	6	6	1	13
	35-45	2	6	0	8
	>46	13	23	0	36
Total		38	64	1	103

Figure 8: Demographic profile of respondents (age and gender)

To sum up the age and gender characteristics of the sample, around 37% of respondents were men and 62% were women. Of these respondents, 45% were between 18-25 years old and over 35% were older than 46.

Regarding the **nationality** of the sample, 89 out of the 103 people that answered the survey were from Spain and 4 others were from Argentina. The rest of them were Brazilian, Mexican, British, Scottish, Colombian, American, Indian and French.

Finally, the survey asked about the **annual income and last educational level completed** to gather more background information about the respondents.

ANNUAL INCOME	<15.000	15.001-25.000	25.001-35.000	35.001-45.000	>45.000
Nº of respondents	39	23	12	16	13
%	38%	22%	12%	15%	13%

Figure 9: Demographic profile about respondents (annual income)

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	High school	Bachelor/ FP	Master	Post-graduate
Nº of respondents	41	25	24	13
%	40%	24%	23%	13%

Figure 10: Demographic profile about respondents (highest educational level completed)

3.2.3. Survey structure

This part of the study is focused on defining the structure of the survey answered by the respondents. The questionnaire was drafted in English to facilitate the analysis of the results, as the research was required to be conducted in English as part of my International Business Degree program.

Questions were asked in sections, each section designed to confirm or reject one of the main hypotheses and all aimed to measure the impact that these variables have on the overall purchase intent of consumers in the influencer marketing context.

- The first section of the survey was focused on the **influencer's credibility** to analyze how reliable influencers are seen by users and the impact an influencer's endorsement has on the trust followers have in that product.

- The second part of the survey was aimed at discovering how sensitive consumers are to persuasive tactics and how accurate their **persuasion knowledge** is.
- Finally, the third section of the questionnaire wanted to analyze if the perception towards the brand, also known as **brand attitude**, increases or decreases the chances of buying a product.

To answer the research question of this end-of-degree project, respondents had to rate the sentence using a 5-point Likert Scale (Likert, 1932), where 1 means strongly disagree, 2 means disagree, 3 is neutral, 4 mean agree and 5 strongly agree.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Once the data has been collected, it is crucial to thoroughly analyze it and interpret the results to gain meaningful insights. In order to assess the findings of our study, the data was exported to STATA 17. The goal of this section is to find the evidence needed to support or not support the hypotheses presented in the beginning of this research by undertaking certain tests.

4.1. Reliability testing

So as to ensure accuracy and trustworthiness of the method used for data collection, it is important to check its reliability. This is done with the Cronbach's Alpha test, that defines that all values above 0.90 are considered as excellent reliable, between 0.70 and 0.90 as high reliability, from 0.50 to 0.70 as moderate reliability and below 0.50 is considered as low reliability (Taherdoost, 2016).

In the case of this study, a test on reliability must be done to all four main variables, including the dependent variable purchase intent, and the results were as follow:

Variable	Cronbach's alpha value	Reliability level
CR (Influencer's credibility)	0.81	High
PK (Persuasion knowledge)	0.63	Moderate
PI (Purchase intent)	0.92	Excellent
BA (Brand attitude)	0.86	High

Figure 11: Cronbach's alpha test on reliability

The test confirms that all variables of this model are reliable, which means that they are consistent and are measuring the same underlying concept. Despite confirming that all variables are reliable, this test is useless until a validity test is performed, which will be carried out on the next section.

4.2. Validity testing

Validity testing is essential to determine if the data collected is adequate for the research purpose of our study. A variety of tests can be performed to assess the validity of our data, and one of them is called the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test that is used to determine if the study's sample size is adequate or not. This test takes into account the entire sample and includes all variables, fixing a minimum accepted score of 0.5 (Kaiser, 1974).

After the analysis, the sample obtained a value of 0.84, which falls in the accepted range of values according to the KMO criterion, confirming the validity of this model.

4.3. Regression analysis (OLS)

To test our hypothesis a structural equation has been used in STATA. First of all, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is performed using the overall variables rather than their individual components; for instance, the composite variable CR is used instead of separating it into CR1, CR2, CR3 and CR4. So, the final model is as follows:

$$PI = \alpha + \beta_1 * CR + \beta_2 * PK + \beta_3 * BA + \varepsilon$$

In this model, the dependent variable is represented by Purchase Intent while the independent variables are represented by Influencer Credibility, Persuasion Knowledge and Brand Attitude.

	Coef.	Std. error	t	P > t	Hypothesis nº	Supported/ Not supported
PI						
CR	0.6688	0.097	6.88	0.000	H1	Supported
PK	-0.8608	0.102	-0.84	0.401	H2	Not supported
BA	0.07385	0.087	0.85	0.398	H3	Not supported
Constant	-5.35e-09	0.136	-0.0	1.000		

Figure 12: Structural equation model values

After performing the structural equation modelling, a multicollinearity test was also performed to determine the existence of multicollinearity issues between the independent variables that could bias the result of the data. The result of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was 1.2, confirming that the model has not multicollinearity issues.

Moreover, the level of goodness of fit of this model was analyzed and, with an R-Squared of 0.4262, it was concluded that the independent variables of this model can explain around 43% of the variations in the dependent variables. Translated into our model, we could say that influencer's credibility, persuasion knowledge and brand attitude explain 43% of the final purchase intent of consumers.

Now, after seeing the results of the structural equation model, we are able to analyze the and interpret its values to confirm if our initial hypotheses are supported or not. As a reminder, to not support a hypothesis its p-value must be higher than the significance level, which in this model is 5%.

Regarding the first hypothesis, the effect of the influencer's credibility on the ultimate purchase intent of our respondents seems to be significant, since its p-value is 0.000 which is lower than the significance level of the model which is 0.05. Therefore, we do support H1.

- H1: Influencers perceived as trustworthy (high source credibility) have a positive impact on customer trust and purchase intent → p-value = 0.000 < 0.05 (**Supported**).

The second variable studied in this model, persuasion knowledge, has a p-value of 0.401 which is higher than our 5% level of significance and, hence, we do not support H2. This means, that consumer's persuasion knowledge on endorsement intentions has no significance on their purchase intentions.

- H2: Consumers with high persuasion knowledge are more suspicious towards influencer promotions, reducing their effectiveness → p-value = 0.401 > 0.05 (**Not supported**).

Finally, the third hypothesis tested the direct positive relationship between brand attitude and purchase intent. This variable obtained a p-value of 0.398 which is more than the 5% significance level the model, which leads to the lack of support of the hypothesis.

- H3: Consumers' brand perception has a positive impact on purchase intention → p-value = 0.398 > 0.05 (**Not supported**).

To sum up the results of this model and its components, both persuasion knowledge and brand attitude are not significant variables within our model, being influencer's credibility the only independent variable that is significant to our dependent variable. Put simply, the ultimate decision of consumers in our model is just affected by how credible the influencer is perceived to be, and not by the consumer's awareness of endorsement mechanisms or the positive perception towards the brand.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The research development of this TFG aimed to explore the effect that influencer credibility, persuasion knowledge and brand attitude have on the purchase intent of consumers in the context of influencer marketing. Understanding how this variables work has become more and more relevant as social media grows and continues to shape how the audience interacts with brands and content, which highlights the importance of this study.

This study set out to offer valuable insights into how consumers interpret influencer endorsements, presenting findings that emphasize the complex interconnection between trust, awareness and perception within the fast-moving landscape of social media. The results obtained entail both theoretical and practical implications, which can be strengthen by formulating actionable recommendation for brands.

5.1. Theoretical implications

This section points out the contribution that this research has on the academic understanding of influencer marketing. This study has integrated three variables, influencer's credibility, persuasion knowledge and brand attitude, in one theoretical framework, contributing to the understanding of consumer behavior within the complex context of influencer marketing.

The hypotheses presented at the beginning of this paper paves the way to new investigation paths regarding the relationship between these variables, encouraging further study to understand their relationship and the impact they have on the final purchase decision of consumers. Moreover, it questions the role of influencer's credibility as a mediator between brand perception, persuasion knowledge and purchase intent, offsetting the bad preconceptions consumers may have and ultimately increase the likelihood of purchasing a certain product.

This study would like to serve as a starting point to other researchers that want to deep in the factors, such as influencer credibility, persuasion knowledge and brand attitude, that determine consumer behavior to get a better understanding of what makes an influencer campaign successful.

5.2. Practical implications

Regarding the practical implication of this research, it aims to offer valuable insights for influencer selection when preparing an endorsement campaign. The results show that the only significant variable of the research model to explain purchase intent is the influencer's credibility. In other words, with just the variables studied, the only factor that can change a consumer's decision to purchase or not an advertised product is how credible the endorser is perceived to be, not how positively the brand is viewed or the consumer's degree of awareness to commercial tactics.

This evidence suggests that even when consumers have a positive perception towards a brand and are aware of persuasive tactics, how trustful the influencer is perceived to be is the most decisive factor on their purchase decision.

5.2.1 Recommendations to brands

Based on the data obtained from the survey performed, enough evidence has been gathered to either reject or accept the hypotheses formulated. As determined in the data analysis section, the most significant variable when it comes to influencing the final purchase decision is influencer credibility.

In light of this findings, brands can concentrate their focus and effort towards this specific variable when planning an influencer marketing campaign. They must look beyond the follower size of influencers and make sure that the values, of both the individual and its followers, and content they share align with the ones of the company. It is essential that brands establish commercial relationships with endorsers that foster a trustworthy and authentic relationship with their audience as it is more likely that they will perceive its advertisements as honest and credible, increasing the effectiveness of the marketing message.

Furthermore, as online ethical consciousness is increasing, brands should choose influencers that promote ethical practices by, not only clearly disclosing their endorsements, but also by sharing transparent content. Brands should select influencers that genuinely use and endorse the products they use and communicates honestly to their audience.

Finally, a useful strategy that brands could implement is monitoring the way the audience feels towards the different marketing campaigns they do and use that feedback to adapt

the strategies they use accordingly to improve their efficiency and their likelihood of success.

5.3. Future research and limitations

Even though this study provides valuable insights into the dynamic between source credibility, persuasion knowledge and brand attitude regarding purchase intent, it is essential to point out the limitations of this insights. The definition of these limitations can pave the way to future research topics that could broaden the current knowledge of consumer behavior on the influencer marketing content.

Firstly, it is necessary to highlight that the population survey of the survey analyzed may not represent the whole populations, limiting the generalization of the results. For future research, this could be solved by using a broader population in terms of culture, nationality and answer volume.

Secondly, the research has been based on a self-reported survey that can be biased due to inaccurate perception of self-behavior or the tendency to respond in a way that is perceived as positive by others. This limitation can question the reliability of the findings of the study since respondents are not fairly reflecting their actual behaviors.

Thirdly, this research has used three key variables to understand how consumer behavior is shaped, leaving aside several other variables that are responsible for the formation of consumer behavior, such as emotional involvement, media platform or more personal factors like culture or education (*What Is Consumer Behavior?*).

In order to overcome these constraints, future research should focus on achieving a broader population sample, that includes platform-specific information and cross-cultural data to get insights of other potential key factors that explain how consumer behavior is shaped.

In addition, during the development of this research some research gaps have showed up due to the lack of empirical evidence and information about it. One of these gaps, that can be a matter for future research, was whether source credibility can mitigate the negative impacts of persuasion knowledge and brand attitude - potentially leading to higher brand engagement despite customers' awareness of the persuasive intent. There was no clear evidence to reject or confirm these hypotheses with the findings of this study, pointing out the need of additional research in this area.

Furthermore, the social media world is in constant evolution which highlights the need to keep researching on this matter to update the theoretical frameworks in response to the continued emerge of trends. This ensures that influencer marketing is still ethical and effective, opening the door to an infinite pool of future research opportunities focused on understanding its impact on brands, consumers and society.

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