

Social Media Micro-Influencer Marketing and purchasing intention of Millenials: the role of Perceived Authenticity and Trust

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of

MBA - Marketing
at Dublin Business School

Renata Abreu

DECLARATION

I, Renata Abreu, declare that this research is my original work and that it has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree or Diploma. In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this work and this work is fully compliant with the Dublin Business School's academic honesty policy.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Renata Abreu', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Date: 07th of January 2019

Acknowledgments

I would like to recognize firstly Dr. Shakeel Siddiqui for always being available and guide me on this process brilliantly. I would like to thank my fellow students who were so inspiring during our time together in this course.

I would like to thank all those who helped me to spread my survey online, you were amazing in helping me and I really appreciate your effort. I would also like to thank all those who took the time to answer this survey, without you this study would not be possible.

I would like to thank my partner Eoin, for being so patient with me and for supporting me through this whole year. I would like to thank all those whom I love and who motivated me every step of the way.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, especially my mom who has always cheered for me and made me believe that I could achieve anything that I desired. That is for you, mom.

ABSTRACT

All over the world marketers have been talking about Social Media Micro Influencer. The idea that normal users can have an enormous impact online is not new. What is rather recent is the concept of people with smaller numbers of online audience to become as relevant as big celebrities online. This research audits the variables Perceived Authenticity and Trust in Social Media Micro Influencer and their impact on the intention to buy of Millennials. An online survey was applied in order to test a previous framework to explain how those factors related to each other. The findings were analyzed based on an extensive literature review. The results of this dissertation show that Perceived Authenticity and Trust have an immediate impact on Intention to buy of Millennials, proving that the framework used can explain those connections for this tire. Furthermore, conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made, either to the academy and to the marketing sector.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of figures	6
List of tables	7
1. Introduction	8
1.1 Social Media Influencer driven	8
1.2 Millennials and Social Media	9
1.3 Bruns-Siddiqui Intention to buy model	10
2. Research question	10
3. Hypothesis	13
3.1 Perceived Authenticity	14
3.2 Perceived Authenticity and Trust	14
3.3 Trust and Intention to buy	15
3.4 Perceived Authenticity and Intention to Buy	16
4. Literature Review	17
4.1 Literature Introduction	17
4.2 Fashion Industry and the Digital Age	17
4.3 Communication and Influence	18
4.4 Social Media	21
4.5 Social Media Influencers	24
4.5.1 Micro Influencers	27
4.5.2 Critical Factors for Influencers success	29
4.6 Generation Y	31
4.6.1 Characteristics	32
4.6.2 Consumer Behavior	33
4.6.3 Media usage	34
4.7 Bruns-Siddiqui Intention to buy Model	35
4.7.1 Trust	36
4.7.2 Perceived Authenticity	37
4.7.3 Intention to buy	38
4.8 Literature Conclusion	39
5. Methodology	39
5.1 Methodology Introduction	40
5.2 Research Design	40
5.2.1 Research Philosophy	40
5.2.2 Research Approach	40

5.2.3 Research Strategy	41
5.3 Population and Sampling	41
5.3.1 Sampling Frame	42
5.3.1.1 Population	42
5.3.1.2 Sampling Size	42
5.3.2 Respondents selection	44
5.4 Data Collection	44
5.5 Instruments and tools	44
5.5.1 Design of questionnaires	44
5.5.2 Questionnaire	45
5.6 Research Ethics	48
5.7 Limitations of Methodology	49
6 Data Analysis	49
6.1 Introduction	49
6.2 Descriptive analysis	50
6.2.1 Demographic questions	50
6.2.2 Micro Influencers	51
6.2.3 Perceived authenticity	56
6.2.4 Trust	62
6.2.5 Intention to buy	65
6.3 Correlation Analysis	68
6.3.1 Social Media Micro Influencer and Perceived Authenticity	69
6.3.2 Perceived Authenticity and Trust	71
6.3.3 Perceived Authenticity and Intention to buy	74
6.3.4 Trust and Intention to buy	75
6.3 Conclusion	80
7. Discussion	81
7.1 Introduction	81
7.2 Findings	81
7.4 Research Conclusion	84
8. Reflection	86
8.1 Introduction	86
8.2 Learning style and Learning process	86
8.3 Developed skills	87
8.3.1 Time management	87
8.3.2 Research and analyze	88
8.3.3 Collaboration	88
8.4 Applying learnings	88
9 References	89

Table of figures

Bruns-Siddiqui Intention to buy model 2018	12
Bruns-Siddiqui Intention to buy model 2018 modified	13
Shannon-Weaver's model of communication	20
Opinion leader in the original contextualization and Opinion leader in Social Network Sites (Karlsen, 2015)	21
Difference between Mass Media and Social Media - Referral Candy	22
Instagram users growth (Sprout Social, 2018)	25
Kim Kardashian sponsored post on her Instagram	27
Solis Foundation for Influence model	30
Population estimation - Central Statistics Office (2018)	43
Gender chart	51
Age group chart	52
Follow Instagram chart	53
Gender X follow influencer chart	53
Age X Follow Influencer chart	54
Style Traces Instagram Profile	55
Emma Kehoe Instagram profile	56
Thyza Ferreira Instagram profile	56
More with less Instagram profile	57
Follow Influencer X Q2 chart	61
Q3 chart	62
Q4 char	64
Follow Influencer X Q5 chart	65
Q7 chart	66
Q8 chart	67
Q9 chart	68
Q10 chart	69

List of tables

Questionnaire	45
Micro Influencers list	54
Q2 X follow Influencer table	61
Q3 X follow Influencer table	63
Q5 X follow Influencer	64
Correlation Social Media Micro Influencer and Perceived authenticity	70
Crosstable Q1xQ2XQ3	70
Correlation perceived authenticity and trust	71
Crosstable Q2 X Q4	71
Crosstable Q2 X Q4	72
Correlation perceived authenticity and Intention to buy	73
Crosstable Q2 X Q9	74
Correlation Trust and Intention to buy	75
Crosstable Q4 X Q8	76
Crosstable Q4 X Q9	76
Crosstable Q5 X Q9	77
Crosstable Q6 X Q8	78
Crosstable Q6 X Q9	79

1. Introduction

1.1 Social Media Influencer driven

Cultural power is being redistributed in both media and marketing. Common people are becoming "famous" on the Internet and business are following the tendency of everyday media users becoming potential influencers (Khamis et al, 2017). With professionals turning to Social Media Influencers (SMIs) that are more local and have fewer followers but higher engagement rates, it is crucial to understand this new way of doing marketing and this group of new social tastemakers. Marketers have stated that to measure return on investment (ROI) is one of the top five challenges for business to work with social media (Headly, 2015 cited at Jargalsaikhan and Anastasija Korotina, 2016). However, as the use of Social Media arises among customers, companies have been applying more resources and expertise to exploit its use as a Marketing tool. Executives have reported that their companies currently spend twelve percent of marketing budgets on social media and the expectation is that it grows seventy-one percent over the next five years (CMO Survey, 2018). Within Social Media, the biggest trend observed is the investment projections on Social Media Influencers. According to an eMarketer research, 70% of US surveyed marketers said that influencer marketing budgets will increase in 2018. Additionally, 89% of the marketers researched believe that Social Media Influencer can positively make a difference in how people feel about a brand (Warthor, 2018). Furthermore, the use of Social Media Micro Influencers to delivery Influencer-driven marketing messages is on the top of the strategies implemented by marketing professionals (Dinesh, 2017). Research shows that 45.8% of marketing professionals that works in Fashion, cosmetic and luxury industries believe that Social Media Micro Influencers (between 10k to 100k) is more effective than other tiers of Influencers like the regular Social Media Influencers or celebrities who are online.

Data from an Influencer marketing software (Klear) shows that the platform Instagram alone generated 1 billion globally in sponsored Instagram posts in 2017. Influencers were overwhelmingly female, with women accounting for about 84% of the group. Fashion and Accessory sector are the top two industries that most partnered with influencers on Instagram (Chadha, 2018). The common use of Instagram Influencer driven marketing in the industry that movement 3 trillion euro per year worldwide, representing 2% of the global gross domestic product, is a sign that it is relevant to study deeply the mechanisms of Social Media Influencer Marketing in the Fashion Industry. In Ireland, where this study is carried

out, the domestic market value of the fashion industry worth 3 billion euro, with 2.5 billion euro spent on clothing (Fashion United, 2018).

1.2 Millennials and Social Media

The generation Y, commonly referred to as Millennials, is the group of people that were growing up during the beginning of the second millennium. The core authors explain that this generation was shaped mainly by the constant exposure to technology (tech natives). By the time they were growing up the internet was at a maturity level that made it possible the widespread use of technology in the households (Bolton et al, 2013). Millennials were growing up during long periods of economic prosperity and experiencing the rapid development of Social Network communications. Those characteristics have certainly impacted the way that Gen Y interacts with technology in general, but especially with Social Media. The websites where people can connect with their friends and producing content, like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Youtube are very popular among this group of people. The Millennials have a necessity to be in constant contact with their peers and take their opinions in high consideration to a number of decisions in their lives. Millennials are particularly sensitive to peers pressure regarding their intention to buy a product (Goldghen, 2004), so Social Media websites are the perfect tool to keep them connected with their social influence network. Dodds and Watts (2007) and Goldghen (2004) agree that this generation is made of not only super influenced individuals, but they are themselves Influencers in their circles. Therefore it makes sense to investigate how people are influencing their peers using Social Media.

Generation Y has brought attention to itself and has become the object of many studies the last years. Bolton et al (2013), although, states that previous studies have arisen more questions than answers about the way this generation uses Social Media and how they compare to other generations. Considering that generation Y are now at the end of their studies and/or in the largest workforce layer, it is more than relevant to keep studying and observing this generation. This research tries to put some light on the phenomenon regarding consumer behavior on Social Media, investigating the micro tire of Social Media Influencers that impacts millennials.

1.3 Bruns-Siddiqui Intention to buy model

In the literature, trust and perceived authenticity are commonly referred to in relation to Social Media Influencers. Many authors agree that trust and perceived authenticity in Social Media Influencer marketing can impact the effectiveness of this kind of marketing strategy. Bruns (2018) has proposed a model to explain how Trust and Perceived authenticity are connected to the purchasing intention of Generation Z. The Bruns-Siddiqui Intention to buy model concept is that Social Media Influencer Marketing driven leads to purchasing intention when consumers perceive an Influencer as authentic. The model also explains how trust is only built when consumers perceive an Influencer as authentic, and trust as well leads to intention to buy. The model proposed by Bruns (2018) will be applied as a framework in this study. The aim is to prove that those variables (Trust and Perceived Authenticity) relate to Social Media Micro Influencers (SMMI) and the generation Y in the same way that those relate to Generation Z. Bruns (2018) states the importance of further studies considering Micro Influencers, and the need to do more investigations to complete the verification of her model.

2. Research question

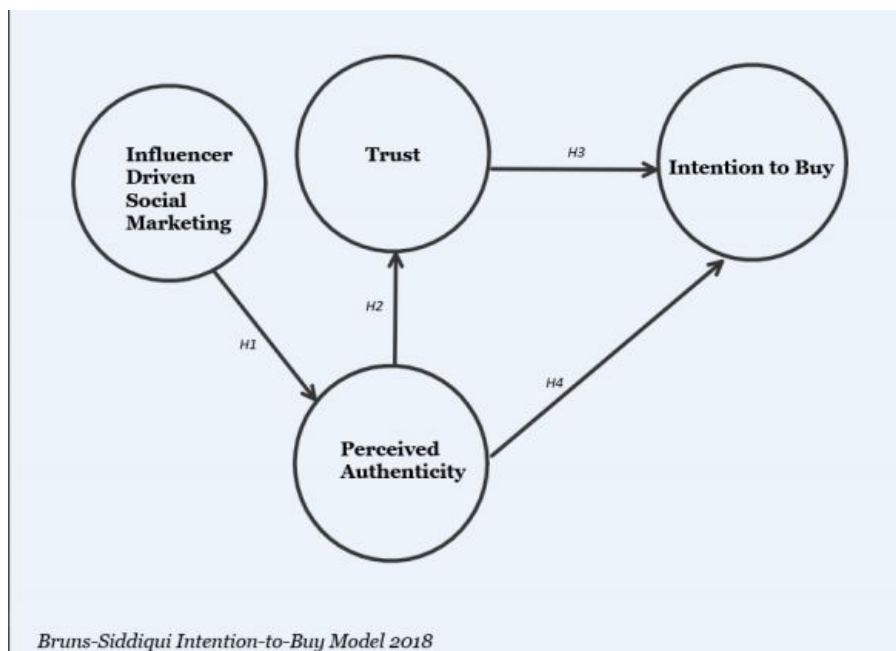
Researchers have used Attitude as a way to measure the effectiveness of Social Media Influencers (SMIs) in past studies (De Veirman et al, 2017; Korotina and Jargalsaikhan, 2016; Lu et al, 2014; Jatto, 2014). In the Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model Attitude is related to Intention to buy a product (Bruns, 2018). Previous studies have also connected positive attitude towards a person/brand/product to Authenticity (Lu et al, 2014), Expertise (Guadagno and Cialdini, 2005) and Popularity (De veirman et al, 2017). The reason for attitude being a good way to measure purchase intention is that attitude towards a brand or product influences the buyer decision-making (Fill, 2009). The purpose of this research is to put some light on the part played by Micro Influencers on the consumer behavior of Generation Y individuals who follow this new type of Influence force. As the literature around Micro Influencer marketing driven is still limited, this study will apply a broader model of Influencer marketing driven: the Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model. The aim is to access

how Trust and Perceived Authenticity impact Millennials attitude towards micro Social Media Influencers.

Turning to SMIs has become a common tactic in communication and marketing in the fashion industry (Burke, 2017). Some studies about SMIs have been carried out in the last years (Bruns, 2018; Abdin, 2016, Bijen, 2017, Zietec, 2016, Jatto, 2017; Jargalsaikhan and Korotina, 2016; Burke, 2017). However, none of them addressed specifically Social Media Micro Influencer related to Generation Y. Bijen (2017) brought attention to the necessity of developing studies about SMIs considering a clear distinction between macro and micro SMIs. He also found in his study the need of accessing this difference from the consumer point of view considering the public knowledge of real SMIs. Social Media Micro Influencer was also quoted in a study about Influencer marketing on the fashion industry in Zietec (2016). This study was focused on how companies could use Influencer marketing to enhance fashion business results but again does not get into the specificities of Micro Influencers. Jargalsaikhan and Korotina (2016) did a qualitative study to investigate attitudes towards SMIs and their influence on purchasing-decision in the gym industry. While it was a great insight about attitudes towards SMIs, the study also does not address micro SMIs. The fact that this research was not related to the Fashion industry also leaves space to explore SMIs connection to the industry that more uses this tool on Instagram (Chadha, 2018). Some of the studies made about Influencer marketing on Social media were more focused on celebrity endorsement (Jatto, 2017; Burke, 2017) while others treated Influencer marketing as online word-of-mouth without getting into the particularities of SMIs (Chen et al, 2011; Liu et al, 2015). While Bruns (2018) argues that people tend to follow SMI with fewer followers, De Veirman et al (2017) study brings a counterpoint. The study suggests that contrary to what marketers professionals believe (Zietec, 2016), people are more inclined to like SMIs with more followers. However, De Veirman et al (2017) study did not consider consumer background about real micro SMIs. Bruns (2018) on the other hand found that the number of followers is an indicator of perceived authenticity. In Bruns (2018) study real-life profiles of Influencers were used, so it may justify this difference in conclusions. Marketers have been differentiating micro SMIs from traditional SMI throughout the engagement variable (Main, 2017; Dhanik, 2016; Nanji, 2017; Wissman, 2018; Binker, 2018). But while engagement can be either a good or bad reaction to a brand, purchasing intention is always a positive behavior (Muntinga, 2015). After extensive research, it was decided that the best way to understand how the Generation Y responds to Micro Social Media Influencer marketing is to test Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model (2018). The model is the most recent work found about Social Media Influencers and it is the only one

that proposes a framework that makes sense to the public that is going to be studied. As Brunns (2018) study brings about, the model was tested considering all types of Social Media Influencers and focused on Generation Z, so there is a need to apply the model to other scenarios and frames. Therefore, this study aims to apply the model to a different generation (Y) focused on a more specific kind of Influencer Driven Social marketing, the Social Media Micro Influencers (SMMI). Which results in the research question:

Can “Bruns-Siddiqui Intention-to-Buy” model explain how Trust and Perceived authenticity related to Social Media Micro Influencer marketing impacts Millennials intention to buy?

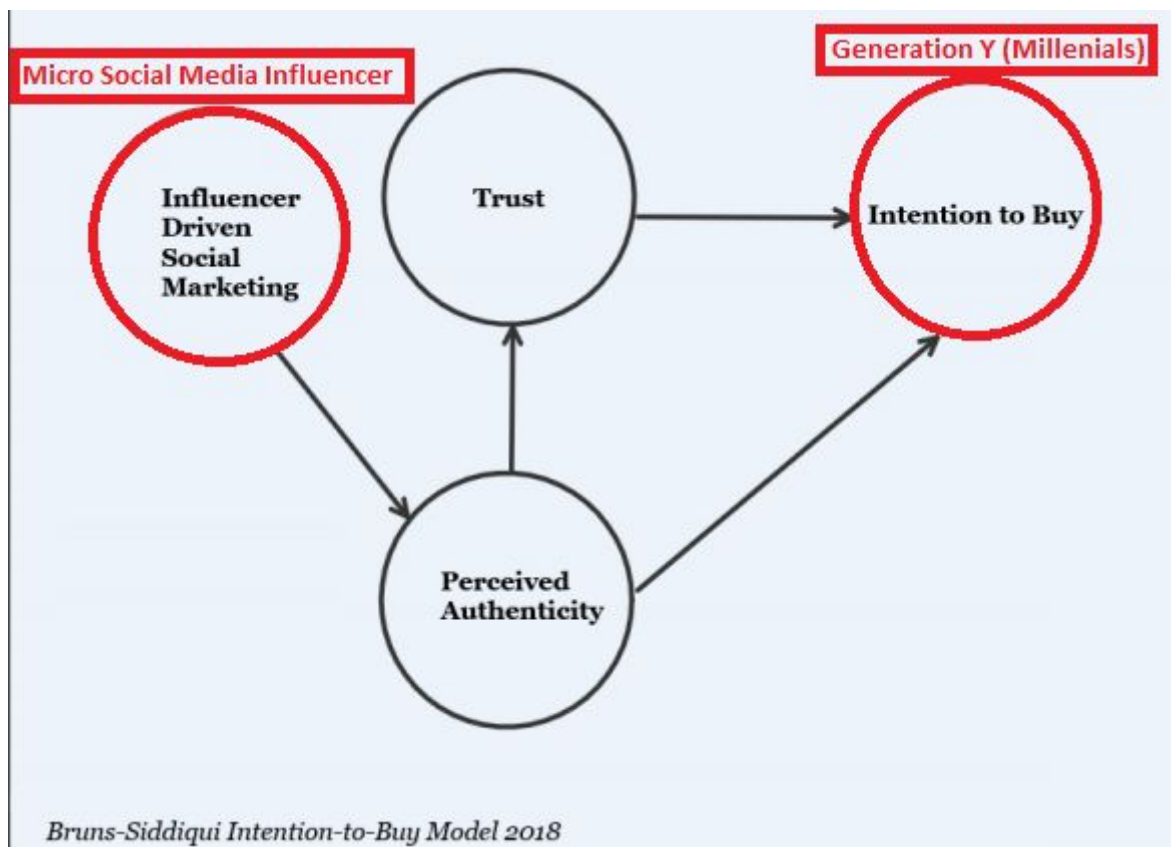


3. Hypothesis

This section explains how the hypotheses are built based on Bruns-Siddiqui Intention to buy model. The model itself was put together testing four different hypothesis that connected Social Media Influencer driven marketing to Trust, Perceived Authenticity and Intention to buy. The acceptance of the hypotheses created the frame that is going to be tested in this study considering a different target: Generation Y. This study will isolate Micro Social Media Influencer marketing driven from general Social Media Influencer marketing driven, in order to test how generation Y responds to Micro Social Media Influencer. Therefore, this study will consider only 1 hypothesis (H), namely:

H1: Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model can explain Millennials intention to buy when impacted by Micro Social Media Influencer marketing.

In order to accept Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model considering the variables Micro Social Media Influencers and Generation Y, all variables that correlate in the original model must be found in this study.



This hypothesis is based on literature review considering the elements of Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model: Trust, Perceived Authenticity and Intention to buy, but focusing on at one end Micro Social Media Influencer marketing and at the opposite end the Generation Y. All the concepts presented in the hypothesis section can be found in dept in the literature review of this study.

3.1 Perceived Authenticity

Bruns (2018) study supports that the number of followers that a person has on Social Media impacts directly the perceived authenticity of that person. The finds on that research pointed to the idea of Social Media Micro Influencers being more trustworthy than regular Social Media Influencers. The Influencers with less than 100,000 followers was seen as more authentic than the ones with over 100,000 followers. This trend is compatible with the market perception. It is observed that more focused and clustered an Influencer is, more impact they will have on their followers, including higher engagement rates and better marketing responses.

Although De Veirman et al (2017) does not agree with that, the study found that using Influencers that has too many followers can trigger the perception of a non-exclusive product, which can be very damaging on the Fashion segment. Therefore, having fewer followers can strong the perceived authenticity. What is interesting is that De Veirman et al (2017) found that a high number of followers has a positive effect on perceived popularity, which positively impacts perceived opinion leadership and consequently perceived likeability. So this is study is also opened to both the possibility of parameters of a high/low number of Influencers be found to impact the perceived authenticity. For instance, under the category of Micro Influencer, as the number of followers gets closer to 100,000 the micro influencer is perceived as more credible - while still local.

3.2 Perceived Authenticity and Trust

The information sources from where the recommendation comes is an important part of Influencer Marketing. The effectiveness of online word of mouth, when compared between different generations groups, is connected to the closeness of the relationship between the sender and the receiver of the message. Sago (2015) found that most Millennials enjoy

interacting with the Influencer by liking or commenting on the post, even if it is only to tag their friends.

Consumers also like giving their feedback on a product through social media and that increases purchase intentions (Balakrishnan et al, 2014). The results of Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model states that the majority of the respondents believes that an Influencer is more trustworthy when he or she interacts on a regular basis and large amounts with the followers. Bruns (2018) study, however, brings attention to new technological resources used to mislead followers on the matter of interaction. Algorithms like Instagress, SocialDrift, ViralUpgrade, Relaxed Social, Combin and Kickstagram are examples of programs that can be used to have bots commenting/liking followers content. Considering that Micro Influencers have always a personal and direct message to their public, it is unlikely that they use those tools without it be easily identified by their followers.

Furthermore, Bruns (2018) shows that Perceived Authenticity is connected to trust. When Influencers and advertising messages were perceived as authentic, people were more likely to build up trust. Thus, in this study, it is mandatory that those same correlations are found between Micro Influencers and Generation Y to consider Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model suitable to explain the behavior of this generation towards Micro Influencers.

3.3 Trust and Intention to buy

Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model comes from the premise that Generation Z is more likely to trust authentic sources. The model connects the event of a follower trusting an authentic source to a higher likeability of that follower having the Intention to Buy a product. The model states that Trust has a direct positive influence on Intention to Buy. While Gen Z participants are likely to get inspired by trends and new products (Bruns, 2018), Gen Y is bound to get inspired by Reviews (Sethi et al 2018). Millennials are also likely to give high importance to experiences because to relate with other people lifestyle helps them to enhance their own personal identity (Mahoney and Tang, 2016). In that sense, it is expected that Micro Influencers show minimum expertise on the field that they produce content, in order to build up trust. Testing products and showing their day-by-day experiences should also enhance consumer trust. Therefore, the preference for contents about Lifestyle or Product reviews created by the Micro Influencers might enhance the Intention to buy of those individuals. That connects Trust on Micro Influencers with Intention to buy a sponsored or recommended product. In order to the hypothesis be accepted those two constructs must connect as well.

3.4 Perceived Authenticity and Intention to Buy

Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model (2018) connects perceived authenticity of Influencer marketing driven to Intention to buy a product. It is natural that more authentic a recommendation feels, more the public get motivated to buy it. This study wants to prove that when a Micro Influencer is perceived as authentic and close to the reality of those who follow them, the Influencer driven marketing is as close as it can be to online word of mouth. The perceived authenticity of a recommendation through the public perception of good intention and truth at the moment of reviewing a product is found in previous literature to enhance purchase intention (Chen et al, 2015).

4. Literature Review

4.1 Literature Introduction

The Literature review presents an overlook on the Fashion industry and the way that professionals and academics involved with this sector have adapted to the digital age (Internet-based environment). Further, it is explained about Social Media and the way that a business uses it to enhance brand value and maximize profits. It will be also explored the phenomenon of Social Media Influencers (SMIs) and its implications from the marketing point of view. Furthermore, the concept of the object of this study (Micro Social Media Influencers) will be introduced as well as the aspects of Generation Y usage of media and consumer behavior. Finalizing, Bruns-Siddiqui Intention to buy model will be explained in order to present the frame that Micro Social Media Influencer and Generation Y will be seen from.

4.2 Fashion Industry and the Digital Age

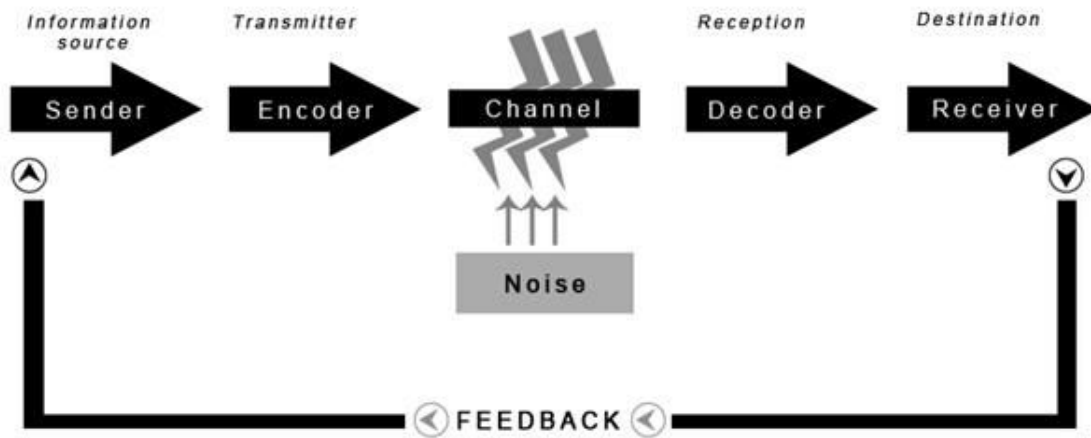
Since the boom of the domestic Internet, companies have rushed to get into the multi-millionaire business of e-commerce (Rahayu and Day, 2015). If to replicate the consumer experience from physical shops to the dynamics of online shopping has been a challenge to the Fashion industry, connecting all channels, using interactive and new technologies online and considering social networks as an important touch point with consumers is where lies the opportunity to overcome it (Blazquez, 2014). Through e-commerce, the Fashion industry has also seen the opportunity to internationalize companies. Luxury Brands that have always had the difficulty of growing without becoming non-exclusive find in e-commerce the opportunity to expand its geographic market without necessarily becoming popular (Guercini and Runfola, 2015). The online era has also brought the opportunity to fashion brands and consumers exchange in online communities like

Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Those interactions have helped brands to develop a relationship with consumers. More the public gets involved with the brand in these communities, greater is the brand awareness and brand loyalty of the consumers regarding those brands (Brogi et al, 2013). It is clear that with the Internet boom, most of Business-to-consumer (B2C) companies have developed any degree of online presence, not only looking for brand awareness but also to leverage sales revenue (Kumar and Mirchandani, 2012). However, to have consumers interacting with brands, companies must to use appropriate strategy content. Li (2018) argues that some contents provoke larger amount of responses from consumers in the fashion industry. Frames content like Holiday (anything associated with traveling, break, relaxing, fun times, etc) and Expert (associated to have knowledge about a specific subject), have higher positive user engagement when evaluating profiles from fashion brands.

Regarding the actual purchasing decision of fashion goods in today's world, there is evidence that apparel consumers value social opinions in order to decide to buy a product. For the generation Y, the opinion of group members that people are part of is one of the factors that influence a fashion purchasing decision, together with the brand, style, and price (Valaei and Nikhashemi, 2017). For Millennials, the opinion of their peers is also important. When shopping Fashion, they take in consider word of mouth to decide to buy a product. Millennials attitude towards online reviews has the highest effect on explaining online purchase intention (Sethi et al 2018), and in the digital age is extremely easy to find opinions about a product that a person wants to buy. The experience becomes an extension of personal identity. The consumers are making an investment in themselves when they make purchases (Mahoney and Tang, 2016).

4.3 Communication and Influence

According to the most quoted theory of communication model, Shannon–Weaver model of communication (1949), communication is a process where sender and receiver connect with each other through a message. This process can be disrupted by a few things. First, it could be rattled by noise, which is everything that goes through the channel and makes the message more difficult to understand by the receiver. Also, the receiver and sender should use similar coding and decoding in order to the message be delivered clearly. Independently of the understanding of the message, once the message is delivered, the receiver can send it feedback, restarting the process again.

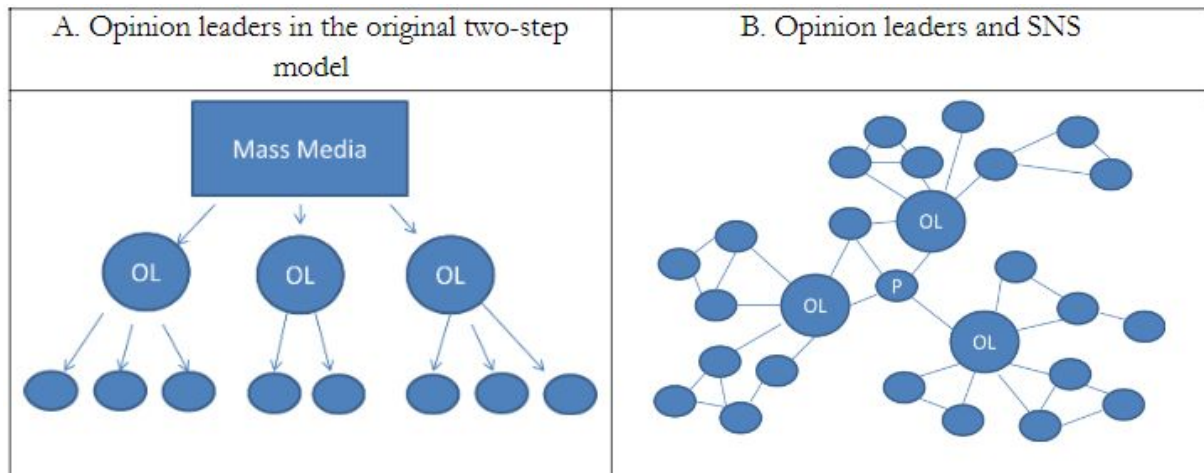


SHANNON-WEAVER'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

When approaching mass media communication, however, Bennet and Mahain (2016 cited Karlsen 2015) argued that we should go back to Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) two-way communication step. In this model, the first step consists in mediated media messages issued by mass media agents encountering the audience. In the second step, this message is contextualized and decodified by opinion leaders to small groups. Therefore, interactions happen not only when mass media encounter their audience, but also when opinion leaders translate and power the message to their influence group. Opinion leaders can differ from subject to subjects, meaning that a person that is known as a reference in Fashion, for instance, might not be a reference in Travel related subjects. Opinion leaders can be people from all sort of backgrounds, status, financial level and scholarly (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955). Personal characteristics of the Opinion Leader is one of the main aspects when accessing opinion leadership. According to Kratz (1955), there are specific attributes that can be identified on Opinion Leaders. Accordingly, sociability and assertiveness, for example, have a positive effect on the power of an opinion leader. Additionally, Watts and Dodds (2007) state that the perception of competence has a positive impact on Opinion Leadership. The author suggests that when a person shows increasing interest and experience in a particular field, it is more likely that this person will be seen as an opinion leader.

Therefore, it is found in the literature that people have roles within their communication groups and that opinion leader is one of the most important agents in the communication process. Besides the two-way communication flow presented before, there are a number of authors that bring attention to the fact the opinion leaders also are influenced by normal

citizens, as well as by their opinion leaders peer (Karlsen, 2015). This can be very evident when looking at Social Media Sites.



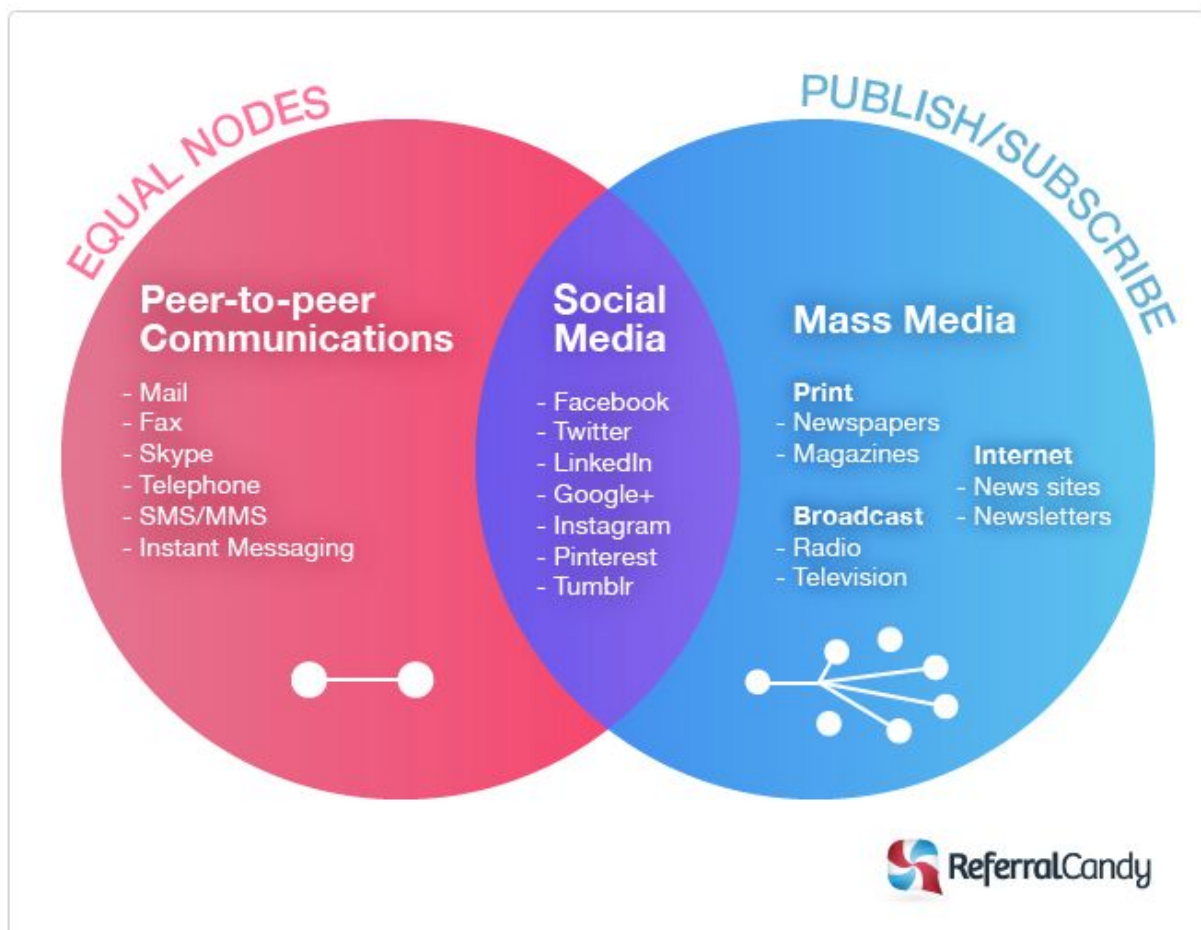
Opinion leader in the original contextualization and Opinion leader in Social Network Sites (Karlsen, 2015)

The difference between the two-way communication considering Mass Media and considering Social Network Sites is that while on the first the audience will be exposed to the message coming from both Opinion leader and the Media, in Social Media websites the message will spread mostly through opinion leaders. On Social Media websites senders rely mostly on active members to spread their message across the web. On Facebook and Instagram, for example, the main way to spread a message is "Liking" something or "sharing" something. On Instagram, there is also the "tags" where you can either tag a place, a subject or a person and research content also based on those tags. There is an algorithm on Instagram that decides which content is more relevant, this algorithm will consider the number of followers, a number of interactions and the relevance of the topic for the audience to spread a message (Carbone, 2018). Bigger is the influence circle of a person, more likely their content will be visible, increasing the cascade effect.

It is important to notice that Social Media presence in the equation of Influence Communication makes it possible for people that are opinion leader to become powerful Influence agents. Websites like Instagram make it easier for people to start cascades effects. Watts and Dodds (2007) states that for an individual to trigger a cascade it depends much more on the global structure of the influence network than on his or her personal degree of influence—that is, if the network permits global cascades, virtually anyone can start one, and if it does not permit global cascades, nobody can.

4.4 Social Media

Social Media can be defined as a group of Medium whose applications and technologies derived from the web (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2011; Sago 2015). Social Media most visible difference from traditional media is its nature itself. Because Social Media is born in the digital era, the audience is enabled to respond and interact with the message, making feedback an important part of the communication process. Additionally, Social Media establish a new dynamics in the media market, consumers now are not only able to respond to messages but to create themselves a message. The user-generated content makes Social Media the kind of platform with vast possibilities and low entry barriers, bringing the audience to an active part of the communication process.



Difference between Mass Media and Social Media - Referral Candy

Kotler (2017) explains how the use of social media has changed the classic sender-transmitter communication model. With Social Media, the public is more likely to share their opinions and taking other people's opinions into consideration. That new dynamic

makes consumers a source of invaluable insights. As a result, customers are building their own image of the companies, despite the own brand image projection. Sender and receiver are intricate now, recipients of a brand communication message can themselves become the senders of a company message.

Therefore, social media has become a widely used marketing tool over the last decade. Either aiming to enhance brand equity or to promote products for increasing sales, Social Media plays always a role in marketing strategies. The aim of companies when using Social Media is commonly related to consumer-relationship, brand awareness and an increase in sales (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2013). Godey et al (2016) add that Social Media marketing efforts have also a significant positive effect on brand awareness and brand image, the two main dimensions of brand equity. In the digital age, its argued that Social Media actions intensify value equity in a way that traditional marketing media do not usually do (Filo et al 2015; Kim et al, 2001).

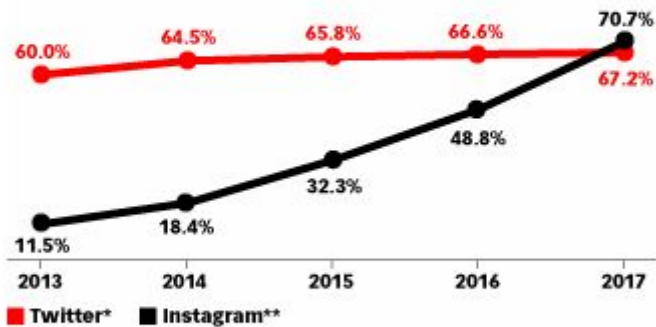
As stated before, Social Media is an interacting communication media. Nor only brands talk to consumers (common on traditional advertising media), but consumers also talk to brands. It is known that Information and entertainment are the dominant drivers of all brand-related social media use by consumers. Either consuming, contributing or creating brand-related content, the audience interest for information and the desire for entertainment is what makes people engage with brands online (Muntinga, 2015). According to Filo et al. (2015), consumers can interact with Social Media during different steps of the consumption process. The author states that the platform can be used during information search and decision-making, as well as having an impact on word of mouth effect. In the digital era, an important aspect of word of mouth is the "review" phenomenal. Electronic communication has provided the perfect territory to people give immediate responses about their experiences with a product/service to a large audience through the so-called "reviews" (Chen et al, 2011). The reviews are contents generated by users after experience a product/service. Those reviews are online social support for their peers, establishing trust among consumers (Hajili, 2014 and Lu, 2014). Hajili (2014) also found that the trust generated indirectly encourage intention to buy through social networking sites. The shared experience between peers on social media encourages consumers to trust in vendors. On the other hand, a group of people that have always been associated with consumer trust, are also connecting themselves with their public using Social Media: the celebrities. Public figures are constantly engaging with their audience on these sites, making this a powerful marketing tool where the direct access and personal message exchanged provides a platform that approximate celebrities to their public (Stever and Lawson, 2013).

It is understood although that there are Social Media websites that work better for celebrities, as well as there are Social Media websites where the audience is more likely to interact with people from their own social circle. Zhu and Chen (2015) model separate them considering the nature of their connection and interaction, so it is possible to understand Social Media from two categories: profile-based and content-based platforms. Profile-based social media focus on individual members. The aim of the members when using this kind of Social Media is to connect with the person behind the profile. Examples of Profile-based social media are Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. The other category is the Content-based social media, a few examples of this kind of Social Media are Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube. The users of this kind of Social Media are interested in contents, discussions, and comments on the posted materials regarding subjects that they like. The focus is on the content that they provide, not on the person behind the profile. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that Profile-based social media might leverage celebrities endorsement while Content-based social media would be more democratic to people that are not famous but have something interesting to share. Taking that into consideration, this study assumes that it makes sense to research the topic of Micro Influencers (non-celebrities) on Instagram.

Based on the latest statistics from the Central Statistical Office (2017), it seems that the Internet is used by 70% of Irish people daily. Among all Social Media, Facebook ranks on the top of the list of the most used Social Media networks in Ireland. 65% of Irish people have an account on Facebook, and 69% use it daily, while one-third of Irish people have an Instagram account, and half of those Instagram users use the platform on a daily basis. However, statistics show that Irish Instagram users have increased by more than 10% while Facebook Irish users increased only by 2%. It shows that Instagram has great growth potential. The same trending is seen worldwide. 71% of US business use Instagram in their marketing strategy while more than 80% of users follow a business profile on Instagram (Sprout Social, 2018). Still, according to Sprout Social (2018), it was found that 80% of Influencers prefer to use Instagram to collaboration.

US Companies Using Twitter and Instagram for Marketing Purposes, 2013-2017

% of total



Note: companies with 100+ employees; *includes use of any of the proprietary public-facing tools on Twitter for marketing purposes; **includes use of any of the proprietary public-facing tools on Instagram for marketing purposes

Source: eMarketer, Oct 2015

198596

www.eMarketer.com

Instagram users growth (Sprout Social, 2018)

The literature shows that Instagram offers applications and functionalities for companies that most of its rivals do not. One example is that Instagram was in the vanguard of introducing professional profiles, including special features to brands, bloggers and celebrities. Also, Instagram has a strong culture of hashtags (#), and it is known that having a hashtag on the content can increase the reach of the post by 12% (Sprout Social, 2018). Still, according to Sprout Social, brands are betting on that as 7 out of 10 Hashtags on Instagram are Branded.

4.5 Social Media Influencers

Social Media Influencers (SMIs) are an independent third party endorser, who through posts on blogs, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media, express their experience and opinions, shaping the public attitude towards brands, causes and such other matters (Freberg et al,

2011; Muntinga et al., 2011). Influencer marketing is being used by marketers as a tool to reach consumers, distributing information and influencing consumers product perceptions (Burke, 2017). It is safe to say that nowadays SMIs work as amplified word-of-mouth. With the amount of information disseminated on the Internet, word-of-mouth phenomenon spreads at an unprecedented speed. For businesses, it has a huge impact, as messages coming from personal sources influence more the reputation of a business than the information provided by the business itself (Escobar-Rodriguez and Bonson-Fernandez, 2016). Previous studies found that consumers have shifted credence from traditional media, for example, Television, Newspapers and so on, to the Internet (Johnson, 2008). And the Internet of consuming is closely intersected with Social Media.

On Social Media, the opinions leaders are called Influencers. The first and most traditional tie of Influence on Social Media is the group of celebrities. They usually have a large circle of Influence due to the support of mass media (Senft, 2013). After that, there are the Internet-born Influencers. Those are the people that produce any sort of content that gets attention from their fellow users. Those Influencers can be divided based on the number of followers they have. Forbes (2017) explains that Micro Influencers are those Influencers with more than 1000 followers (everyday Influencer) and those who have between 10,000 to 100,000 followers (premium Influencers). When an Influencer has over 100,000 followers they become an A-list Influencer or a Macro Influencer. There are Macro Influencers that become so successful that are elevated to the status of celebrity. An example of that is the Kardashian family. After becoming famous on Social Media websites like Instagram and Snapchat, Kim Kardashian and her sisters are building an empire outside the Internet, with programs, clothesline, makeup line, cosmetics products, VIP presence, modeling, advertising and so on.



837k likes

1d

kimkardashian New obsession @sugarbearhair 🍬 I have two of these a day as part of my hair care routine. They are delish! #sugarbearhair #sp

view all 12,337 comments

Paulina.Beattie First

alexandra_pap8 @labros_jin @panagiota_meleti σορρυ κιολας αλλά εγώ εχω μαυρίσει περισσότερο απο τη φίλη μ τη @kimkardashian

ale.dalbosco Essa @_amandaamor

yeahmy Lolly pop

cosmickayzo Lb

boyslavonac Kyle is better in lake's

kristenecook Lb

miakhalifafansgirl LB

____.algeriaangirl Elle trois belle

andrianiha I h

Kim Kardashian sponsored post on her Instagram

Through social media 'ordinary' people acquired a medium with a significant potential audience, therefore popularity and prominence no longer rest on the hands of traditional gatekeepers such as editors, producers, celebrities, etc. (Khamis et al, 2017; Booth and Matic, 2011). Quite the opposite, there might be a crisis on the traditional celebrities credential. A previous study about Celebrities endorsement, for example, found that only 46.7% of the sample interviewed agreed with the statement that "celebrity endorsements on social media is believable" (Jatto, 2014). More than half of the participants either were neutral or do not believe in the authenticity of celebrity experience when endorsing a product, and 51% of the respondents had never bought a product solely because a celebrity endorsed it (Jatto, 2014). Another aspect to consider is that the engagement ratio decreases with the number of followers (Mikro Influencer, 2018), so having a Macro Influencer or a traditional celebrity with an online profile to promote a brand because they have millions of followers might not translate into results.

On the other hand, there are some studies that show that SMIs (sometimes called 'micro-celebrities') are generally perceived as trustworthy and have a positive attitude associated to them (Jargalsaikhan and Korotina, 2016; Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017; Liu et al, 2015). The idea of having opinion leaders that the audience relates to is an essential part of the Social Media dynamics. A study about sponsored posts on blogs by Lu et al (2014) found that consumers do not mind if Influencers are receiving a monetary incentive

from brands to review a product/service. The author suggests that consumers might feel that when the Influencer states that they are being sponsored in some way they are being honest, not trying to mislead or cheat on them. This is, therefore, the reason why they do not resent Influencers paid recommendation. The author concludes that if consumers trust the authenticity of a recommendation it is likely that this has a positive impact on purchasing intention. That brings the natural conclusion that consumer perception of the SMIs as a person has an impact on the endorsed product perception. The literature supports that the source of the online Word-of-mouth, as well as the content, are crucial to purchase decision (Chen et al, 2015).

Newman (2015) explains that Influencer marketing is growing exponentially and shows no sign of decrease. When non-traditional celebrities like the 'Instafamous' SMIs are more powerful influencers than more traditional celebrities (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017), brands who seek continuous engagement with consumers throughout the web multi-channels must acknowledge the influence of the formers "nobody" (Booth and Matic, 2011).

4.5.1 Micro Influencers

Academically the term Micro Influencer is rather new. The term usually describes SMIs that have a limited number of followers (Abdin, 2016; Bijen, 2017; Zietec, 2016). In the business vocabulary, the term is widely used nowadays to differentiate the SMIs that have a large audience from the SMIs that have less but more engaged followers and are well-known of the public they communicate with (Main, 2017; Dhanik, 2016; Nanji, 2017; Wissman, 2018; Binker, 2018). Marwick cited in Khamis et al (2016) mention ordinary users that have become 'Instagram famous' with about 35,000 followers, having the potential to reach an audience comparable to the mass media's celebrities'. The biggest difference between SMIs and SMIs without a big army of followers is that it is possible to the Micro Influencers to connect with their public. Also, Micro SMIs are usually seen as a reliable source of info, which can enhance the feeling of trustworthiness. The literature shows that Social Media Micro Influencers were found to have a more positive influence on brand trust and purchase intention than regular SMIs (Bijen, 2017), for example. SMIs audience tends to be more engaged when they are smaller. Studies found that bloggers who have the smallest audience are the most influential outlets due to their tailored content, frank and detailed product reviews (Booth and Matic, 2010). According to Marketing Dive's research cited at Dinesh (2017), engagement is considerably higher on SMIs that have fewer followers. The

engagement for Micro-influencers with 1,000 followers, for example, is about 4% higher than for influencers with 10,000 followers. From a marketer point of view, Dinesh (2017) adds that Micro-influencers are easier to connect and communicate with than the established SMIs. The requirements and investment to become a micro SMIs are comparatively low and the potential reach, in terms of public and influence, is spectacularly high (Khamis, 2016). The author states that Platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram accelerate and emphasize the ways by which users can explore their personal brand in order to profit from it. Inspirational, relatable, instructive and cautionary content would translate into self-branding, and that would be the reason for the following mass evolves into a fan base, making 'ordinary' users famous on the Internet.

Instagram dynamics is pointed out as one of the best platforms for Micro Influencers. The use of hashtags like OOTD (outfit of the day) for instance can make normal followers become amateur Influencers when discovered by the right people or when they are able to gather a mass of followers throughout a hashtag (Abidin, 2016).

On the other hand, a study (De veirman et al, 2017) shows that having more followers increases likeability and popularity perception. To perceive SMIs as more popular, and consequently more likable. On the other hand, it is known that the interaction ratio decreases as the number of followers arises, causing global celebrities to have fewer engagements (Mikro Influencer, 2018).

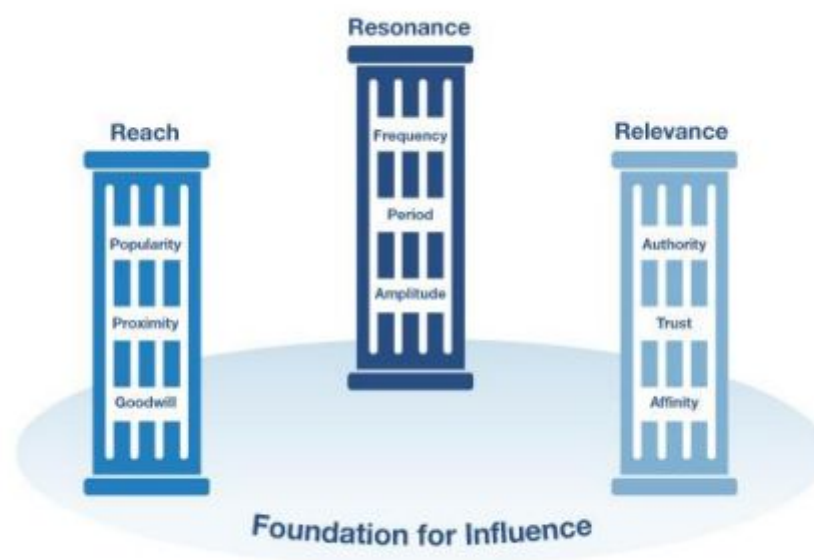
Watts and Dodds (2007) and their study about the network of influence brings light to the fact that micro influencers are themselves influenced by super influencers. They argue that an influencer is usually an easily influenced person that influences easy-to-influence individuals. The authors add that Influence cascade effects mostly depends on the structure of the network itself instead of the personal traits of the agents. In that case, Micro influencers must be at the right place and the right time to boost their influence network. If common people would trust more micro influencers than global Influencers (Bruns, 2018), normal people that have a considerable amount of followers can be a perfect intermediary of influence.

Although it is known that Micro Influencers are those who have a limited number of followers, there is no consensus on what that number might be. Some professionals consider it to be between 1,000 and 100,000 followers (Forbes, 2017). Others consider the cut at the point where the engagement rates start to fall, which could be either up to 40,000 or 100,000 followers (Pierucci, 2017). Some authors say that the number is from 10,000 to 100,000 followers (Westwood, 2018). Due to the lack of consensus on the definition of the number of

followers that characterize "micro" SMIs, this study will define Social Media Micro Influencers as Influencers that have ideally between 10,000 and 100,000 followers.

4.5.2 Critical Factors for Influencers success

Following Bruns (2018) work, this session presents the framework developed by Bryan Solis in order to understand Social Media Influencer characteristics. Solis (2012) states that Online Influence is measured as Social Capital. Thus, Social Capital is the number one prerequisite for an Influencer to influence individual behavior. According to Solis (2012), Social Capital on Social Media is defined as "online networks of relationships among people in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively". The author defends that the social capital of an Influencer is composed of three pillars: reach, relevance, and resonance, therefore in this context this should be the pillars of Influence.



Solis Foundation for Influence model

He refers to reach when talking about the connection that an Influencer is able to make with other users, indicating the potential escalation of the information. The reach is hence a consequence of the popularity, proximity, and goodwill that the Influencer can bring to bear. The second pillar, relevance, is also crucial to the Influencer potential. Authority, trust, and affinity are the factors that make an Influencer relevant. The Influencers authority is a direct

result of their invested time and energy to a specific niche or subject. Trust is acquired when the audience believes what the Influencer says. On Instagram people mostly have access to the Influencer lifestyle, so that helps to build trust, after all, if you are able to follow somebody's life from that close it is more likely that you can identify when some recommendation is out of place. Finally, affinity goes with the natural relatability between audience and Influencer. So when there is reach capability and relevance potential, resonance can be built. Resonance in this context is the reactions of the community regarding the message disseminated by the Influencer. For marketers resonance is the visible and measurable figures, resonance is translated into interaction rates, per se, how long a person sees an ad for, how many times per day, etc. Therefore, if something influences, for instance, the trust of an Influencer, the resonance and therefore the interaction rates can also suffer disturb. The literature shows that perceived benevolence, perceived integrity, and key opinion leaders endorsement affect consumer trust, and trust has a strong relationship with consumer purchase intention (Che et al, 2017). Perceived trustworthiness and the professional competence of the sender are often mentioned in the literature (Solis 2012, Brown Hayes 2008, Kolbik 2016) as primordial determinants of credibility. Some researchers have found that the perceived trustworthiness will suffer when the consumer assumes that the advertiser is being paid to recommend a product (Solis, 2012). On the other hand, it was previously showed that there are studies that found that consumers do not mind if Influencers are receiving a monetary incentive from brands to review a product/service as long as they state it clearly (Lu et al, 2014). Therefore it is still unclear to what extent Micro Influencers are perceived as trustworthy when sponsored by a brand. This paradigm has received a great amount of interest, but the literature has not revealed consistent results yet. What is known is that some platforms, including Instagram, now make it mandatory to Influencers indicating a paid partnership with a brand (Instagram, 2018).

Solis (2012) highlights another success factor to the Influencer success: the perceived physical attractiveness of the sponsored person. The factors familiarity, sympathy, and similarity are crucial to the audience feel attracted to the Influencer, they are a way to the public identify themselves with the Influencer and consequently with the brand/product sponsored. More the audience intentions of improving their social reputation, higher the probability of the person to comply with the message. According to Kahle and Homer (1985), Influencers which are perceived as attractive by their public/peers have more influence on consumers. Attractive Influencers will have more influence if the product advertised is the type that enhances the attractiveness of the consumer. That should be even more strong

when talking about Fashion. This idea is supported by previous literature, as it is known that consumers see most Fashion purchases as an investment in their own self-image (Mahoney and Tang, 2016).

4.6 Generation Y

In this study, one of the main aims is to find out how Generation Y interacts with Micro Social Media Influencers, so it is crucial to closely look at this layer of the population. There are various studies about Generation Y in all sort of areas within the academy. After all, this is the group of people that were highly associated with technology when technology was still something "new". Also, this is the generation that is now in the workforce or just about to enter it, that means the biggest tire of consuming. The interest in studying the new ways that people strongly affected by technology interact with the world has not yet ceased.

Nowadays, prior studies on interactive forms of online communication such as social media and peer recommendations have not yet deeply addressed the effect of Social Media Micro Influencer to this generation (Bruns, 2018).

Generation Y, commonly called Millennials, are mostly identified as the people that were growing up during the first years of the third Millennium (Serazio, 2015; Smith, 2011; Sago, 2015; Bolton et al, 2013; Goldgen, 2013; Nadeem, 2015; Moore, 2012;). All the core authors agree that this is the generation of technology, the so-called "tech-savvy" and the "hyperconnected" generation. Back in 2010, 93% of American teens between the ages of 12 and 17, as well as young adults between the ages of 18 to 29, went online (Pew Research, 2010). The same research shows that Millennials were hyper-connected to Social Media and the numbers were steadily growing. The core authors support the fact that Millennials are heavy users of Social Media websites (Sago, 2015; Serazio, 2015; Bolton et al, 2013; Nadeem, 2015). This generation is associated with the use of Social media as a tool for making decisions about what product or brand to buy (Bolton et al, 2013).

Further, in this section it will be explored the characteristics and the consumer behavior of this generation in order to understand the specificity of this group of people.

4.6.1 Characteristics

Although the core authors identify common characteristics among Millennials, there is no consensus about the beginning or ending year of birth associated with this generational group.

Sago (2015) identifies Generation Y as those who were born between the years of 1982 to 2002. Bolton et al (2013) say that "all the people who were born between the years of 1981-1991 irrespective of their circumstances" are considered as Millennials. Moore (2012) identify Millennials those who were born between 1982 and 2004. On the other hand, Smith (2011) believes that Millennials are those who were born only between 1981 and 1994. In her work Bruns (2018) consider people born after 1994 as part of the next generation, the generation Z. Therefore in this work, it will be considered Millennials all those who were born between the years of 1981 and 1994.

All core authors identify the access and technology as the unique aspect of this generation. Eastman et al (2014) explain how this is the generation that uses mobile technology and social network connectivity as natives. Because they had grown up with those devices and had contact with technology since their early years, the generation Y uses cell phones and related mobile technology abundantly. They also tend to be enthusiastic about technological advances (Pew research, 2010). Millennials are known for relying mostly on technology for entertainment, as well as use technology to reach and connect with others. Bolton et al (2013) explain that technology is adopted by this group in order to regulate their emotions. That can be one of the reasons why there is massive use of Social Media and other tools to connect with their peers.

This is the generation that has lived through long periods of economic prosperity and quick advance in communication technologies, especially social networks and instant communication appliances (Bolton et al, 2013; Goldgehn, 2014; Eastman, 2014). Those environmental conditions made them feel "special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, conventional, pressured, and achieving" (Howe and Strauss 2003 cited in Eastman, 2014). This manner of thinking and feeling sometimes can become a challenge for those part of this generation. Millennials can constantly feel challenged with independent thinking and decision making, as well as struggling with the lack of risk-taking attitude (Eastman, 2014). Compared to the previous generation, that have forged their connections and personalities growing up in the instability of the political scenario (second world war), Millennials have their relationship forget based on commercial interests (Serazio, 2015). They have grown up inside the vast and unregulated world of the Internet, at the same time that experienced

financial stability. That makes millennials self-identities intimately related to consumer behavior.

4.6.2 Consumer Behavior

Millennials are believed to be refined shoppers and big consumers. According to Goldgehn (2004), the generation Y spend between \$100 billion and \$450 billion a year. This generation usually spends more money on top brands and high-end products. Some studies found that millennials spend more than all the previous generations on branded products, including status products (Eastman, 2014; Goldgehn, 2004), and prestigious clothing (Moore and Carpenter, 2008). Goldgehn (2004) explains that they are willing to pay more on quality brands because they have a high sense of brand loyalty. The necessity of being validated by their peers leads to consumer behavior that is status conscious. Millennials are greatly affected by the message of the brands, this means that the concept that those brands/products can aggregate to their own image is a strong reason why they would buy a product (O'Cass and Frost cited in Eastman, 2014). The connection with a Brand, therefore, implicate on loyalty.

On the one hand Millennials are sophisticated shoppers who are mostly resistant to mass media advertising and common marketing techniques (Eastman, 2014; Sago, 2015). On the other hand, Millennials beliefs and actions about brands and products are strongly shaped by the opinion of their peers and close influence circle. Goldgehn (2004) states that Millennials are willing to be coached and get advisors in many areas of their lives. Mentors, according to Gladwell's theory, are people "who have experience in the specific field/area and an influential persona that draws people to them". Therefore a mentor or advisor can offer the direction to be followed by to those individuals, successfully creating a word-of-mouth cascade effect. It is known that one of the main factors for a recommendation to have impact and effectiveness on word-of-mouth is the closeness of the relationship between the sender and receiver of the message (Sago, 2015). More close in relationship the receiver of the message is from the sender (i.e. family, friends) more likely that the receiver will be influenced by the given message (Sago, 2015).

Bringing word of mouth to the digital era, it is a consensus in the literature that Social Media has amplified the cascade effect of this phenomenon. Social media allows people to recommend products to many more friends/family/acquaintances that could ever be possible in real life. Weigand (2009 cited in Pate, 2013) study about Generation Y and the Social

Media influence on their consumer behavior showed that young Millennials have strong ties to social networking sites and the opinions expressed by their contacts on these platforms. It was found that this generation is more likely to purchase items "liked" by "friends" on social Media website than those items not "liked". Additionally, this study suggests that Millennials are more likely to follow the trends started by close friends or celebrities when in the online. Furthermore, when the word of mouth communication phenomenon that is initially restricted to close relationship ties is boosted by Social Media, it leads to more word-of-mouth messages from other sources with more distant relationship ties, such as casual acquaintances, non-acquaintances and businesses profiles. That explains how positive and negative product messages obtained from different social media sources now influences considerably Millennials consumer behavior (Sago, 2015).

Finally, generation Y consumers expect personalization of products and services, a good range of variety, flexibility on their choices and convenience when shopping because they believe that the companies will always offer a solution for their problems or needs (Pate, 2013). And although Millennials are highly connected to the internet, especially Social Media, there are suggestions that Millennials use more interactive technologies to make contact and develop relationships with shops and brands than to actually purchase products online (Moore, 2012).

4.6.3 Media usage

All the core authors agree that the generation Y is the generation of technology native individuals (Serazio, 2015; Smith, 2011; Sago, 2015; Bolton et al, 2013; Goldgen, 2013; Nadeem, 2015; Moore, 2012;). Millennials use technology and the internet not only to deal with their daily activities but also for commercial purposes. This group has adopted the internet to establish or maintain a relationship with brands as well as to contact retailers. Although they use traditional means to access the internet, like laptops and desktops, Millennials tend to connect on social networks from their mobile phone, which makes them have it strongly intersected with their day-by-day activities (Moore, 2012).

The habit of using the Internet constantly changes the way by how this generation interacts with media. This generation was born into a world of two-way communication interactivity. With information circulating freely online, Millennials reject one-way marketing and

advertising (Serazio, 2015; Kotler, 2017). They are constantly referred by marketers as the skeptical generation, constantly ignoring advertisements, fast-forwarding commercials or just not paying attention at any kind of marketing attempt (Serazio, 2015; Eastman, 2014; Sago, 2015). However, Social Media brings the opportunity to marketers fulfill Millennials need to be heard. This generation is often enthusiastic to give their feedback about the brands or products they use (eMarketer, 2011). They are more likely to value others opinions in social media (eMarketer, 2011; Smith, 2011), so it is natural that they believe that their opinion is also important. Smith (2011) argues that Millennials usually feel comfortable giving their opinion about products, for instance writing reviews and helping the consumer-generated product to be shaped. According to the author, consumer-generated content such as commercials, podcasts, and blogs are on the rise and have caught the eyes of marketers.

The popularization of Social Media networks such as YouTube and Google Video are responsible for the reaching power of consumer-generated production. Most of the studies suggest that Gen Y actively contributes to Social Media content, either creating it or mashing it and that they are always looking for social media platforms where they can contribute and be part of it (Bolton et al, 2013). In counterpoint, Bolton (2013) also points out to studies that suggest that Millennials spend a considerable amount of time just consuming content like any other generation. However, as many studies suggest that Millennials would rather create advertisements instead of watching them, organizations can exploit their willingness to write reviews to leverage their businesses.

4.7 Bruns-Siddiqui Intention to buy Model

In the work of Bruns (2018) it was proposed a model that explains how Perceived Authenticity, Trust and Intention to buy are connected with Influencer driven social marketing. In Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model Perceived Authenticity and Trust are seen as intersections between Influencer marketing and the intention to buy a product from the generation Z. This new proposed model was the most adequate framework found to connect those same variables to Micro Social Media Influencers and Generation Y.

Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model was based on Hajili (2014) model. This base model was validated by the structural equation modeling method SEM-PLS, as its component

based-estimations based on cause-effect relationships were appropriate to give it validation. Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model was released in 2018, the same year that this thesis is being developed, so it there is much knowledge building that can be done as a derivation of this work. Furthermore, it will be made a review of the model and its principal's literature references.

4.7.1 Trust

Mayer et al (1995) define trust as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party". When talking about Social Media Influence it is clear that this definition is still very appropriate. Bruns (2018) acknowledge the importance of Social Media Influencers to be trustworthy when recommending something or giving any sort of advice. Bruns (2018) model identifies that there is a necessity of Influencers to acquire the trust of their followers in order to influence their purchasing decisions. The previous literature shows that just like Gen Z, Millennials trust their peers and other Social Media sources. Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model validates that the trustworthiness of Influencer marketing agent is connected to intention to buy of its followers. Therefore it is expected that when applied to Millennials it will also be found that trust is relevant to their intention to buy. On the other hand, Generation Z is less likely than Millennials to build up brand loyalty (IBM, 2017 cited in Bruns, 2018). Considering that Millennials tend to be loyal to brands (Goldgehn, 2004), this generation might not be as skeptical as Generation Z. Thus, Millennials also were brought up in the digital age and knows as well as the Gen Z how to differentiate between marketing-like messages and authentic messages. Trust is, therefore, tightly associated with authenticity. For generation Z authenticity is important because they are skeptics, they would need first to believe on the brand and then trust on them. Generation Z " would like to interact with brands on their term where they focus on quality and authenticity" (Bruns, 2018). Meanwhile, for Millennials authenticity impacts trust because they see the brands that they are loyal as a projection of their own selves. Therefore it can be assumed that either generation only is able to build trust when the sources are perceived as authentic.

4.7.2 Perceived Authenticity

Brand authenticity can be defined as: to delivery different strategies and cues to enrich an object with authenticity (Napoli et al., 2016). The author discusses the relevant mechanisms of the individual construction of an authentic experience. Napoli et al build up on the idea that authentic experience is the inevitable consequence of combining object based-cues that evokes a connection with their previous experience and future aspirations to their imagination. Authenticity can be perceptual, conditionally as well as objectively or subjectively (Petromen et al., 2010). In the English language, authenticity means to be truthful and to be real. This simple idea of authenticity guides Solis (2012) in his inquiry about the usage of Influencers in marketing strategies. He believed that Influencer marketing would be exploited until it has a negative effect on the authenticity of the message. The lost of authenticity, in consequence, would make Influencer marketing decrease in relevance and become as efficient as mass media marketing. Thus, authenticity is the main asset of influencer marketing. Bruns (2018) argues that there is a great chance that straightforward advertising contributions from Influencers could cost the loss of perceived authenticity of Influencers. The author explains that if Influencers are regarded as authentic and advertises/recommends products authentically it is possible to build trust. And trust would have a positive influence on the intended purchase.

According to Bruns (2018), Micro Influencers are perceived as more authentic than a macro Influencer. Bruns (2018) study shows that those who prefer to follow Influencers with less follower (Micro Influencers) are more likely to believe that the advertising messages affects negatively the credibility of an Influencer. Therefore it is expected that also for Millennials, the lack of transparency on paid partnership or any kind of vantage acquired in order to recommend a product can impact negatively on the perceived authenticity of the Micro Influencer. The last point to be considered is the impact of the well known "fake followers" programs used by big Influencers. Bruns (2018) argues that buying online follower can undermine companies partnerships with Influencers.

Additionally, Bruns (2018) work shows that the majority of the respondents assumed that an Influencer is more trustworthy when he or she interacts with their followers. It is known that Millennials like to interact on Social Media, liking or commenting content online (Sago, 2015) or writing reviews and giving their opinion to companies (Sethi et al 2018).

Finally, Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model states that there is a connection between Perceived Authenticity and Trust. Consumers that perceive an Influencer as authentic are

more likely to build up trust. And Trustworthiness, alongside with perceived authenticity, are positively related to intention to buy a product.

4.7.3 Intention to buy

It has emerged from the previous literature review that the source credibility is one of the factors that most impact positive attitudes towards endorsed products. A person's perception of information as unbiased, believable, true, or factual is what makes the source credible (Hass, 1981 cited on Lu et al, 2014). If the audience feels that a message is given for any other motives than a recommendation and personal consumer experience, they are likely to resist the persuasive intent of the message and do not believe in the source credibility (Lee & Koo, 2012 cited at Lu et al, 2014). Lu et al (2014), therefore, define positive consumer attitudes toward sponsored recommendation posts as a tendency to believe in and trust the source regarding a particular sponsored recommendation in a specific occasion-frame.

Reputation and trust also seem to affect consumer compliance in the online fashion industry. In online apparel transactions, trust and perceived value of vendors are crucial to purchasing intention (Escobar-Rodriguez and Bonson-Fernandez, 2016). Trustworthiness is also found to be crucial to purchase intention derived from vendors on Instagram. Perceived benevolence, perceived integrity, and Key Opinion Leader endorsement were highly associated with a propensity to trust, and consumer trust has a significant effect on purchase intention on Instagram (Chen et al, 2015).

According to (Guadagno and Cialdini, 2005) authority figures or perceived experts are more likely to influence individuals online. Higher compliance is also related to high status, especially if the Influence agent is a member of the group. The authors also found that online influence is more successful when the target has committed with a similar cause in the past. For instance, the chances of compliance are considerably higher when a person is asked to answer a small survey/petition for a cause and only than, in the second moment, they are asked to volunteer for a similar cause. When promoting a product it was found that consumers have also a positive attitude towards discount code offering and advice giving from SMIs, while product placement is the tool that influences the actual purchase (Korotina and Jargalsaikhan, 2016). However, search for goods or products/services that have high brand awareness were found to arouse more positive attitudes towards endorsed products, improving purchasing intention (Lu et al, 2014).

When it comes to the analyzed model, Bruns (2018) found that a considerable amount of people are skeptical about Influencer marketing, directly impacting purchase decision. That

means that Perceived Authenticity and Intention to Buy were found to be connected. Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model, therefore, suggests that consumers are not willing to make a purchase decision if the Influencer is not authentic.

4.8 Literature Conclusion

The literature review contextualized the framework of the study and presented in detail the theoretical concepts used in formulating the hypothesis of the study that will be further tested and analyzed. It was shown how the previous literature connects with Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model, as well as explained the model itself and its own academic support. It was also presented information available on the interested group of study (Micro Influencers and Millenials). Although, secondary data derived from previous literature can only give a certain amount of information on the topic. To achieve a more profound understanding of how Micro Influencers fit into the Social Media communication it is necessary to go further in this research. It is crucial to the academy and to the market to understand potential events in deep. Moreover, there is a developed model that shape the previous literature into a structure but has not yet been tested to different social groups. The literature on the generation Y is extensive, however, so far there are no previous studies that have researched how this generation feels about Micro Social Media Influencers considering the influence of Trust and Authenticity to the Intention to buy a product. By the previous literature review is obvious that there is great interest in finding out more about Social Media Influencer marketing. Thus, an example of the relevance of this research is that the author of Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model has stated that it was desired that the subject was explored considering different generations or isolating Micro Social media influencers (Bruns, 2018). Furthermore, the research will be developed and explained in its details.

5. Methodology

5.1 Methodology Introduction

The methodology selected to develop this study is presented in this session following the Research Onion framework by Saunders et al. (2009). The choice of Positivism as philosophy will be explained following. In this session, it will also be explained why Survey was chosen to accomplish the objective of this study. The places where the questionnaires were posted and well as the Researcher strategies to get respondents are also presented in this session. Additionally, ethical issues are discussed and the limitations of the methodology are considered.

5.2 Research Design

5.2.1 Research Philosophy

The Research philosophy chosen to carry out this study was Positivism. This philosophy was chosen because the role of the researcher is limited to an objective data collection and interpretation (Oliver, 2014). It was explained previously that there is a general feeling coming from professionals about the subject, so it is a benefit for the study that the findings were observed and quantifiable. Additionally, observable social reality can produce generalizations similar to those produced by the natural scientist, which can help professionals and the academy on future conjectures. Finally, because a pre-existing model was tested, it was important to keep the findings as loyal as possible of the original model, therefore having limited space for interpretation.

5.2.2 Research Approach

The approach applied to this study is Deductive. It was developed hypotheses based on existing theory. Because study tested a pre-existing theory model considering different variables the Deductive approach is coherent to previous literature (Oliver, 2014). The idea was that using a Deductive approach the hypothesis developed from Theoretical previous model could be tested and then generalized (Gill, and Johnson, 2010). Therefore deducting conclusions derived from premises found in the literature review.

5.2.3 Research Strategy

The quantitative approach used in this study. First, it was chosen a framework where this thesis was based (Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model), secondly it was developed connections between this framework and the variables that are being looked at this study (Micro Social Media Influencers and Generation Y). Finally, it was developed a survey to access quantitative data. The quantitative approach was used to access if the framework could be applied to a different group of people and object of study. Finding a connection between those, the hypothesis could be confirmed. The aim was to find if the theory available (framework) could be applied to another situation, so a quantitative method was used in this study. The quantitative approach allows certain generalizability (Gill, and Johnson, 2010). To find a framework that could be applied it was looked at the literature review. Bruns-Siddiqui Intention to buy model was the framework that most adequate to the research problem, therefore, it was the model used. For the study, an online survey was applied to respondents of the Generation Y (25 to 38 years old). In business studies survey method is widely used in order to test hypotheses about the nature of concepts and its relationship within a population (Oliver, 2014). Online questionnaires were used as the target of this study are, as stated in the literature review, Social Media users, making it coherent for the researcher to use the digital environment to connect with them. Connections and conclusions were drawn through one-factor and two-factor descriptives and correlations analysis.

5.3 Population and Sampling

The sample used in this study is a non-probability one. It was used the method of Purposive sampling, where members of a particular group are purposefully sought after (Oliver, 2014). This was decided because this study needed people that specifically were interested in Fashion and were familiar with the concept of Social Media Influencer. As it is impossible to determine the number of people that compose this population as well as who they are, the researcher opted for this strategy. Non-probability methods usually have smaller numbers of population than probability samplings (Oliver, 2014). Even though it was not used a

probability sampling, it will be explained following the type of sample, the number of people in the sample and how was the process in which the participants were selected.

5.3.1 Sampling Frame

5.3.1.1 Population

In order to be able to conduct a survey, a sampling frame was needed. The total amount of people of interest must be defined, in order to give it the first cut of the population (Oliver, 2014). Therefore the base number of the target group of this study is the number of people between 25 to 38 years old who live in Ireland. According to the Central Statistics Office (2018), the number of the Irish population between 25 and 44 years old is:

Population estimates by age group and sex

Population estimates by age group and sex

Age Group	2017	2018
Both sexes		
0 - 14 years	1,007.0	1,008.7
15 - 24 years	584.8	605.5
25 - 44 years	1,398.1	1,395.2
45 - 64 years	1,152.7	1,174.3
65 years and over	649.9	673.4
All ages	4,792.5	4,857.0

Population estimation - Central Statistics Office (2018)

Therefore the data can be used to calculate the size of the target population: $1395.2 / 20 * 14 = 976.64$.

5.3.1.2 Sampling Size

The larger the sample size, the more statistically relevant it is. This makes sure that more the results will not happen just by coincidence, which is mandatory when testing a conceptual model for its relevance. For this research, it was necessary to calculate a sample size. For this reason, the following formula was applied to determine the sample size:

$$\frac{\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2}}{1 + \left(\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2 N}\right)} = 384$$

In this formula, N= represents the population size, e=represents margin of error, z=z-score (Z-score for a desired confidence level of 95%=1,96) (SurveyMonkey, 2018). The confidence level calculated was 95 % and while the Margin of Error was 5%.

Considering that 384 is the optimal sample size for this population, the ideal would be to reach this number. However, in this dissertation this sample size will not be reached due to operational challenges. Firstly the time frame for this dissertation is not long, so that impacts on the period the survey would be open for the collection of data. Secondly, the difficulty of having people answering surveys are among the reasons why this sample could not be reached. With many activities disputing the attention of people online, it is known that the number of questionnaire dropouts is high. Finally, the sample was collected considering the interest of the respondents in Fashion and their use of Social Media, therefore this had also limited the reach.

5.3.2 Respondents selection

This thesis intends to understand the behavior of the generation Y, therefore the survey was posted on channels where it was more likely that this public could see it. Because this research needed that the participants were part of a specific group, a non-probability sampling method was due.

5.4 Data Collection

The Data was collected through an online questionnaire. The strategy applied consisted of disclosing the surveys through the researcher personal network, the university students and Facebook groups related to Social Media or Fashion. Those potential respondents were adequate to the research due to the age group and shared interests between them. Additionally, the researcher went through micro SMIs profiles and asked them to share the survey with their followers. This strategy enabled the researcher to attract the right audience. The questionnaire was confidential, with no need for the respondents to identify themselves. A face-to-face questionnaire was rejected because of the time and resource consuming (people to apply, paper). Email or phone questionnaires were also rejected because according to new privacy legislation it is forbidden for organizations to access personal data without people's permission (European Union, 2018).

5.5 Instruments and tools

5.5.1 Design of questionnaires

To answer the hypotheses the questionnaire was designed considering the factors Perceived Authenticity, Trust and Intention to buy of Social Media Micro Influencers. The questionnaire was made considering questions related to Bruns-Siddiqui Intention to buy model. Only two demographics questions were asked: Age and Gender. After that, there were two questions that aimed to identify people who follow Micro Influencers on Social Media, as well as who were the Micro Social Media Influencer followed. The question "Who is the Micro Influencer that you follow" was not mandatory as many people might abandon the questionnaire if they did not remember the exact name of the influencer. Because this research does not intend to analyze the profiles of those influencers it was decided that this

information was not crucial. Following, it was asked three questions related to Perceived Authenticity, four questions related to Trust and three questions related to Intention to buy. In this questionnaire, there were 13 closed questions and 1 open question. The questions were nearly all closed because those questions permit better-analyzing possibilities when using a quantitative research approach. The only open question was made in order to get data on who were the Micro Influencers followed by the respondents. Regarding the closed questions, there were 12 scaled questions (Likert scale) and 2 Multiple choices. Multiple choice questions were formulated based on the previous literature review findings. The wording of the questionnaire tried to be as close as possible to Millennials repertory. At the beginning of the questionnaire, it was explained what Social Media Micro Influencer meant in this study, in order to reinforce this concept to the participants.

5.5.2 Questionnaire

Demographics

Gender
Please select your gender. *
Male
Female
Prefer not to say
Age
Please select your age group. *
Under 24
25 to 38
Above 39
*Mandatory

Table X Questionnaire: Demographics

Influencers

Follow Influencer

Do you follow on Instagram any MICRO Influencer who is interested in Fashion? *

Yes

No

Which Influencer

If you answered yes, who?

*Mandatory

Perceived authenticity

Q1

I believe that more followers an Influencer has, less authentic on his/her recommendations he/she is. *

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

Q2

I believe that Influencers recommendations are trustworthy when they receive a sample product from a company to test/review it but are not being paid to promote it.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

Q3

I believe that Influencers recommendations are more trustworthy when they are not being sponsored by the brand they are recommending. *

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

Trust

Q4

I believe that the micro Influencer that I follow has enough knowledge in Fashion to recommend products/brands. *

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

Q5

I trust more the recommendations of Influencers that communicate with their followers (answering questions, answering DM, launching polls, interacting with followers). *

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

Q6

I believe that the Fashion Micro Influencer that I follow is committed to telling the truth about products/brands even if he/she is sponsored by that brand.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

Q7

I prefer to follow Fashion Micro Influencers who post more about: *

Fashion related subjects

Partnerships/product placement

Product reviews

Their lifestyle

Intention to buy

Q8

I have become aware of a new Fashion brand/product through the Micro Influencer that I follow. *

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

Q9

I have felt more confident about buying a fashion product after seeing the Micro Influencer that I follow recommending/using it.*

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

Q10

Have you ever bought a Fashion product/brand after the Micro Influencer that you follow recommends it? *

Yes, I bought it through the link that she/he posted

Yes, I looked up somewhere else and ended up buying it

Yes, I remembered the recommendation sometime after and bought it

It is possible but I do not remember it

No, I have never bought anything but I would buy it someday

No, I have never bought anything and I would never buy it

5.6 Research Ethics

All data collected were used only for this study purpose. The technology chosen considers maximum security to the participants. Although the online collection is always subjected to unintentional leakage, there is no identification that could link the participants to their answers. The researcher has not offered any form of benefit for participants who answered the survey. All participants answered the survey in their own free will.

All the references in this work were quoted used Harvard method, making sure that all secondary data, information, opinions, and ideas were given the rightful credit.

Finally, this research looks at SMIs that have a low amount of followers and are more “normal citizens” alike than “celebrities”. So it was decided that it would not be selected profiles but rather asked respondents to disclose which Micro SMI they were referring, preserving Micro SMIs privacy.

5.7 Limitations of Methodology

The process of data collection was subjected to all sort of challenges that an online collection suffers. First of all, there were not enough respondents to reach the ideal amount of the sample. Secondly, a good part of the data collected online came from the researcher personal network. So it is likely that this brings any sort of biased, especially because of the unbalanced amount of people from the same nationality (Brazilians and Irish). Another expressive part of the data was collected with the help of Micro SMIs posts on their profile. That data can also be biased because respondents might be personal acquaintances of those SMIs, therefore wanting to "help" them instead of being honest. On the other hand, although the concept of Influencers is very familiar to Millenials, there might be participants that do not fully understand the difference between Micro Influencers and Macro Influencer. This was addressed with the explanation of the concept of Micro SMI at the beginning of the questionnaire. Additionally, it would have to be ideal to deal only with people that followed a Micro SMI, and from there have the ability to deepen the analysis study. Finally, the given time-frame to delivery this work was the most challenging limitation. The lack of time has obligated the researcher to adopt a minimal population as well as not go into findings that were not in the scope.

6 Data Analysis

6.1 Introduction

The aim of the data analysis is to prove the hypothesis proposed that Bruns-Siddiqui Intention to buy model can explain how the Generation Y relate to Social Media Micro Influencers. Additionally, this data analysis will try to identify patterns and trends that can give insights about Social Media Micro Influencers. The data was handled and analyzed using the program SPSS. The same program was adopted to build graphics and tables later analyzed. This session is divided into two parts. The first half disclose the main findings, mostly

through a descriptive analysis of one or two factors. This first part intends to connect the findings with the supporting literature in order to validate and generalize the results to the population. The information is presented as they appear in the data, that means, following the survey order to appear. The second half of the data analysis regards the hypothesis testing. It was used cross tables and correlations tables to identify the connection between the findings and Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model's structure.

6.2 Descriptive analysis

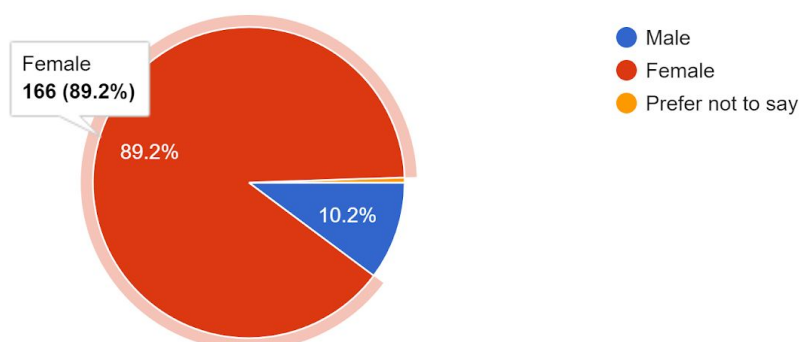
6.2.1 Demographic questions

As stated before, the survey was responded by 182 people. Firstly we will see demographic aspects of the data. In the bellow pie chart, it is possible to see the population of respondents divided by gender. It is clear that the majority of respondents are Female (red color). This gender is counted 162 times in the data, which is the equivalent of 89.2% of all respondents. In blue it is possible to notice that only 19 of the participants were Male, making out 10.2% of the population. Only one respondent did not disclose its gender in this study, accounting for the 0.5% piece of the pie represented in the yellow color.

Ge

Please select your gender.

186 responses

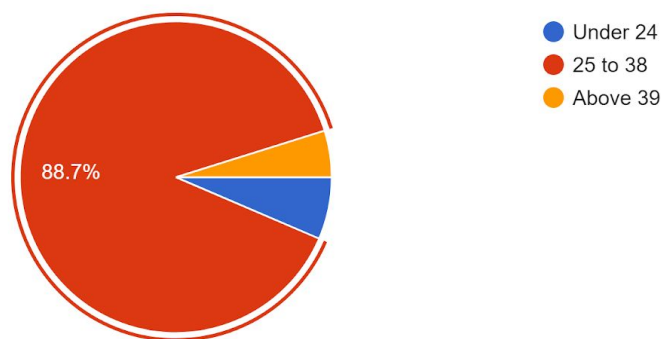


Because this study was focused on Generation Y, the data was collected in channels that were more likely to attract this audience. That reflects in the data, as 165 people out of the

182 respondents were between the ages of 25 to 38 years old. This represents 88.7% of the data population and it is illustrated in the bellow pie chart in red. There were 12 respondents who are below 24 years old, making out 6.5% of the answers. As said before, people who belong to this age group are considered part of Generation Z, not studied in this thesis. A 4.8% of respondents are in the group above 38 years old. Those 9 individuals, again, are also not being studied in this thesis, therefore the data will be analyzed without that two cohort.

Please select your age group.

186 responses



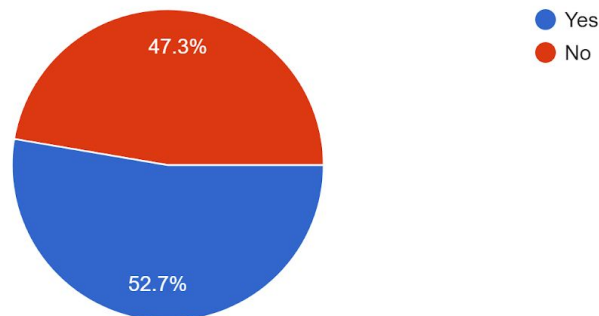
Age group chart

6.2.2 Micro Influencers

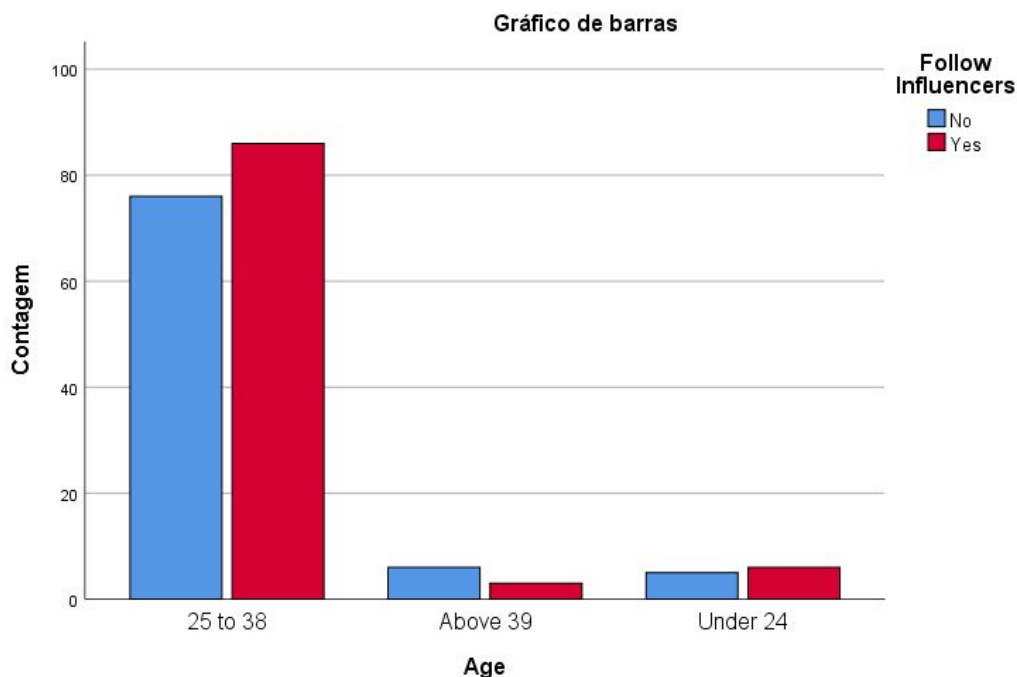
In the survey of this study, it was asked the respondents if they followed any Micro Influencer who were interested in Fashion. A total of 98 participants said they followed Micro Influencers who were interested in Fashion on Instagram, while 88 of them said they did not follow any Micro Influencer on Instagram. That means that more than half (52.7%) of the respondents followed Micro Influencers on Instagram that interested in Fashion.

Do you follow on Instagram any MICRO Influencer who is interested in Fashion?

186 responses



When it comes to age group, the majority of people that follow Micro Influencers on Instagram are Millennials (25 to 38 years old). While 86 of Millennials said they follow Micro Social Media Influencers on Instagram who are interested in Fashion, 76 of them said they do not follow anyone. 1/3 of the respondents above 39 years old (5 people) said that they follow Micro Social Media Influencers on Instagram, while just a bit more than half of the people from generation Z (6 people) said they do.



The questionnaire has asked who were the Social Media Micro Influencer that they followed, but that was not a mandatory question. It was found that most of the responses (72%) were

unique (table on appendices). This result was expected because the Micro Influencer cluster has a smaller influence circle, meaning that it is very unlikely that in a group of 89 people there were many people that followed the same Micro Influencer. The four names below were those ones that appeared more than one time:

WhichInfluencer	Frequency	percent
more with less	2	2,2%
Thyzaferreira	4	4,4%
emmakehoe	5	5,6%
styletraces	8	9,0%

Micro Influencers list

Although it is not in the scope of this research to analyze the data qualitatively, it is possible to see that those profiles are under the category of Micro Influencer and has any sort of sponsorship or paid partnership with brands. All the profiles have a strong sense of aesthetics associated with it. The literature shows that attractive Influencers will have stronger influence power if the type of product they promote enhances the attractiveness of the consumer (Kahle and Homer, 1985). In consequence, it is expected that successful Fashion Influencers are highly aware of aesthetics and visual attractiveness.

Although they are all based on Fashion, they all also post about diversified subjects, such as fitness, travel, make up, decoration and so on, giving their followers a sense of lifestyle.



styletraces

Following



666 posts

17.8k followers

902 following

Flatlays Life & Style by Joana

"chasing life's sparkles" ✨

contact: styletraces@gmail.com

📍 #Dublin

BLOG ↓

www.styletraces.com/2018/12/how-to-style-winter

Followed by yoursmeiledirect, ciaraswalsh, dresses.ie + 1 more



shop



blog



flatlays



beauty



unboxing

Style Traces Instagram Profile



emmakehoe Following

3,565 posts 34.9k followers 736 following

EMMAKEHOE

- POSITIVITY ✨ / BODY CONFIDENCE/ SELF LOVE 💛
- Depop @Emmakehoe
- Snapchat @Emmakehoe86
- www.emmakehoe.com

Followed by niamh_osullivan, yoursmeledirect, ashleykehoe09 + 3 more



MAKEUP T...



XMAS OUT...



EASILOCKS



SYMPROVE



BEAUTY



FITNESS



HOUSE

Emma Kehoe Instagram profile



thyzaferreira Follow

2,563 posts 44.4k followers 1,801 following

Thyza Ferreira

- . Publicitária
- . Empresária
- . Social Media

🌻 Leve a vida leve

Owner da @baianite
 CEO da @agenciadoisf -Mkt Digital
 📌 Assessoria @followdigital
www.agenciadoisf.com.br

Followed by maisefrancis, _brisorres, peudelgado + 12 more



Thyza Ferreira profile



Morewithless Instagram profile

6.2.3 Perceived authenticity

There were 3 questions asked to access the perceived Authenticity of the respondents in relation to Micro Social Media Influencers (Q1, Q2, and Q3).

All questions used a Likert scale. The data was isolated considering the variable age. Only respondents who were part of the age group from 25 to 38 years old were considered in the analysis from here. The results are the following:

Q1: I believe that more followers an Influencer has, less authentic on his/her recommendations he/she is

Q1

		Frequência	Porcentagem	Porcentagem válida	Porcentagem acumulativa
Válido	Strongly agree	20	12,1	12,8	12,8
	Agree	26	15,8	16,7	29,5
	Neutral	64	38,8	41,0	70,5
	Disagree	27	16,4	17,3	87,8
	Strongly Disagree	19	11,5	12,2	100,0
	Total	156	94,5	100,0	
Omisso	Sistema	9	5,5		
Total		165	100,0		

*

*Frequencia= Frequency

Porcentagem=Percentage

Porcentagem Valida= Valid Percentage

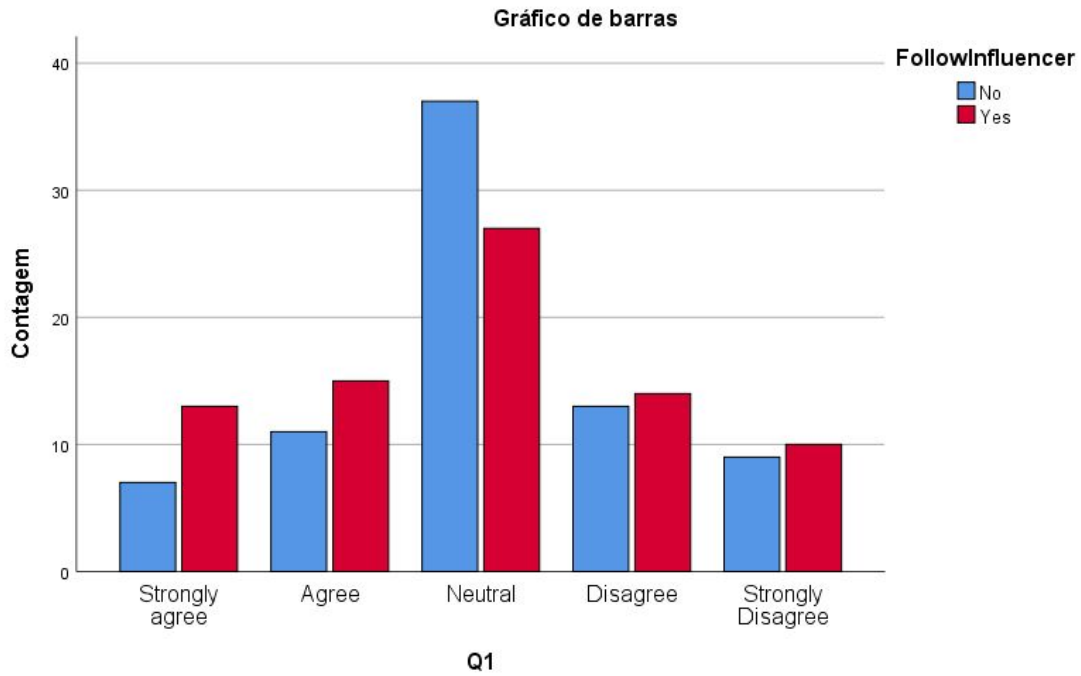
Porcentagem acumulativa = Accumulated percentage

Valido=Valid

Omisso= Omitted

For this first question, 9 responses were considered omitted. A total of 12,8% of the valid answers said that they strongly agree with the statement, while 16,7% Agree. Combined, 30.5 % in some level believes that having too many followers on Instagram can be a sign of a lack of authenticity. Whereas a total of 29.5% disagree (17.3%) or strongly disagree (12.2%) with the statement. The majority of respondents are neutral about the statement which suggests that although the number of followers is a factor that predicts Authenticity to some people, the majority might not take this into consideration to evaluate the authenticity of a Micro Social Media Influencer.

Below the results of responses comparing people that follow Micro Social Media Influencers and people that do not follow Micro Social Media Influencers. It can be seen that to follow or not to follow does not make a significant difference in the results. People that follow influencers are slightly likely to have an opinion about the number of followers that a Micro Social Media Influencer has, as there is 10 fewer occurrences of Neutral statement by people that do not follow any Micro SMI compared to those who do.

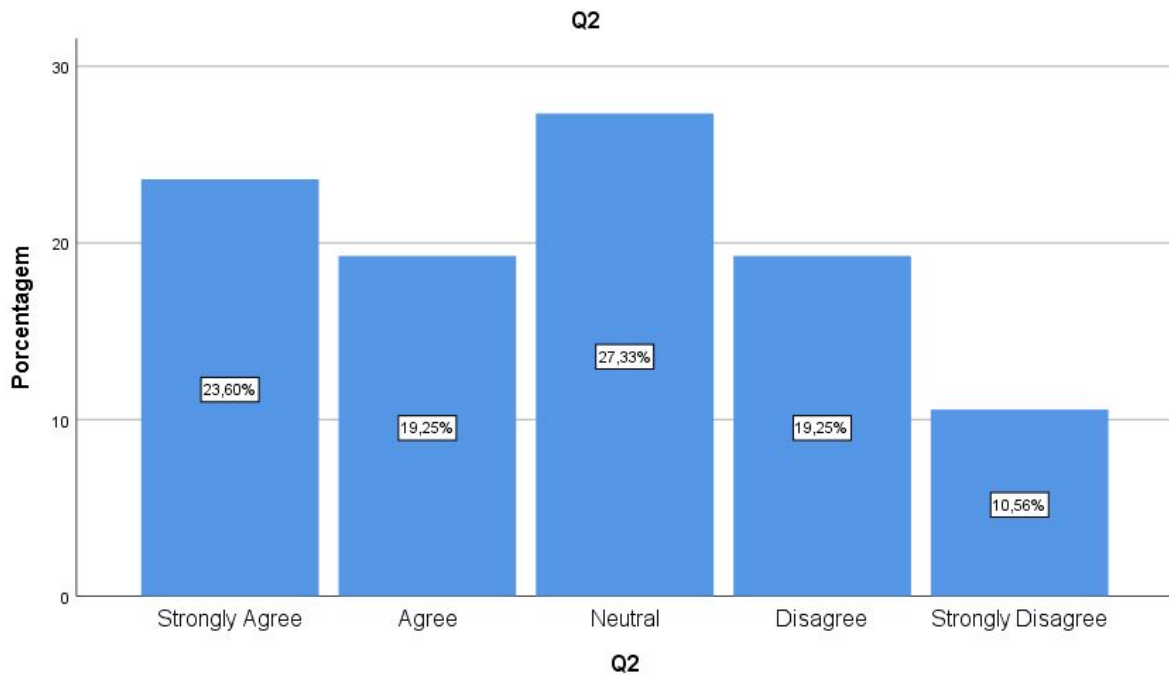


*

* Contagem = Counting

Gráfico de barras = Bars chart

In Q2 there were 4 answers omitted. Most of people agree (19.25%) or strongly agree (23.6%) with the statement, making out 42.85% of participants that believe that Influencers recommendations are trustworthy when they receive a sample product from a company to test/review it but are not being paid to promote it, as it can be seen below.



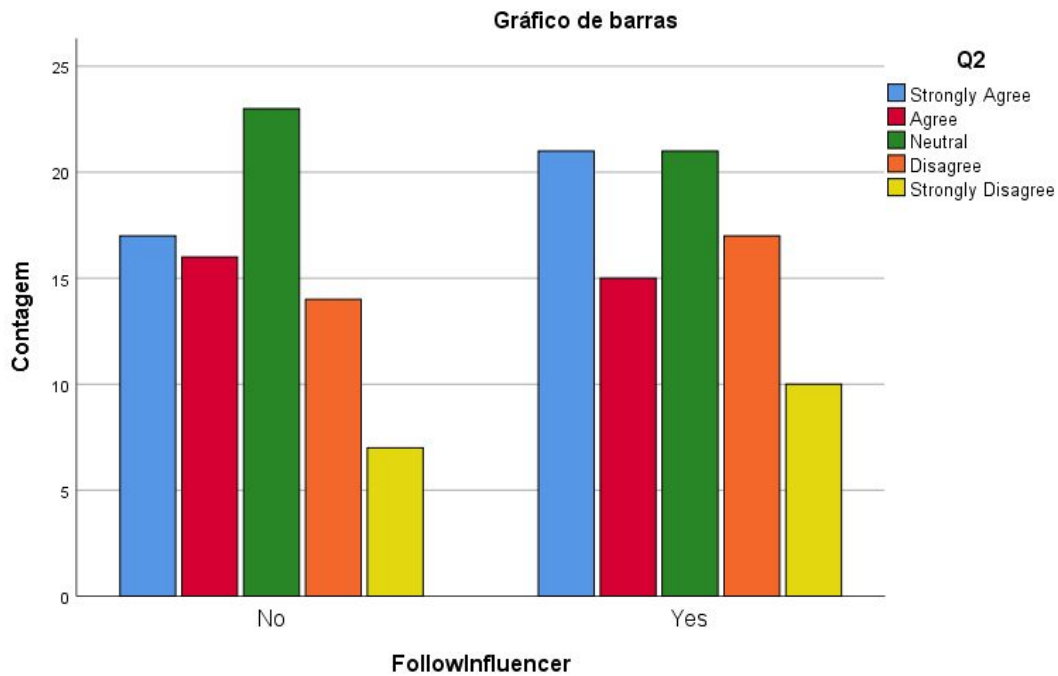
*

* Percentagem: Percentage

27.33% were neutral and an expressive 29.81% disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

Separating people that said that follow an Influencer from those who do not, the responses barely changed. People who follow a Micro SMI are slightly less neutral having a score of 25% against 29.9% of those who do not follow an Influencer. In the group that follows Micro Influencers the people that are not neutral can be seen divided between 42.9% that agree or

strongly agree with the statement and 32.1% who disagree in any level.



* Contagem = Counting

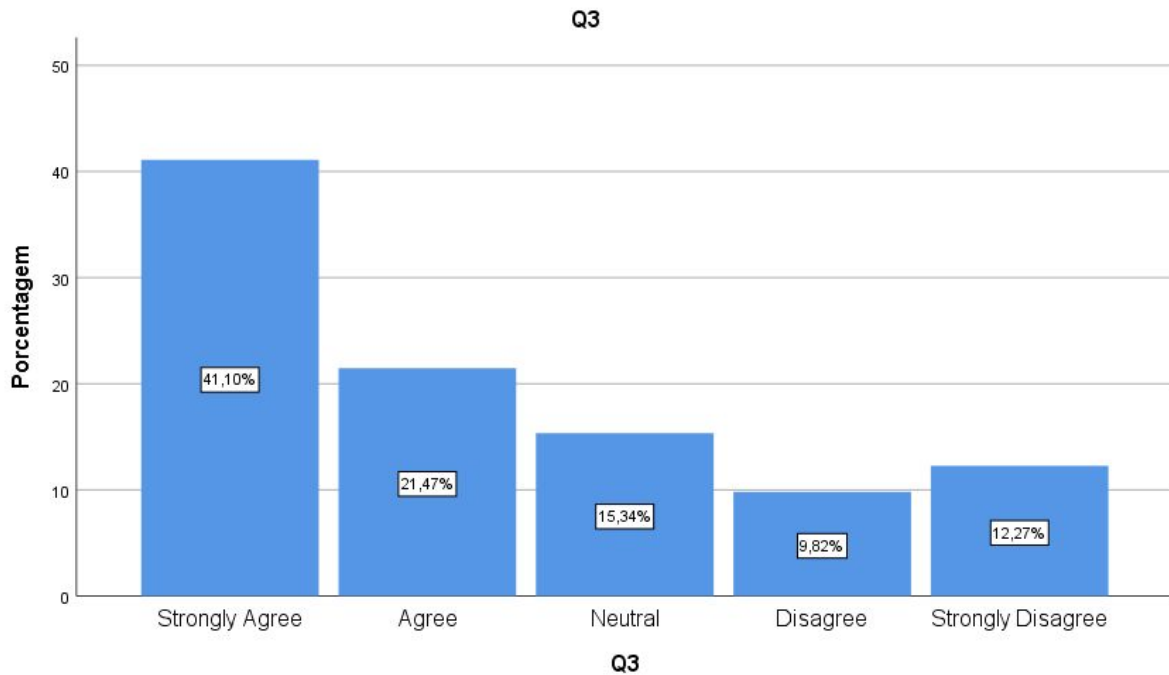
Gráfico de barras = Bars chart

All in all most of people agree or strongly agree that Influencers that make a recommendation without getting an apparent financial advantage from companies seem to be more trustworthy, followed by an expressive amount of people that are neutral as the following table shows:

FollowInfluencer	Q2		Q2					Total
			Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
No	Contagem		17	16	23	14	7	77
		% em FollowInfluencer	22,1%	20,8%	29,9%	18,2%	9,1%	100,0%
		% em Q2	44,7%	51,6%	52,3%	45,2%	41,2%	47,8%
	Yes	Contagem	21	15	21	17	10	84
		% em FollowInfluencer	25,0%	17,9%	25,0%	20,2%	11,9%	100,0%
		% em Q2	55,3%	48,4%	47,7%	54,8%	58,8%	52,2%
Total	Contagem	38	31	44	31	17	161	
	% em FollowInfluencer	23,6%	19,3%	27,3%	19,3%	10,6%	100,0%	
	% em Q2	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	

*Contagem= Counting

The third question was about the trustworthiness of Influencers recommendations related to them being sponsored by the brand they are recommending. As can be seen in the chart below, 41% of the respondents strongly agree that Influencers are more trustworthy when they are not sponsored by the brand that they are recommending. 21,47% also agree with the statement. 15,34% were neutral about it, while the total of 22.52% disagree (9.82%) or strongly disagree (12.7%).



*Porcentagem= Percentage

The same trend can be seen when we separate people that follow a micro influencer from those who do not follow a micro influencer. 65% of those who do not follow a micro influencer strongly agree or agree with the statement, while 60.4% of those who follow a micro influencer strongly agree or agree. Interestingly, there were more neutral people among those who follow a micro influencer (18.6%) than among the other group (11.7%). Only 21% of those who follow a micro influencer do not believe that being sponsored by a brand has an effect on the trustworthiness of the Influencer.

	Válidos		Casos Omissos		Total	
	N	Porcentagem	N	Porcentagem	N	Porcentagem
FollowInfluencer * Q3	163	98,8%	2	1,2%	165	100,0%

Tabulação cruzada FollowInfluencer * Q3

			Q3					Total
			Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
FollowInfluencer	No	Contagem	30	20	9	7	11	77
		% em FollowInfluencer	39,0%	26,0%	11,7%	9,1%	14,3%	100,0%
		% em Q3	44,8%	57,1%	36,0%	43,8%	55,0%	47,2%
	Yes	Contagem	37	15	16	9	9	86
		% em FollowInfluencer	43,0%	17,4%	18,6%	10,5%	10,5%	100,0%
		% em Q3	55,2%	42,9%	64,0%	56,3%	45,0%	52,8%
Total	Contagem	67	35	25	16	20	163	
	% em FollowInfluencer	41,1%	21,5%	15,3%	9,8%	12,3%	100,0%	
	% em Q3	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	

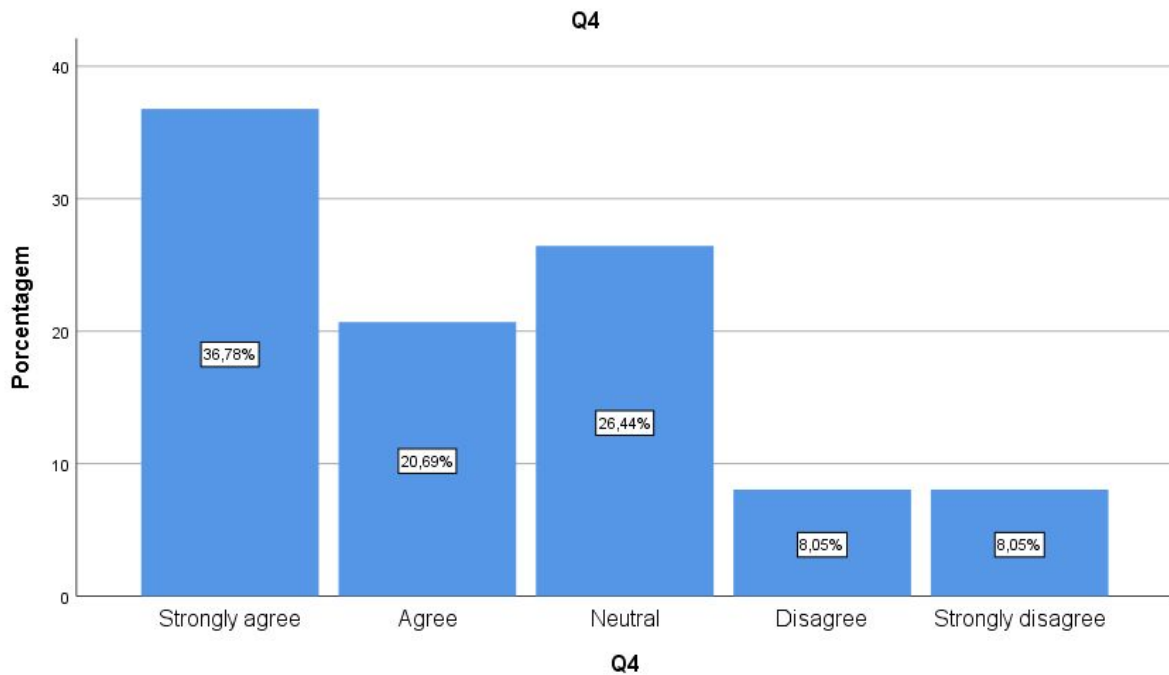
The results of the three questions give an insight into the Perceived Authenticity that Millennials have regarding Influencers. In this analysis, it was found that most of the people are neutral regarding the number of followers that an Influencer has. Additionally, the majority believe that Influencers recommendations are trustworthy when Influencers review products without getting financial gain. However, an expressive number of respondents were neutral in this point, which can indicate that they do not connect either positively or negatively Influencers being paid for reviews with the authenticity of the Influencer. Finally, most of the respondents believe that recommendations are more trustworthy when the Influencer is not sponsored by the brand that they recommend. These results suggest that being sponsored can have a negatively effect on the perceived authenticity of a Social Media Influencer.

6.2.4 Trust

In the survey, there were four questions asked regarding the factor Trust: Q4, Q5, Q6, and Q7. In the questions Q4, Q6 and Q7 the respondents were asked how they felt about the Micro SMIs that they followed. Therefore, for those questions, it was applied a filter to consider only the answers of those who had previously answered that they followed on Instagram a Micro SMI that is interested in Fashion.

In Q1 more than half of the participants answered that they either strongly agree (36.78%) or agree (20.69%) with the statement: I believe that the micro Influencer that I follow has

enough knowledge in Fashion to recommend products/brands. 26.44% were neutral, while 17% disagree or strongly disagree with it.

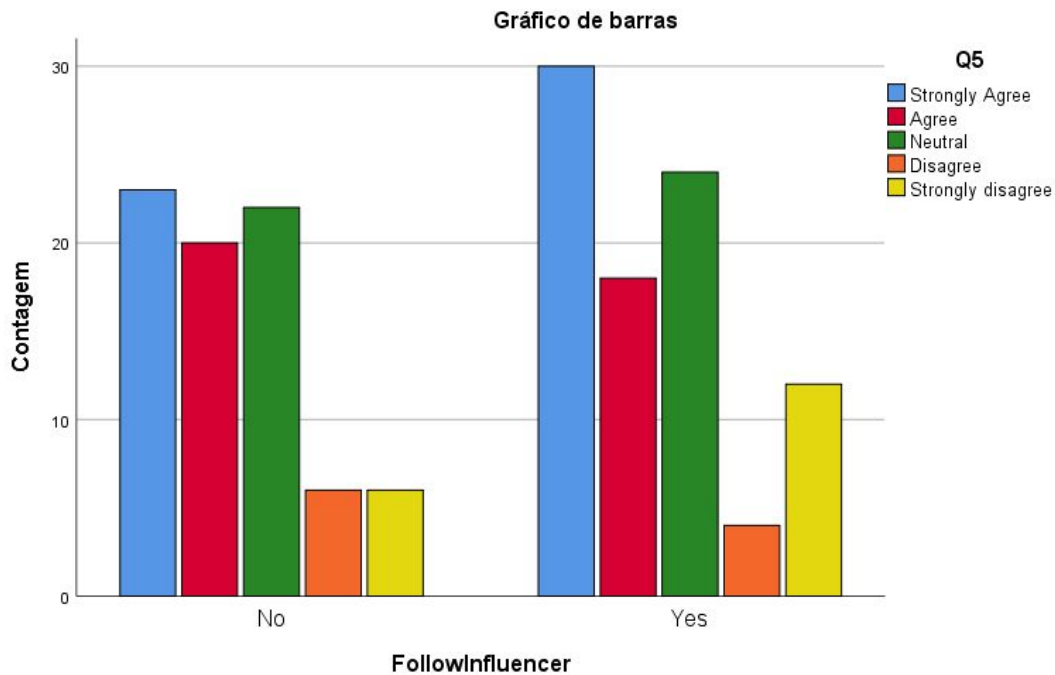


When it comes to the communication that Millennials expect from SMIs, the data shows that there are very little differences depending on the kind of respondent. In general, both groups tend to agree in any level that communication is important for them to trust in the Influencer recommendations. 55.9% of those who do not follow a SMIs, and 54.6% of those who do, agree or strongly agree with that statement.

Tabulação cruzada FollowInfluencer * Q5

			Q5					Total
			Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
FollowInfluencer	No	Contagem	23	20	22	6	6	77
		% em FollowInfluencer	29,9%	26,0%	28,6%	7,8%	7,8%	100,0%
		% em Q5	43,4%	52,6%	47,8%	60,0%	33,3%	46,7%
	Yes	Contagem	30	18	24	4	12	88
		% em FollowInfluencer	34,1%	20,5%	27,3%	4,5%	13,6%	100,0%
		% em Q5	56,6%	47,4%	52,2%	40,0%	66,7%	53,3%
Total	Contagem	53	38	46	10	18	165	
	% em FollowInfluencer	32,1%	23,0%	27,9%	6,1%	10,9%	100,0%	
	% em Q5	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	

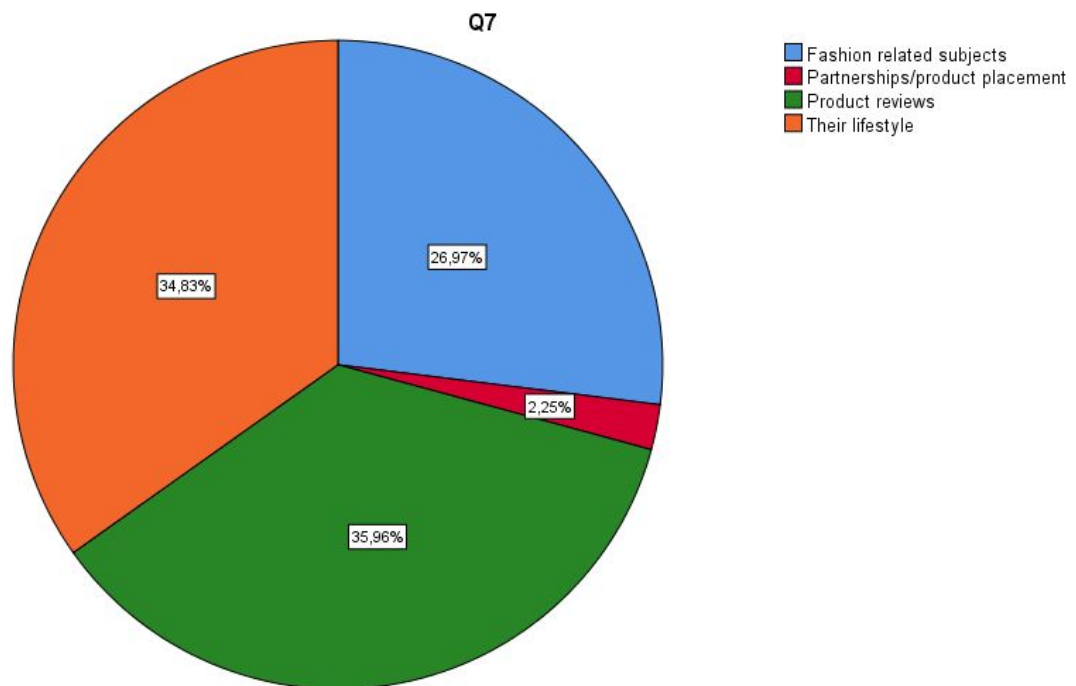
Interesting, respondents who follow Micro Influencers are more likely to have a strong opinion about the topic as it can be seen in the chart below:



The majority of those who strongly agree that Influencers that communicate with their followers are more trustworthy (56.6%, represented in blue on the right side) follow a Micro SMI. Similarly, the majority of those who strongly disagree with this (66.7%, represented in yellow on the right side) also follow a Micro SMI. This suggests that Millennials who follow Micro Influencers have a more defined opinion about the subject.

Regarding the level of faith that Millennials have on Micro SMI that they follow being truthful, it was found that most agree or strongly agree with the statement presented. As it can be seen in the chart below, 51.69% believe that the Fashion Micro Influencer that they follow is committed to telling the truth about products/brands regardless if the Influencer is sponsored by that brand or not. A 25.84% of participants do not believe in that in some level, while 22.47% neither believe or disbelieve. The finding suggests that only the minority of the participants are skeptical about the Influencers, while more than half of all the respondents trust that the Influencer that they follow is always truthful.

The last question related to Trust (Q7) asked what the respondents preferred to hear from the Fashion Micro Influencers that they followed.



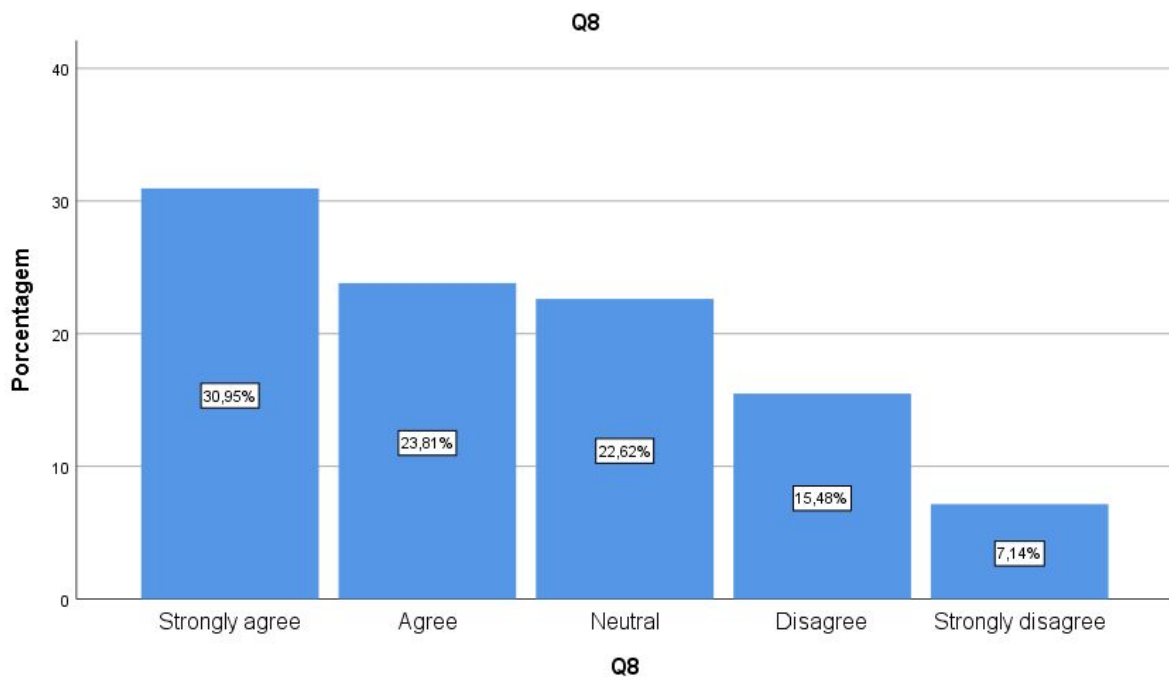
The chart above illustrates the findings. Product reviews (35.96%) alongside Lifestyle (34.83%) were pointed as subjects more likely to make the respondents follow a Micro SMI. The third one was Fashion Related subjects (26.97%) represented in the chart in blue. Those are results supported by the previous literature review. The most notorious finding here is that only 2.25% of the participants would follow a Micro SMI because of the content involving paid partnerships or product placement.

6.2.5 Intention to buy

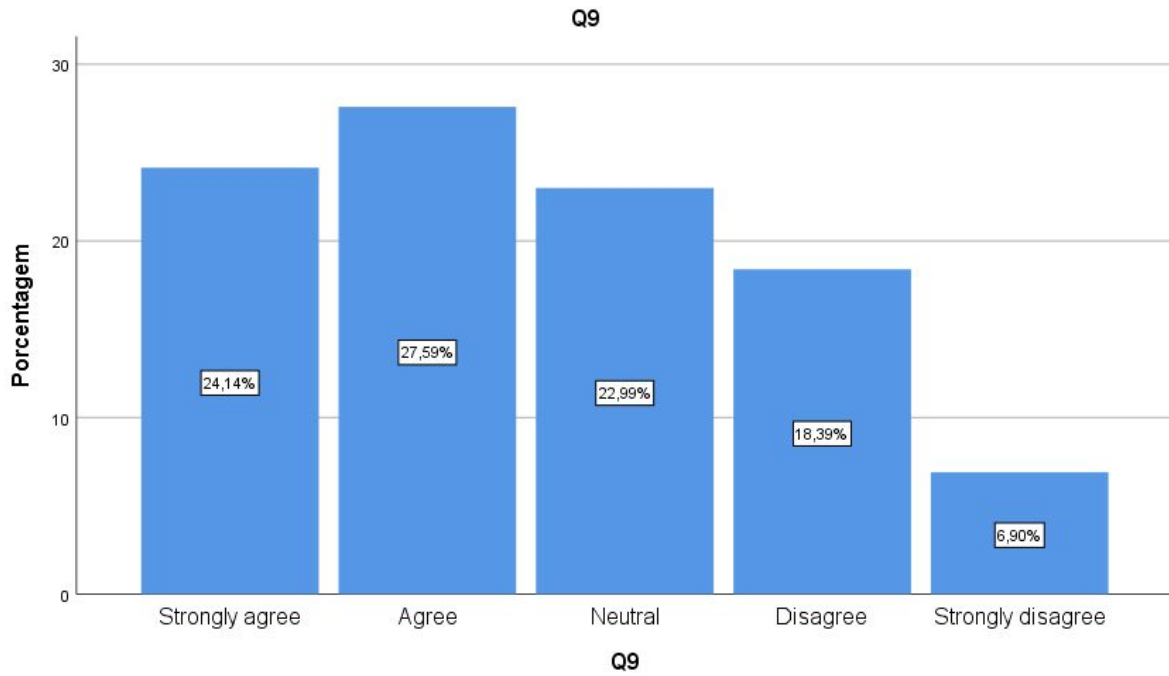
The last part of the findings is presented in this session. The questions Q8, Q9, and Q10 intended to measure the intention to buy of those impacted by Micro Social Media

Influencers. Those questions, like three previous, were directed to those who said to follow a Micro SMI. Therefore, this filter was applied when analyzing results.

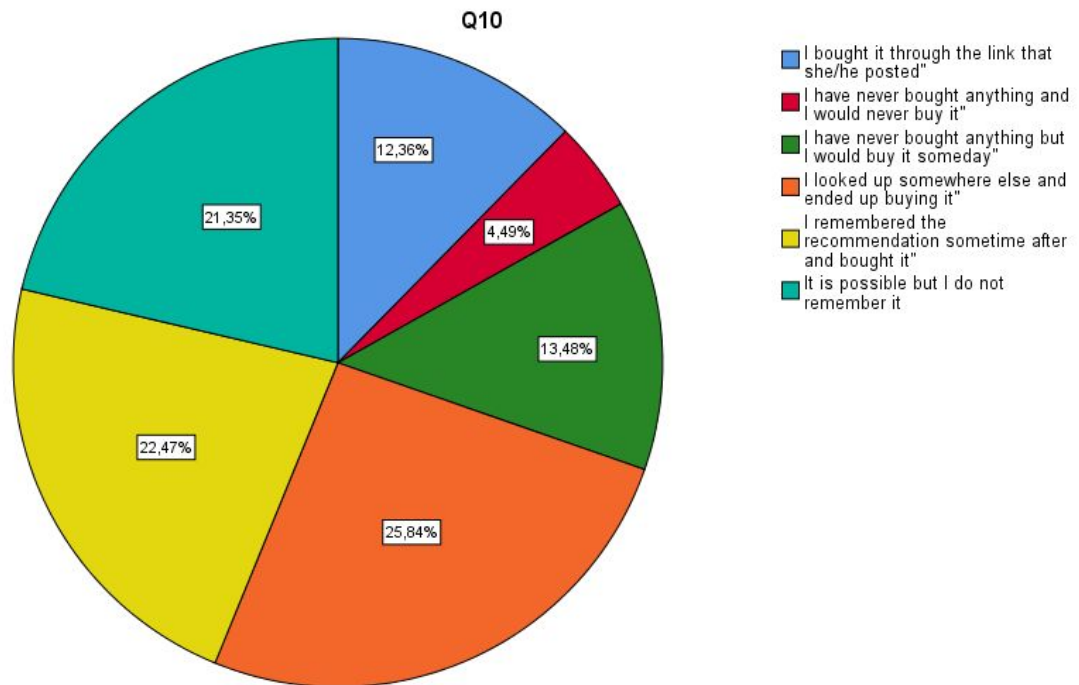
The first conclusion is that 54.76% of the respondents have become aware of the new Fashion brand/products through the Micro SMI that they follow. The chart below shows that 22.58% do say that they have never become aware of a new product related to Fashion through Micro SMIs.



In the chart below it is shown that more than half of the participants (51.73%) said that they have felt more confident about buying a fashion product after seeing the Micro Influencer that they follow recommending or using it, while 22.99% felt neutral about this statement. In this context people that chose the option neutral could not remember if they have experienced it.



The last conclusion from the data regards the actual purchasing decision of people that follow Micro SMIs. When asked if they have ever bought a Fashion product or brand after the Micro Influencer that they follow recommended it 60% answered that they have bought something after being influenced by the Micro SMI. The following chart brings great insight into which channels and circumstances those products were purchased.



The orange and yellow parts represent the population that has bought a product after a Micro SMI recommends it, but did not use the directed link provided by the Micro Influencer (48.31%). Only 12.32% of the respondents have used the link posted by the Micro SMIs to purchase something. 13.45% stated that although they have never bought anything after a recommendation from the Micro SMI that they follow, they would buy it someday. This suggests that this public has a positive attitude towards buying a product recommended by a Micro SMIs but maybe just had not had the opportunity to complete a purchase. 21.35% of the participants said that they do not remember if they have bought a product after a recommendation but that this could be possible. It can be concluded therefore that only 4.49% of the respondents have a negative response towards Micro SMI recommendations. Those respondents said that they not just never bought anything after a Micro SMI recommendation but also that they would never buy it.

6.3 Correlation Analysis

The aim of this study is to prove that the Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model can explain the relationship between the variables Trust, Authenticity, Intention to buy and Micro Social Media Influencer marketing among Millenials. For that reason, in order to prove the hypothesis, it is necessary to do Correlations analysis. The connections among the

constructs of the model must be identified. If Trust, Authenticity, and Intention to buy can be connected to Millennials and Micro Influencers in a similar way that Bruns-Siddiqui Intention to buy model does, the hypothesis will be accepted. Each of the factors of the model (Trust, Perceived Authenticity, Intention to buy) will be a guideline for this section.

According to Pearson (Statstutor, 2018), to calculate the correlation coefficient, the data analyzed must be scaled in a similar design for both variables. That means that the variables analyzed must have the same measuring unit. As a consequence, questions with the 5 point Likert Scale were selected for this analysis. Following Bruns (2018) methodology of analysis, only key questions were selected to represent each of the constructions of Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model. The concept of $r=0$ will be adopted in this kind of analysis. The correlation coefficient r is always a number between -1 and +1. In the case of $R=0$, no correlation can be seen. That means that two variables that correlate about zero are not connected whatsoever. In the case of R be greater than zero, that is $R>0$, the two variables are positively directly correlated (Statstutor, 2018). On the other hand, when $R<0$ the opposite applies. That means that when R is below zero there is a negative directly correlation among the variables (Statstutor, 2018).

The correlation analysis will be separated by the relationship of factors, namely: Perceived authenticity X Trust; Trust X Intention to buy; Perceived Authenticity X Intention to buy. For the hypothesis to be accepted there must be a correlation among all those groups of constructions.

6.3.1 Social Media Micro Influencer and Perceived Authenticity

In this study, there were three questions about perceived authenticity. There were no questions comparing Social Media Micro Influencer with the regular Social Media Influencers. In order to establish if Micro Influencers are perceived as authentic the correlations amongst Q1, Q2 and Q3 will be analyzed. The data analyzed consider only people that follow Micro Influencers. Those three questions represent the following literature concepts: Influencers with less amount of follower are perceived as authentic and people who follow Micro Influencers recognize authenticity when Influencers are not financially associated with a brand.

		(Q1)	Q2)	(Q3)
(Q1)	Correlação de Pearson	1	,399**	,394**
	Sig. (2 extremidades)		,000	,000
	N	81	81	81
Q2)	Correlação de Pearson	,399**	1	,517**
	Sig. (2 extremidades)	,000		,000
	N	81	86	86
(Q3)	Correlação de Pearson	,394**	,517**	1
	Sig. (2 extremidades)	,000	,000	
	N	81	86	88

** . A correlação é significativa no nível 0,01 (2 extremidades).

As can be seen on the table above, Q1 and Q2 correlate 0,399, while Q1 and Q3 correlate 0,394 and Q2 and Q3 correlate 0,517. All the questions correlate positively and have $p=0,00$.

	Válidos		Casos Omissos		Total	
	N	Porcentagem	N	Porcentagem	N	Porcentagem
(Q1) * (Q3)	81	91,0%	8	9,0%	89	100,0%

			Tabulação cruzada (Q1) * (Q3)					
			(Q3)					
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
(Q1)	Strongly Agree	Contagem	10	2	1	0	0	13
		% em (Q1)	76,9%	15,4%	7,7%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%
	Agree	Contagem	11	4	0	0	1	16
		% em (Q1)	68,8%	25,0%	0,0%	0,0%	6,3%	100,0%
	Neutral	Contagem	9	6	6	7	0	28
		% em (Q1)	32,1%	21,4%	21,4%	25,0%	0,0%	100,0%
	Disagree	Contagem	1	0	7	0	6	14
		% em (Q1)	7,1%	0,0%	50,0%	0,0%	42,9%	100,0%
	Strongly Disagree	Contagem	5	3	0	0	2	10
		% em (Q1)	50,0%	30,0%	0,0%	0,0%	20,0%	100,0%
Total		Contagem	36	15	14	7	9	81
		% em (Q1)	44,4%	18,5%	17,3%	8,6%	11,1%	100,0%

95% of those who believe that more followers Micro Influencer have, less authentic on the recommendations they agree in some level that Influencers recommendations are more trustworthy when they are not being sponsored by the brand they are recommending. Interestingly, 80% of those who believe the opposite, that more influencers are equal to more authenticity, also agree in some level that Influencers recommendations are more

trustworthy when they are not being sponsored by the brand they are recommending. 71.9% of respondents who were neutral in Q1 agree in some level or are neutral in Q2.

As it can be seen on the table below, 76.9% who strongly agree with Q1, agrees in some level with Q2. The majority of those who agree with Q1 (56.3%) also agree in some level with Q2. Those who are neutral about the meaning of the number of followers for the authenticity of the Influencer agree or are neutral with Q2.

	Válidos		Omissos		Total	
	N	Porcentagem	N	Porcentagem	N	Porcentagem
(Q1) * Q2)	81	91,0%	8	9,0%	89	100,0%

Tabulação cruzada (Q1) * Q2)

			Q2)					Total
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
(Q1)	Strongly Agree	Contagem	7	3	2	1	0	13
		% em (Q1)	53,8%	23,1%	15,4%	7,7%	0,0%	100,0%
	Agree	Contagem	6	3	3	3	1	16
		% em (Q1)	37,5%	18,8%	18,8%	18,8%	6,3%	100,0%
	Neutral	Contagem	4	8	10	5	1	28
		% em (Q1)	14,3%	28,6%	35,7%	17,9%	3,6%	100,0%
	Disagree	Contagem	2	0	5	3	4	14
		% em (Q1)	14,3%	0,0%	35,7%	21,4%	28,6%	100,0%
	Strongly Disagree	Contagem	2	2	0	3	3	10
		% em (Q1)	20,0%	20,0%	0,0%	30,0%	30,0%	100,0%
Total		Contagem	21	16	20	15	9	81
		% em (Q1)	25,9%	19,8%	24,7%	18,5%	11,1%	100,0%

6.3.2 Perceived Authenticity and Trust

The first correlation analysis is the connection between Perceived Authenticity and Trust. Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model states that there is a correlation between those two factors as Trust can only be built if the Influencer is perceived as authentic.

		Q2	Q4	Q5
Q2	Correlação de Pearson	1	,369**	,427**
	Sig. (2 extremidades)		,001	,000
	N	85	85	85
Q4	Correlação de Pearson	,369**	1	,548**
	Sig. (2 extremidades)	,001		,000
	N	85	87	87
Q5	Correlação de Pearson	,427**	,548**	1
	Sig. (2 extremidades)	,000	,000	
	N	85	87	89

** . A correlação é significativa no nível 0,01 (2 extremidades).

The questions Q2 (perceived authenticity) and Q4 and Q5 (Trust) were compared in this analyses. It can be seen at the table above that all comparisons found a positive correlation between the factors. We will concentrate on the results from Q2 x Q4 and Q2 x Q5 (different constructs) as the correlation among Q2 and Q4 is quite obvious. The results show that there is a correlation of 0,369 between Q2 and Q4. The p-value (SPSS labels p-value as Sig) is 0,001. For Q2 and Q5 the correlation was 0,427. For this group, the p-value was 00,00.

Crosstab

		(Q4)						
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	
Q2)	Strongly agree	Contagem	14	3	4	0	0	21
	% em Q2)		66,7%	14,3%	19,0%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%
	Agree	Contagem	8	5	1	0	2	16
	% em Q2)		50,0%	31,3%	6,3%	0,0%	12,5%	100,0%
	Neutral	Contagem	2	6	8	6	0	22
	% em Q2)		9,1%	27,3%	36,4%	27,3%	0,0%	100,0%
	Disagree	Contagem	6	3	5	0	3	17
	% em Q2)		35,3%	17,6%	29,4%	0,0%	17,6%	100,0%
	Strongly Disagree	Contagem	2	1	5	0	2	10
	% em Q2)		20,0%	10,0%	50,0%	0,0%	20,0%	100,0%
Total	Contagem		32	18	23	6	7	86
	% em Q2)		37,2%	20,9%	26,7%	7,0%	8,1%	100,0%

It can be seen on the table above that out of 86 people who answered the questionnaire and followed a Social Media Micro Influencer, 30 strongly agree or agree with Q2 and Q4. That means 34.88% of respondents believed that the micro Influencer that they follow has enough

knowledge in Fashion to recommend products/brands and that Influencers recommendations are trustworthy when they receive a sample product from a company to test/review it but are not being paid to promote it. On the opposite side, only 5.81% disagree or strongly disagree with both statements. 50% of those who are skeptical about the credibility of the recommendation of an Influencer is neutral about the amount of knowledge that they believe the influencer that they follow has. 90% of those who strongly agree with Q2 agree in any level with Q4.

Crosstab

			(Q5)					
			Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Q2)	Strongly agree	Contagem	12	1	6	2	0	21
		% em Q2)	57,1%	4,8%	28,6%	9,5%	0,0%	100,0%
	Agree	Contagem	8	6	2	0	0	16
		% em Q2)	50,0%	37,5%	12,5%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%
	Neutral	Contagem	3	9	8	1	1	22
		% em Q2)	13,6%	40,9%	36,4%	4,5%	4,5%	100,0%
	Disagree	Contagem	6	1	3	1	6	17
		% em Q2)	35,3%	5,9%	17,6%	5,9%	35,3%	100,0%
	Strongly Disagree	Contagem	1	1	4	0	4	10
		% em Q2)	10,0%	10,0%	40,0%	0,0%	40,0%	100,0%
Total		Contagem	30	18	23	4	11	86
		% em Q2)	34,9%	20,9%	26,7%	4,7%	12,8%	100,0%

When comparing Q2 and Q5 answers it is possible to notice that an average 31.39% of all respondents either agree or strongly agree with both the statements. 57.1% of those who Strongly agree with Q2 also strongly agree with Q5, while 37.5% of those who agree with Q2, answered Agree in Q5. 40.9% of those who answered "neutral" in Q2, agrees with Q5, suggesting that those people do not mind if the Influencers is being paid or not to promote a product but they do trust more the Influencer that communicates with their public. On the other hand, 80% of those who answered strongly disagree in Q2 are either neutral or strongly disagree with Q5, suggesting that most of those who are skeptical about the authenticity of the recommendation also do not trust more Influencers that communicate with their followers. Out of all respondents, 12.79% disagree or strongly disagree with both statements, and 23.25% were neutral regarding both statements.

6.3.3 Perceived Authenticity and Intention to buy

The next connection to be checked is between Perceived Authenticity and Intention to buy. Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model found out that building trust is not ultimately necessary to Intention to buy a product. People, therefore, could have the intention to buy a product after perceiving the Influencer as authentic. As the table below shows, this study has also found that Perceived Authenticity is correlated to Intention to buy.

(Perceived authenticity) and Q9 (Intention to buy).

		Q3	Q2	Q9
Q3	Correlação de Pearson	1	,522**	,487**
	Sig. (2 extremidades)		,000	,000
	N	87	85	85
Q2	Correlação de Pearson	,522**	1	,349**
	Sig. (2 extremidades)	,000		,001
	N	85	85	84
Q9	Correlação de Pearson	,487**	,349**	1
	Sig. (2 extremidades)	,000	,001	
	N	85	84	87

** . A correlação é significativa no nível 0,01 (2 extremidades).

It was found that both of them are correlated. Q2 and Q9 have a correlation of 0,349, while Q3 and Q9 have a correlation of 0,487. The p-value for the first pair is 0,001 while to the other group is 0,000. In Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model those constructs are also correlated.

Crosstab

			(Q9)					
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Q2)	Strongly agree	Contagem	9	4	3	3	1	20
		% em Q2)	45,0%	20,0%	15,0%	15,0%	5,0%	100,0%
	Agree	Contagem	4	7	2	3	0	16
		% em Q2)	25,0%	43,8%	12,5%	18,8%	0,0%	100,0%
	Neutral	Contagem	5	8	7	1	1	22
		% em Q2)	22,7%	36,4%	31,8%	4,5%	4,5%	100,0%
	Disagree	Contagem	3	3	3	6	2	17
		% em Q2)	17,6%	17,6%	17,6%	35,3%	11,8%	100,0%
	Strongly Disagree	Contagem	0	2	3	3	2	10
		% em Q2)	0,0%	20,0%	30,0%	30,0%	20,0%	100,0%
Total	Contagem		21	24	18	16	6	85
	% em Q2)		24,7%	28,2%	21,2%	18,8%	7,1%	100,0%

On the above cross table, it is that 65% of those who answered strongly agree in Q2 also voted agree or strongly agree in Q9. 68.8% of those who answered Agree in Q2 answered Strongly agree or agree in Q9. 31,8% who were neutral in Q2 were also neutral in Q9. 47.1% of those who answered Disagree in Q2 answered Disagree or strongly disagree in Q9. And 50% of those who answered Strongly disagree in Q2 have answered Disagree or strongly disagree in Q9. That suggests that when people do not believe that Influencers recommendations are trustworthy when they receive a sample product from a company to test/review it but are not being paid to promote it, they do not feel confident to buy a product recommended by the Micro Influencer.

6.3.4 Trust and Intention to buy

For this comparison, there were selected two questions from Trust and two questions from Intention to buy. Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model states that once Trust is built it leads to Intention to buy. Below the table shows the correlation between the questions Q5, Q6, Q9, and Q9.

		Q9	Q8	Q5	Q6
Q9	Correlação de Pearson	1	,634**	,456**	,455**
	Sig. (2 extremidades)		,000	,000	,000
	N	87	82	87	87
Q8	Correlação de Pearson	,634**	1	,470**	,482**
	Sig. (2 extremidades)	,000		,000	,000
	N	82	84	84	84
Q5	Correlação de Pearson	,456**	,470**	1	,563**
	Sig. (2 extremidades)	,000	,000		,000
	N	87	84	89	89
Q6	Correlação de Pearson	,455**	,482**	,563**	1
	Sig. (2 extremidades)	,000	,000	,000	
	N	87	84	89	89

** A correlação é significativa no nível 0,01 (2 extremidades).

The correlation between Q5 (Trust) and Q8 (Intention to buy) was of 0,470, while Q5 (Trust) and Q9 (Intention to buy) was of 0,456. The second question from the construct "Perceived Authenticity", namely Q6, is also correlated to the other two questions from "Intention to buy". Q6 and Q8 have a positive correlation coefficient of 0,482 while Q6 and Q9 have a positive correlation of 0,455. Opposite to Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model, Trust has higher values of correlation with the intention to buy, than Perceived Authenticity has.

Crosstab

			(Q8)					
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
(Q4)	Strongly agree	Contagem	19	7	4	0	0	30
		% em (Q4)	63,3%	23,3%	13,3%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%
	Agree	Contagem	3	7	3	3	1	17
		% em (Q4)	17,6%	41,2%	17,6%	17,6%	5,9%	100,0%
	Neutral	Contagem	3	4	9	5	2	23
		% em (Q4)	13,0%	17,4%	39,1%	21,7%	8,7%	100,0%
	Disagree	Contagem	0	2	1	2	1	6
		% em (Q4)	0,0%	33,3%	16,7%	33,3%	16,7%	100,0%
	Strongly Disagree	Contagem	1	0	1	3	2	7
		% em (Q4)	14,3%	0,0%	14,3%	42,9%	28,6%	100,0%
Total		Contagem	26	20	18	13	6	83
		% em (Q4)	31,3%	24,1%	21,7%	15,7%	7,2%	100,0%

The above crosstabs shows that 86.6% of those who strongly agree with Q4 agree or strongly agree with Q8, while the remainder are neutral. 58.8% of those who agree with Q4 Strongly agree or agree with Q8. That means that most of the people that think that the

Micro Influencer that they follow has knowledge in Fashion have become aware of a new product through those influencers. On the other hand, 71.5% of those who strongly disagree and 50% of those who disagree with Q4 disagree or strongly disagree with Q8. This might suggest that when the person does not believe that the Influencer has knowledge in Fashion, they do not pay attention to the posts where Influencers recommend new products.

At the same time, when respondents believed that the Micro Influencer had knowledge in Fashion, they tend to feel more confident about buying a product recommended by the Influencer. The cross table below shows that 70.9% of those who strongly agree and 72.2% of those who agree with Q4, agree or strongly agree with Q9.

Crosstab

		(Q9)					Total	
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
(Q4)	Strongly agree	Contagem	13	9	4	4	1	31
		% em (Q4)	41,9%	29,0%	12,9%	12,9%	3,2%	100,0%
	Agree	Contagem	4	9	2	3	0	18
		% em (Q4)	22,2%	50,0%	11,1%	16,7%	0,0%	100,0%
	Neutral	Contagem	4	4	8	5	2	23
		% em (Q4)	17,4%	17,4%	34,8%	21,7%	8,7%	100,0%
	Disagree	Contagem	0	1	3	1	1	6
		% em (Q4)	0,0%	16,7%	50,0%	16,7%	16,7%	100,0%
	Strongly Disagree	Contagem	0	1	1	3	2	7
		% em (Q4)	0,0%	14,3%	14,3%	42,9%	28,6%	100,0%
Total		Contagem	21	24	18	16	6	85
		% em (Q4)	24,7%	28,2%	21,2%	18,8%	7,1%	100,0%

50% of those who disagree with Q4, are neutral about Q9, meaning that for some people other factors can determine their level of confidence on buying a recommended product. Finally, 71.5% of those who strongly disagree with Q4, disagree or strongly disagree with Q9. The results suggest that when respondents do not identify the Influencer as knowledgeable, they will probably not feel confident about buying a recommended product.

The next cross table shows the results of Q5 and Q9. 72.4% of those who strongly agree and 72.3% of those who agree with Q5 statement, agree or disagree with Q9.

Crosstab

		(Q9)					Total	
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
(Q5)	Strongly Agree	Contagem	13	8	2	5	1	29
		% em (Q5)	44,8%	27,6%	6,9%	17,2%	3,4%	100,0%
	Agree	Contagem	3	10	3	2	0	18
		% em (Q5)	16,7%	55,6%	16,7%	11,1%	0,0%	100,0%
	Neutral	Contagem	4	4	11	4	1	24
		% em (Q5)	16,7%	16,7%	45,8%	16,7%	4,2%	100,0%
	Disagree	Contagem	1	1	1	0	1	4
		% em (Q5)	25,0%	25,0%	25,0%	0,0%	25,0%	100,0%
	Strongly Disagree	Contagem	0	1	2	5	3	11
		% em (Q5)	0,0%	9,1%	18,2%	45,5%	27,3%	100,0%
Total		Contagem	21	24	19	16	6	86
		% em (Q5)	24,4%	27,9%	22,1%	18,6%	7,0%	100,0%

72.8% of those who strongly disagree with Q5, disagree or strongly disagree with Q5. While 45% of those who are neutral in Q5 is also neutral in Q9. Those numbers suggest that respondents who trust more the recommendation of Influencers that communicate with their followers mostly feel more confident about buying a recommended product. Additionally, it seems that a good part of the respondents that are neutral about Influencers communicating with their followers are also neutral about their level of confidence in buying something after a recommendation.

The next image shows Q6 and Q8 crosstable. Q6 stands for: I believe that the Fashion Micro Influencer that I follow is committed to telling the truth about products/brands even if he/she is sponsored by that brand. While Q8 states: I have become aware of a new Fashion brand/product through the Micro Influencer that I follow.

Those two questions were the most correlated among the two constructs (Trust and Intention to buy).

Crosstab

		(Q8)						
			Stronlgy agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
(Q6)	Stongly agree	Contagem	12	6	3	1	1	23
		% em (Q6)	52,2%	26,1%	13,0%	4,3%	4,3%	100,0%
	Agree	Contagem	7	7	4	0	2	20
		% em (Q6)	35,0%	35,0%	20,0%	0,0%	10,0%	100,0%
	Neutral	Contagem	6	5	6	3	0	20
		% em (Q6)	30,0%	25,0%	30,0%	15,0%	0,0%	100,0%
	Disagree	Contagem	0	2	4	6	1	13
		% em (Q6)	0,0%	15,4%	30,8%	46,2%	7,7%	100,0%
	Strongly Disagree	Contagem	1	0	2	3	2	8
		% em (Q6)	12,5%	0,0%	25,0%	37,5%	25,0%	100,0%
Total		Contagem	26	20	19	13	6	84
		% em (Q6)	31,0%	23,8%	22,6%	15,5%	7,1%	100,0%

78,3% of those who strongly agreed and 70% of those who agreed with Q6 statement have agreed or strongly agreed with Q8 statement. 55% of those who were neutral in Q6 agree or strongly agree in Q8. That suggests that although many respondents are not sure if Micro Influencers are committed with the truth, they have become aware of a new product through them. On the other hand, 62.5% of those who strongly disagree with Q6 statement, disagree in any level with Q8. That shows that the majority of people that do not believe that the Micro Influencer is telling their true opinion about a brand or product has never become aware of a new product through the Micro Influencer.

The last cross table shows the correlation between Q6 and Q9.

Crosstab

			(Q9)					
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
(Q6)	Stongly agree	Contagem	10	7	3	2	1	23
		% em (Q6)	43,5%	30,4%	13,0%	8,7%	4,3%	100,0%
	Agree	Contagem	5	7	6	3	0	21
		% em (Q6)	23,8%	33,3%	28,6%	14,3%	0,0%	100,0%
	Neutral	Contagem	5	8	4	1	1	19
		% em (Q6)	26,3%	42,1%	21,1%	5,3%	5,3%	100,0%
	Disagree	Contagem	1	0	4	7	2	14
		% em (Q6)	7,1%	0,0%	28,6%	50,0%	14,3%	100,0%
	Strongly Disagree	Contagem	0	2	2	3	2	9
		% em (Q6)	0,0%	22,2%	22,2%	33,3%	22,2%	100,0%
Total	Contagem		21	24	19	16	6	86
	% em (Q6)		24,4%	27,9%	22,1%	18,6%	7,0%	100,0%

The table above shows that 73.9% of those who strongly agree with Q6 statement agree in any level with Q9. A large positive correlation is also found for those who answered agree in Q6, 57.1% of them agree or strongly agree with Q9 statement. 64.3% who disagree and 55% of those who strongly disagree with Q6 do not agree in any level with Q9 statement. The results suggest that when people believe that the Micro Influencer is telling the truth about a brand, they feel more confident about buying the product that they are recommending.

6.3 Conclusion

The data analysis findings were presented in the previous session. It was found correlations among the structures of Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model. In each correlation tests, the p=value were less than 0.05. A p=value <0,05 intends to reject the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis, in this case, would have been: HO: Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model cannot be applied to Micro Social Media Influencer marketing related to Millenials.

7. Discussion

7.1 Introduction

In this section, it will be discussed the finding of this research as well as limitations and recommendations. The research question will be also answered.

7.2 Findings

In this study, 52.7% of the respondents followed Micro Influencers on Instagram that is interested in Fashion. There is a balance among those who think that fewer followers predict Authenticity and those who believe that in fact, more followers do it. The majority, however, are neutral. That suggests that Millennials might not take the number of followers into consideration to decide if an Influencer is authentic or not. The literature has too presented conflicting positions. While Bruns (2018) found that having fewer followers can strength perceived authenticity of Generation Z, De Veirman et al (2017) argues that people are more inclined to identify Influencers with more followers as popular and therefore more likable. The correlations analysis, however, showed that the majority among those who were neutral regarding the importance of the number of followers to identify perceived authenticity believed that Influencers who are not financially associated with brands are perceived to be more authentic. Thus was possible to find a correlation among Social Media Micro Influencer and Perceived authenticity, the literature is ambiguous about the part played by financial gain of Micro Influencers related to Perceived authenticity too. It would be interesting that more qualitative researches were done to try to enlighten how this factor and the number of followers really impacts on perceived authenticity. There are very few studies done about it so qualitative research might be appropriate to deep this issue.

The results of the survey show that most of the Millenials believe that Influencers that make a recommendation without getting an apparent financial advantage from companies seem to be more trustworthy. However, a considerable amount of people do not connect either positively or negatively Influencers being paid for reviews with the authenticity of the Influencer. In the literature review, there are studies that found that consumers do not mind if Influencers are receiving a monetary incentive from brands to review a product/service as long as they state it clearly (Lu et al, 2014).

The findings also suggest that Gen Y believe that recommendations are more trustworthy when Micro Influencers are not sponsored by the brand that they are recommending. Being sponsored could have a negative effect on the perceived authenticity of a Social Media Influencer. Bruns (2018) also found that people who prefer to follow Micro Influencers are more likely to believe that the advertising messages affects negatively the credibility of an Influencer. Millennials who trust on independent reviews feel confident to buy a product recommended by the Micro Influencer. Millennials can constantly feel challenged with independent thinking and decision making, as well as struggling with the lack of risk-taking attitude (Eastman, 2014). Thus it makes sense that reviews that seem to be authentic are appreciated by this generation, as it can help them to decide to buy or not a product. This research found that when Millennials do not mind if the Micro Influencer is being paid or not to promote a product, communicating with the followers represents an important factor for trust.

The data suggest a connection between organic reviews and perception of knowledge. The majority of Millennials who trust non-paid reviews by Micro Influencers whom they follow perceives those as knowledgeable in Fashion. When Millennials believe that the Micro Influencer has knowledge in Fashion, they tend to feel more confident about buying a product recommended by such Influencer. Hajili (2014) said that trust indirectly encourages intention to buy through social networking sites. However, this is not a prerequisite. The results also suggest that for some people other factors can determine their level of confidence in buying a product recommended by a Micro Influencer. It was not in the scope to find what other factors could that be, but this is definitely one of the findings that could be explored in further researches.

Another interesting finding is that most of the followers who do not perceive a Micro Influencer as somebody who knows about Fashion have never become aware of a new product through those Micro Influencers. Also, the majority of people that do not believe that a Micro Influencer is telling their true opinion about a brand or product has never become aware of a new product through a Micro Influencer. It can be argued that when Millennials do not trust on the Micro Influencer, they do not pay attention to products or brands that the Micro Influencers associate with. In consequence, marketers should be aware of this when using Social Media Influencer Marketing. Followers and engagement rates might be irrelevant if people do not trust the Influencer.

However, the majority of the respondents in this study believe that Micro Influencers are committed to telling the truth about brands independently if they are sponsored by a company or not. The results show that when Millennials believe that the Micro Influencer is telling the truth, they feel more confident about buying the product that they are being recommended. This finding is supported by the literature review. The credibility of the source of recommendations is critical to purchase decision (Chen et al, 2015; Lu et al, 2014). Additionally, it was found that followers who trust particularly Micro Influencers that communicate with them are also more likely to build purchasing intention.

Another notorious finding is that only 2.25% of the participants would follow a Micro SMI because of the content involving paid partnerships or product placement, but 54.76% of the respondents have become aware of new Fashion brand/products through the Micro SMI that they follow. Review and lifestyle were ranked the subjects that would most incentivize people to follow a Micro Influencer. That indicates that subtle marketing strategies such as sending free products to Micro Influencers test and give their opinion could be a better way to use Micro Influencers. Furthermore, primarily targeting Micro Influencers so they become loyal to the brand will lead to having the brand integrated to Micro Influencers lifestyle. Once those are loyal they will naturally influence their peers. Dodds and Watts (2007) and Goldghen (2004) agree that Millennials are either Influencers and Influenced at the same time.

Finally, 60.63% of participants said they have bought a product recommended by a Micro Influencer and 21.35% said that it could be possible that they have done it although they can not remember. So it is proved that Social Media Micro Influencer can be highly effective. The requirements and investment to become a Micro Influencer are comparatively low and the potential reach, in terms of public and influence, is spectacularly high (Khamis, 2016). In consequence, it is likely that Social Media Micro Influencer keeps growing. As the literature shows, regular Social Media Influencer can soon reach a turning point and become mass-media-like. This study argues that the future could lie on Social Media Micro Influencer, as there will always be people who are credible and trusted in their own micro tire of influence.

7.4 Research Conclusion

This study aimed to identify how Social Media Micro Influencers were related to Generation Y (Millennials). The model “Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy” was identified as a suitable framework to connect those two ends. Bruns (2018) model connected the factors Trust and Perceived Authenticity to Intention to buy. Therefore, the research question of this study was:

Can “Bruns-Siddiqui Intention-to-Buy” model explain how Trust and Perceived authenticity related to Social Media Micro Influencer marketing impacts Millennials intention to buy?

Where the proposed hypothesis was:

H1: Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model can explain Millennials intention to buy when impacted by Micro Social Media Influencer marketing.

For this hypothesis being accepted the following paired works must correlate to each other: Perceived Authenticity - Trust; Trust - Intention to buy; Perceived Authenticity - Intention to buy. The data analyzing shows that there were correlations found for each of the works. For all the correlations $p = \text{value} < 0,05$, meaning that the Null Hypothesis (H0) can be denied. The following statement answer the research question:

Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model explains how Trust and Perceived Authenticity impact intention to buy of Millennials that follow Social Media Micro Influencer focused on Fashion on Instagram. Trust was built on perceived authenticity, and both perceived authenticity and Trust was found to be positively correlated to intention to buy.

The main difference found from Bruns-Siddiqui intention to buy model is that in opposition to Bruns (2018) model frame, Trust has higher values of correlation with Intention to buy, than Perceived Authenticity has. That suggests that although Trust is built on Perceived Authenticity, once Trust is built it affects Intention to buy strongly than Perceived Authenticity. Besides giving an insight on how this generation interacts with Social Media Micro Influencers, this study helps to validate Bruns-Siddiqui Intention to buy model.

There were some limitations to this research. The sample size was small, so there was a loss in generality. Additionally, it was not measured where respondents live. Therefore it could not be accessed cultural differences. "Micro follow Influencers" is a rather new concept so it was needed to trust that people knew what it meant or at least read it in the questionnaire description. Due to time limitation, it was not possible to analyze in depth the list of Micro Influencers generated by the data collection. Further studies could try to identify what Micro Influencers have in common and connect that to factors that might be responsible for "Perceived authenticity" and "Trust". Social Media Micro Influencer can also be analyzed from another generation point of view, finding differences between Millennials and other generations. Moreover, this study delivered what it was proposed.

8. Reflection

8.1 Introduction

In this session, it will be presented insights into the researcher experience in the MBA in Marketing. The skills that were gained during the MBA in Marketing and the thesis development process will be discussed.

8.2 Learning style and Learning process

Rogers (2013) have explored before that there are two ways of learning. The learning that comes from a solid and immediate accumulation of experience without any sort of structure or specific learning aim, what he calls acquisition learning. And the learning that is formalized and conscious, where to learn is the task itself. Based on my personal trajectory, I have always been the first type of learner. I have gathered much of my knowledge working and experiencing in the real-life concepts taught in College. Rogers (2013) advocates that meaningful learning is crucial to the learning process. In that sense, it was a great surprise for me that the course was structured in a way that permitted me to explore the concepts in practical meaningful activities. An example of that can be found on the first assessment that was applied within the module Financial analysis. It was asked that we did an analysis of a real company, with real business information and real market fluctuation. I personally found it to be very interesting, making me retain the knowledge that I had learned in that module. Still according to Rogers (2013) learning is facilitated by, among other things, self-evaluation. I could see how valuable this was when I took the module Personal and Professional Development. In this course, we built a "portfolio" where it was possible for me

to evaluate my results on the course of that semester. I still revisit that file to keep track of my progress.

Regarding learning style, I had a balance of autonomous and dependent methods. According to Smith and Sadler-Smith (2006), the autonomous approach refers to a self-learning process. Most of my learning experience in the course came that way. I saw the classes as a source of information where I had the insights on what concepts and ideas I could research deeply afterward. The other main approach by which I have learned during this journey as what Smith and Sadler-Smith (2006) called as "dependent". In some modules, I learned lots with the professors, especially in areas where I had not much previous knowledge like International Management. So having good professors were particularly important for my learning experience through this approach. In terms of style, according to the survey taken based on Honey and Mumford types of learner, I am definitely a Pragmatist. It makes sense as I would prefer to understand how concepts work in practice. All modules that had that premise were great chances for me to learn. The professor Juan Fravega was especially great on that. He was always bringing cases for us to study and linking theory to practical market examples in a structured way. Finally, regarding Curry's model (1983) of cognitive style, I lean towards the verbal style. I can remember better a well-articulated speech or an important statement.

8.3 Developed skills

8.3.1 Time management

I have mostly been not very good at time management. I have always felt that I did not have enough time to finish my tasks. In this course, I learned that a good schedule is the main tool to have everything ready on time. I learned that it is crucial to really give time according to the type of the task. For instance, I used to not consider "doc formatting" in my schedules, so everytime I had to rush towards the deadline. Now I assign at least 2 hours to this task, making my life easier and my documents more presentable. I have also learned that when an activity is given to be completed at a certain time I should start it as soon as possible. Many times the deadline seems to be far but other appointments can come on your way and delay your previous plan. The best strategy is always when possible try to be ahead of the schedule. Regarding time I have also learned to be punctual. Many lecturers complained when other students were late and I could see how much of a bad impression it can make. Nowadays I am always trying to anticipate myself. This skill will definitely be useful in my

professional life. One of the main characteristics of a good manager is the ability to deliver. A good sense of time management is certainly crucial to be able to perform at high levels.

8.3.2 Research and analyze

During the development of this thesis, I learned a great amount about synthesizing and interpreting. A large amount of information available made it necessary to learn how to organize all the information acquired. It was of great value to learn how to select the best sources and where to find the right kind of data needed. I have also found out how to reference according to the Harvard referencing system, which was different from the system that I am used to in my home country (Brazil). I have also learned how to use the SPSS system, how to import data and to find exactly the toll for the type of analysis that I was looking for. That was very challenging at first but we hard work it was possible to achieve excellence. Finally, I matured my critical thinking by always trying to find a counterpoint of opinions among authors.

8.3.3 Collaboration

I have learned in this course the power of collaboration. I have made a group of friends that would always help each other to study and that was very helpful. Also, my fellow students were an incredible source of inspiration in class. Sometimes people underestimate the impact of asking a simple question in class, however, on many occasions, somebody's doubt can lead to a very productive discussion. Nonetheless, this MBA was an important source of learning when it comes to delegating. When doing college group assignments previously I used to tend to be a bit controller. In this course, although, I had to learn to trust in my colleagues as the load of work made it mandatory for me to loosen up control over the whole process. That was very fortunate because now I know that when you pair with people that have the same goal than you, it is natural that everybody contributes equally to the task. Work in a group become very enjoyable since this experience.

8.4 Applying learnings

The MBA provided me with amazing cognitive learning in multiple business critical areas. The areas where I did not have much knowledge previously, as Finances and Administration, are those where I most learned. Those skills will certainly be applied in the scenario where I work in a managerial or in an administrative position within a company. Because my background is in Marketing, all the knowledge in Business will be essential for the career-changing that I had planned for this year. My goal is to start my own business online so I will have the opportunity to apply all the capabilities that I developed in the course. The knowledge in trade, resources management, performance, and business plan will be, in particular, adopted in my future career.

The most important part of this MBA, however, was to have the opportunity to in-depth into the topic of my thesis: Social Media Micro Influencers. I have always been extremely interested in the social phenomenon that occurs online. From about 3 years until now I have read and followed the market of Influencers. To be able to learn academically about this topic and to develop whole research around it was an excellent opportunity. I will now use all the knowledge acquired in the topic to finally start my business, which is internet based and has everything to do with Social Media Micro Influencers.

9 References

Abidin, C., 2016. Visibility labour: Engaging with Influencers' fashion brands and# OOTD advertorial campaigns on Instagram. *Media International Australia*, 161(1), pp.86-100.

Escobar-Rodríguez, O. & Bonson-Fernandez, R., 2016. Analysing online purchase intention in Spain: fashion e-commerce T

Anon, 2018. Home - CSO - Central Statistics Office. Live Register January 2017 - CSO - Central Statistics Office. Available at: <https://www.cso.ie/en/index.html> [Accessed October 10, 2018].

Balakrishnan, B.K., Dahnil, M.I. and Yi, W.J., 2014. The impact of social media marketing medium toward purchase intention and brand loyalty among generation Y. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 148, pp.177-185.

Bevins, C., 2014. Get Schooled: A visual social semiotic analysis of Target's branding using Instagram.

Bijen, Y.J., 2017. # AD: The effects of an influencer, comments and product combination on brand image (Master's thesis, University of Twente).

Blázquez, M., 2014. Fashion shopping in multichannel retail: The role of technology in enhancing the customer experience. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 18(4), pp.97-116.

Bolton, R.N., Parasuraman, A., Hoefnagels, A., Migchels, N., Kabadayi, S., Gruber, T., Komarova Loureiro, Y. and Solnet, D., 2013. Understanding Generation Y and their use of social media: a review and research agenda. *Journal of service management*, 24(3), pp.245-267.

Booth, N. and Matic, J.A., 2011. Mapping and leveraging influencers in social media to shape corporate brand perceptions. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 16(3), pp.184-191.

Brinker, L., 2018. The Value of Working with Microinfluencers - eMarketer. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.emarketer.com/content/the-value-of-working-with-micro-influencers>. [Accessed 12 August 2018].

Brogi, S., Calabrese, A., Campisi, D., Capece, G., Costa, R. and Di Pillo, F., 2013. The effects of online brand communities on brand equity in the luxury fashion industry. *International Journal of Engineering Business Management*, 5(Godište 2013), pp.5-32.

Burke, K.E., 2017. *Social Butterflies-How Social Media Influencers are the New Celebrity Endorsement* (Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Tech).

Carbone, L. (2018). *This is How The Instagram Algorithm Works in 2018*. [online] Later Blog. Available at: <https://later.com/blog/how-instagram-algorithm-works/> [Accessed 28 May 2018].

Che, J.W., Cheung, C.M. and Thadani, D.R., 2017. Consumer Purchase Decision in Instagram Stores: The Role of Consumer Trust.

Chen, C.H., Nguyen, B., Klaus, P.P. and Wu, M.S., 2015. Exploring electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in the consumer purchase decision-making process: the case of online holidays—evidence from United Kingdom (UK) consumers. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 32(8), pp.953-970.

Chen, Y., Fay, S. and Wang, Q., 2011. The role of marketing in social media: How online consumer reviews evolve. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 25(2), pp.85-94.

Dhanik, T., 2018. Micro, Not Macro: Rethinking Influencer Marketing | DigitalNext - Ad Age. [ONLINE] Available at:
<http://adage.com/article/digitalnext/micro-macro-influencer-marketing-kim-kardashian/307118/>.
[Accessed 12 June 2018].

De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V. and Hudders, L., 2017. Marketing through Instagram influencers: the impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), pp.798-828.

Dinesh, D., 2017. Why Micro-Influencers Are a Social Media Marketing Imperative for 2017. *EContent*, 40(3), pp.14-15.

Djafarova, E. and Rushworth, C., 2017. Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 68, pp.1-7.

Eastman, J.K., Iyer, R., Liao-Troth, S., Williams, D.F. and Griffin, M., 2014. The role of involvement on millennials' mobile technology behaviors: The moderating impact of status consumption, innovation, and opinion leadership. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 22(4), pp.455-470.

Enberg, J. eMarketer. 2018. Marketers Around the World Are Banking on Microinfluencers - eMarketer. [ONLINE] Available at:
<https://www.emarketer.com/content/why-marketers-are-banking-on-microinfluencers>. [Accessed 13 June 2018].

European Union, 2018. GDPR - Data Protection Commission - Ireland. 2018. GDPR - Data Protection Commission - Ireland. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/GDPR/1623.htm>.
[Accessed 12 August 2018].

FashionUnited. 2018. Global fashion industry statistics - International apparel. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://fashionunited.com/global-fashion-industry-statistics>. [Accessed 1 May 2018]

FashionUnited. 2018. Fashion Statistics Ireland. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://fashionunited.ie/fashion-statistics-ireland>. [Accessed 12 May 2018].

Fill, C., 2005. *Marketing communications: engagements, strategies and practice*. Pearson Education.

Filo, K., Lock, D. and Karg, A., 2015. Sport and social media research: A review. *Sport management review*, 18(2), pp.166-181.

Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K. and Freberg, L.A., 2011. Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality. *Public Relations Review*, 37(1), pp.90-92.

Gill, J. and Johnson, P., 2010. *Research methods for managers*. Sage.

Godey, B., Manthiou, A., Pederzoli, D., Rokka, J., Aiello, G., Donvito, R. and Singh, R., 2016. Social media marketing efforts of luxury brands: Influence on brand equity and consumer behavior. *Journal of business research*, 69(12), pp.5833-5841.

Goldgehn, L.A., 2004. Generation who, what, Y? What you need to know about Generation Y. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 5(1), pp.24-34.

Guadagno, R.E. and Cialdini, R.B., 2005. Online persuasion and compliance: Social influence on the Internet and beyond. *The social net: The social psychology of the Internet*, pp.91-113.

Guercini, S. and Runfola, A., 2015. Internationalization through e-commerce. The case of multibrand luxury retailers in the fashion industry. In *International Marketing in the Fast Changing World* (pp. 15-31). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Hajli, M.N., 2014. A study of the impact of social media on consumers. *International Journal of Market Research*, 56(3), pp.387-404.

Hassan, S., Nadzim, S.Z.A. and Shiratuddin, N., 2015. Strategic use of social media for small business based on the AIDA model. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 172, pp.262-269.

Highlights and Insights Report, 2018. Available at:

<https://cmosurvey.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2018/02/The_CMO_Survey-Highlights_and_Insights_Report-Feb-2018.pdf> (Accessed: 28 Mar 2018)

Ioanid, A., Militaru, G. and Mihai, P., 2015. SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES FOR ORGANIZATIONS USING INFLUENCERS' POWER. *European Scientific Journal, ESJ*, 11(10).

Jatto, O., 2014. *Consumer Attitude towards celebrity endorsements on Social Media* (Doctoral dissertation, Dublin Business School).

Johnson, T.J. and Kaye, B.K., 2004. Wag the blog: How reliance on traditional media and the Internet influence credibility perceptions of weblogs among blog users. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 81(3), pp.622-642.

Karlsen, R., 2015. Followers are opinion leaders: The role of people in the flow of political communication on and beyond social networking sites. *European Journal of Communication*, 30(3), pp.301–318

Kaplan, A.M. & Haenlein, M., 2012. Social media: back to the roots and back to the future. *Journal of Systems and Information Technology*, 14(2), pp.101–104.

Kahle LR, Homer PM 1985 Physical Attractiveness of the Celebrity Endorser A. Course Hero. Available at: <https://www.coursehero.com/file/p7qisc6/Kahle-LR-HomerPM-1985-Physical-Attractiveness-of-the-Celebrity-Endorser-A/> [Accessed December 10, 2018].

Khamis, S., Ang, L. and Welling, R., 2017. Self-branding, 'micro-celebrity' and the rise of Social Media Influencers. *Celebrity Studies*, 8(2), pp.191-208.

Korotina, A. and Jargalsaikhan, T., 2016. Attitude towards Instagram micro-celebrities and their influence on consumers' purchasing decisions.

Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H. & Setiawan, I., 2017. *Marketing 4.0: moving from traditional to digital*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Kotrlik, J.W.K.J.W. and Higgins, C.C.H.C.C., 2001. Organizational research: Determining appropriate sample size in survey research appropriate sample size in survey research. *Information technology, learning, and performance journal*, 19(1), p.43.

- Kumar, V. and Mirchandani, R., 2012. Increasing the ROI of social media marketing. *MIT sloan management review*, 54(1), p.55.
- Li, Z., 2018. Social Media and Impacts of Frames on User Engagement in the Fashion Industry.
- Liu, S., Jiang, C., Lin, Z., Ding, Y., Duan, R. and Xu, Z., 2015. Identifying effective influencers based on trust for electronic word-of-mouth marketing: A domain-aware approach. *Information sciences*, 306, pp.34-52.
- Lu, L.C., Chang, W.P. and Chang, H.H., 2014. Consumer attitudes toward blogger's sponsored recommendations and purchase intention: The effect of sponsorship type, product type, and brand awareness. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 34, pp.258-266.
- Main, S., 2018. www.adweek.com. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.adweek.com/digital/micro-influencers-are-more-effective-with-marketing-campaigns-than-highly-popular-accounts/>. [Accessed 7 June 2018].
- Moore, M. and Carpenter, J.M., 2008. Intergenerational perceptions of market cues among US apparel consumers. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 12(3), pp.323-337.
- Moore, M., 2012. Interactive media usage among millennial consumers. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 29(6), pp.436-444.
- Muntinga, D.G., 2016. Managing brands in the age of DIY-Branding: the COBRA approach. *Handbuch Sozialtechniken der Kommunikation: Grundlagen–Innovative Ansätze–Praktische Umsetzungen*, pp.1-20.
- Nadeem, W., Andreini, D., Salo, J. and Laukkanen, T., 2015. Engaging consumers online through websites and social media: A gender study of Italian Generation Y clothing consumers. *International Journal of Information Management*, 35(4), pp.432-442.
- Napoli, J., Dickinson, S.J., Beverland, M.B. and Farrelly, F., 2014. Measuring consumer-based brand authenticity. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(6), pp.1090-1098.
- Newman, D., 2016. Love It Or Hate It: Influencer Marketing Works. Forbes. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danielnewman/2015/06/23/love-it-or-hate-it-influencermarketing-works/#69bf6392150b> [Accessed May 17, 2018].

Oliver, P., 2014. *Writing your thesis*, Los Angeles: SAGE.

Pate, S.S. and Adams, M., 2013. The influence of social networking sites on buying behaviors of millennials. *Atlantic Marketing Journal*, 2(1), p.7.

Pierucci, S., 2017. Why Social Media Influencer is the game in 2018. Medium. Available at: <https://medium.com/swlh/why-micro-influencer-marketing-is-the-game-in-2018-fdeda0993c36> [Accessed November 17, 2018].

Rahayu, R. and Day, J., 2015. Determinant factors of e-commerce adoption by SMEs in developing country: evidence from Indonesia. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 195, pp.142-150.

Rogers, A., 2013. *What is the difference? A new critique of adult learning and teaching*, Leicester. s.l.:NIACE.

Sago, B., 2015. The Influence of Social Media Message Sources on Millennial Generation Consumers. *International Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications*, 2(2).

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A., 2009. *Research methods for business students*. Pearson education.

Senft, T.M., 2013. Microcelebrity and the Branded Self. *A Companion to New Media Dynamics*, pp.346–354.

Serazio, M., 2015. Selling (digital) millennials: The social construction and technological bias of a consumer generation. *Television & New Media*, 16(7), pp.599-615.

Sethi, R.S., Kaur, J. and Wadera, D., 2018. Purchase Intention Survey of Millennials Towards Online Fashion Stores. *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*.

Smith, P. J. & Sadler-Smith, E., 2006. *Learning in Organizations, Complexities and Diversities*. 1st ed. s.l.:Routledge.

Stever, G. and Lawson, K. (2013) "Twitter as a Way for Celebrities to Communicate with Fans: Implications for the Study of Parasocial Interaction", *North American Journal of Psychology*, 15(2) pp. 339-354, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost

Shannon, C.E., Weaver, W. & Wiener, N., 1949. The Mathematical Theory of Communication. *Physics Today*, 3(9), pp.31–32.

Smith, K.T., 2011. Digital marketing strategies that Millennials find appealing, motivating, or just annoying. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 19(6), pp.489-499.

Sprout Social -18 stats that every marketer should know for 2018- Sprout Social. Available at:<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/instagram-stats/> [Accessed October 10, 2018].

Statstutor, 2018. Pearson's correlation. Available at:
<http://www.statstutor.ac.uk/resources/uploaded/pearsons.pdf>
[Accessed December 10, 2018]

Survey Monkey, 2018. How many responses do I need on my survey. Available at:
https://help.surveymonkey.com/articles/en_US/kb/How-many-respondents-do-I-need
[Accessed August 10, 2018]

Thebriansolis, 2012. The Pillars of Influence and How to Activate Cause and Effect. Brian Solis. Available at:
<https://www.briansolis.com/2012/03/the-pillars-of-influence-and-how-toactivate-them-in-business/>
[Accessed November 10, 2018].

Tsimonis, G. and Dimitriadis, S., 2014. Brand strategies in social media. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 32(3), pp.328-344.

Valaei, N. and Nikhashemi, S.R., 2017. Generation Y consumers' buying behaviour in fashion apparel industry: a moderation analysis. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 21(4), pp.523-543.

Watts, D. & Dodds, P., 2007. Influentials, Networks, and Public Opinion Formation. *JOURNAL OF CONSUMER RESEARCH*, , pp.441–458

Westwood, K., 2018. Everything you need to know about Micro Influencers. Social Media week. Available at:
<https://socialmediaweek.org/blog/2018/07/everything-you-need-to-know-about-micro-influencers/>
[Accessed November 10, 2018].

Wissman, B., 2018. www.forbes.com. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/barrettwissman/2018/03/02/micro-influencers-the-marketing-force-of-the-future/>. [Accessed 7 June 2018].

Zhu, Y.Q. and Chen, H.G., 2015. Social media and human need satisfaction: Implications for social media marketing. *Business horizons*, 58(3), pp.335-345.

Zietek, N., 2016. Influencer Marketing: the characteristics and components of fashion influencer marketing.

Appendix A

List of Micro Influencers

WhichInfluencer	Frequency	%	Valid %
apropriadamente profile	1	1,1	1,1
Canela brasil Chiara	1	1,1	1,1
Dani Noce French one	1	1,1	1,1
Lovelauren Michele McGrath	1	1,1	1,1
Vic Ceridono Vikaferrari	1	1,1	1,1
@blackbloggerbrasil	1	1,1	1,1
@ciaraswalsh	1	1,1	1,1
@cozinhalalternativa	1	1,1	1,1
@findingpaola	1	1,1	1,1
@fran_mk	1	1,1	1,1
@jovelroystan	1	1,1	1,1
@ju_Romano; @anafritsch; @paulabastos; @michelebotan; @carlomanso	1	1,1	1,1
@laisrasera	1	1,1	1,1
@momglobetrotting	1	1,1	1,1
@thyzaferreira	2	2,2	2,2
@umquedetododia	1	1,1	1,1
Adri Momento Maquiagem	1	1,1	1,1
Antoni Porowski	1	1,1	1,1
Black actress	1	1,1	1,1
Boca Rosa	1	1,1	1,1
Camila Coelho	1	1,1	1,1
Camila Coutinho	1	1,1	1,1

Daiane Cunha	1	1,1	1,1
Dermatomaedicas	1	1,1	1,1
Do more with less	2	2,2	2,2
Duda Fernandes	1	1,1	1,1
emmakehoe	5	5,6	5,6
Flavia ribeiro	1	1,1	1,1
Foxy.wander	1	1,1	1,1
gabriela.ganem	1	1,1	1,1
Gisele Buchen	1	1,1	1,1
I dont remember	1	1,1	1,1
Jodie Wood	1	1,1	1,1
Jodie Woods	1	1,1	1,1
Kf_modas	1	1,1	1,1
Lala Rudge	1	1,1	1,1
LOUISE COONEY	1	1,1	1,1
Lovedecor_interior	1	1,1	1,1
Luisa accorsi	1	1,1	1,1
Luiza Mel	1	1,1	1,1
Lushmodas	1	1,1	1,1
Ma Negri	1	1,1	1,1
Many	1	1,1	1,1
Maria Aline	1	1,1	1,1
Mariana Alonso	1	1,1	1,1
Mariana Calonso	1	1,1	1,1
Men Street Style	1	1,1	1,1
Mequetrefismos	1	1,1	1,1
Nanda Wiaderna	1	1,1	1,1
Niina Secrets	1	1,1	1,1
None	1	1,1	1,1
Patricia Souza	1	1,1	1,1
patysampaio_	1	1,1	1,1
Paula Bastos	1	1,1	1,1
Pranah	1	1,1	1,1
Rayza nicasio	1	1,1	1,1
Renatacominsta	1	1,1	1,1
Riane. Meijer	1	1,1	1,1
Rica de Marré	1	1,1	1,1

Rihana	1	1,1	1,1
Shantal	1	1,1	1,1
shellfoxmua	2	2,2	2,2
Some few people	1	1,1	1,1
styletraces	8	9,0	9,0
Teteguidi	1	1,1	1,1
Thaís Farage/Carol Burgo/Ches Noelli	1	1,1	1,1
Thassia Navez	1	1,1	1,1
Thyza Ferreira	2	2,2	2,2
Usesempreebela	1	1,1	1,1
vicqueen	1	1,1	1,1
Total	89	100,0	100,0