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Portuguese Consumers' Perceptions of Bookstagrammers

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Department of Marketing, Operation and General
Management

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RESUMO

Na era digital, as redes sociais transformaram a forma como os consumidores descobrem, avaliam e tomam decisões de compra. O marketing de influência emerge como uma estratégia que permite às marcas alcançarem e influenciarem os consumidores. É neste contexto que os *bookstagrammers* se destacam como fontes credíveis de recomendações de livros. No entanto, existe pouca investigação sobre assunto e, por isso, este estudo investiga os fatores que influenciam as percepções dos consumidores portugueses sobre a credibilidade dos *bookstagrammers*, especificamente a Confiança, Competência, Atratividade, Similaridade e Congruência, e o impacto da credibilidade nas suas intenções de pré-compra. Foi utilizada uma abordagem quantitativa, recorrendo a um questionário online com duas versões, cada uma com uma *bookstagrammer* diferente. A amostra final é constituída por 325 portugueses que utilizam o Instagram. A Modelação de Equações Estruturais com Mínimos Quadrados Parciais (PLS-SEM) revelou que, à exceção da Similaridade, todas as outras dimensões influenciam positivamente a Credibilidade da Publicação. Além disso, a Credibilidade da Publicação tem um impacto positivo no Interesse dos consumidores pela publicação, na sua predisposição para procurar mais informações e na sua Intenção de Compra. A análise multi-grupos entre os dois cenários (níveis altos versus níveis baixos de cada dimensão) revelou que, quando os consumidores percecionam altos níveis de Confiança e Congruência não precisam de avaliar outros indicadores para confiar na recomendação do *bookstagrammer*. Estes resultados contribuem para o marketing de influência, proporcionando informações valiosas sobre o comportamento do consumidor no contexto das recomendações de livros em Portugal.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Influenciadores dos Media Sociais

Marketing de Influência

Bookstagrammers

Credibilidade

Congruência

Intenções Pré-Compra

Sistema de Classificação JEL: M31 – Marketing; M37 - Advertising

ABSTRACT

In the digital age, social media platforms have transformed how consumers discover, evaluate, and make purchasing decisions. Influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful strategy for brands to reach and influence consumers, with bookstagrammers gaining prominence as trusted sources of book recommendations. However, limited research exists on how Portuguese consumers perceive and interact with bookstagrammers. This study investigates the factors influencing Portuguese consumers' perceptions of bookstagrammers' credibility, specifically Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, Similarity, and Congruence, and the impact of credibility on consumers' pre-purchase behavioural intentions. A quantitative approach was employed, using an online questionnaire with two versions featuring different bookstagrammer profiles. The final sample consisted of 325 Portuguese Instagram users. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) revealed that Trustworthiness, Congruence, Attractiveness, and Expertise positively influence Post Credibility, while Similarity does not. Furthermore, Post Credibility positively impacts consumers' Interest in the Post, Willingness to search for more information, and Purchase Intention. The multigroup analysis comparing the two different scenarios (high versus low levels of Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, Similarity, and Congruence) revealed that when perceived Trustworthiness and Congruence are high, the relative importance of Expertise and Attractiveness is overshadowed. This suggests that when consumers perceive high levels of Trustworthiness and Congruence, they no longer feel the need to evaluate other indicators to trust the bookstagrammer's recommendation. These findings contribute to the understanding of influencer marketing and consumer behaviour in the context of book recommendations, providing valuable insights for brands and bookstagrammers to effectively leverage Instagram for book promotions in Portugal.

KEYWORDS

Social Media Influencers (SMIs)

Influencer Marketing

Bookstagrammers

Source Credibility

Congruence

Pre-Purchase Intentions

JEL Classification System: M31 – Marketing; M37 - Advertising

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In an age dominated by digital technology and the ubiquity of social media platforms, the ways in which individuals discover, evaluate, and ultimately make purchasing decisions have undergone a profound transformation. Nowadays, even though consumers use social media platforms extensively to help in their buying-decision processes (Martínez-López et al., 2020), consumers' growing scepticism toward traditional marketing has made it increasingly difficult for firms to attract and influence consumers (Lou & Yuan, 2019). In addition, half of consumers already apply ad blocks, which considerably reduces the effectiveness of many of the usual types of online advertising (Martínez-López et al., 2020). So, to overcome this growing communication barrier in reaching consumers online, companies seek to make an impact on consumers that is more rooted in content (Martínez-López et al., 2020), which is precisely where influencer marketing fits well, specifically social media influencers (SMIs).

The use of influencers also provides diverse benefits for the message being conveyed once that consumers see it as more reliable, personal, authentic, less commercial and controlled by brands, and thus, more suitable to their tastes (Martínez-López et al., 2020).

Among these influencers, bookstagrammers, or individuals who use Instagram as a platform for sharing their love for books and providing book recommendations, have gained a substantial following. Bookstagrammers, as a subset of Instagram users, curate their content to revolve around books, covering topics such as book reviews and book recommendations.

Like in many other areas, the digital age has transformed the way books are consumed and the way readers seek recommendations, placing their trust in messages shared by their peers when searching for information and deciding which products or services to buy, making their trust on influencers paramount (Martínez-López et al., 2020). However, while these influencers have the potential to connect readers with books they might otherwise overlook, their role, credibility, and influence remain uncertain, as there is limited research into how Portuguese consumers perceive and interact with bookstagrammers.

1.1. Research Objectives

Given the growing relevance of SMIs and influencer marketing in general, along with the fact that there is little to no research into how Portuguese consumers perceive and interact specifically with bookstagrammers, it becomes crucial to explore this further to better understand the role of these SMIs, in the specific context of book recommendations.

Therefore, the present study intends to investigate what factors influence Portuguese consumers' perceptions of bookstagrammers' credibility, specifically Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, Similarity, and Congruence, and the impact of their credibility in shaping consumers' pre-purchase attitudes and behavioural intentions, including their interest in the post, willingness to seek further information, and ultimately, intention to purchase the book reviewed.

Accordingly, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1: What factors influence Portuguese consumers' perceptions of bookstagrammers as credible sources of book recommendations?

RQ2: What are the effects of bookstagrammers' perceived credibility on Portuguese consumers' pre-purchase behavioural intentions?

Addressing this research problem proves to be relevant as its findings will contribute to the overall knowledge in influencer marketing and consumer behaviour, further helping marketers select the right bookstagrammers to effectively endorse their books on Instagram, in Portugal.

Regarding the study setting, the present study focuses explicitly on Instagram since it has been regarded as the most prevalent social networking platform advertisers utilize for influencer marketing campaigns (Dhun & Dangi, 2023).

1.2. Dissertation Structure

The structure of this dissertation is organized into six main chapters, beginning with the present Introduction. This first chapter provides an overview of the research problem, its relevance, and the objectives of the study, laying the foundation for the investigation into what influences Portuguese consumers' perceptions of bookstagrammers as credible sources of book recommendations.

The second chapter presents the theoretical framework through an extensive Literature Review on Digital Marketing, Social Media, Social Media Marketing, Influencer Marketing, Social Media Influencers, and their effectiveness factors, particularly the Source Credibility Model and Congruence. This chapter aims to explore existing theories and research related to social media influencers and how to assess their credibility, which will later be applied to the specific context of our study and will support the development of the conceptual model and its respective hypotheses.

Accordingly, the third chapter outlines our study's hypotheses, drawn from and supported by the existing literature, along with the proposed conceptual model.

The fourth chapter corresponds to the Methodology and details the research design, including the research approach, the methods for data collection and analysis, the questionnaire design and structure, all the indicators used to measure each construct, the scales employed to measure them, and the sources from which they were derived and adapted from.

The fifth chapter contemplates the Results and Discussion, where the findings of the study are presented and analysed to interpret the results. This chapter also highlights the theoretical contributions of our study and its implications for both bookstagrammers and brands or marketers.

Finally, the last chapter is dedicated to discussing our study's limitations and providing suggestions for future research, based on those limitations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Digital Marketing

The evolution from traditional marketing to digital marketing was driven by the opportunities granted by advances in technology, the emergence of the Internet and digital technologies, rapid globalization, and, consequently, shifts in consumer behaviour (Dahiya & Gayatri, 2018; Durmaz & Efendioglu, 2016; Henriques, 2022; Kannan & Li, 2017).

However, this does not mean that digital marketing is an entirely new marketing type, but rather an adaptation of the core marketing principles and the development of new approaches, methods, and tools that leverage these technological advancements (Kalashnikov, 2019; Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020). Defined by the American Marketing Association, marketing is “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (American Marketing Association, 2024). While traditional marketing makes use of offline channels to achieve this, digital marketing takes advantage of digital technologies, tactics, and channels to reach consumers where they spend most of their time, that is, online (Durmaz & Efendioglu, 2016; R. Dwivedi & Nath, 2020; Henriques, 2022; Panda & Mishra, 2022; Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020).

As consumers recognized the convenience and efficiency of digital communication channels, they began to use them extensively, not only to search for information, but also share their experiences with others (Alghizzawi, 2019; Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Yasmin et al., 2015). As a result, today’s consumers are empowered by technology, having access to more information than ever before, which makes them more selective, critical, and in control of the communication process, consequently leading them to lose trust in the corporate message and brand (Bala & Verma, 2018; Henriques, 2022; Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014).

Digital marketing becomes relevant in this context because it allows marketers to successfully engage with consumers in this scenario where companies do not have full control over the media or the message anymore (Bala & Verma, 2018). Unlike traditional marketing approaches that focus solely on product promotion, digital marketing facilitates an ongoing two-way communication (Dwivedi et al., 2015), enabling companies to connect in ways that were previously not possible (Li et al., 2021) and nurture relationships with each individual consumer, collaborating to create, communicate, deliver, and sustain value (Durmaz & Efendioglu, 2016; Kalashnikov, 2019; Kannan & Li, 2017). Such a dialogue allows companies

to be more understanding and responsive to consumers' needs and preferences, as well as tailor personalized and targeted messages that resonate with both specific and diverse audience segments. (American Marketing Association, 2024; Kalashnikov, 2019; Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020). Moreover, by empowering consumers to actively participate in the decision-making process, digital marketing accelerates their purchase decisions and reinforces brand engagement, while enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty (Durmaz & Efendioglu, 2016; Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020).

Additionally, by leveraging digital channels, companies can go beyond geographical boundaries and connect with consumers worldwide in real-time, facilitating the dissemination of promotional messages and campaigns, quickly and cost-effectively (Dwivedi & Nath, 2020; Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020). Furthermore, digital marketing provides companies the flexibility to adapt to ongoing changes in the external environment (Dwivedi & Nath, 2020; Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020).

Therefore, it is crucial for companies to integrate digital marketing into their communication mix in order to meet the evolving needs of consumers and society (Kannan & Li, 2017; Dahiya & Gayatri, 2018; Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020; Henriques, 2022). To do so, there are many types of digital marketing strategies that companies can implement, including Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Content Marketing, Email Marketing, Online Advertising, Website, Affiliate Marketing, Viral Marketing, and Social Media Marketing (SMM) (Dwivedi & Nath, 2020; Panda & Mishra, 2022; Proença, 2021).

2.2. Social Media

Social media is a broad and dynamic concept that is continuously evolving and changing, along with technology (Proença, 2021), and that has significantly changed the way people interact and communicate (Kim & Kim, 2021). It is commonly used to refer to a diverse range of online platforms that essentially allow its users to virtually connect, interact, and exchange information, ideas, and content in various formats in real-time (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Proença, 2021). Specifically, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (UGC)” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This broadly includes content communities such as blogs and online forums, collaborative websites such as Wikipedia, virtual worlds that are online environments inhabited

by avatars, and social networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, among others (Chu & Kim, 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Silva et al., 2020).

SNSs are highly interactive online communities generally formed around common interests (Durmaz & Efendioglu, 2016), allowing individuals to communicate, create, cooperate, and share content with a global audience instantaneously (Durmaz & Efendioglu, 2016; Proença, 2021; Silva et al., 2020). UGC refers to all these forms of media content created by end-users and shared on social media platforms (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The widespread adoption of SNSs has made individuals more connected than ever, significantly transforming how they interact and socialize by encouraging users to share their personal experiences online, which were previously exchanged exclusively through face-to-face interactions with close friends (Appel et al., 2020; Durmaz & Efendioglu, 2016; Ho & Ito, 2019). Similarly, individuals now have access to content produced and shared by users that they do not personally know, giving them the opportunity to learn about others' opinions, skills and lives (Ho & Ito, 2019).

As a result, SNSs have become platforms where consumer-to-consumer conversations thrive, particularly brand-related electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and have completely changed the relationship between brands and consumers (Chu & Kim, 2011; Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Vrontis et al., 2021).

Word-of-mouth (WOM) refers to the face-to-face exchange of information among consumers regarding any product, brand or service (Arndt, 1967), and its significance in shaping consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards brands and their offerings has long been acknowledged in the marketing literature (Bi & Zhang, 2023; Engel et al., 1969; Ghosh et al., 2014; Gilly et al., 1998; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). Because WOM is perceived as more genuine, sincere, trustworthy, and reliable than brand-generated messages (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Joshi et al., 2023; Ye et al., 2021), consumers often turn to it when seeking information to inform their purchase decisions, lowering their perceived risk about the brand, product, or service (Arndt, 1967; Bi & Zhang, 2023). Hence WOM being highly effective in driving product adoption and boosting the sales of new products (Arndt, 1967; Bi & Zhang, 2023), and, thus, being considered one of the most important and efficient communication channels (Keller, 2007).

With the proliferation of SNSs, as communication transitioned from the traditional "one-to-one" interactions to "one-to-many" and "many-to-many", WOM also transitioned into eWOM (Proença, 2021). Defined as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude

of people and institutions via the Internet” (Babić Rosario et al., 2020), eWOM transcends geographical and temporal boundaries implicit to WOM (Dellarocas, 2002). This allows for the dissemination of enduring messages to a global audience (Proença, 2021), further amplifying eWOM’s importance as a factor in influencing consumer purchasing decisions (Babić Rosario et al., 2020).

Empowered by social media, consumers are no longer passive recipients of marketing communications (Vrontis et al., 2021; Cheung et al., 2022). Instead, they actively shape the marketing communication process, acting as both consumers and promoters of brands (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Li et al., 2021; Vrontis et al., 2021). By sharing their opinions, they help shape the perceptions of other consumers towards brands and their offerings, ultimately influencing their purchase decisions (Silva et al., 2020; Vrontis et al., 2021; Wei & Lu, 2013).

This transformation in consumer behaviour indicates a significant shift in the focus of persuasive power, from traditional marketing strategies to the voices and opinions of consumers themselves (Joshi et al., 2023). Accordingly, this trend has empowered ordinary consumers to reach mass audiences, giving rise to a new type of influential figure within SNSs, known as Social Media Influencer (SMI) (Mcquarrie et al., 2013; Torres et al., 2019; Vrontis et al., 2021).

Because these influential figures play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions, as many consumers rely heavily on social media reviews when making decisions, it is crucial for brands to identify SMIs and encourage them to spread positive eWOM (Chu & Kim, 2011; Ghosh et al., 2014).

2.2.1. Instagram

Instagram is a highly popular social media platform that focuses on image and video sharing. Due to its rich content format and entertainment-driven nature, when compared to other text-based platforms such as X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram is the most widely used SNS for influencer marketing (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020; Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019; Haenlein et al., 2020).

On Instagram, users can upload pictures or videos, often accompanied by captions and hashtags (e.g., #books, #currentlyreading), which are displayed both on their profiles and in their followers’ feeds. In addition to showcasing content from followed users, feeds also feature sponsored posts that are paid advertisements from brands or other users that the individual may not follow. To showcase the posts on the feed, Instagram employs an AI algorithm that prioritizes content that users are most likely to be interested in, rather displaying posts

chronologically. As a result, users may not see all the posts shared by the accounts they follow, and thus, the number of actual post views is typically lower than the total follower count (Haenlein et al., 2020).

Besides allowing users to share photos and videos and to follow other accounts, Instagram allows them to like their posts, leave comments, and even contact them through direct messaging (Haenlein et al., 2020).

In addition, in 2016, Instagram introduced Stories, a feature that allows users to share temporary content, such as photos or short videos, that disappear after 24 hours. Stories can be customized with filters, stickers, and text, and are displayed in a separate section at the top of the feed. In 2018, Instagram launched IGTV, enabling longer videos of up to 60 minutes, further expanding the platform's video-sharing capabilities (Haenlein et al., 2020).

Being a platform that facilitates electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), Instagram fosters social interactions between users, brands, and entities, strengthening its position as a powerful tool for both personal and commercial engagement (De Veirman et al., 2017; Haenlein et al., 2020; Jin et al., 2019).

2.3. Social Media Marketing

It is in this context, where consumers are spending increasingly more time on the Internet and on social media platforms, that Social Media Marketing (SMM) emerges as a pivotal strategy in contemporary marketing efforts (Appel et al., 2020; Ghosh et al., 2014; Peng et al., 2018). Marketers, recognizing the unparalleled potential of social media as a marketing channel (Appel et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2020), allocate more and more resources to establish and strengthen brands' social presence on these platforms (Torres et al., 2019), as a way to effectively connect with their target audience where they are (Appel et al., 2020; Kim & Kim, 2021; Lin et al., 2018).

SMM can be defined as a comprehensive approach directed at promoting products and services across social media platforms with the aim of positively influencing consumers' behaviour and buying decisions (Chen & Lin, 2019). When compared to traditional marketing methods, SMM offers distinct advantages for firms, including its potential to reach a significantly broader audience (Appel et al., 2020; Y. K. Dwivedi et al., 2015; Li et al., 2021), and to engage directly and immediately with end consumers at a lower cost and with greater effectiveness (Cheung et al., 2021; Durmaz & Efendioglu, 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Furthermore, social media platforms' interactive and collaborative nature (Chu & Kim, 2011) provide unique opportunities for companies to engage with consumers in their social

communities and foster closer and more personal relationships with them (Godey et al., 2016; Li et al., 2021; Proença, 2021) by enhancing brand-consumer interactions (Silva et al., 2020).

2.3.1. Influencer Marketing (IM)

Influencer Marketing (IM) emerges as a powerful SMM strategy that is increasingly adopted by brands to address the diminishing effectiveness of conventional marketing tactics in reaching consumers online (Hudders et al., 2021; Dhun & Dangi, 2023). Consumers' growing scepticism toward brands' direct marketing, combined with the widespread use of ad-blocking software to avoid the overwhelming clutter of intrusive ads and pop-up notifications on SNSs (Dhun & Dangi, 2023), has made it increasingly difficult for brands to reach and influence consumers (De Veirman et al., 2017; Leung, Gu, & Palmatier, 2022; Leung, Gu, Li, et al., 2022).

Therefore, to overcome the challenge, and reflecting the growing influence of SMIs as trusted sources of information, brands are shifting away from traditional advertising toward IM (De Veirman et al., 2017; Martínez-López, Anaya-Sánchez, Fernández Giordano, et al., 2020). Instead of pushing their ads onto their audience, brands are leveraging the persuasive power of SMIs to promote their products and messages directly to consumers, in a more genuine, relatable and persuasive manner (De Veirman et al., 2017; Leung, Gu, & Palmatier, 2022; Martínez-López, Anaya-Sánchez, Fernández Giordano, et al., 2020; Reinikainen et al., 2020).

Essentially, IM is the strategic use of SMIs (Hudders et al., 2021) to promote the brand and its offerings in exchange for compensation, to leverage their distinctive resources, such as their reach, personal positioning, and established credibility and trust, to effectively reach their target audience (De Veirman et al., 2017; Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019; Dhun & Dangi, 2023; Hudders et al., 2021; Jean Lim et al., 2017; Leung, Gu, & Palmatier, 2022; Lou et al., 2019; Martínez-López, Anaya-Sánchez, Fernández Giordano, et al., 2020).

By promoting their products and services through a trusted source, brands can cultivate favourable attitudes and behaviours among the SMI's followers, reduce perceived brand-related risk, increase brand awareness, and ultimately influence their purchasing decisions (Dhun & Dangi, 2023; Leung, Gu, & Palmatier, 2022; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Martínez-López, Anaya-Sánchez, Fernández Giordano, et al., 2020; Reinikainen et al., 2020; Vrontis et al., 2021).

Moreover, because SMIs cultivate distinct personal brands (Lee & Eastin, 2020) that attract homogeneous, like-minded followers (McQuarrie et al., 2013), brands gain access to the most direct and organic channel for reaching these consumer segments (Kim & Kim, 2021; Leung, Gu, & Palmatier, 2022; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Martínez-López, Anaya-Sánchez, Esteban-Millat, et al., 2020). This segmentation occurs naturally as followers self-select into a segment by

following influencers whose content, lifestyle, and preferences resonate with them (Leung, Gu, & Palmatier, 2022). Thus, unlike traditional segmentation approaches, instead of targeting specific consumer segments, IM focuses on targeting SMIs who are capable of reaching those same segments (Leung, Gu, & Palmatier, 2022).

IM allows SMIs to take on the role of message sender (Leung, Gu, Li, et al., 2022), enabling them and their followers to co-create the brand image on social media, fostering higher engagement and more positive consumer sentiments than brand-generated content (Lou et al., 2019; Martínez-López et al., 2020). By endorsing brands through sponsored posts that resonate with their audience, SMIs act as critical intermediaries (Lin et al., 2018), facilitating the dissemination of information to their followers and bridging the gap between them and the endorsed brand or product (Silva et al., 2020; Joshi et al., 2023).

While the concept of using influential figures, specifically celebrities, to endorse brands is a well-established strategy (Munnukka et al., 2016; Vrontis et al., 2021), studies have shown that because SMIs are ordinary individuals, they are perceived as more relatable. Thus, their endorsements resemble peer recommendations and, as a result, have a greater impact on consumers' purchase decisions than those from mainstream celebrities (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Jin et al., 2019; Lou et al., 2019; Pöyry et al., 2019; Reinikainen et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2020).

Thus, this approach capitalizes on the effectiveness of eWOM to overcome consumer avoidance and resistance to brand-generated content, as SMIs' messages are perceived as more trustworthy and authentic (De Veirman et al., 2017; Kim & Kim, 2021; Martínez-López et al., 2020). When SMIs recommend a product or service, they do so in such a natural and unscripted manner that consumers are more likely to perceive it as trustworthy and purchase the recommended product (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lim et al., 2015; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Silva et al., 2020; Ye et al., 2021). However, unlike organic eWOM, in which consumers share information voluntarily, IM involves brands intentionally selecting and compensating SMIs, either materially or financially, to promote their products or services on social media (De Veirman et al., 2017; Hudders et al., 2021; Leung, Gu, & Palmatier, 2022; Leung, Gu, Li, et al., 2022; Petrescu et al., 2018; Vrontis et al., 2021).

Furthermore, this approach has proven to be a long-lasting investment, with its impact on purchase intention persisting for up to four years, according to Fink, Koller, Gartner, Floh, and Harms' study (Fink et al., 2020). Thus, given its enduring impact, SMIs represent a powerful channel through which brands can effectively communicate to achieve their marketing objectives (Fink et al., 2020; Pöyry et al., 2019).

2.4. Social Media Influencers (SMIs)

Social influence is a fundamental marketing concept that reflects consumers' enduring tendency to value others' opinions when making purchasing decisions (Singh, 2010; De Veirman et al., 2017). Historically, people have always sought advice from peers, as sharing experiences and seeking guidance is an inherent part of human social interaction (Singh, 2010).

As discussed previously, the growing popularity of SNSs has provided consumers with unprecedented power to share their opinions with a much wider audience, thus amplifying the reach and impact of their recommendations (De Veirman et al., 2017; Reinikainen et al., 2020; Xiong et al., 2018). As SNSs became, for many, the primary source for both seeking and sharing insights on diverse topics, including travel, food, lifestyle, fashion and beauty, and more, certain individuals have emerged as influential figures within each specific niche (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Vrontis et al., 2021; Yuan & Lou, 2020).

These individuals, referred to as Social Media Influencers (SMIs), are ordinary people who leverage their expertise in a particular domain to consistently create and share content online, and as a result, have attracted a substantial following, on one or more SNSs (Cheung et al., 2022; Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019; Ge & Gretzel, 2018; J. A. Lee & Eastin, 2020; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Vrontis et al., 2021).

Thus, SMIs are perceived as reliable and trusted sources of advice within their specific niches, further enhancing their ability to shape consumers' perceptions of brands by influencing their followers' opinions, attitudes, and behaviours through their posts on SNSs (Boerman, 2020; De Veirman et al., 2017; Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Freberg et al., 2011; Hudders et al., 2021; Joshi et al., 2023; Koay et al., 2022; Leung, Gu, Li, et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2018; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Schouten et al., 2020; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Vrontis et al., 2021; Yuan & Lou, 2020).

Even though some SMIs gather such a large following that they achieve celebrity status, the fact that they are ordinary people who have risen to fame organically allows them to build closer connections with their followers, compared to traditional celebrities (Chae, 2018; Dhun & Dangi, 2023; Hudders et al., 2021; Joshi et al., 2023; Leung, Gu, Li, et al., 2022; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Yuan & Lou, 2020). By consistently sharing their experiences, opinions, and glimpses of their personal lives, and engaging in two-way interactions with their followers, SMIs are perceived as approachable and relatable. As a result, followers' sense of connection and intimacy is intensified, further increasing their susceptibility to the SMI's posts (Abidin, 2016; Appel et al., 2020; De Veirman et al., 2017; Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Jin et al., 2019;

Joshi et al., 2023; J. A. Lee & Eastin, 2020; Schouten et al., 2020; Torres et al., 2019; Yuan & Lou, 2020).

As a result, because their recommendations are perceived as more genuine, impartial, and reliable, SMIs represent powerful intermediaries for brands wanting to reach their target audience and influence their purchasing decisions (Cheung et al., 2022; Fink et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2018; Yuan & Lou, 2020).

2.5. SMI's Effectiveness Factors

While SMIs' impact is undeniable, simply employing an endorser in an advertisement does not automatically guarantee its success (Schouten et al., 2020). Therefore, to choose the most appropriate and effective SMI, brands must understand the underlying factors that enable them to effectively influence their followers (De Veirman et al., 2017; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Trivedi & Sama, 2020; Hudders et al., 2021; Vrontis et al., 2021; Dhun & Dangi, 2023).

To identify and select SMIs, brands typically rely on reach, measured by quantitative metrics such as the number of followers, likes, comments, and shares (Freberg et al., 2011; De Veirman et al., 2017; Hudders et al., 2021; Dhun & Dangi, 2023). However, while a large following can enhance perceptions of popularity, it does not necessarily equal impact (De Veirman et al., 2017; Hudders et al., 2021; Vrontis et al., 2021). Moreover, quantitative measures alone are insufficient and cannot be relied upon exclusively, as they are susceptible to manipulation through several unethical practices, like buying fake followers (De Veirman et al., 2017; Haenlein et al., 2020; Harrigan et al., 2021; Dhun & Dangi, 2023).

Thus, while SMIs' reach is important, what matters most is their impact, which refers to their ability to connect with their followers and effectively influence their decision-making through their recommendations (Haenlein et al., 2020; Hudders, et al., 2021; Dhun & Dangi, 2023). Therefore, brands must prioritize impact over reach when trying to identify credible SMIs, as the quality of their influence is more important than the quantity (Dhun & Dangi, 2023; Freberg et al., 2011). Building on this, existing research on endorsement marketing highlights source characteristics, namely credibility and congruence, as key predictors of their effectiveness, positively influencing consumers attitudes toward the ad and brand, as well as their purchase intentions (De Veirman et al., 2017; Dhun & Dangi, 2023; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Fink et al., 2020; Gong & Li, 2017; Hudders et al., 2021; Koay et al., 2022; Leung, Gu, Li, et al., 2022; Ohanian, 1990; Reinikainen et al., 2020; Schouten et al., 2020; Tran & Strutton, 2014; Vrontis et al., 2021).

2.5.1. Source Credibility Model (SCM)

A source, as defined by Ohanian (1990), is a message sender or creator (Ohanian, 1990; Lou et al., 2019). Accordingly, source credibility refers to a communicator's positive attributes that influence the receiver's acceptance of the message (Ohanian, 1990) and is closely related to how the audience perceives the quality of the information source (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Koay et al., 2022; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). It encompasses the extent to which the intended audience perceives the source as a reliable, knowledgeable, and credible in providing insights into a product or service (Ohanian, 1990; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Source credibility theory suggests that credibility enhances message acceptance. Thus, the more credible the source, the more effective and persuasive it becomes, and consequently, the more the recipient is influenced by the message (Babić Rosario et al., 2020; Dhun & Dangi, 2023; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Ghosh et al., 2014; Jean Lim et al., 2017; Reinikainen et al., 2020; Schouten et al., 2020). In other words, the persuasiveness and effectiveness of a message largely depend on the SMI's perceived credibility, which significantly influences consumers' beliefs, opinions, and evaluations of the brand and its offerings (Dhun & Dangi, 2023; Hovland et al., 1953; Jean Lim et al., 2017; Koay et al., 2022; Leung, Gu, Li, et al., 2022; Ohanian, 1990; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Vrontis et al., 2021).

Source credibility is a thoroughly researched topic, with multiple conceptualizations emerging over time (Harrigan et al., 2021). Originally, the Source Credibility Model, as introduced by Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953), consisted of two dimensions, namely Expertise and Trustworthiness (Harrigan et al., 2021; Hovland et al., 1953; Trivedi & Sama, 2020; Yuan & Lou, 2020). Later, Ohanian (1990) expanded this framework by proposing a tri-component model, adding Attractiveness as the third dimension (Dhun & Dangi, 2023; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Koay et al., 2022; Ohanian, 1990; Reinikainen et al., 2020; Tran & Strutton, 2014; Wei & Lu, 2013). More recent studies, such as Munnukka, Uusitalo, and Toivonen (2016), introduced Similarity as the fourth dimension for assessing an endorser's credibility (Dhun & Dangi, 2023; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Munnukka et al., 2016; Yuan & Lou, 2020). Accordingly, this study adopts a four-dimensional framework, encompassing Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, and Similarity.

2.5.1.1. Trustworthiness

Source trustworthiness refers to the extent to which a SMI is perceived to be honest, sincere, truthful, reliable and dependable (Erdogan, 1999; Gong & Li, 2017; Harrigan et al., 2021; Jean Lim et al., 2017; Jin et al., 2019; Koay et al., 2022; Ohanian, 1990; Schouten et al., 2020; Yuan

& Lou, 2020). When a SMI is seen as trustworthy, followers are more likely to perceive the information they provide as credible, objective, and honest (Wei & Lu, 2013; Koay et al., 2022). This perception of trustworthiness significantly and positively influences consumers' attitudes and behavioural intentions, including purchase intention, toward the endorsed brand and product (Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Gong & Li, 2017; Jin et al., 2019; Koay et al., 2022; Yuan & Lou, 2020).

2.5.1.2. Expertise

Source expertise refers to the extent to which a SMI is perceived to possess relevant knowledge, skills, or experience in a specific subject area, making them opinion leaders within that niche (Erdogan, 1999; Harrigan et al., 2021; Hudders et al., 2021; Koay et al., 2022; Ohanian, 1990; Schouten et al., 2020; Trivedi & Sama, 2020; Wei & Lu, 2013; Yuan & Lou, 2020). This perception of competence enhances consumers' perception of SMIs as accurate and reliable sources of information (Koay et al., 2022; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Wei & Lu, 2013). Additionally, SMIs who demonstrate a certain level of knowledge and experience with the endorsed products tend to be more persuasive and capable of positively influencing consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions (Gong & Li, 2017; Jean Lim et al., 2017; Koay et al., 2022; Ohanian, 1990; Schouten et al., 2020).

2.5.1.3. Attractiveness

Source attractiveness refers to the extent to which a SMI is perceived to be physically attractive and likeable (De Veirman et al., 2017; Erdogan, 1999; Jean Lim et al., 2017; Wei & Lu, 2013; Yuan & Lou, 2020)ei & Lu, 2013; Yuan & Lou, 2020). Visually appealing SMIs tend to capture followers' attention, increasing the likelihood of message reception and acceptance, even for sponsored content (Jean Lim et al., 2017). Consumers often develop favourable perceptions of attractive SMIs, which can extend to the endorsed brand and product (Erdogan, 1999; Gong & Li, 2017; Jean Lim et al., 2017; Koay et al., 2022; Till & Busler, 1998). Thus, high levels of perceived attractiveness can enhance SMIs' credibility, thereby improving endorsement effectiveness in driving consumers' behavioural intentions, specifically purchase intention (Gong & Li, 2017; Koay et al., 2022; Pöyry et al., 2019; Till & Busler, 2000; Tran & Strutton, 2014; Yuan & Lou, 2020).

2.5.1.4. Similarity

Source similarity refers to extent to which consumers identify with or perceive themselves as similar to the SMI (Chu & Kim, 2011; J. A. Lee & Eastin, 2020; Lou & Yuan, 2019). This perceived similarity can stem from diverse characteristics, including demographic factors such as gender and age, as well as ideological factors such as beliefs and lifestyle choices, significantly influencing how consumers evaluate information (Chu & Kim, 2011; J. A. Lee & Eastin, 2020; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Schouten et al., 2020; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Yuan & Lou, 2020). Similarity inspires trust because what works for a SMI will likely also work for individuals who share similar characteristics (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Accordingly, individuals are more susceptible to be influenced and accept product claims from sources perceived as similar to themselves, as this reduces resistance to the message (Cheung et al., 2022; Jin et al., 2019; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Schouten et al., 2020; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Thus, the more individuals identify with a SMI, the more likely they are to adopt their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours (J. A. Lee & Eastin, 2020; Schouten et al., 2020).

2.5.2. Congruence

According to the literature, in addition to the four dimensions of SCM, congruence is another crucial factor in determining the effectiveness and success of SMI endorsements (De Veirman et al., 2017; Hudders et al., 2021; Jean Lim et al., 2017; Kim & Kim, 2021; Martínez-López et al., 2020; Pöyry et al., 2019; Till & Busler, 1998; Torres et al., 2019; Vrontis et al., 2021).

Congruence refers to the perceived fit between the SMI and the product or service being endorsed (Erdogan, 1999; Hudders et al., 2021; Kim & Kim, 2021; Till & Busler, 1998). This perceived congruence arises from the alignment between the SMI's characteristics, such as image, personality and expertise, and the attributes of the endorsed product or brand's identity (Schouten et al., 2020; Kim & Kim, 2021). Therefore, a product endorsement must seamlessly integrate with the SMI's lifestyle and consumption habits, emerging as a natural extension of their identity (Silva et al., 2020; Vrontis et al., 2021). Furthermore, the product should match the SMI's perceived area of expertise to ensure the endorsement feels genuine and organic (Kim & Kim, 2021; Schouten et al., 2020; Vrontis et al., 2021). Conversely, when there is a mismatch, consumers are more likely to perceive the influencer as inauthentic, untrustworthy, and less credible (Knoll & Matthes, 2017; J. A. Lee & Eastin, 2020; Pöyry et al., 2019; Schouten et al., 2020; Torres et al., 2019). Thus, it is crucial to ensure an appropriate fit between the SMI and the product being endorsed to generate positive attitudes toward the product and brand, and

increase purchase intentions (Hudders et al., 2021; Jean Lim et al., 2017; Kim & Kim, 2021; J. A. Lee & Eastin, 2020; Silva et al., 2020; Torres et al., 2019; Vrontis et al., 2021).

CHAPTER 3

Conceptual Model and Research Hypothesis

The main aim of this study is to understand which factors determine Post Credibility, drawing on the four dimensions of the Source Credibility Model, as proposed by Munnukka, Uusitalo, and Toivonen (2016), along with Congruence. Furthermore, the study explores the influence of Post Credibility on consumers' attitudes and behavioural intentions.

Many studies (e.g., Chu & Kim, 2011; Munnukka et al., 2016; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Schouten, 2020; Koay et al., 2022) have demonstrated the significant and positive influence of SMIs' perceived trustworthiness on consumers' trust in the message and its acceptance. Trust plays a crucial role in how consumers assess the quality of a source, which, in turn, has a significant impact on message credibility (Chu & Kim, 2011). When consumers perceive SMIs as dependable, honest, reliable, sincere, and trustworthy, they are more likely to view the information provided by them as believable and credible (Koay et al., 2022). Thus, we hypothesize that when a bookstagrammer is perceived as trustworthy, they will also be seen as a credible source for book recommendations, which will manifest through increased post credibility:

H1: Trustworthiness has a positive effect on Post Credibility

Likewise, expertise has been shown to have a positive impact on message credibility and acceptance (e.g., Munnukka et al., 2016; Martínez-López et al., 2020; Koay et al., 2022). When SMIs are perceived to be experienced, knowledgeable, and qualified regarding the product or brand they are endorsing, their recommendations are more likely to be seen as authentic, honest, and sincere (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020). Conversely, if they are not perceived as experts in that area, SMI's recommendations will be considered less credible (Schouten et al., 2020). Thus, we hypothesize that when a bookstagrammer is perceived as an expert, they will also be viewed as a credible source for book recommendations, which will manifest through increased post credibility:

H2: Expertise has a positive effect on Post Credibility

Previous research has shown that attractiveness can affect consumers' attitudes toward the message, being positively related to its credibility and acceptance (e.g., Munnukka et al., 2016;

Lou & Yuan, 2019; Torres et al., 2019; Yuan & Lou, 2020; Koay et al., 2022). Thus, when the SMI is perceived as attractive, message credibility increases (Tran & Strutton, 2014). Accordingly, we hypothesize that when a bookstagrammer is considered attractive, they will also be perceived as a credible source for book recommendations, which will manifest through increased post credibility:

H3: Attractiveness has a positive effect on Post Credibility

Existing research on endorsement marketing has also identified perceived similarity as a key factor in determining its effectiveness (e.g., Munnukka et al., 2016; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Martínez-López et al., 2020; Schouten et al., 2020; Yuan & Lou, 2020). When consumers perceive SMIs as similar to themselves in some way, they are more likely to view the information provided by them as authentic and trustworthy, thereby enhancing message credibility and acceptance (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Martínez-López et al., 2020; Schouten et al., 2020). Thus, we hypothesize that when a bookstagrammer is perceived by consumers as similar to themselves, they will be viewed as credible sources of book recommendations, which will manifest through increased post credibility:

H4: Similarity has a positive effect on Post Credibility

Furthermore, congruence is also considered key for SMIs' endorsement effectiveness (e.g., Knoll & Matthes, 2017; Torres et al., 2019; Martínez-López et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2020; Kim & Kim, 2021). The better the perceived fit between the SMI's characteristics and those of the product being endorsed, the greater the message credibility and acceptance (Knoll & Matthes, 2017; Martínez-López et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2020). Conversely, when the product does not align with the SMI's lifestyle, personality, or overall identity, the endorsement is perceived as inauthentic (Knoll & Matthes, 2017; J. A. Lee & Eastin, 2020; Torres et al., 2019). Thus, we hypothesize that when a bookstagrammer is perceived as highly congruent with the book, they will also be viewed as a credible source for book recommendations, which will manifest through increased post credibility:

H5: Congruence has a positive effect on post credibility

Lastly, previous studies (e.g., Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Martínez-López et al., 2020) have shown that consumers are more likely to show positive attitudes and behavioural intentions, including purchase intentions, toward brands and products endorsed by sources they perceive to be credible. Thus, we hypothesize that when a bookstagrammer's post is perceived as credible, consumers will be more interested in the post, more willing to search for more information, and demonstrate a higher purchase intention:

H6: Post Credibility has a positive effect on Interest in the Post

H7: Post Credibility has a positive effect on Willingness to search for more information

H8: Post Credibility has a positive effect on Purchase Intention

Thus, based on these eight hypotheses drawn from the Literature Review conducted, the proposed Conceptual Model is depicted in Figure 3.1.

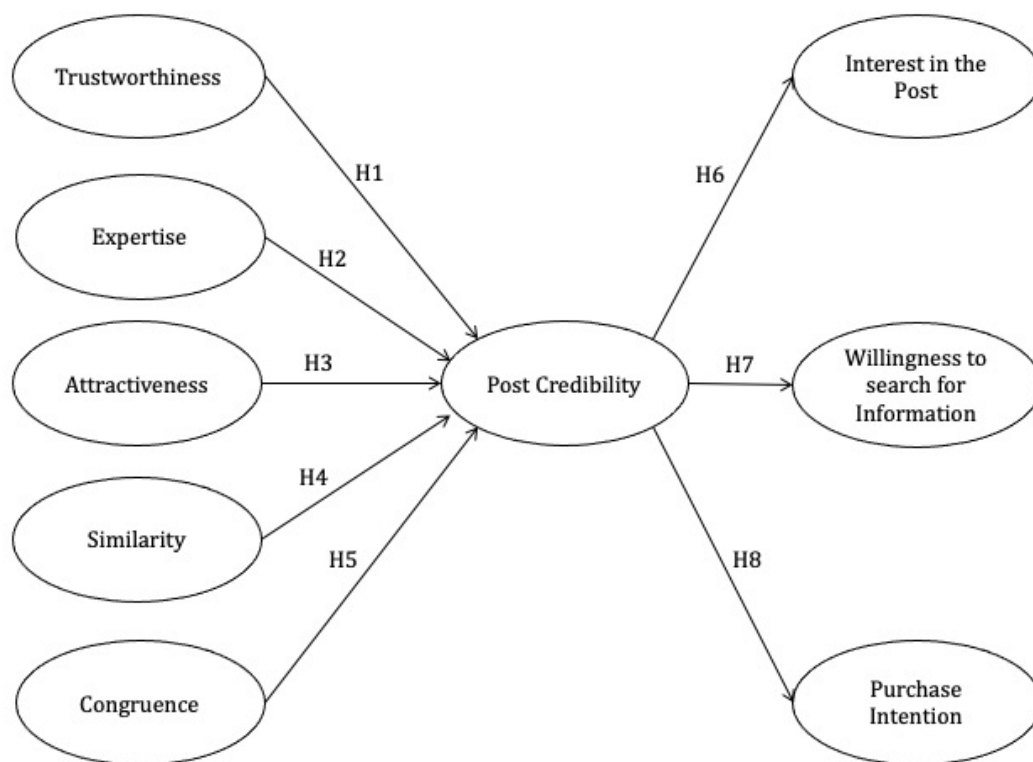


Figure 3.1. Proposed Conceptual Model

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Approach

This study follows a deductive, quantitative, and explanatory approach to investigate both the underlying factors that influence consumers' perceptions of bookstagrammers as credible sources of book recommendations and their effects on consumers' pre-purchase attitudes. As an explanatory study, its purpose is to explain outcome variables, namely consumers' perceptions and pre-purchase behavioural intentions, based on a set of explanatory variables, including perceived credibility. We chose a deductive approach because this method formulates hypothesis based on existing theories and literature, which are then tested through empirical observation. While the realm of bookstagrammers may be relatively new, Influencer Marketing is a well-established topic, making this approach appropriate.

Thus, we first began by collecting secondary data from the extensive literature on Influencer Marketing to gain a comprehensive understanding of its key concepts. This step was crucial, as it helped us identify which constructs to include in our analysis and develop a conceptual model supported by previous studies, detailed in Chapter 3.

Subsequently, to collect primary data and test the validity of the conceptual model in the context of our study, we implemented a structured, self-administered online questionnaire. Evidently, the ideal population for our study would include all Portuguese citizens who use Instagram. However, since it was impossible to survey the entire population, the questionnaire was implemented following a non-random sampling method, specifically convenience sampling, which means participants were selected based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. This method was chosen for its practicality and ability to reach a wide and diverse sample of consumers, quickly and economically.

We opted for a quantitative data collection because it allows us to measure, analyse, and compare data precisely and objectively. As a result, this approach helps identify patterns and relationships among variables, therefore helping us answer our research questions.

The questionnaire was created using Qualtrics, an online platform designed for web-based surveys, and then distributed online through two distinct links, one for each version. The dissemination of the links was done mainly on social media platforms, specifically on Facebook, in Portuguese groups precisely intended for sharing questionnaires. Additionally, the links were also shared on Portuguese readers' groups on Reddit, and with personal contacts through email and WhatsApp, with the purpose of obtaining responses from consumers with varied sociodemographic characteristics.

Prior to its distribution, we conducted a preliminary test (pre-test) with six individuals that were relevant to the study, including one with a PhD in marketing, to evaluate the questionnaire's duration, determine if any adjustments were necessary, and verify if each of the two versions of influencer profiles influenced participants' perceptions as intended. The feedback received during this phase was crucial, as it allowed us to clarify the intentions behind some questions by refining the vocabulary used and simplify the response process by adjusting the Likert-type scales from 7-point to 5-point, for example. It is important to note that these six respondents were not included in the main questionnaire.

The questionnaire was also submitted to ISCTE's Research Ethics Committee before being distributed. In addition, measures were taken to ensure that the data collected was kept confidential, used strictly for academic purposes, and analysed according to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidelines.

4.2. Questionnaire design

To ensure a successful data collection, the questionnaire was meticulously designed, with questions arranged in a logical order and clear instructions on how to respond. To avoid respondent fatigue, the questionnaire was kept as short as possible, and a skip logic was implemented to ensure respondents were only shown questions relevant to their previous answers. Furthermore, ambiguous words were avoided to prevent bias, and a 5-point Likert-type scale was chosen for its simplicity and ease of use. The fact that it has fewer options, compared to a 7-point Likert-type scale, and a clear neutral point, allows respondents to express their opinions quickly and confidently, without feeling overwhelmed.

The questionnaire was initially written in English and proofread by a native English speaker with a PhD in marketing. Corrections and revisions were made based on her suggestions. Since the target audience consisted of Portuguese consumers, the survey was then translated into Portuguese by a native Portuguese speaker, also proficient in English. The accuracy of the translation was verified by the researcher and supervisors, with minor adjustments made to ensure that both versions of the questionnaire conveyed the same meaning. Copies of both the Portuguese and English versions are available in Annex A and Annex B, respectively.

Regarding the structure of the questionnaire, an opening paragraph was included to provide participants with an overview of the study's purpose, to reassure them that their answers would be kept confidential and anonymous, and to clarify that the data would be used for academic purposes only. Respondents were also informed of the estimated time required to complete the questionnaire and given an email contact in case they had any questions or concerns.

To ensure participants met the eligibility criteria for the study, the first question was designed to confirm that respondents were Portuguese. This initial screening question was crucial to ensure that the data collected was relevant to the target population. Only those who met this requirement were allowed to proceed with the questionnaire. Then, the questionnaire was divided into 4 main sections:

In the first section (questions 1 to 5), participants were asked about their Instagram usage. The first question in this section, “How often do you use Instagram?”, also served as an eliminatory question. If participants selected the option 'Never,' they were directed to the end of the questionnaire, as using Instagram was another eligibility criterion. The following questions aimed to determine if participants followed any influencers and, if so, which categories these influencers fit into. Additionally, the questions sought to find out if participants had ever made a purchase that was influenced by an influencer and, if so, whether they had specifically purchased books as a result of such influence. This information was crucial for understanding participants' Instagram usage habits, the type of content they engage with on the platform, and the impact of influencers on their purchasing decisions as this might influence how they respond to the stimulus presented later in the study. Participants who have already purchased something based on an influencer’s recommendation or who are interested in book-related content might be more inclined to respond positively to the stimulus presented.

In the second section (questions 6 to 9), participants were asked about their reading habits. This section aimed to gather information on how many books participants read on average per month, their favourite literary genres, how often do they purchase books, and the importance they place on various sources of book recommendations, rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 corresponds to “Not Important” and 5 to “Very Important”. Understanding participants' reading habits and genre preferences was crucial, as these factors could also influence their responses to the stimulus presented later in the survey. Since the book featured in the subsequent section is a historical romance, participants' opinions might be affected if they typically do not favour this genre.

In the third section of the questionnaire (questions 10 to 19), participants were shown one of two influencer profile descriptions and an Instagram post regarding a book review (Annex C). The book reviewed in the stimuli was *Bridgerton*, a historical romance written by Julia Quinn, chosen for its widespread popularity in both book and television formats (Cardoso, 2024). Two different versions of the questionnaire were created to gain a better understanding of participants’ actual perceptions of Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, Similarity, and Congruence, and their subsequent impact on Post Credibility. In the first version, the stimulus

showed a 24-year-old bookstagrammer whose favourite literary genres were historical romance and young adult, precisely matching the genre of the book shown, and that had an Instagram page dedicated exclusively to reviewing and recommending these types of books. Additionally, the post's photo itself resembled *Bridgerton*'s era setting, to further reinforce the idea that she truly matched the book. Furthermore, she was very involved in the literary industry, as she was pursuing a master's degree in translation while also working part-time at a local bookstore. Thus, the goal for this first profile was to manipulate it in such a way that it would convey the perception of high levels of Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, Similarity, and Congruence with the book. Conversely, in the second version, because we wanted to convey precisely the opposite scenario, this is, low levels of perceived Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, Similarity, and Congruence, the stimulus showed a 32-year-old marketing assistant who focused on sharing marketing-related content on her Instagram page. Moreover, the post's photo did not give particular emphasis to the book, and the description was kept short and simple, without much detail, and with basic hashtags. By being exposed to only one version, participants could provide more genuine and undistracted responses, allowing for a clearer assessment of their reactions and attitudes towards the specific content presented while minimizing bias.

Then, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with several statements (Table 4.1) about the influencer they were shown, using a 5-point Likert scale where 1 corresponds to "Strongly Disagree" and 5 to "Strongly Agree". These statements aimed to assess respondents' perceptions of the bookstagrammers' Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, Similarity, and Congruence with the book. Additionally, the statements also explored participants' reactions to the post, including whether they found it credible, their interest in its content, their willingness to search for more information about the featured book, and their purchase intention. This information was essential to understanding participants' perceptions of the bookstagrammers' credibility and its influence on their attitudes and behaviours. Since the main objective of this section was to gather the necessary data for testing the hypotheses outlined in the previous chapter, the questions in this section were designed to correspond to the indicators selected to measure each construct (Table 4.1). These indicators are drawn from the existing literature and adapted when needed to align with the context of our study.

Table 4.1. Summary of all the indicators used for each construct and the sources from which they were derived

Construct	Items	Reference
Trustworthiness (5 items)	The influencer is honest.	Ohanian, 1990
	The influencer is reliable.	
	The influencer is sincere.	
	The influencer is dependable.	
	The influencer is trustworthy.	
Expertise (5 items)	The influencer is an expert.	Ohanian, 1990
	The influencer is experienced.	
	The influencer is qualified.	
	The influencer is knowledgeable.	
	The influencer is skilled.	
Attractiveness (6 items)	The influencer is attractive.	Lee & Watkins, 2016
	The influencer is pretty/good-looking.	
	The influencer is sexy.	
	The influencer is likeable.	Dimofte et al., 2003
	The influencer is warm.	
Similarity (3 items)	The influencer is friendly.	Bower & Landreth, 2001
	The influencer and I have a lot in common.	
	The influencer and I are a lot alike.	
Congruence (4 items)	I can easily identify with the influencer.	Till & Busler, 1998
	The influencer is appropriate for recommending the book.	
	The influencer is effective at recommending the book.	
	The influencer aligns well with the book.	
Post Credibility (3 items)	The influencer matches well with the book.	Lim et al., 2015
	The post is reliable.	
	The post is credible.	
Interest in the Post (3 items)	The post is believable.	Wei & Lu, 2013
	I am interested in the post's content.	
	I like the post.	
Willingness to search for more Information (3 items)	I have a good impression of the shared content.	Wei & Lu, 2013
	I will search for more information about the book shared by the influencer.	
	I will search for online word-of-mouth about the book shared by the influencer.	
Purchase Intention (7 items)	I will compare prices of the book shared by the influencer.	Dodds et al., 1991
	It is likely that I consider buying the book shared by the influencer.	
	I am willing to buy the book shared by the influencer.	
	I intend to buy the book shared by the influencer.	

I would purchase books shared by this influencer.	See-To & Ho, 2014
I would encourage people close to me to buy the books shared by this influencer.	
I would follow book recommendations from this influencer.	Author's own creation
I would purchase books based on the advice I am given by this influencer.	

In the fourth and last section of the questionnaire (questions 20 to 23) participants were asked about their demographic characteristics, namely age, gender, education level, and employment status.

4.3. Data Analysis

For the demographic characterization and descriptive analysis of the data collected from the sample, we used the IBM SPSS Statistics software, Version 29.0.2.0.

To test the validity of our proposed hypotheses and analyse the relationships between constructs, we employed the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), a multivariate analysis method, utilizing the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach. This analysis was conducted using the SmartPLS software, Version 4.1.0.8.

The PLS-SEM approach has gained prominence for being a more flexible statistical analysis method, as it allows for the analysis of complex models with multiple constructs, even with smaller sample sizes or non-normal data distributions, while still producing viable results. Although it does not have a strict minimum sample size requirement, it is recommended that the sample size be at least ten times the number of arrows pointing to the most complex variable in the model (Hair et al., 2017). In our conceptual model, the maximum number of arrows pointing to a single variable is five, which indicates that our sample should include at least 50 participants.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the period in which the survey was online, from July 26th to August 8th, 2024, a total of 545 responses were obtained, with 256 answers in version 1 and 289 answers in version 2. Even though all 545 respondents were Portuguese, 113 selected 'Never' for the second screening question, “How often do you use Instagram?”, and thus were subsequently excluded from the study, as being Portuguese and an Instagram user were the two criteria for consideration. Additionally, after reviewing the dataset for missing data, another 107 participants who did not complete the questionnaire were also excluded. As a result, the final number of valid responses is 325, with 162 answers in version 1 (49.8%) and 163 answers in version 2 (50.2%).

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

A summary of the characterization of the sample can be seen in Annex D.

5.1.1. Demographic Characterization

The final sample consists of 325 Portuguese respondents, with the majority being female (71.1%), followed by male (28.3%), and a small proportion identifying as nonbinary (0.6%).

In terms of age distribution, the sample includes participants across a wide range of age groups, with the majority of respondents being between 45 and 54 years old, representing 30.2% of the total sample. The next largest groups are the 55-64 age range, with 20.9% of the respondents, and the 18-24 age range, making up 16% of the sample. Participants aged 25-34 and 35-44 account for 15.7% and 11.7% of the sample, respectively, indicating moderate representation of young to middle-aged adults. The least represented age groups are those under 18 and over 64 years old, each constituting only 2.8% of the sample, reflecting a very small proportion of both minors and senior citizens.

Regarding education level, the sample is predominantly composed of individuals with higher education, with the majority holding a bachelor's degree, accounting for 37.2% of the sample. This is followed by master's degree holders making up 20% of the sample, Doctorate holders constituting 12.9% of the sample, and Postgraduate degree holders representing 12% of the sample. Together, these groups account for 82.1% of the sample, reflecting a substantial representation of highly educated individuals. Of the remaining 17.9%, 12.9% of the respondents have completed Secondary Education (10th to 12th grade), 2.5% have only completed Basic Education (1st to 9th grade), 2.2% have completed Technical-Professional

Education, and 0.3%, which corresponds to 1 person, fall into the “Other” category, without specifying further details.

In terms of employment status, the majority of the respondents are employed (77.8%), with 68% working for an employer, and 9.8% being self-employed. The next largest group consists of students, making up 15.4% of the sample. Among the remaining 4%, 1.2% are retired, 1.2% prefer not to disclose their employment status, 1.2% answered “Other” and 0.3% are unable to work.

5.1.2. Instagram Usage

Regarding the frequency with which respondents access Instagram, the vast majority (87.4%) uses Instagram frequently. A significant majority of respondents access Instagram several times a day (62.8%), followed by those who check it once a day (14.8%). This indicates a very high level of engagement with the platform, suggesting that Instagram plays an important role in their daily lives, possibly as a primary source of social interaction, entertainment, and information. A smaller segment of the respondents (12.7%) uses Instagram less frequently, either once a week (2.5%) or less (10.2%), indicating very low engagement with the platform. This suggests that this group may prefer other platforms and use Instagram only for specific purposes or occasional updates or may even not use social media at all.

When it comes to following influencers, even though 61.2% of respondents follow at least one influencer on Instagram, there is still a substantial proportion (38.8%) that does not. This suggests that while influencers may have a significant reach and potential impact within the majority of this sample, the significant proportion of respondents who do not follow influencers might not be interested in influencer content, or may prefer to use Instagram for other purposes, such as connecting with friends, or brands directly, for example, making them potentially less susceptible to be influenced by social media influencers.

Regarding those 61.2% who do follow influencers, the data shows a diverse range of interests among respondents, with the most popular influencer categories selected being Travel (62.8%), Lifestyle (55.3%), and Humour (55.3%). These are closely followed by Fashion and Beauty (49.7%), Cooking and Recipes (40.2%), and Health and Well-being (39.2%), which also have a notable following. Although Fitness and Sports (36.7%) and Books (36.2%) are somewhat less popular, they are still meaningful, accounting for 36.7% and 36.2% of the total responses, respectively. Within the “Other” category (11.1%), respondents mentioned Art (0.6%), Christians, Personal Development, Radical Feminism, Finance, Photography, Crochet, Information, IT/Computing, Music, and Restoration of Antique Pieces (0.3% each).

When asked about how often they buy products or services by recommendation of an influencer, a significant majority of respondents (77.3%) either rarely (46.2%) or never (31.1%) does so. This suggests that the generality of the sample may not be significantly influenced by influencer recommendations. Among the smaller proportion (22.5%) that shows some level of susceptibility, only 2.5% can be considered highly influenced, with just 0.3% very frequently making purchases based on influencer recommendations, which corresponds to only one person in the sample. This suggests that most respondents in this sample are either indifferent or resistant to making purchases based on influencer recommendations. Among those who have made a purchase based on an influencer's recommendation, for the slight majority of respondents (53.1%) this did not include buying a book.

5.1.3. Reading Habits

When it comes to the reading habits of the sample, specifically regarding how many books they read, on average, per month, most respondents (70.5%) read between 1 and 3 books per month, with 51.1% reading 1 book per month. This suggests that reading is a fairly active habit among the majority of the sample. However, nearly a quarter of the sample (24.6%) does not read any books on a monthly basis. The remaining 5% are avid readers, consuming 4 to 5 books per month (2.5%), or even more (2.5%).

Concerning respondents' favourite book genres, romance is the most popular among the sample, with 58.2% of the respondents selecting it as one of their favourites. Thus, suggesting that romance novels have a broad appeal within the sample. Fiction and Mystery/Thriller also rank highly, with 40.9% and 36.9% of respondents choosing these genres, respectively. These are closely followed by Biography/Memoirs, with 35.7% of respondents showing interest in this genre. Less popular genres include Science Fiction and Fantasy, each selected by 15.1% of the sample, suggesting a more niche appeal. "Other" genres account for 14.2%, with respondents mentioning History, Art, Scientific, Religious, Personal Development, Economics, Philosophy, Politics, Design, Education, Spirituality, Finance, Business, Entrepreneurship, Stock Market, Humour, Marketing, Poetry, and technical books.

When it comes to buying books, only 8.6% of the sample never purchases books at all. Among the 91.4% of respondents who do buy books, the largest segment does so sporadically, with 63.4% purchasing books less than once a month. A smaller proportion of 27.7% buys books either once (17.5%) or a few times (10.2%) a month, indicating an occasional but still consistent purchasing behaviour, which is more frequent when compared to the majority.

Notably, only 0.3% of the respondents buy books every week, which corresponds to just one individual.

Regarding the importance respondents place on the various sources of book recommendations, Friends and Family emerged as the most consensual, with 83.1% of the sample rating it as important (47.7%) or very important (35.4%). Only 3.7% viewed it as having little (2.5%) to no importance (1.2%), while 13.2% remained neutral. This indicates that personal connections play a significant role in influencing book choices for the majority of respondents. Social Media presented a more divided opinion as 39.4% of respondents rated it as important (34.8%) to very important (4.6%), but a notable 28.6% placed little (19.1%) to no importance (9.5%) on this source, and 32% remained neutral. This suggests that social media has a moderate but less universal influence compared to friends and family. Literature Blogs or Websites received a moderately favourable response, with 55.7% of the sample considering it important (47.1%) to very important (8.6%). However, 18.8% viewed it as slightly (11.1%) to unimportant (7.7%), while 25.5% remained neutral, indicating that while these platforms are valued by many, a substantial portion (44.3%) of the audience is either indifferent or does not rely on them. Interestingly, Influencers/Bookstagrammers were viewed as only slightly (17.2%) to unimportant (22.8%) by 40% of the sample, while another 30.2% remained neutral. Only 29.8% of respondents considered them as an important to very important source for book recommendations, with just 5.8% rating them as very important. This suggests that, despite their growing popularity, bookstagrammers do not hold as strong a position as other recommendation sources, with a significant proportion of respondents (70.2%) either indifferent or dismissive of their influence. Book Clubs and Newspapers/Magazines showed similar patterns. 46.5% of respondents considered book clubs to be important (39.1%) or very important (7.4%), and 44.3% felt the same about newspapers and magazines (36.9% and 7.4%, respectively). Both sources had relatively high neutral responses, with 32.3% on book clubs, and 34.5% on newspapers and magazines, indicating that these more traditional sources still hold relative relevance, though opinions are mixed. Finally, Recommendation algorithms (e.g., Goodreads, Kobo, Amazon) garnered the highest level of neutrality, with 41.2% of respondents being neutral toward their importance. Only 18.1% found them important (13.8%) to very important (4.3%), while 40.6% considered them of little (18.8%) to no importance (21.8%). This suggests that while algorithm-based recommendations are widely used, they are not yet fully embraced or trusted as key influencers in the decision-making process.

5.2. Validation of the Conceptual Model

To validate the quality of our proposed conceptual model, we conducted a PLS model test that is carried out in two steps. First, we tested the measurement model to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs used, and then tested the structural model, to analyse the relationships between the constructs.

5.2.1. Evaluation of the Measurement Model

Reliability and validity are fundamental concepts in research, particularly because the accuracy and credibility of results depend largely on how well the indicators used measure each construct. Thus, it is extremely important to assure the validity and reliability of these indicators, to ensure that the data collected is both accurate and consistent, and that we can generalize the study's findings. It is important to note that an unreliable measure can never be valid. Reliability is, therefore, a necessary condition for validity. It is not possible for a measure to be valid but not reliable.

5.2.1.1. Reliability

Reliability refers to the internal consistency of the scales used to measure a certain construct. It is crucial to ensure that the items within a scale are consistent with one another because reliable instruments increase data precision by reducing the influence of random error.

To confirm individual indicator reliability and internal consistency reliability, we calculated the standardized factor loadings, the Cronbach's Alpha and the Composite Reliability (CR) for each construct.

Standardized factor loadings are numerical values that represent the strength and direction of the relationships between indicators and their respective latent constructs, indicating how well each indicator contributes to its corresponding construct. A higher loading suggests that the indicator is a strong predictor of the construct. Values typically range from -1 to +1, where a loading around 0 suggest no relationship. Loadings closer to +1 indicate a strong positive relationship, while those closer to -1 indicate a strong negative relationship. Examining the standardized factor loadings of all the indicators for the variables under study (Annex E), we can verify that they are all above 0.6, which is considered indicative of a strong relationship. Furthermore, based on the p -value associated with the t -statistics, we have evidence to conclude that all individual indicators are reliable at a 0.1% significance level (all $p < 0.001$), thus confirming individual indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2017).

The Cronbach's Alpha is a measure of internal consistency reliability commonly used to assess the reliability of a set of measurement indicators, with values ranging from 0 to 1. Similarly, composite reliability (CR) evaluates how well a set of indicators represents a single underlying construct, with values also ranging from 0 to 1. High values, generally above 0.7, indicate that the items consistently measure the same underlying construct and are, therefore, considered reliable. Based on the results shown in Table 5.1 below, since all constructs' Cronbach's Alphas (α) and CR values are well above the threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017), this indicated strong consistency between the indicators used to measure each construct, thereby confirming internal consistency reliability.

Table 5.1. Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted, Correlations, and Discriminant Validity checks

Variable	α	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
(1) Trust-worthiness	.940	.954	.806	.898	.536	.536	.404	.505	.790	.655	.407	.603
(2) Expertise	.906	.930	.726	.615	.852	.427	.466	.684	.680	.596	.360	.616
(3) Attractiveness	.855	.888	.572	.514	.405	.756	.361	.612	.597	.489	.220	.387
(4) Similarity	.928	.954	.873	.382	.427	.328	.934	.415	.429	.662	.536	.666
(5) Congruence	.880	.917	.733	.470	.623	.522	.388	.856	.647	.598	.328	.578
(6) Post Credibility	.902	.939	.837	.731	.627	.559	.407	.591	.915	.676	.351	.613
(7) Interest in the Post	.902	.938	.835	.609	.545	.457	.604	.550	.622	.914	.685	.835
(8) Willingness to search for more information	.928	.954	.874	.380	.330	.204	.499	.306	.326	.619	.935	.720
(9) Purchase Intention	.947	.957	.759	.575	.578	.368	.622	.542	.581	.763	.659	.871

Author's own creation. The bolded numbers represent the square roots of AVE. The correlations between the constructs are displayed below the bolded diagonal elements, while the HTMT ratios are shown above the bolded diagonal elements.

5.2.1.2. Validity

Validity refers to whether each instrument accurately measures the construct it is intended to measure. To ensure that the constructs measured by a questionnaire truly represent the theoretical concepts they aim to capture, it is crucial that the items correspond appropriately to those constructs for which they were developed. Otherwise, any conclusions drawn from the data could be flawed as the relationships found between constructs could be invalid.

To confirm convergent and discriminant validity, we also calculated the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratios (HTMT) for each construct in our model.

AVE is a measure used in PLS to assess the amount of variance that is captured by a construct in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error. It indicates the level of convergent validity, which reflects how well the indicators correlate with their underlying latent construct. Since, as previously mentioned, all indicators show positive and significant associations with their respective constructs, all constructs have CR values greater than 0.7, and, as shown in Table 5.1, all AVE values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2017), we can confirm convergent validity. In fact, except for Attractiveness, all AVE values are above 0.7, which means that each construct explains more than 70% of the variance from its indicators, confirming strong convergent validity. Furthermore, this suggests that a large portion of the variance is attributed to the construct itself rather than random error. Thus, we can conclude that all constructs are well-defined, as all indicators are highly correlated with their respective constructs, and thus, effectively represent their underlying dimensions. Even so, it is still worth mentioning that Willingness to search for more information (0.874) and Similarity (0.873) are the two constructs with the highest AVE values, capturing almost 90% of their variance, closely followed by Post Credibility (0.837) and Interest in the Post (0.835). The lowest value, yet still above the critical threshold, is Attractiveness, with an AVE of 0.572.

To confirm discriminant validity and ensure that each construct is distinct and different from all the other constructs in the model, we first applied the Fornell and Larcker criterion, which requires that the square root of each construct's AVE be greater than its highest correlation with any other construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). By examining the diagonal values in bold in Table 5.1, that represent the square roots of AVE, we have evidence to conclude that this criterion is satisfied for all constructs. Next, we applied the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) criterion proposed by Henseler et al. (2015), that is considered to be a more sensitive and reliable method for evaluating discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2017). Based on the HTMT ratios shown above the diagonal elements in bold in Table 5.1, we confirm that all values are below the stringent threshold of 0.85, thus providing additional evidence that all the constructs in our model are sufficiently distinct from each other, further supporting discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2017).

These results indicate that the items intended to measure each construct effectively do so, and that all constructs are measured consistently across the sample. This confirms that our measurement model is both reliable and valid, allowing us to trust that it will produce

meaningful and trustworthy findings. Thus, we can confidently proceed to the evaluation of the structural model.

5.3. Evaluation of the Structural Model and Testing of the Hypotheses

To evaluate the structural model in PLS, we examined the sign, magnitude, and significance of the structural Path Coefficients, along with the values of Explained Variance (R^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2) for each dependent variable, to assess our model's predictive accuracy and relevance, respectively (Hair et al., 2017).

First, before evaluating the structural model, we checked for multicollinearity among the independent variables (predictors) by analysing their Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, as shown in Annex F. Since all VIF values are below the critical threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 2017), ranging from 1 to 2.160, we can conclude that there is no significant correlation among the independent variables under study. Thus, this allows us to confidently interpret the relationships between the variables in our model.

Explained Variance (R^2) refers to the proportion of the variance in a dependent variable that is explained by one or more independent variables in the model. Thus, it measures our model's predictive accuracy, because it reflects how well the independent variables collectively account for the variation in the dependent variable. R^2 values range from 0 to 1, where 1 indicates that the model explains all the variance in the dependent variable. Therefore, higher values represent greater predictive accuracy (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 5.2. Explained Variance (R^2)

Variables	R^2
Post Credibility	.641
Interest in the Post	.387
Willingness to search for more information	.106
Purchase Intention	.338

Based on the R^2 of the dependent variables in Table 5.2, we can conclude that all exceed the 10% threshold (Falk & Miller, 1992), even if only slightly in the case of Willingness to search for more information (10.6%). Specifically, our model accounts for 64.1% of the variance in Post Credibility, leaving the remaining 35.9% unexplained. Additionally, it also explains a considerable portion of the variance in Interest in the Post (38.7%) and Purchase Intention (33.8%).

Predictive Relevance (Q^2), estimated through the blindfolding procedure in SmartPLS, is another measure used to assess the predictive accuracy of a model, as it evaluates its ability to accurately predict data that was not included in the estimation process. Thus, it helps determine if the model's predictions are reliable beyond just the data it was built on, ensuring it works well in different situations. Q^2 values greater than 0 indicate that the model has predictive relevance for a specific outcome (dependent variable), with higher values representing greater predictive accuracy (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 5.3. Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Variables	Q^2
Post Credibility	.624
Interest in the Post	.442
Willingness to search for more information	.145
Purchase Intention	.402

Based on the Q^2 values for the dependent variables shown in Table 5.3 above, we can infer that our model reflects strong predictive relevance for Post Credibility (0.624), as well as substantial predictive relevance for Interest in the Post (0.442) and Purchase Intention (0.402). Thus, our model can reliably predict outcomes for new data concerning these three dependent variables. However, when it comes to Willingness to search for more information (0.145), our model only demonstrates moderately low predictive relevance for this specific outcome, and thus, caution is required when generalizing findings.

Table 5.4 summarizes the hypothesis testing obtained from the SmartPLS bootstrapping procedure, which allows us to analyse the significance of the beta coefficients (path coefficients) and, if significant, the strength of the relationship between constructs.

Table 5.4. Hypotheses Tests Results

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	p -values	Support of Hypothesis
H1: Trustworthiness $\rightarrow$ Post Credibility	.456	.000	Supported
H2: Expertise $\rightarrow$ Post Credibility	.149	.022	Supported
H3: Attractiveness $\rightarrow$ Post Credibility	.152	.001	Supported
H4: Similarity $\rightarrow$ Post Credibility	.047	.229	Not Supported
H5: Congruence $\rightarrow$ Post Credibility	.186	.001	Supported

H6: Post Credibility → Interest in the Post	.622	.000	Supported
H7: Post Credibility → Willingness to search for more information	.326	.000	Supported
H8: Post Credibility → Purchase Intention	.581	.000	Supported

By examining the *p*-values in Table 5.4, we can conclude that Trustworthiness has, without a doubt, the most significant impact on Post Credibility ($\beta=0.456$, $p<0.001$), which is consistent with existing research (e.g., Chu & Kim, 2011; Munnukka et al., 2016; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Schouten, 2020; Koay et al., 2022). Thus, our results confirm that trustworthiness, often considered the most important dimension underlying source credibility (Friedman & Friedman, 1979), does in fact significantly influence how Portuguese consumers evaluate the quality of the source and, consequently, has a direct impact on their perception of message credibility. When bookstagrammers provide book recommendations, consumers need to trust that these suggestions are genuine and unbiased, rather than merely paid advertisements. As readers, consumers do not have unlimited time or money to spend on books they may not enjoy, making them value honest and authentic opinions. A bookstagrammer perceived as trustworthy is likely to be sincere and share both the positive and negative aspects of a book, which enhances the credibility of their recommendations. Furthermore, even if a bookstagrammer is perceived as an expert, attractive, congruent with the book, and similar to consumers, their credibility may be severely undermined if they are not perceived as honest, reliable, sincere, and dependable. Without trust, even the most knowledgeable bookstagrammers' recommendations may be dismissed. If consumers sense that the bookstagrammer is driven primarily by commercial interests or other ulterior motives rather than genuine passion or sincerity, it significantly damages their believability and credibility, regardless of the books they recommend.

Congruence follows as the second most significant construct influencing Post Credibility ($\beta=0.186$, $p<0.01$). This finding supports the results of previous studies (e.g., Knoll & Matthes, 2017; Martínez-López et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2020) and further highlights the importance of congruence in shaping Portuguese consumers' assessment of message credibility in the specific context of bookstagrammers' recommendations. When Portuguese consumers perceive a strong alignment between a bookstagrammer's established identity and the books they recommend, it fosters a sense of coherence that reinforces the belief that the recommendations are genuine and authentic, further strengthening the perceived credibility of the recommendation. This congruence goes beyond simply liking the genre of the book, it also encompasses a deeper

connection between the book's content and the bookstagrammer's background, personal experiences, or any aspect other of their identity. Whether through shared themes, values, or even life experiences, this connection enhances the perception that the book recommendation is genuine and reflects the bookstagrammer's true tastes and opinions, rather than being driven by commercial motivations. As a result, consumers are more likely to trust and rely on bookstagrammers who stay true to their personal brand and recommend books that naturally and organically align with their image and past content. Additionally, this consistency can help to build credibility over time, as bookstagrammers who continuously recommend books that resonate with their core values and identity become perceived as more dependable and trustworthy. Thus, to strengthen Portuguese consumers' perceptions of message credibility and overall trustworthiness of the recommendation, bookstagrammers should endorse books that not only match their literary preferences but also align with their personality, values, and life experiences. This deeper level of congruence contributes significantly to shaping consumer trust and enhancing the perceived authenticity of book recommendations.

According to our findings, Attractiveness ($\beta=0.152$, $p<0.01$) and Expertise ($\beta=0.149$, $p<0.05$) also have a positive impact on Post Credibility, though to a smaller extent. While attractiveness does influence credibility, thus supporting the findings of other researchers (e.g., Munnukka et al., 2016; Martínez-López et al., 2020; Koay et al., 2022), its relatively lower effect compared to other factors may stem from its reduced relevance in a domain like bookstagram. This may be due to the nature of the content shared by bookstagrammers, where the focus is primarily on literary insights rather than their physical appearance. When consumers evaluate the credibility of a book recommendation, they are more likely to appreciate the bookstagrammer's depth of knowledge, passion for reading, and genuine connection to the book being discussed, rather than their appearance. Consequently, even though bookstagrammers' attractiveness positively influences Portuguese consumers' impressions of their recommendations, once exposed to such content, consumers are likely to seek a deeper understanding of the motivations behind the bookstagrammers' recommendation (Torres et al., 2019). Given that the core purpose of book recommendations is to review and discuss the actual books, it is understandable that other characteristics, such as trustworthiness and congruence, have a greater influence on how credible the bookstagrammer is perceived to be. However, the attractiveness dimension goes beyond mere physical appearance and also encompasses traits such as the likability, warmth, and friendliness of the bookstagrammer. If Portuguese consumers perceive bookstagrammers as approachable and friendly, this could foster a sense of familiarity, potentially leading them to view the bookstagrammer as a friend. Since friends

are often trusted, this sense of personal connection could, in turn, enhance perceptions of trustworthiness, ultimately strengthening the bookstagrammer's credibility as a source of book recommendations. Thus, even if it has a smaller impact on establishing credibility in this specific context, attractiveness should not be discarded.

Our findings are consistent with previous studies regarding Expertise (e.g., Lou & Yuan, 2019; Torres et al., 2019; Yuan & Lou, 2020;), as this dimension does influence, even if to a lesser extent, Portuguese consumers' perceptions of bookstagrammers as credible sources of book recommendations. The fact that expertise has the lowest impact among all the dimensions that significantly influence post credibility may be attributed to the nature of the book used in the stimuli. Since it is a fictional light historical romance, expertise may not be seen as a critical requirement for Portuguese consumers to view the bookstagrammer as a credible source for recommending this specific book genre. Since *Bridgerton* falls into a popular and relatively accessible genre, the bookstagrammer does not necessarily need to be an expert in romance literature to make a recommendation of this specific book seem credible. Instead, ensuring that they appear trustworthy and that the book seems an extension of themselves is more important in shaping Portuguese consumers perceptions of credibility. In this specific context, keeping in mind the focus of these findings is a light romance, it is interesting to note that congruence is more relevant to establish credibility than expertise. Expertise in a genre like romance, which can be highly subjective and less technical, may be somewhat relative and not as easy to evaluate by consumers. However, it is important to consider that if the stimulus had featured a different type of book, such as a non-fiction work, a technical manual, or a book addressing a specialized topic, the perceived expertise of the bookstagrammer would likely have had a much stronger effect on determining their credibility. In these cases, consumers would expect the bookstagrammer to demonstrate a deep knowledge of the subject matter to be seen as a trustworthy and reliable source of recommendations.

Interestingly, contrary to our initial expectations, Similarity does not have a significant impact on Post Credibility, contradicting the findings of many studies on influencer marketing effectiveness (e.g., Munnukka et al., 2016; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Martínez-López et al., 2020; Schouten et al., 2020; Yuan & Lou, 2020). Our findings suggest that, in this specific context, Portuguese consumers place a greater importance on the three other dimensions of the source credibility model and congruence with the book being recommended, rather than on any perceived shared similarities with the bookstagrammer. One possible explanation is that, because book recommendations are highly intellectual and content-driven, consumers may prioritize bookstagrammers' ability to articulate thoughtful and in-depth

analyses of the plot, characters, or writing style. A bookstagrammer who demonstrates a deep understanding of literature, or the themes addressed in the book being recommended can establish credibility among Portuguese consumers through their knowledge, expertise, and alignment with the book, regardless of whether they share similar demographics or values. Moreover, reading is a deeply personal and subjective experience, making it distinct from other areas where shared characteristics often lead to similar preferences or behaviours. Unlike fields where individuals with common traits typically gravitate toward the same products, literature transcends such boundaries. Anyone, regardless of their background, appearance, or personal traits, can enjoy the same literary work, especially one as light and universally popular as *Bridgerton*. People may connect with the same book for entirely different reasons, even if they are nothing alike. Portuguese consumers may prioritize how relevant the book's content is to their interests, rather than whether the bookstagrammer shares their demographics or beliefs, when assessing the credibility of a recommendation. Thus, even if a bookstagrammer does not share any obvious similarities with a particular consumer, their recommendation can still carry significant weight. In this context, perceptions of expertise within the genre or trust in the bookstagrammer's judgment are more influential in establishing credibility than shared similarities. The focus is more on the book's relevance and the authenticity of the recommendation, rather than the personal alignment between the consumer and the bookstagrammer. Additionally, while perceived similarity is often important in influencer endorsements effectiveness, its impact depends on the type of product being endorsed (Schouten et al., 2020). In this case, since a book is unlikely to make the consumer feel more similar to the bookstagrammer, similarity is less effective. This contrasts with other products where shared characteristics with the influencer might be more relevant for establishing credibility (Schouten et al., 2020). Thus, in the realm of book recommendations, factors such as Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, and Congruence with the book outweigh the need for similarity between bookstagrammers and Portuguese consumers in shaping perceptions of credibility.

Lastly, our findings provide support for H6, H7, and H8, as Post Credibility significantly and positively impacts Interest in the Post ($\beta=0.622$, $p<0.001$), Willingness to search for more information ($\beta=0.326$, $p<0.001$), and Purchase Intention ($\beta=0.581$, $p<0.001$). These results are consistent with those of past studies (e.g., Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Martínez-López et al., 2020), which have shown that consumers tend to exhibit more positive attitudes and heightened behavioural intentions, including purchase intentions, toward brands and products endorsed by credible sources. Accordingly, in the bookstagram context, post

credibility plays a critical role in sparking Portuguese consumers' interest in the post, encouraging them to explore further, and ultimately increasing their intention to purchase the recommended book. The reason post credibility can drive these behaviours is rooted in the trust and believability it fosters. When consumers perceive that a bookstagrammer is credible, whether through demonstrated Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, or Congruence with the recommended book, they are more likely to value their opinions and recommendations. This trust leads to a deeper engagement with the post, as consumers feel that the recommendation is sincere and well-informed. As a result, they are more likely to invest time in learning more about the book, searching for additional details or reviews to further validate their interest. Furthermore, credibility reduces perceived risk (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), making consumers more comfortable with the idea of purchasing the book. If they trust the bookstagrammer, they are less likely to feel sceptical about the book's quality or relevance, and more inclined to believe that the recommendation aligns with their preferences. This chain of trust, exploration, and validation ultimately increases purchase intention, as Portuguese consumers are reassured that they are making an informed and worthwhile decision. Thus, our findings provide empirical evidence that message credibility positively influences Portuguese consumers' pre-purchase behavioural intentions in the context of book recommendations.

5.4. Multigroup Analysis

A multigroup analysis was conducted to test for statistically significant differences between the two versions of the questionnaire. Table 5.5 summarizes the results.

Table 5.5. Results of the Multigroup Analysis

Hypothesis	Complete		Version 1		Version 2		Permutation <i>p</i> -value
	Path Coefficient	<i>p</i> - values	Path Coefficient	<i>p</i> - values	Path Coefficient	<i>p</i> - values	
H1: Trustworthiness → Post Credibility	.456	.000	.550	.000	.286	.000	.008
H2: Expertise → Post Credibility	.149	.022	.018	.803	.281	.002	.051*
H3: Attractiveness → Post Credibility	.152	.001	.019	.755	.246	.000	.010
H4: Similarity → Post Credibility	.047	.229	.012	.810	.021	.737	.890
H5: Congruence → Post Credibility	.186	.001	.348	.000	.148	.068	.066*

H6: Post Credibility → Interest in the Post	.622	.000	.618	.000	.625	.000	.916
H7: Post Credibility → Willingness to search for more information	.326	.000	.368	.000	.269	.000	.382
H8: Post Credibility → Purchase Intention	.581	.000	.604	.000	.567	.000	.646

* Congruence and Expertise are significant at a 10% significance level, which corresponds to a 90% confidence level, rather than the conventional 95%

When analysing the data separately for each questionnaire version, we observe that both Expertise and Attractiveness lose their influence on Post Credibility in the first version ($\beta=0.018$, $p=0.803$ and $\beta=0.019$, $p=0.755$, respectively). This unexpected result can be attributed to the first version's stimulus, which was designed to portray a bookstagrammer with high levels of perceived Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, and Congruence. As previously noted, our overall findings demonstrate that Trustworthiness and Congruence are the most important factors influencing Portuguese consumers' perceptions of post credibility in the context of book recommendations. Given that this first version of the questionnaire effectively conveys strong perceptions of these two dimensions simultaneously, the relative importance of Expertise and Attractiveness may diminish or be overshadowed. The strong emphasis on Trustworthiness and Congruence in this scenario may allow consumers to perceive the bookstagrammer as credible based solely on these attributes, thereby reducing the need to evaluate her Expertise or Attractiveness in determining the credibility of her recommendations. Furthermore, since this first version presents an idealized bookstagrammer who is deeply involved in the literary industry, has a genuine passion for historical romances, and maintains an Instagram page dedicated to in-depth reviews of the books she reads, consumers may overlook the need for specific expertise or attractiveness. Thus, when a bookstagrammer is perceived as trustworthy and congruent with the book they are recommending, Portuguese consumers do not feel the need to further evaluate any other factors to believe the recommendation is credible.

However, in the second version, the bookstagrammer is depicted as having lower levels of perceived Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, and Congruence. In this scenario, where the bookstagrammer lacks strong trustworthiness cues, Portuguese consumers may feel the need to seek alternative indicators to evaluate the credibility of the post. As such, the

bookstagrammer's perceived Expertise and Attractiveness may become more prominent and play a compensatory role in influencing Post Credibility, as consumers search for additional cues to inform their judgment. Thus, when consumers perceive the bookstagrammer's Trustworthiness as low, they are more likely to rely on superficial or secondary factors, such as Attractiveness and Expertise, to evaluate the credibility of the recommendation, compensating for the lack of trustworthiness.

The fact that congruence does not significantly influence Portuguese consumers' perceptions of message credibility in the second version of the questionnaire may be due to varying perceptions of the bookstagrammer's alignment with the book. This variability could stem from the fact that, as previously discussed, anyone, regardless of demographics, appearance, area of expertise, or other personal traits, can enjoy the same literary work, particularly one as light and universally popular as *Bridgerton*. Unlike more tangible factors such as Expertise, which can be inferred from the bookstagrammer's knowledge or content depth, Congruence is more abstract. As a result, evaluating whether a bookstagrammer is congruent with a specific book can be highly subjective and open to individual interpretation. For instance, two consumers might look at the bookstagrammer in the second version's stimulus and come to different conclusions about how well she aligns with *Bridgerton*, especially since she also has an Instagram page dedicated to posting reviews about books, even if mostly about marketing-related books. This subjectivity makes it harder to get a consistent measure of Congruence, and when responses are highly varied, this variability can weaken the strength of its statistical relationship with Post Credibility.

Based on the permutation p-values in Table 5.5, we can conclude that these are the only four significant differences between the two versions, highlighting the complex dynamics of how consumers evaluate credibility based on varying contexts and perceived attributes.

5.5. Theoretical Contributions

Source credibility theory has been widely used in marketing and communication to explain how the perceived credibility of a source impacts consumers' attitudes and behaviours. However, while several studies have explored the perceived credibility of celebrities and, more recently, social media influencers, most have focused on product categories such as technology or fashion, for example.

Thus, this study contributes to the theoretical framework in several ways by extending existing research on influencer marketing, source credibility, and consumer behaviour. Specifically, it investigates whether and how each dimension of the source credibility model,

along with congruence, influences consumers' perceptions of credibility and shapes their pre-purchase intentions within a new product category and market – books in Portugal.

Our findings show that, based on the strength of the path coefficients, Trustworthiness, Congruence, Attractiveness, and Expertise have a significant and positive impact on Portuguese consumers' perceptions of Post Credibility.

Trustworthiness emerges as the most influential dimension on Post Credibility, both when examined collectively and individually in each questionnaire version, further reinforcing its role as a key factor underlying source credibility within the context of book recommendations.

The second most important factor significantly impacting Portuguese consumers' perceived post credibility is the Congruence between the bookstagrammer and the book being recommended. However, our findings also suggest that, in the realm of books, this construct may be particularly susceptible to subjective evaluation, especially when the book in question is not technical or one that addresses a specific topic. Since anyone, regardless of demographics, appearance, area of expertise, or any other personal traits, can enjoy the same literary genre, determining whether a bookstagrammer is congruent with a specific book can be highly subjective and open to individual interpretation.

Attractiveness, while still positively and significantly influencing post credibility, has a relatively lower impact compared to other factors, ranking third in terms of influence. This may be due to the nature of content shared by bookstagrammers, where the focus is primarily on literary insights rather than their physical appearance. Given that books are more intellectual in nature, when evaluating the credibility of a recommendation, consumers may prioritize cues such as the perceived sincerity of the claims or the alignment between the book and the bookstagrammer. However, the attractiveness dimension also includes qualities such as likeability, warmth, and friendliness. If the bookstagrammer displays these traits, it could lead Portuguese consumers to perceive them more as a friend, which enhances credibility. Thus, in this context, the influence of attractiveness may be less about physical appearance and more about personal relatability, unlike in areas like fashion, for example, where physical appearance carries greater weight.

Finally, Expertise emerges as the dimension with the least impact on influencing Portuguese consumers' perceptions of bookstagrammers' recommendation credibility. This may be attributable to the fact that the book used in the stimuli was a fictional, light historical romance, which falls into a popular and relatively accessible genre. In such a genre, the bookstagrammer does not need to be perceived as an expert for their recommendation to appear credible. Additionally, expertise in a genre like romance can be more subjective and harder to

evaluate, unlike technical books or those on specialized topics where consumers may feel a stronger need to trust the bookstagrammer's expertise in order to believe their claims.

However, both Attractiveness and Expertise gain increased relevance in scenarios where perceived trustworthiness is lower, as Portuguese consumers may seek additional cues to assess the credibility of the recommendation, compensating for the lack of trust. Thus, while these two dimensions may not be as influential as Trustworthiness and Congruence, they should not be overlooked, as they can help enhance perceptions of credibility when other dimensions fall short.

Furthermore, our findings indicate that, in the context of book recommendations, Similarity does not play a role in shaping Portuguese consumers' perceptions of post credibility. Given that books are intellectual and content-driven, and anyone, regardless of their characteristics, can enjoy any book genre, shared similarities between the bookstagrammer and consumer may hold less importance in shaping credibility in this domain. Even without shared characteristics, a bookstagrammer's recommendation can still carry substantial weight if they are perceived as trustworthy, congruent with the book, attractive, or knowledgeable. Thus, in the context of book recommendations, dimensions such as Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, and Congruence with the book outweigh the need for similarity in shaping Portuguese consumers' perceptions of credibility.

Lastly, our results provide strong evidence of the clear and positive impact of message credibility on Portuguese consumers' pre-purchase behavioural intentions, specifically their interest in the post, intention to purchase, and to a lesser extent, willingness to search for more information, within the context of book recommendations. When consumers perceive a bookstagrammer as credible, they are more likely to value their opinions and recommendations, which in turn motivates them to invest time in searching for more information about the book, ultimately increasing their intention to purchase it. This underscores the importance of establishing credibility in driving consumer engagement and potential purchasing behaviour.

5.6. Practical Implications

From a practical perspective, the findings of our study also provide valuable recommendations for both brands and marketers interested in employing effective influencer marketing strategies, specifically with social media influencers who share book-related content on Instagram, as well as for the bookstagrammers themselves, by offering insights into the factors that influence Portuguese consumers' perceptions of credibility in the context of book recommendations, as well as the impact this perception has their pre-purchase intentions.

For brands and marketers, our findings suggest that when trying to identify and select credible bookstagrammers to endorse their books, priority should be given to those who are perceived as highly trustworthy by their followers and consumers in general. Perceived trustworthiness plays a critical role in enhancing the credibility of their recommendations, which directly contributes to stronger pre-purchase behavioural intentions, ultimately possibly leading to higher book purchase rates.

Additionally, brands should collaborate with bookstagrammers whose established identities align with the genre of the book they aim to promote, whether through the content they typically share, their values, lifestyle, past experiences, or any other aspect that resonates with the book's theme and message. When recommendations feel genuine and natural, this alignment further enhances Portuguese consumers' perceptions of the recommendation as both trustworthy and credible.

For bookstagrammers, our findings highlight the critical importance of establishing and nurturing trust with their audience to fully leverage their influence. To achieve this, bookstagrammers should focus on providing thoughtful and detailed recommendations, sharing their honest opinions about the books they review, even in promotional contexts. Consumers are more likely to perceive these recommendations as genuine and unbiased if bookstagrammers consistently highlight both the positive and negative aspects of the books, when applicable. This balanced approach will enhance the perception that the bookstagrammer's reviews are reliable and credible, which, in turn, further enhances the perception of trustworthiness, and so on.

Moreover, to further enhance their trustworthiness and credibility, bookstagrammers should ensure that their recommendations resonate with their personal identities, reading preferences, and the content they typically share. When consumers perceive book recommendations as authentic extensions of the bookstagrammers' genuine interests, they are more inclined to trust their insights. This alignment between the bookstagrammer's identity and their recommendations creates a sense of authenticity that is essential in building trustworthy relationships with their followers and establishing credibility in the book recommendation context.

Overall, it is essential for brands and bookstagrammers to recognize that Portuguese consumers place a higher value on finding trustworthy, insightful recommendations than on connecting with bookstagrammers based on shared characteristics. Additionally, if consumers perceive a focus on ulterior motives rather than genuine passion, the credibility of

bookstagrammers' recommendations can diminish significantly, regardless of the quality of the books being recommended. Therefore, bookstagrammers should cultivate a trustworthy persona to enhance their credibility and strengthen their influence. Meanwhile, brands should aim to identify bookstagrammers who embody these qualities in order to leverage their influence effectively.

CHAPTER 6

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study's findings provide valuable insights, several limitations should be noted.

One of the major limitations of this study is its sampling procedure. By relying on a non-probabilistic convenience sampling, our sample may not fully or accurately represent the population under study, potentially limiting the generalizability of our findings. Furthermore, since the study focused exclusively on Portuguese consumers, the applicability of its findings to other populations or cultural contexts may be restricted.

The use of fictional bookstagrammers' profiles, rather than real-life bookstagrammers, represents another limitation of this study. While we paid close attention to every detail to ensure the fictional posts closely resembled a real scenario, they may not fully capture the complexity and nuances of authentic interactions between bookstagrammers and their audience. As respondents were not engaging with a real influencer, the depth of emotional connection or trust typically developed with real bookstagrammers might be absent, potentially affecting how participants perceived the recommendations. Besides, the stimulus only depicted female bookstagrammers, which represents another limitation of our study.

Another limitation of this study is its exclusive focus on Instagram, specifically on a single static post format. While this style of posting is popular, it is not the only type available on this social media platform, which may limit the scope of our findings. The study does not account for other formats, such as Instagram Stories or videos, which could elicit different responses from users.

Additionally, a significant limitation is the focus on only one book genre, specifically a light historical romance. This narrow range may bias our conclusions and reduce the applicability of our findings to other genres. More practical or specialized genres, such as non-fiction or very specific themed books, might require bookstagrammers to exhibit different traits to provide credible recommendations. Therefore, our conclusions may not extend to those areas, where other characteristics could play a more pivotal role in shaping consumers' trust.

Thus, future research could address these limitations and expand upon the current findings in several ways.

First, employing a probabilistic sampling method would help ensure a more representative sample of the target population. A larger and more diverse sample could also allow for a deeper exploration of the relationships identified in this study, providing more robust insights into the factors influencing Portuguese consumers' perceptions of bookstagrammers' credibility and its impact on their pre-purchase behavioural intentions. Expanding the sample to include consumers from diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds would also enable cross-national and cross-cultural comparative studies, which could reveal whether the factors influencing bookstagrammers' perceived credibility vary across different cultures or countries. This would also enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Additionally, since this research relies solely on quantitative methods, future studies could integrate qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups with consumers, to provide richer, more nuanced insights into how consumers perceive and interact with bookstagrammers.

Future studies could also feature real bookstagrammers in their stimuli, including male bookstagrammers, to explore whether and how Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, Similarity, and Congruence influence credibility differently in those scenarios. Moreover, additional factors not considered in our study but that have been in others, such as the parasocial relationships between consumers and influencers, perceived brand control, and posts' commercial orientation, could be integrated into future research to see whether and how they help shape perceptions of bookstagrammers' credibility.

Exploring other social media platforms, such as TikTok and its growing book community (BookTok), could shed light on whether our findings apply across different platforms. Furthermore, within Instagram itself, future research could investigate how different post formats may affect consumer perceptions of bookstagrammers' credibility.

Moreover, it would also be valuable to explore other book genres beyond light historical romance, to determine whether different constructs influence book recommendations' credibility depending on the book genre. This could provide more detailed insights for both brands and bookstagrammers, allowing them to tailor their strategies when promoting different types of books.

Finally, examining how individual differences (e.g., gender, age, reading habits) or contextual factors (e.g. book price or format) moderate the relationships found in this study could lead to even deeper insights.

By addressing these areas, future research can further enhance the understanding of the dynamics between bookstagrammers and their followers, ultimately leading to more effective and ethical influencer marketing strategies within the literary domain.

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ANNEXES
ANNEX A
PORTUGUESE VERSION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE



Caro/a participante,

O meu nome é Catarina Romão e estou a administrar este questionário no âmbito da unidade curricular de Dissertação do Mestrado em Marketing do ISCTE Business School.

Este estudo tem como objetivo perceber quais os fatores que influenciam as **perceções dos consumidores sobre bookstagrammers** (influencers de livros no Instagram) como fontes credíveis de recomendações de livros.

Atenção: todas as respostas são completamente anónimas e confidenciais, e os dados recolhidos serão utilizados exclusivamente para fins académicos.

O questionário tem a duração aproximada de 8 minutos. Por favor, leia cada pergunta com atenção e responda de forma espontânea e honesta. Não existem respostas certas ou erradas.

Se tiver alguma pergunta sobre o questionário ou a minha pesquisa, pode contactar-me por email: ciaro@iscte-iul.pt

Muito obrigada pela sua participação e disponibilidade! A sua contribuição é muito importante para a minha pesquisa.

Atenciosamente,
Catarina Romão

Survey Completion
0% 100%



Qual é a sua nacionalidade?

☐ Portuguesa

☐ Outra

0%  100%
Survey Completion



Com que frequência usa o Instagram?

☐ Várias vezes ao dia

☐ Uma vez por dia

☐ Algumas vezes por semana

☐ Uma vez por semana

☐ Menos de uma vez por semana

☐ Nunca

0%  100%
Survey Completion



Segue algum(a) influencer no Instagram?

☐ Sim

☐ Não

0%  100%
Survey Completion



O(s) ou a(s) influencer(s) que segue enquadram-se em que categoria(s)? (Selecione todas as opções que se apliquem)

☐ Viagens

☐ Moda e Beleza

☐ Lifestyle

☐ Livros

☐ Fitness/Desporto

☐ Culinária/Receitas

☐ Saúde/Bem-estar

☐ Humor

☐ Outro:

0%  100%



Com que frequência compra produtos ou serviços recomendados por influencers?

☐ Muito frequentemente

☐ Frequentemente

☐ Algumas vezes

☐ Raramente

☐ Nunca

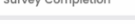
0%  100%



Alguma vez comprou livros por recomendação de um(a) influencer?

☐ Sim

☐ Não

0%  100%



Quantos livros lê, em média, por mês?

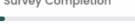
☐ Nenhum

☐ 1

☐ 2 a 3

☐ 4 a 5

☐ Mais de 5

0%  100%



Quais são os seus gêneros literários preferidos? (Selecione todas as opções que se apliquem)

☐ Ficção

☐ Não-ficção

☐ Mistério/Thriller

☐ Romance

☐ Ficção Científica

☐ Fantasia

☐ Biografia/Memórias

☐ Autoajuda

☐ Outro:

Survey Completion
0%  100%



Com que frequência compra livros?

☐ Todas as semanas

☐ Algumas vezes por mês

☐ Uma vez por mês

☐ Menos que uma vez por mês

☐ Nunca

Survey Completion
0%  100%



Numa escala de **1 (Nada Importante) a 5 (Muito Importante)**, qual a importância que atribui às seguintes fontes de recomendações de livros?

	1 - Nada Importante	2 - Pouco Importante	3 - Neutro	4 - Importante	5 - Muito Importante
Amigos e familiares	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Redes sociais	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Blogues e/ou sites de literatura	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Influencers/Bookstagrammers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Clubes do livro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Jornais e/ou revistas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Algoritmos de recomendação (ex: Goodreads, Amazon)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



Por favor, leia e veja com atenção o perfil e a publicação de Instagram que se seguem.

Nas próximas perguntas, serão apresentadas várias afirmações referentes a esta bookstagrammer e à sua publicação.



A Sofia tem 24 anos, é de Lisboa, está no mestrado de Tradução na Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa e trabalha numa livraria, em part-time.

Tem uma paixão profunda por romances históricos e ficção juvenil, que a faz partilhar, com frequência, críticas detalhadas e recomendações de livros destes géneros na sua conta do Instagram, dando a sua opinião sobre o enredo, as personagens e o estilo de escrita.

Além disso, também partilha outros conteúdos e informações relacionados com a comunidade literária, incluindo novos lançamentos e eventos, como a Feira do Livro de Lisboa, por exemplo.

Adicionalmente, dá ainda dicas relacionadas com leitura, tais como “como ultrapassar bloqueios de leitura”, por exemplo, e participa em desafios literários, incentivando os seus seguidores a participarem também.



SofiaReadsRomance · Follow
Lisboa, Portugal



287 likes

SofiaReadsRomance Na minha Era Bridgerton... 🌸💕📖

Acabei de ler 'Bridgerton' e estou completamente encantada! 🌟📖 Este romance histórico transportou-me para Inglaterra no início do século XIX e foi a escapadela perfeita após um longo dia de estudos. Têm de ler, recomendo vivamente! 🌟 #BookReview #CríticaLiterária #RomanceHistórico #Bridgerton #Bookstagram

[View all 16 comment](#)

2 days ago

Survey Completion
0% 100%



Por favor, considere cuidadosamente cada afirmação e indique o seu nível de concordância, numa escala de **1 (Discordo Totalmente) a 5 (Concordo Totalmente)**.

As suas respostas devem refletir a sua opinião honesta com base nas suas impressões à cerca da publicação. Lembre-se de que não existem respostas certas ou erradas.

Survey Completion
0% 100%



Please note that, given the number of questions in this section, the post was displayed before each question to prevent participants from forgetting key details and to ensure their answers were consistent with the stimulus throughout the questionnaire. However, the post is hidden here in the annex to save space and avoid repetition.

Com base nesta publicação, considero que:

	1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo	3 - Não Concordo nem Discordo	4 - Concordo	5 - Concordo Totalmente
A influencer é honesta.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A influencer é confiável.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A influencer é sincera.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A influencer é fiável.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A influencer é credível.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Survey Completion
0% 100%



Com base nesta publicação, considero que:

	1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo	3 - Não Concordo nem Discordo	4 - Concordo	5 - Concordo Totalmente
A influencer é especialista.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A influencer é experiente.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A influencer é qualificada.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A influencer é bem informada.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A influencer é competente.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



Com base nesta publicação, considero que:

	1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo	3 - Não Concordo nem Discordo	4 - Concordo	5 - Concordo Totalmente
A influencer é atraente.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A influencer é bonita.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A influencer é amigável.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
É fácil gostar da influencer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A influencer é afável.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A influencer é sexy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



Com base nesta publicação, considero que:

	1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo	3 - Não Concordo nem Discordo	4 - Concordo	5 - Concordo Totalmente
Eu e a influencer temos muito em comum.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eu e a influencer somos muito parecidos.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Consgo identificar- me facilmente com a influencer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Survey Completion
0%  100%



Com base nesta publicação, considero que:

	1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo	3 - Não Concordo nem Discordo	4 - Concordo	5 - Concordo Totalmente
A influencer é apropriada para recomendar o livro.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A influencer é eficaz a recomendar o livro.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A influencer enquadra-se bem com o livro.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A influencer combina bem com o livro.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Survey Completion
0%  100%



Com base nesta publicação, considero que:

	1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo	3 - Não Concordo nem Discordo	4 - Concordo	5 - Concordo Totalmente
A publicação é confiável.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A publicação é credível.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A publicação parece ser verdadeira.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Survey Completion
0%  100%



Com base nesta publicação, considero que:

	1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo	3 - Não Concordo nem Discordo	4 - Concordo	5 - Concordo Totalmente
O conteúdo da publicação interessa-me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gosto da publicação.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tenho uma boa impressão do conteúdo partilhado.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Survey Completion
0%  100%



Com base nesta publicação:

	1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo	3 - Não Concordo nem Discordo	4 - Concordo	5 - Concordo Totalmente
Vou procurar mais informação sobre o livro partilhado pela influencer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vou procurar opiniões online sobre o livro partilhado pela influencer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vou comparar preços do livro partilhado pela influencer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Survey Completion
0%  100%



Com base nesta publicação:

	1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo	3 - Não Concordo nem Discordo	4 - Concordo	5 - Concordo Totalmente
É provável que eu considere comprar o livro partilhado pela influencer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Estou disposto a comprar o livro partilhado pela influencer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pretendo comprar o livro partilhado pela influencer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

0%

Survey Completion

100%

→

Com base nesta publicação:

	1 - Discordo Totalmente	2 - Discordo	3 - Não Concordo nem Discordo	4 - Concordo	5 - Concordo Totalmente
Compraria livros partilhados por esta influencer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Compraria livros com base nos conselhos dados por esta influencer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Seguiria recomendações de livros desta influencer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Encorajaria outras pessoas a comprar os livros partilhados por esta influencer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

0%

Survey Completion

100%

→

Indique a sua faixa etária:

☐ Menos de 18

☐ 18-24

☐ 25-34

☐ 35-44

☐ 45-54

☐ 55-64

☐ Mais de 64

Indique o seu género:

☐ Masculino

☐ Feminino

☐ Outro:

Indique o seu nível de escolaridade:

☐ Ensino Básico – 1.º ao 3.º Ciclo (1.º ao 9.º ano)

☐ Ensino Secundário (10.º ao 12.º ano)

☐ Ensino Técnico-Profissional

☐ Ensino Superior (Licenciatura)

☐ Pós-Graduação (Especialização)

☐ Mestrado

☐ Doutoramento

☐ Outro:

Indique a sua situação profissional atual:

☐ Trabalhador por conta de outrem

☐ Trabalhador por conta própria

☐ Desempregado

☐ Estudante

☐ Reformado

☐ Incapacitado

☐ Prefiro não dizer

☐ Outra:

Survey Completion
0%  100%



We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

Survey Completion
0%  100%

ANNEX B

ENGLISH VERSION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

0. What is your nationality?

- Portuguese;
- Other;

(If participants answer "Other", they are not eligible to continue the questionnaire.)

Section 1: Instagram Usage

1. How often do you use Instagram?

- Several times a day;
- Once a day;
- A few times a week;
- Once a week;
- Less than once a week;
- Never;

(If participants answer "Never", they are not eligible to continue the questionnaire.)

2. Do you follow any influencers on Instagram?

- Yes;
- No;

(If participants answer "No", they are sent directly to the second section of the questionnaire.)

3. The influencer(s) you follow fall into which category(ies)? (Select all that apply)

- Travel;
- Fashion and Beauty;
- Lifestyle;
- Books;
- Fitness/Sports;
- Cooking/Recipes;
- Health/Well-being;
- Humour;
- Other (with space to specify);

4. How often do you buy products or services recommended by an influencer?

- Very frequently;
- Frequently;
- Sometimes;
- Rarely;
- Never;

(If participants answer "Never", they are sent directly to the second section of the questionnaire.)

5. Have you ever bought a book based on an influencer's recommendation?

- Yes;
- No;

Section 2: Reading Habits

6. How many books do you read on average, per month?

- None;
- 1;
- 2-3;
- 4-5;
- More than 5;

7. What are your favourite literary genres? (Select all that apply)

- Fiction;
- Non-fiction;
- Mystery/Thriller;
- Romance;
- Science Fiction;
- Fantasy;
- Biography/Memoirs;
- Self-help;
- Other (with space to specify);

8. How often do you buy books?

- Every week;

- A few times a month;
- Once a month;
- Less than once a month;
- Never;

9. On a scale from 1 (Not Important at all) to 5 (Very Important), how important do you consider the following sources of book recommendations?

- Friends and family;
- Social media;
- Literature blogs/websites;
- Influencers/Bookstagrammers (Book Influencers on Instagram);
- Book clubs;
- Newspapers and/or Magazines;
- Recommendation algorithms (e.g., Goodreads, Kobo, Amazon);

Section 3: Stimulus

Please carefully read and view the Instagram profile and post that follow.

In the following questions, several statements will be presented regarding this bookstagrammer and her post.

(Stimulus: see Annex C)

Please carefully consider each statement and indicate your level of agreement on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Your responses should reflect your honest opinion based on your impressions of the post. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

10. Trustworthiness

- The influencer is honest.
- The influencer is reliable.
- The influencer is sincere.
- The influencer is dependable.
- The influencer is trustworthy.

11. Expertise

- The influencer is an expert.
- The influencer is experienced.
- The influencer is qualified.
- The influencer is knowledgeable.
- The influencer is skilled.

12. Attractiveness

- The influencer is attractive.
- The influencer is pretty/good-looking.
- The influencer is friendly.
- The influencer is likeable.
- The influencer is warm.
- The influencer is sexy.

13. Similarity

- The influencer and I have a lot in common.
- The influencer and I are a lot alike.
- I can easily identify with the influencer.

14. Congruence

- The influencer is appropriate for recommending the book.
- The influencer is effective at recommending the book.
- The influencer aligns well with the book.
- The influencer matches well with the book.

15. Post Credibility

- The post is reliable.
- The post is credible.
- The post is believable.

16. Interest in the Post

- I am interested in the post's content.

- I like the post.
- I have a good impression of the shared content.

17. Willingness to search for more information

- I will search for more information about the book shared by the influencer.
- I will search for online word-of-mouth about the book shared by the influencer.
- I will compare prices of the book shared by the influencer.

18. Purchase Intention

- It is likely that I consider buying the book shared by the influencer.
- I am willing to buy the book shared by the influencer.
- I intend to buy the book shared by the influencer.

19. Purchase Intention (continuation)

- I would purchase books shared by this influencer.
- I would purchase books based on the advice I am given by this influencer.
- I would follow book recommendations from this influencer.
- I would encourage people close to me to buy the books shared by this influencer.

Section 4: Demographics

20. Indicate your age group:

- Less than 18;
- 18-24;
- 25-34;
- 35-44;
- 45-54;
- 55-64;
- More than 64;

21. Indicate your gender:

- Male;
- Female;

- Other (with space to specify);

22. Indicate your education level:

- Basic Education - 1st to 3rd Cycle (1st to 9th grade);
- Secondary Education (10th to 12th grade);
- Technical-Professional Education;
- Higher Education (Bachelor's degree);
- Postgraduate (Specialization);
- Master's degree;
- Doctorate;
- Other;

23. Indicate your employment status:

- Employee;
- Self-employed;
- Unemployed;
- Student;
- Retired;
- Unable to work;
- Prefer not to say;
- Other (with space to specify);

ANNEX C

STIMULI

Influencer Profile 1: High Trustworthiness, High Expertise, High Attractiveness, High Similarity, High Congruence

Profile Description:

Sofia is a 24-year-old translation master's student from Lisbon who has a deep passion for historical romance novels and YA fiction. Working part-time at a local bookshop, Sofia frequently shares detailed book recommendations and reviews on her Instagram account, offering her thoughts on the plot, characters, and writing style. Beyond book reviews, she shares content related to the literary community, including upcoming book releases, and literary events. She also gives reading tips, such as how to get through a reading slump, and participates in reading challenges, encouraging her followers to join in.

Post Description:

In my Bridgerton Era... ☁️🎀🏹💕 Just finished 'Bridgerton' and I am absolutely enchanted! 📖✨ This historical romance transported me to England in the early 19th century, offering the perfect escape after a long day of studying. Highly recommend it to all my fellow book lovers! ✨ #BookReview #HistoricalRomance #Bridgerton #Bookstagram

Final Post:



SofiaReadsRomance · Follow
Lisbon, Portugal



287 likes

SofiaReadsRomance In my Bridgerton Era... 🍷💕🔪💖 Just finished 'Bridgerton' and I am absolutely enchanted! 📖✨ This historical romance transported me to England in the early 19th century, offering the perfect escape after a long day of studying. Highly recommend it to all my fellow book lovers! ✨ #BookReview #HistoricalRomance #Bridgerton #Bookstagram

[View all 16 comments](#)

2 days ago

Influencer Profile 2: Low Trustworthiness, Low Expertise, Low Attractiveness, Low Similarity, Low Congruence

Profile Description:

Marta is a 32-year-old marketing assistant from Braga who shares reviews of marketing-related books on her Instagram account, offering practical applications for professionals. She occasionally posts reviews about other book genres, but they are brief and general, typically focusing on popular bestsellers, without in-depth analysis of the plot, characters, or writing style. Her content mainly focuses on motivational quotes, and tips and strategies for both personal and professional growth, leveraging the knowledge gained from her personal development journey and marketing experience.

Post Description:

Read “Bridgerton” as a break from my usual marketing reads to see what the fuss was all about. It was an interesting historical romance, though not really my type 🧐 Might appeal to those looking for a light, historical romance. #BookReview #HistoricalRomance #Bridgerton #Reading

Final Post:



MarketingwithMarta · [Follow](#)

Braga, Portugal



84 likes

MarketingwithMarta Read 'Bridgerton' as a break from my usual marketing reads to see what the fuss was all about. It was an interesting historical romance, though not really my type 🙄 Might appeal to those looking for a light, historical romance. #BookReview #HistoricalRomance #Bridgerton #Reading

[View all 8 comment](#)

2 days ago

ANNEX D

SUMMARY OF THE CHARACTERIZATION OF THE SAMPLE

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	92	28.3	28.3
	Female	231	71.1	99.4
	Other	2	.6	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	
Age	Less than 18	9	2.8	2.8
	18-24	52	16.0	18.8
	25-34	51	15.7	34.5
	35-44	38	11.7	46.2
	45-54	98	30.2	76.3
	55-64	68	20.9	97.2
	More than 64	9	2.8	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	
Education Level	Basic Education	8	2.5	2.5
	Secondary Education	42	12.9	15.4
	Technical-Professional Education	7	2.2	17.5
	Bachelor's	121	37.2	54.8
	Postgraduate	39	12.0	66.8
	Master's	65	20.0	86.8
	Doctorate	42	12.9	99.7
	Other	1	.3	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	
Employment Status	Employee	221	68.0	68.0
	Self-employed	32	9.8	77.8
	Unemployed	9	2.8	80.6
	Student	50	15.4	96.0
	Retired	4	1.2	97.2
	Unable to work	1	.3	97.5
	Prefer not to say	4	1.2	98.8
	Other	4	1.2	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
How often do you use Instagram?	Several times a day	204	62.8	62.8
	Once a day	48	14.8	77.5
	A few times a week	32	9.8	87.4
	Once a week	8	2.5	89.8
	Less than once a week	33	10.2	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	
Do you follow any influencer(s) on Instagram?	Yes	199	61.2	61.2
	No	126	38.8	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	
Influencer categories	Travel	125	62.8	
	Fashion and Beauty	99	49.7	
	Lifestyle	110	55.3	
	Books	72	36.2	
	Fitness/Sports	73	36.7	
	Cooking/Recipes	80	40.2	
	Health/Well-being	78	39.2	
	Humour	110	55.3	
	Other	22	11.1	
	Total	769*	386.4*	
How often do you buy products or services recommended by an influencer?	Very frequently	1	.3	.3
	Frequently	7	2.2	2.5
	Sometimes	66	20.3	22.8
	Rarely	150	46.2	68.9
	Never	101	31.1	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	
Have you ever bought a book based on an influencer's recommendation?	Yes	105	32.3	32.3
	No	119	36.6	68.9
	Missing**	101	31.1	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	

* The multiple response nature of this question allows respondents to indicate more than one category, which is reflected in the total percentage exceeding 100%, and the total number of answers exceeding 325

** These missing values represent respondents who answered “Never” in the previous question “How often do you buy products or services recommended by an influencer” and were thus not shown this question

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
How many books do you read on average, per month?	None	80	24.6	24.6
	1	166	51.1	75.7
	2 to 3	63	19.4	95.1
	4 to 5	8	2.5	97.5
	More than 5	8	2.5	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	
Book Genres	Fiction	133	40.9	
	Non-fiction	66	20.3	
	Mystery/Thriller	120	36.9	
	Romance	189	58.2	
	Science Fiction	49	15.1	
	Fantasy	49	15.1	
	Biography/Memoirs	116	35.7	
	Self-help	59	18.2	
	Other	46	14.2	
	Total	827*	254.5*	
How often do you buy books?	Every week	1	.3	.3
	A few times a month	33	10.2	10.5
	Once a month	57	17.5	28.0
	Less than once a month	206	63.4	91.4
	Never	28	8.6	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	

* The multiple response nature of this question allows respondents to indicate more than one genre, which is reflected in the total percentage exceeding 100%, and the total number of answers exceeding 325

How important do you consider these sources of book recommendations?		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Friends and Family	(1) Not Important at all	4	1.2	1.2
	(2) Slightly Important	8	2.5	3.7
	(3) Neutral	43	13.2	16.9
	(4) Important	155	47.7	64.6
	(5) Very Important	115	35.4	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	

Social Media	(1) Not Important at all	31	9.5	9.5
	(2) Slightly Important	62	19.1	28.6
	(3) Neutral	104	32.0	60.6
	(4) Important	113	34.8	95.4
	(5) Very Important	15	4.6	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	
Literature Blogs/ Websites	(1) Not Important at all	25	7.7	7.7
	(2) Slightly Important	36	11.1	18.8
	(3) Neutral	83	25.5	44.3
	(4) Important	153	47.1	91.4
	(5) Very Important	28	8.6	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	
Influencers/ Bookstagrammers	(1) Not Important at all	74	22.8	22.8
	(2) Slightly Important	56	17.2	40.0
	(3) Neutral	98	30.2	70.2
	(4) Important	78	24.0	94.2
	(5) Very Important	19	5.8	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	
Book Clubs	(1) Not Important at all	34	10.5	10.5
	(2) Slightly Important	35	10.8	21.2
	(3) Neutral	105	32.3	53.5
	(4) Important	127	39.1	92.6
	(5) Very Important	24	7.4	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	
Newspapers/ Magazines	(1) Not Important at all	29	8.9	8.9
	(2) Slightly Important	40	12.3	21.2
	(3) Neutral	112	34.5	55.7
	(4) Important	120	36.9	92.6
	(5) Very Important	24	7.4	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	
Recommendation Algorithms (e.g.,	(1) Not Important at all	71	21.8	21.8

Goodreads, Kobo, Amazon)	(2) Slightly Important	61	18.8	40.6
	(3) Neutral	134	41.2	81.8
	(4) Important	45	13.8	95.7
	(5) Very Important	14	4.3	100.0
	Total	325	100.0	

ANNEX E

STANDARDIZED FACTOR LOADINGS

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ([O/STDEV])	P values
Attr_a_1 <- Attr_a	0,682	0,673	0,060	11,300	0,000
Attr_a_2 <- Attr_a	0,755	0,747	0,050	15,133	0,000
Attr_a_3 <- Attr_a	0,792	0,792	0,030	26,621	0,000
Attr_a_4 <- Attr_a	0,844	0,845	0,018	46,643	0,000
Attr_a_5 <- Attr_a	0,829	0,830	0,022	38,088	0,000
Attr_a_6 <- Attr_a	0,609	0,601	0,071	8,630	0,000
Cong_1 <- Cong	0,854	0,855	0,017	48,955	0,000
Cong_2 <- Cong	0,848	0,848	0,020	41,904	0,000
Cong_3 <- Cong	0,871	0,869	0,022	38,834	0,000
Cong_4 <- Cong	0,852	0,850	0,026	33,186	0,000
Exp_1 <- Exp	0,807	0,805	0,026	31,433	0,000
Exp_2 <- Exp	0,847	0,846	0,022	37,755	0,000
Exp_3 <- Exp	0,861	0,860	0,024	35,384	0,000
Exp_4 <- Exp	0,868	0,869	0,018	48,274	0,000
Exp_5 <- Exp	0,875	0,874	0,017	51,622	0,000
Inter_1 <- Inter	0,868	0,867	0,020	43,198	0,000
Inter_2 <- Inter	0,946	0,946	0,008	126,056	0,000
Inter_3 <- Inter	0,926	0,926	0,008	111,131	0,000
Post_Cred_1 <- Post_Cred	0,940	0,940	0,008	119,465	0,000
Post_Cred_2 <- Post_Cred	0,956	0,956	0,007	136,680	0,000
Post_Cred_3 <- Post_Cred	0,845	0,844	0,023	36,438	0,000
Pur_Int_1 <- Pur_Int	0,818	0,816	0,024	33,976	0,000
Pur_Int_2 <- Pur_Int	0,854	0,853	0,019	45,134	0,000
Pur_Int_3 <- Pur_Int	0,811	0,809	0,024	33,616	0,000
Pur_Int_4 <- Pur_Int	0,910	0,910	0,010	87,399	0,000
Pur_Int_5 <- Pur_Int	0,922	0,922	0,009	108,323	0,000
Pur_Int_6 <- Pur_Int	0,922	0,921	0,010	93,213	0,000
Pur_Int_7 <- Pur_Int	0,857	0,857	0,019	45,470	0,000
Sim_1 <- Sim	0,928	0,927	0,013	71,359	0,000
Sim_2 <- Sim	0,944	0,943	0,011	89,880	0,000
Sim_3 <- Sim	0,932	0,932	0,010	95,966	0,000
Trust_1 <- Trust	0,865	0,865	0,020	43,912	0,000
Trust_2 <- Trust	0,912	0,912	0,013	72,902	0,000
Trust_3 <- Trust	0,878	0,877	0,020	43,973	0,000
Trust_4 <- Trust	0,913	0,913	0,014	66,494	0,000
Trust_5 <- Trust	0,920	0,920	0,011	80,328	0,000

Will_1 <- Will	0,937	0,937	0,012	75,491	0,000
Will_2 <- Will	0,950	0,949	0,011	85,174	0,000
Will_3 <- Will	0,918	0,918	0,014	64,427	0,000

ANNEX F
VIF VALUES

	Interest in the Post	Post Credibility	Purchase Intention	Willingness to search for more information
Attractiveness		1,593		
Congruence		1,928		
Expertise		2,160		
Interest in the Post				
Post Credibility	1,000		1,000	1,000
Purchase Intention				
Similarity		1,299		
Trustworthiness		1,882		
Willingness to search for more information				