



Department of *Impresa e Management*

Course of *Marketing Plan & Markstrat Simulation*

The difference between TikTok and Instagram influencers: a quantitative study on their impact on purchase intention of luxury products among Generation Z

Prof. Rumen Ivaylov Pozharliev

---

SUPERVISOR

Prof. Matteo De Angelis

---

CO-SUPERVISOR

Nicoletta Bullone – 751891

---

CANDIDATE

Academic Year 2022/2023

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	3
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	5
<b>1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND</b> .....	9
<b>1.1. Generation Z consumers</b> .....	9
1.1.1. Generation Z consumers and luxury brands .....	11
1.1.2. Generation Z consumers' purchase intention of luxury products.....	14
<b>1.2. Influencer marketing</b> .....	15
1.2.1. The promotion of luxury products through Instagram and TikTok.....	18
1.2.2. The moderating role of influencer's typology: differences between Micro and Macro influencers.....	21
<b>1.3. The mediating role of perceived quality of luxury products</b> .....	24
<b>1.4. Consumers previous experience for luxury products</b> .....	26
<b>2. METHODOLOGIES</b> .....	28
<b>2.1. Conceptual framework and research question</b> .....	28
<b>2.2. Research design and stimuli</b> .....	29
<b>2.3. Survey structure and measurement</b> .....	32
<b>2.4. Sample and Data collection</b> .....	34
<b>2.5. Scales reliability</b> .....	36
<b>2.6. Measurement of variables</b> .....	37
2.6.1. Two - way ANOVA.....	37
2.6.2. ANCOVA.....	40
2.6.3. Process .....	41
<b>3. GENERAL DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS</b> .....	43
<b>3.1. Summary of main findings</b> .....	43
<b>3.2. Theoretical implications</b> .....	45
<b>3.3. Managerial implications</b> .....	46
<b>3.4. Limitations and future research</b> .....	49
<b>3.5. Conclusions</b> .....	50
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	52
<b>APPENDIX 1 – QUESTIONNAIRE</b> .....	59
<b>APPENDIX 2 – OUTPUT SPSS</b> .....	63
<b>SUMMARY</b> .....	77

## **ABSTRACT**

In the context of the rise of Instagram and TikTok as social media platforms of worldwide relevance, this research has the aim to examine the existing differences between these two platforms, with a focus on influencers effect on Generation Z consumers purchase intentions of luxury products.

Both social media have proven to fit well with the themes of influencer marketing, but specifically Instagram, with its ability to reach a global audience and its focus on fashion luxury sector, it is considered particularly suitable for luxury brands. The visual display of content on Instagram, the creativity and the possibility to constantly interact with the influencers, could positively affect consumers purchase intention. From the other hand, TikTok, with its short, informal and funny videos, could have a limited impact on the understanding of the luxury products. That said, it is important to note that the distinctions between Micro and Macro influencers are crucial, as Macro influencers seem to have a more positive impact than Micro influencers in increasing purchase intentions of luxury products. In addition, the perception of luxury product quality plays a significant role in influencing purchase intention, helping to establish consumer trust and brand exclusivity.

Even if the use of TikTok by luxury brands is growing, the study results suggest that these brands should concentrate their resources on Instagram as main platform for advertising campaign, by collaborating with Macro influencers and by creating relevant contents for consumers belonging to Generation Z.

Ultimately, this research provides important indications for luxury brands marketing strategies aiming to reach Generation Z consumers through social media, taking into account the specifics of the platforms and the type of influencers involved.

## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era, the rapidly evolution of technology gave birth to a generation unlike any other, known as “Generation Z”. Born between 1995 and 2010, this group, often defined as “Digital native”, has grown in a world full of digital technology. The influence of technology from an early age endowed them with unique characteristics, including the ability to rapidly access and process information, mostly through search engines and social media platforms (Mckinsey&Company, 2018).

Nowadays, in order to reach out Generation Z in an efficacy way, a deep understating of their habits and preferences is required, always considering social networks that are the main communication channels for them (Uzelac et al., 2020). These platforms, are used not only as sources of entertainment, but also as place to find news and brands updates. In this context, brands have to recognize the importance of adapting their strategies to meet the specific needs and values of this consumers category (Uzelac et al., 2020).

What distinguishes Generation Z from its predecessors is their mastery of technology and their innate ability to navigate a digital landscape rich in tools and platforms (Haenlein et al., 2020). This expertise presents both an opportunity and a challenge for businesses seeking to capture their attention.

A distinctive feature of Generation Z is their constantly looking for truth, that profoundly effects their brands perception. Consequently, brands that aim to connect with this generation must veer toward consumption as means of access rather than ownership, emphasize self-expression through consumption, and address the ethical considerations surrounding their products. This evolving consumer landscape forces companies to delicately balance large-scale production with personalized experiences, while ensuring that their actions are in line with ethical principles (McKinsey & Company, 2018).

Crucially, Generation Z shows a meticulous approach to their purchasing decisions, seeing products as manifestations of self-expression rather than mere possessions (McKinsey & Company, 2018). Luxury brands, once considered symbols of status, must now reflect the values and individuality of this discerning audience (Dobre et al., 2021). As a result, luxury brands have undergone significant transformations in their marketing strategies, leveraging social media platforms to communicate authenticity, ethical practices, personalized experiences, and collaborations with influencers (Bazi et al., 2020).

The development of social media has played a central role in transforming this Generation into a key segment for luxury brands (Lau et al., 2022). Influencers, who wield considerable influence on social networks, play a key

role in redefining perceptions of luxury brands among Generation Z (Dobre et al., 2021). Influencers not only endorse products, but also shape social trends and lifestyles by establishing deep connections with their followers (Leung et al., 2022). As a result, brands have embraced influencer marketing as a strategy to improve performance, increase brand awareness and reach new costumers (Berne-Manero, 2020).

Influencer marketing is based on the selection of influencers, both Micro and Macro, with a credibility, interactivity and authenticity aligned with values and images of the brand (Vrontis et al., 2020). These collaborations, allow the brands to actively involve customers in the brand's image creation. Micro influencers, which have a minor number of followers but a higher engagement, excel in niche topics and may be suitable for emerging brands in search of visibility (De Veirman et al., 2017). On the other side, Macro influencers, which have an higher number of followers compared to the Micro ones, offer great credibility, particularly when sponsoring luxury brands (Berne-Manero, 2020).

Another important aspect of the Influencer marketing context is the choice of social media platform. Instagram and TikTok, two major platforms among Generation Z, are fertile ground for collaborations with influencers. Instagram visual appeal and creative contents, make it an ideal social media for luxury brands (Park et al., 2021). At the same time, TikTok, with its short

and funny videos, could represent a unique challenge and opportunity for luxury brands (Hayden, 2022). Understanding the dynamics between these two social media platforms and influencers is essential in order to specify their impact on Generation Z purchase intentions.

This study aims to explore the complex interaction between social media (Instagram and TikTok), influencers' typology (Micro influencers and Macro influencers), luxury product quality perception and customers' previous experiences, shedding light on the intricate relationship between Generation Z, luxury brands and digital marketing.



# **1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

## **1.1. Generation Z consumers**

The term “Generation Z”, is used to identifies all the people born from 1995 and 2010. This people are all digital native, because they have been exposed to technology since they were very young. This situation, has given rise to a generation able to collect a huge number of information in a short time, using an extended variety of sources, such as search engines and social media (Mckinsey&Company, 2018). Given the high use of technology, another name by which Generation Z is identified is "Digital Generation", and nowadays the best way to reach these people is actually through social networks, which are very popular platforms among Gen Z people and on which they spend most of their time for various reasons, like search for news, look for brands updates, or simply spend some free time (Uzelac et al., 2020).

As highlighted above, the biggest difference between Generation Z and previous generations lies in the use of technology in all its forms, and in the ability to understand in immediate manners all the features they have at their disposal, and also know how to use them. This can be regarded as a key element in being able to capture the attention of people belonging to this generation. Even the media that they use, are different from the

ones use by older generations: streaming services are preferred to traditional TV, Spotify is more used than radio, and of course they pay more attention to social media platforms instead of take a look to traditional advertisements (Haenlein et al., 2020).

	<b>B</b> Baby boomer 1940–59	<b>X</b> Gen X 1960–79	<b>Y</b> Gen Y (millennial) 1980–94	<b>Z</b> Gen Z 1995–2010
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postwar</li> <li>• Dictatorship and repression in Brazil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political transition</li> <li>• Capitalism and meritocracy dominate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Globalization</li> <li>• Economic stability</li> <li>• Emergence of internet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility and multiple realities</li> <li>• Social networks</li> <li>• Digital natives</li> </ul>
Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Idealism</li> <li>• Revolutionary</li> <li>• Collectivist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materialistic</li> <li>• Competitive</li> <li>• Individualistic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Globalist</li> <li>• Questioning</li> <li>• Oriented to self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undefined ID</li> <li>• "Communaholic"</li> <li>• "Dialoguer"</li> <li>• Realistic</li> </ul>
Consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideology</li> <li>• Vinyl and movies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status</li> <li>• Brands and cars</li> <li>• Luxury articles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience</li> <li>• Festivals and travel</li> <li>• Flagships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniqueness</li> <li>• Unlimited</li> <li>• Ethical</li> </ul>

Figure 1: Differences between Generations (Mckinsey&Company, 2018)

An important thing about Generation Z is that they are constantly looking for truth, and this of course has a consequence on how they see and evaluate the brands. Organizations need to be aware of three key considerations when it comes to this generation: perceiving consumption as an opportunity for access rather than ownership, viewing consumption as a means of self-expression, and recognizing consumption as a subject of ethical significance (Mckinsey&Company, 2018).

So, it is clear that companies need to reconsider their approach to delivering value to these consumers, finding a balance between scale and mass production on one hand, and personalized experiences on the other.

Additionally, it is crucial for businesses to align their actions with their marketing messaging and ethical principles when addressing marketing concerns and workplace ethics (Mckinsey&Company, 2018). It is important to underline that, this generation pays close attention to the purchases they make and tries to retrieve as much information as possible before making a purchase. Gen Z people see the products they buy, or they willing to buy, as manifestation of self-expression, so brands need to choose their marketing campaigns carefully, and study properly the message they want to get across when they try to sell a product (Mckinsey&Company, 2018).

### **1.1.1. Generation Z consumers and luxury brands**

Unlike previous generations, Gen Z do not see luxury products as something to be used to flaunt one's status, on the contrary they see owning luxury items as an expression of themselves and as an expression of values in which they yield (Dobre at al., 2021). They do not buy luxury items just because of the concept of luxury. During the years, luxury brands have had to revise their marketing strategies in order to try to approach and attract even consumers who belong to Generation Z, which started to be an interesting segment for their business.

Luxury brands are perceived as having a high price point and believe to offer exceptional quality and exclusive features (Park et al., 2021), the products they sell, are something that not everyone can have, and they also help define a person's social status. More specifically, Tynan (2010) defines luxury brands products as “high quality, expensive and non-essential products and services that appear to be rare, exclusive, prestigious and authentic, and offer high levels of symbolic and emotional/hedonic values through customer experiences”. At a previous stage, these brands were reluctant to use social media platforms, as they would allow anyone to interact with the brand, at the risk of losing exclusivity, and to become more accessible than before. But at some point, they understood that if they wanted to engage Gen Z people, they needed to change direction. They tried to redefine the concept of “Luxury” and to use social media to communicate their messages and to promote the brand (Bazi et al., 2020).

More concretely, these brands have adopted different strategies, but what is interesting is that all these strategies are founded on the use of social media platforms. Some examples of adopted strategies are: showing transparency and authenticity, highlighting the ethical practices used by the company, creating personalised experience and customised products, collaborating with influencers (Bazi et al., 2020).

Generation Z is strongly interested in authenticity and sustainability of luxury brands. They look for brands and products that can represent their social values, and demonstrating attention and commitment to these values attracts young consumers. Several brands are doing this directly on social media, where they communicate step by step all the sustainable and socially responsible activities they made (Kong et al., 2021). This is also the case with regard to transparency of business practices, particularly in reference to production processes.

Regarding the last strategy mentioned, luxury brands are increasingly understanding the influence people working on social networks have on the purchase intention of people belonging to Generation Z. Thanks to influencers, luxury brands are able to achieve greater popularity and desirability among Gen Z, also through the creation of social trends (Dobre et al., 2021).

It is clear that the focus of all sort of strategies lies in the use of social media, as it has been proven that the benefits of social networks perceived by consumers belonging to Generation Z, have a positive correlation with perceived benefits regarding luxury brands' products (Dobre et al., 2021). Consequently, almost all luxury brands have started to move in the same direction.

### **1.1.2. Generation Z consumers' purchase intention of luxury products**

According to a research conducted by Bain and Company (2021), Generation Z is the most influential generation in the world, and will contribute 70% to the growth of the luxury industry by 2025. In this regard, the development of social media, has been a key piece in making this generation a target segment for luxury brands. The platforms have made it possible to obtain a great deal of information quickly about brands and individual products sold. In addition, the ability to share information, experiences, and opinions, easily and constantly, has resulted in the creation of communities on social networks, increasing the desire to obtain a particular product (Lau et al., 2022). Moreover, the emergence of the figure of the influencer has expanded this desire for luxury of Generation Z even more. They, in fact, represent a way of life for those who follow them on social media, and when they sponsor a luxury product, they arouse a desire to purchase it in their followers, as such a purchase would allow them to get closer to the influencer (Dobre et al., 2021).

Another aspect is the authenticity, which is highly valued by Generation Z. It seeks products that can tell a story, thing that luxury brands always do. Behind each of their products there is a detailed storytelling, which

helps consumers understand why that product is unique (Dobre et al., 2021).

Since luxury brands have recognized the importance of this generation to their business, during the last years, they have been created products that could be more suitable and attractive for a younger age, both in terms of price and design, and this was a big step and a powerful proof of approaching this generation (Shin et al., 2020).

It is clear, then, that this generation represents an important slice of luxury brand customers, and they are increasingly realizing this and looking for several ways to approach younger consumers in the most natural possible manner.

## **1.2. Influencer marketing**

Nowadays, Generation Z consumers do not trust as before traditional advertising, and choosing an influencer to promote the brand can be a right way to get people's attention (Leung et al., 2022). It has been proven that consumers are very trusting of contents shared on social media, probably because they are not simply passive recipients anymore (Vrontis et al., 2020). Moreover, it has also been found that influencers advertisement are more memorable and direct than TV advertisement (Berne-Manero, 2020).

Influencer marketing is a strategy used by brands for different things, including improvement of performances (in terms of purchase intention and brand interaction), creation of brand awareness, and reaching new consumers (Berne-Manero et al., 2020). This strategy consists in the selection of an influencer and in the beginning of a partnership with the latter (Leung et al., 2022). Thanks to this, brands are able to involve all those who follow influencers on social media in creating the brand image, making them feel an active part of the process (Vrontis et al., 2020).

Leung 2022, states “Online influencers are individuals, groups of individuals, or even virtual avatars who have built a network of followers on social media and are regarded as digital opinion leaders with significant social influence on their network of followers”. The key of their success lies in sharing the right contents, in the right way and in the right moment.

It is possible to say that an influencer's following is fairly homogeneous, since everyone who follows a particular influencer is interested in the type of content he or she publishes, which is almost always related to the same topic (i.e. fitness, fashion, travel, food). Because of this, brands are able to capture changes in consumer preferences, as an influencer's audience changes based on user preferences. People may start following the influencer when they are interested in what he or she posts, and



unfollowing him or she when preferences have changed (Leung et al., 2022). As a result, there is very limited risk that the product may be advertised to people who are not interested in the world of luxury.

Another important aspect is that consumers tend to trust influencers more than a brand, because they see them as something closer, thanks to the fact that in their posts, they try to involve as much as they can their followers, and this creates a strong and lasting relationship (Leung et al., 2022).

A crucial theme is choosing the right influencer. He or she has to be in line with image and values of the brand (Vrotis et al., 2020). Only in this way message communication will be clear and effective. There are also other critical issues related to the choice of an influencer, which, if not properly considered, can harm the brand. These include: influencer reliability and authenticity of published content (Park et al., 2020). The first aspect regards the level of integration and transparency of the influencer in brand's product promotion. It is important that they are honest and do not use deception techniques to influence the choices of their followers. Regarding the authenticity, it is valuable to know that the posts have to be spontaneous and not overly advertising, because this could damage consumers' trust in the brand and in the sponsored product (Park et al., 2020).

Once the brand has entered into a contract with an influencer, the latter has an obligation to publish content regarding the brand and some specific products, in exchange for remuneration that can be: monetary or non-monetary (free products or discounts), according to pre-established agreements. The influencer has some freedom in deciding what content to publish, but he or she must always take into consideration the guidelines that the brand provides (Leung et al., 2022).

### **1.2.1. The promotion of luxury products through Instagram and TikTok**

The great popularity achieved in recent years by Instagram and TikTok, has meant that a thriving social media influencer industry could emerge (Haenlein et al., 2020).

Obviously, each social media has a different target audience, mostly in terms of age. This depends on multiple factors, including the period in which it originated and the features it has, which may appeal to a more or less younger audience (Haenlein et al., 2020).

Instagram and TikTok were launched respectively in 2010 and 2018, and today they are among the most widely used social media in the world between people belonging to Generation Z. The former allows you to create and share both photos and videos, while the latter only videos. This

characteristic, along with the fact that the users of these platforms are mainly very young, makes them appealing for influencer marketing, as opposed to other social networks (such as Twitter), which due to their features are not suitable for the development of influencers who want to promote brands, and they are used for personal enjoyment (Haenlein et al., 2020).

Luxury brands usage of social media has a positive impact on consumers purchase intentions (Lee et al., 2016). All luxury brands have an Instagram account, but not all of them have one on TikTok, or at least only now are they starting to create one. This is because initially these brands were reluctant to start interacting with consumers through a platform so different from others, and used mostly by a very young audience (Hayden, 2022). However, they now use both platforms to sponsor their products through influencers.

Instagram has the potential to reach a global audience, which is precisely why it has become fertile ground for collaboration between influencers and luxury brands (Vinerean, 2019), and it is considered as the most suitable social media for these types of brands (Park et al., 2021), since the fashion sector is perfect for the visual characteristics presented by this platform (Jin et al., 2019). These brands see influencer as brand ambassadors, capable to reach a huge audience and to create a positive

association with the product (Jin et al., 2019). This social network can improve consumers purchase intention for a variety of reasons: visual display, authentic and creative content and involvement and interaction (Park et al., 2021). The visual display of content that Instagram gives, can have a significant impact on purchase intentions, as engaging content can create a desire to own the product; the creative presentation of a luxury product, can arouse a sense of aspiration and desire in consumers; the engagement with influencers that this social offers (responses to surveys, comments under posts, and direct messages) can increase users interest and trust in the sponsored product and generate increased purchase intention (Park et al., 2021).

Although there is still poor literature on the relationship between TikTok and luxury brands, some considerations can be made. Even if Instagram and TikTok have several features in common, Instagram post may be more effective than a video posted on TikTok in terms of purchase intention of luxury products. As stated earlier, TikTok allows only video creation. Such videos are very short, informal and fun, and this may limit the exposure and understanding of the luxury product (Hayden, 2022). While Instagram is traditionally linked to content such as fashion and luxury, TikTok is more geared toward mere entertainment. This can

influence users' expectations and perceptions of the sponsored luxury product (Karlak, 2022).

A previous research, conducted by Hayden (2022) about the perception of luxury brands on TikTok by people belonging to Gen Z, showed that such perception is neither positive or negative, consequently users do not seem to react particularly to luxury brands advertisements on this social media.

Considering what was just said, the first hypothesis of the study is the following:

H1: The type of social media platforms influence purchase intention. Sponsorship of a luxury product via Instagram post generates higher purchase intention, compared to a TikTok post.

### **1.2.2. The moderating role of influencer's typology: differences between Micro and Macro influencers**

It is possible to distinguish between two different categories of influencers: Micro influencers and Macro influencers. The first category includes all influencers who have a number of followers ranging from 1.000 to 10.000, while the second one includes those with more than 100.000 followers (De Veirman et al., 2017).

Beyond that, further distinctions can be made between the different types of influencers, taking into consideration certain aspects, such as: innovativeness, credibility, interactivity and authenticity. All these have an influence on consumers' purchase intentions, and creates a positive attitude toward the brand (Glucksman, 2017).

The difference between Micro and Macro influencers, in terms of consumers' perceptions on social media platforms, are to date a bit controversial. The general idea is that Micro influencers are able to achieve more engagement from followers, and produce more personalized and direct messages to be launched on social media, given the tendency they have in considering their followers as friends; Macro influencers, on the other hand, are considered as socially desirable, and consequently more suitable to generate sympathy for a given brand and consequently increase its popularity (Berne-Manero et al., 2020). What is certain is that, influencers who possess more followers are perceived as more credible, expert, and admirable particularly when it comes to promoting a major luxury brand whose ultimate goal is to increase sales (Berne-Manero et al., 2020). Previous studies have shown that the greater the number of followers, the greater the positive consumer attitude toward that influencer is (De Veirman et al., 2017). Instead, Micro influencers, seem to be better suited to deal with more specific niche

topics, as they have a closer connection with their followers and offer a greater opportunity for interaction (De Veirman et al., 2017). They seem to be more suitable for the promotion of an emerging brand, which aims to make itself known to consumers. Another important aspect that should not be underestimated is that Micro influencers may be less experienced in creating unique and quality contents, and this may not be conducive to the successful promotion of a major luxury brand's product (Haenlein et al., 2020).

The type of social platform through which an influencer sponsors a luxury product is certainly important when it comes to measuring a consumer's level of purchase intention, but the type of influencer (Micro vs. Macro) plays a key role and should not be overlooked.

Summing up all these considerations, it is possible to develop the second hypothesis of the research:

H2: Influencer's typology moderate the relationship between the type of social media platform and purchase intention. Sponsorship of a luxury product by a Macro influencer increases purchase intentions, more than sponsoring the same product by a Micro influencer.

### **1.3. The mediating role of perceived quality of luxury products**

Luxury products' perceived quality has key importance to consumers and it's capable to influence their purchase intention. Products' quality and brand reputation are closely related to each other and consumers often seek out brands that are known for their excellence in manufacturing and attention to details. When clients know that the quality of a particular brand's products is superior to others, they develop a sense of trust in that brand, which let the relationship between them to be stable and continuous (Kim, 2020). Moreover, a perception of high quality adds value to the product, giving it exclusivity and superiority, increasing the sense of luxury and prestige (Lau et al., 2023). Products' perceived quality also plays an important role in its user experience. A luxury item, must offer excellent performance, in terms of durability and strength over time (Kim, 2020).

Most of the times, quality consideration come from the judgment of consumers who have tried the product. Two different types of quality can be identified: subjective (which can vary from consumer to consumer) and objective (all consumers agree on that quality assessment). Very often, to evaluate the quality of a luxury item, consumers make comparisons with other brands that offer similar products, and good quality is recognized when they perceive differentiation and superiority



of the evaluated brand (Park et al., 2020). It can be summarized that perceived quality, can strongly influence a consumer's preferences, bringing them closer to one brand rather than another.

A research conducted by Husic & Cicic (2008), has already proven that luxury consumption is strongly influenced by several factors, including products' quality, which influence the relationship in a significant and positive way. Their study showed that good quality should be an indicator for any famous and well-known brand.

In the specific case of promoting luxury items on social media, the perceived quality of the product can influence consumers' overall evaluation. In fact, the post published should seek to communicate a high quality of the item promoted so that it is perceived as more desirable and attractive (Kim, 2020). It is possible, then, that perceived quality may mediate the relationship between social platforms type (Instagram vs. TikTok) and consumer purchase intention, since it is strongly considered when a product is evaluated.

H3: Perceived quality of luxury products mediate the relationship between type of social media platform and purchase intention.

#### **1.4. Consumers previous experience for luxury products**

The term "Previous experience" refers to the body of knowledge, personal experience and general interaction with luxury products. Such experience, may come from a variety of factors, including: previous purchases, research on the luxury world, and interactions with consumers who are experts in this field (Loureiro et al., 2013). Previous experience on luxury products, is a key element, which can influence a consumer's purchase intentions, the perception of a product quality and their overall satisfaction. A high degree of experience, allows them to recognize more quickly and effectively if a product is truly luxury, and consequently assess whether or not it should be purchased (Loureiro et al., 2013). Past research, have already demonstrated that a higher level of experience leads to a major awareness of luxury brands and of distinctive features of products (Ko et al., 2011).

Consumers' experience will be a very important control variable in the following study, because it can modulate the effect of other variables in the clients' purchasing process. For example, if a consumer has a higher degree of experience in luxury products, he/she could be less affected by type of social media platform or type of influencer, since he/she is able to judge independently the product shown. In this sense, consumers possess a more critical evaluative spirit, and an influencer is unlikely to

shape their thinking. They have more clear ideas of what they look when buying a luxury item, and what are their desires about it. In addition, clients who have had a long relationship with a brand and know its products very well, are more likely to trust it, without considering the way they advertise, or who they choose as brand ambassadors (Wiedmann et al., 2009).

Therefore, in order for the research to be accurate, it is necessary to control this variable and have a clearer view of the purchasing dynamics of the luxury sector, resulting from the use of social media and influencers.

## 2. METHODOLOGIES

### 2.1. Conceptual framework and research question

According to what it has been already explained, it is possible now to develop the conceptual framework of the study.

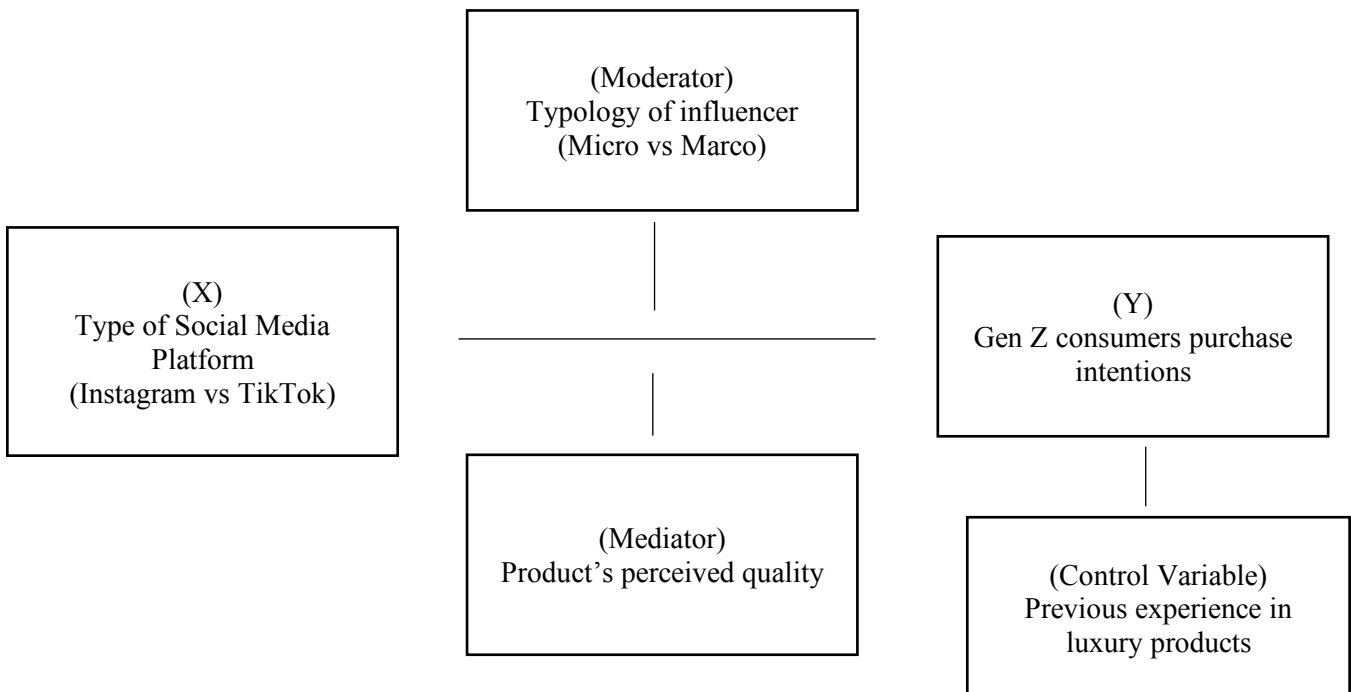


Figure 2: Conceptual model of the study

Consequently, the research question to investigate and analyze is:

*“How does the type of Social Media Platform on which luxury products are sponsored influence the purchase intentions of consumers belonging to Generation Z? How does the difference between Micro and Macro influencers moderate this relationship? Is Product's perceived quality*

*mediate the effect that type of Social Media Platforms have on consumers purchase intentions?”*

## **2.2. Research design and stimuli**

In order to test the previous explained hypotheses, a survey was developed using the Qualtrics platform<sup>1</sup>. The survey was distributed through anonymous link to participants, using the Prolific platform<sup>2</sup>.

The study consisted in a between 2X2 subject design, with four different scenarios, randomly assigned to respondents, each depicting a fictional brand-sponsored post featuring a bag on either Instagram or TikTok. The scenarios involved two posts on Instagram and two posts on TikTok, with some participants exposed to a macro influencer and others to a micro influencer:

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://impresaluiss.qualtrics.com/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://app.prolific.co/>

## Instagram influencer with 1 MLN followers



*Figure 3: Scenario 1*

## Instagram influencer with 10k followers



*Figure 4: Scenario 2*

### **TikTok influencer with 10k followers**



*Figure 5: Scenario 3*

### **TikTok influencer with 1 MLN followers**



*Figure 6: Scenario 4*

After seen one of these scenarios, participants were asked to answer questions related to their purchase intentions and perceived quality related the bag presented. Additionally, participants were asked questions regarding their background of previous experience with luxury products, serving as a control variable. Finally, two demographic questions (age and gender) were included at the end of the survey.

All variables were measured using pre-validated scales that had been utilized in previous research studies. It is important to note that all responses obtained were completely anonymous and cannot be traced back to individual respondents.

### **2.3. Survey structure and measurement**

The survey was structured into 9 blocks to gather the necessary data (Appendix 1):

- The first block served as an introduction, providing respondents with information about the purpose of the study, a brief presentation of the researcher, and general instructions for the survey. Participants were encouraged to carefully review the subsequent content.
- Blocks 2 to 5 presented the four different scenarios. Each block introduced a specific scenario: block 2 presented scenario 1, block 3 presented scenario 2, block 4 presented scenario 3, and block 5 presented scenario 4.



- Block 6 focused on measuring the dependent variable, which was the participants' purchase intention for the bag. This was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represented "strongly disagree" and 5 represented "strongly agree" (Gordon et al., 2012). They had to rate 3 different statements about how was their purchase intention after seen the scenario they randomly received.
- Block 7 aimed to measure the mediator variable, which was the perceived quality of the bag. Participants were asked to rate their perceived quality on a 9-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 for "strongly disagree" to 9 for "strongly agree" (Gordon et al., 2012). They had to rate 4 different statements about how was the quality perceived by them, after seen the scenario assigned.
- Block 8 focused on measuring the control variable, which was the participants' previous experience of luxury products. This was assessed using a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 represented "strongly disagree" and 7 represented "strongly agree" (Gordon et al., 2012). They was asked to rate 3 statements about their background of experience with luxury products.

- The final block contained two demographic questions regarding the age and gender of the participants.

#### **2.4. Sample and Data collection**

The total respondents of the survey were 237, but after cleaning the dataset, they became 222. Preview responses (3) were deleted and all the respondents that didn't finish all the survey (12) as well. The duration of responses was the same for everyone (about 90 seconds for each person, which was also the expected time of survey completion), so there was no need to delete other responses.

The target population for the study was made by people between 18 and 28 years old, all active users of TikTok and Instagram platforms. The sample was chosen with these characteristics because the study was focused on Gen Z consumers which are active on these two social media platforms.

In order to get an high number of responses in short time, the survey was directly posted on Prolific website, where the Qualtrics link was uploaded. Prolific is a crowd-sourcing platform, where people are paid for participate to the studies. Thanks to this website, it is easy to customize the target population, specifying that people who would

participate in the study, should be between 18 to 28 years old and should be, also, active users of the two social media involved in the research. Regarding the respondents' gender, the results showed: 36,9% (Male), 60,4% (Female), 2,7% (Non-binary / third gender). Moreover, 67,7% of respondents were between 23-28 years old, while the remaining 32,9% were between 18-22 years old.

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Male	82	36,9
Female	134	60,4
Non binary / third gender	6	2,7

Figure 7: Gender table

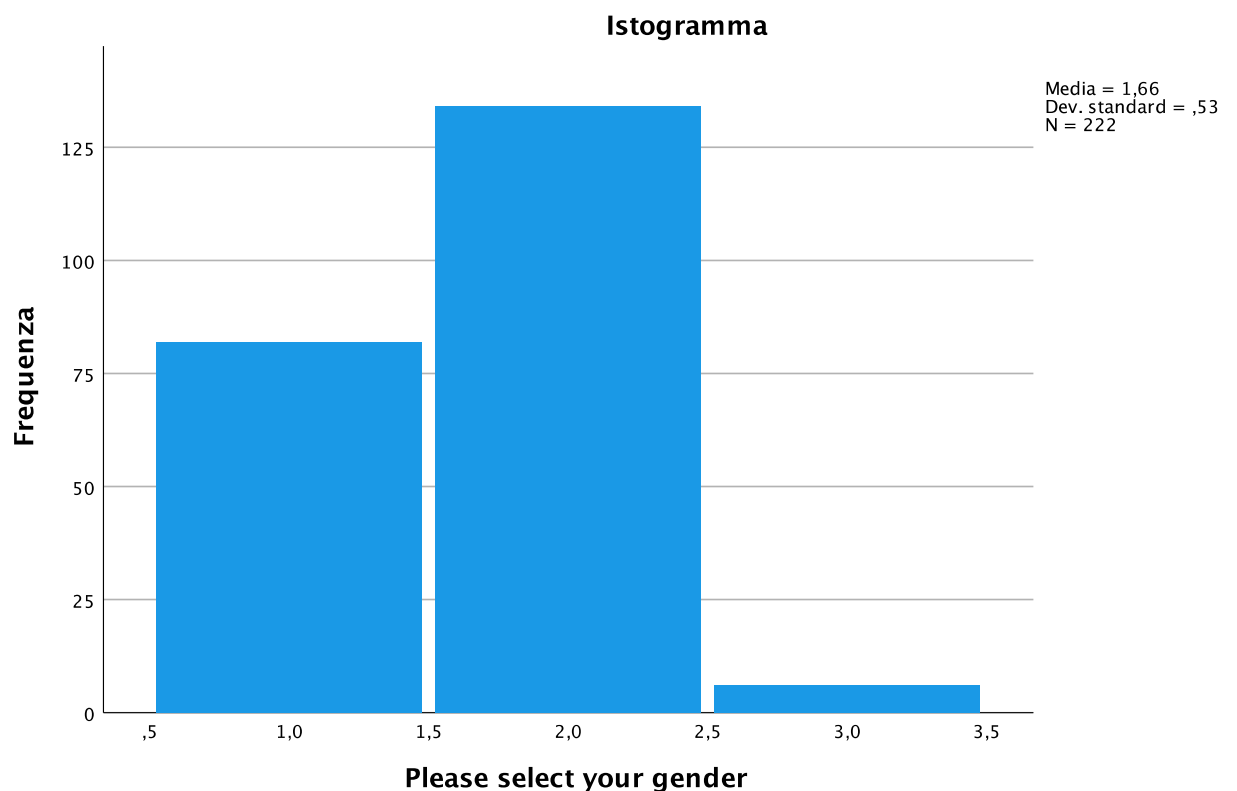


Figure 8: Gender Histogram

## 2.5. Scales reliability

Reliability is a technique used for assessing consistency to the scales used in a survey. It's very important, because in case there is no validity of the scales, the research cannot be considered.

For this reason, once the dataset was been cleaned, the reliability of the scales was checked. The scales used in study, were already been used for previous research on purchase intention, perceived quality, and prior experience (Gordon et al., 2012), but not specifically for luxury products. For what concerns the scale, that measured the respondents purchase intention of the product (5-point Likert scale), the Cronbach alpha was:  $\alpha = 0.921$ .

Regarding the scale, that measured the respondents perceived quality of the product (9-point Likert scale), the first Cronbach alpha was:  $\alpha = 0.915$ . In this case, by removing the first item of the scale "The promotion has an influence on my perceptions of its overall quality", it was possible to obtained:  $\alpha = 0.929$ . Consequently, in subsequent analyses, only the remaining 3 items of the scale were considered.

For the last scale, that measured the respondents previous experience for luxury products (7-point Likert scale), the Cronbach alpha was:  $\alpha = 0.868$ .

It is possible to state that all the scales are reliable (Appendix 2).

CONSTRUCT	NUMBER OF ITEMS	CRONBACH APLHA
Purchase Intention	3	0.921
Perceived Quality	3	0.929
Previous Experience	3	0.868

Figure 9: Cronbach Alpha Reliability Measure Table

## 2.6. Measurement of variables

After cleaning the dataset, having analysed the sample by descriptive statistics, and concluding with scales validity, two different variables were created in order to proceed with the analysis: “Post\_typology” (where 1 = TikTok, 0 = Instagram) and “Influencer\_typology” (where 1 = Micro influencer, 0 = Macro influencer).

After this, it was possible to proceed with hypothesis testing, and to calculate the mean of the dependent variable of the conceptual framework, which was called “DV\_mean”. Same was done with the control variable “CV\_mean”, and with the mediator “M\_mean”.

### 2.6.1. Two - way ANOVA

In order to test H1 and H2, it was conducted a Two – way ANOVA test (Appendix 2).

H1: The type of social media platforms influence purchase intention. Sponsorship of a luxury product via Instagram post generates higher purchase intention, compared to a TikTok post.

H2: Influencer's typology moderate the relationship between the type of social media platform and purchase intention. Sponsorship of a luxury product by a Macro influencer increases purchase intentions, more than sponsoring the same product by a Micro influencer.

By observing the descriptive statistics table (Figure 10), and by taking into consideration the dependent variable, it was possible to observe the differences between the two conditions. The mean corresponding to condition 0 (Instagram) was equal to 1.73, while the mean corresponding to condition 1 (TikTok) was equal to 1.43. As a result, it can be seen that, the mean corresponding to condition 0, that was the post made on Instagram, is higher than the mean of condition 1.

With respect to moderator, it was found that the mean of the condition 0 (Macro influencer) was equal to 1.72, while the mean corresponding to condition 1 (Micro influencer) was equal to 1.44.

Considering all the possible combinations between independent variable and moderator, the highest mean was equal to 1.75, which was given by

the interaction between an Instagram post and a Macro influencer. Therefore, for the sample analyzed, the preferred scenario consists of an Instagram post published by a Macro influencer.

Post_typology	Influencer_typology	Mean	SD
0 = Instagram	0 = Macro Influencer	1,7544	0,93122
	1 = Micro Influencer	1,7143	0,90883
	Tot	1,7345	0,9163
1 = TikTok	0 = Macro Influencer	1,6964	0,97084
	1 = Micro Influencer	1,1509	0,4112
	Tot	1,4312	0,79776
Tot	0 = Macro Influencer	1,7257	0,94725
	1 = Micro Influencer	1,4404	0,76293
	Tot	1,5856	0,87156

Figure 10: Descriptive statistics

The analysis revealed that respondents purchase intention for luxury products is influenced by the Instagram post ( $M_{\text{Instagram}} = 1.73$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ;  $M_{\text{TikTok}} = 1.43$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ;  $p = 0.007$ ). Also the effect of the presence of a Macro influencer has proven to be significant ( $M_{\text{Macro}} = 1.72$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ;  $M_{\text{Micro}} = 1.44$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ;  $p = 0.10$ ).

	P-Value
Post_Typology (IV)	0,007
Influencer_Typology (W)	0,01
Post_Typology*Influencer_Typology	0,026

Figure 11: Two-way ANOVA results - Purchase intention

Therefore, it is possible to state that the post typology has an influence on the consumers purchase intention of the bag, that perceive the influence of an Instagram post more strongly than a TikTok post. In

addition, the effect of influencer typology can be also considered significant. In particular, sponsorship by a macro influencer, appears to moderate the effect between post type and consumer purchase intention more.

Thus, the hypotheses 1 (H1: The type of social media platforms influence purchase intention. Sponsorship of a luxury product via Instagram post generates higher purchase intention, compared to a TikTok post) and 2 (H2: Influencer's typology moderate the relationship between the type of social media platform and purchase intention. Sponsorship of a luxury product by a Macro influencer increases purchase intentions, more than sponsoring the same product by a Micro influencer) of the study are both confirmed.

### **2.6.2. ANCOVA**

To ensure that the study was performed considering all possible aspects, the effect of a control variable "Previous experience in luxury products" was also analyzed.

Before running an ANCOVA analysis, the mean of the above mentioned variable was calculated, and was called "CV\_mean".

ANCOVA showed that the control variable "Previous experience in luxury products" affects the model (Appendix 2).



Control Variable	P-Value
Previous experience in luxury products	p<0,001

Figure 12: ANCOVA results

### 2.6.3. Process

In order to test the last hypothesis of the study (H3: Perceived quality of luxury products mediate the relationship between type of social media platform and purchase intention), it was conducted a mediation analysis, through a regression analysis with SPSS Process Model 8, Version 4.2. The regression made it possible to assess the significance and validity of the assumptions of the theoretical framework. In the model the independent variable (X) was the post typology, the dependent variable (Y) was DV\_mean, the mediator (M) was M\_mean, and the moderator (W) was the influencer typology.

The first thing that was done, was to observe the p-value of each variable (which has to be minor or equal to 0.05). Thanks to the analysis it was observed that the effect of X on M was positive, but not significant (p-value = .1748), so post typology is not a significant predictor for the product's perceived quality. Same for the the effect of W on M (p-value = .1748). Regarding the main effect with the mediation, it was possible to observe that, again, it was not significant (p-value = .4190). What was interested was that, the mediator influenced the product purchase intention in a positive and significant way (p-value = .0000; b = .3246; t

= 14.3405). Moreover, the indirect effect of X on Y via M<sub>mean</sub> is positive and statistically significant (p-value = .0023). All these results suggested that there is no mediation effect, but only a moderation one, therefore H3 is not confirmed.

### **3. GENERAL DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

#### **3.1. Summary of main findings**

The purpose of this research was to understand how the market for luxury products interacted with social media, and how these in turn influenced Generation Z consumers' purchase intentions. Specifically, two different types of social media platforms were considered, Instagram and TikTok, which were thus the independent variable in the study. It was seen how the sponsorship of luxury products on these platforms (a luxury handbag in the specific case of the research) could differently influence the consumers who saw the advertisement (which was represented by a photo for Instagram and a video for TikTok). Moreover, it was also analyzed the effect that the type of influencer appearing in the advertisement could have on the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent one. Two different types of influencers were considered: micro influencer and macro influencer, which thus had a moderating role in the research. To try to better understand the phenomenon under study, a mediator (perceived product quality) was also included, but it did not show significance in the research.

The overall results showed that only two of the three hypotheses of the study were confirmed. There is evidence that the type of social media

platform has an influence on Generation Z consumers' purchase intention, and in particular Instagram, which has been shown to have a greater impact than TikTok. It was also proven that, type of influencer had a moderating role in the study, and data showed that a macro influencer has a greater positive impact on consumers compared to a micro one. The third hypothesis was about the mediation effect of the research, but as stated above, the data did not show significance, which is the reason why this hypothesis was not confirmed.

As mentioned earlier, it is crucial for brands to make the right choices when it comes to advertisement campaigns. Thanks to the obtained results, small strides have been made on the topic of luxury and social media, giving a clearer idea of what the platforms to use may be, when luxury brands want to approach a younger consumer category, and which influencers to choose based on the category of product to be advertised. This is important also because the potential of TikTok has not yet been fully explored, as such social media is very new and popular by young users. The study showed that choosing to sponsor a luxury product on this platform is not really optimal, and it is therefore better to try to invest in other types of social media, such as Instagram. Moreover, given that the purchase of a luxury product by a consumer belonging to Generation Z, such as a handbag in the case of the research in question, requires the

use of a significant amount of money, it is better to rely on well-known influencers, who can be trusted more, rather than perhaps investing less and considering an influencer with fewer followers.

### **3.2. Theoretical implications**

Research's conclusions have provided some important theoretical implications in the field of luxury market and the use of social media for what concerns Generation Z consumers.

First of all, what was highlighted is the distinctive role of the social media platforms (Instagram and TikTok). Results showed a different impact of these two social media on the consumers purchase intention. What was observed is that Instagram has a greater influence than TikTok. This helped to extend the existing literature about the topic of luxury brands and social media, when it comes to promoting their products with the final goal of increasing consumers purchase intentions. It also helps to understand that there are specificities in the way contents are presented on different social platforms, and advertising strategy should be adjusted accordingly.

Another important element is the importance of the influencers. The study has shown that the type of influencer plays a crucial role in the sponsorship of luxury products on social media. As mentioned above,

Macro influencers have a more positive impact compared to Micro influencers, and this suggests that the efficacy of marketing campaigns that are based on influencers depends on the importance of the influencer himself/herself. These results could improve the already published literature about all the dynamics between types of influencers and consumers purchasing behaviors.

Relevant is also the Generation Z consumers' behaviors regarding luxury products, that have been discovered during the study. The findings have helped to extend the literature about Generation Z consumers' habits and preferences, focusing both on social media and luxury goods.

In general, even though the literature already provided extensive information on certain issues (i.e. social media development, differences among influencers, habits and perceptions of luxury products by consumers belonging to Generation Z), the study I carried out certainly helped to fill the gap in the literature regarding the connections that might be there between TikTok and luxury brands, and especially what might be optimal ways of using these social media platforms.

### **3.3. Managerial implications**

The main objective of the research was to investigate the phenomenon of social media platforms, related to luxury brands. In particular, the aim

was to help these brands to better understand how to approach an advertising campaign when they want to have an impact on consumers belonging to Generation Z. The two social media considered were Instagram and TikTok, because when it comes to sponsorship, they are the ones that allow for the most interaction with users, and they help to describe appropriately the product, also using different approaches.

From a managerial perspective, it is important to carefully consider different aspects of the advertisement campaign to put in place, like for example: when to use Instagram instead of TikTok, which type of influencer use to promote the product, which type of contents create for Generation Z consumers.

The results have shown that brands should focus on Instagram as main platform for advertisement campaign, because it has a greater impact on Generation Z consumers, so marketing resources should be mainly allocated on this platform in order to reach in an efficient way the target population. Despite the fact that, results suggest that TikTok may not be optimal in order to sponsor luxury products, brands should continue to monitor and explore the opportunities that this platform offers, since it is still new and growing. Anyway, TikTok's campaigns should be carefully designed and monitored to adapt to the specific audience and context of the platform.

Moreover, choosing the right influencer is also very important for the success of the campaign, and basing on the results, luxury brands should consider collaborating with well-known influencers with a large number of followers, in order to increase brand's credibility and consumers trust, even if this would require a greater investment of financial resources.

Regarding the type of contents to create, what emerged is that to maximize the impact of the post created, luxury brands should ask the influencer to produce contents that are highly relevant, and that reflects the preferences of Generation Z consumers. Moreover, they also should carefully monitor the emerging trends in Generation Z consumers behaviors and in the use of social media. This could help them to adapt promptly marketing strategies and to exploit new opportunities for consumers engagement.

Lastly, even if the mediator "perceived product quality" didn't show significance in the study, is still important to take it into consideration this element in the marketing decision-making processes. Brands should ensure that luxury products are perceived as authentic, high quality, and worthy of the asking price. This can positively influence consumers' purchase intentions.



### **3.4. Limitations and future research**

This study aims to understand the potential that Instagram and TikTok have when talking about promotion of luxury products, with a specific focus on the role of the influencers on these two platforms and the way the content are created. Even if two out of three hypothesis were confirmed, there are some limitations that characterized this research.

The first limitation regards the sample. The total number of respondents was 222, and the sample was quite heterogeneous in terms of gender. By reaching more survey participants, the results might have changed slightly, but unfortunately the budget for this research did not allow for a higher number of respondents . Moreover, it was not investigated from where people of the sample came from, since there was not a focus on a particular geographic area, but it would be interested to understand also the differences between one country and another. Lastly, luxury habits of respondents were not investigated, so it was not possible to be aware of information like: how often they purchase luxury products, or how they prefer to buy them (online or in store), or even what was their idea of luxury in general.

The second limitation is about the questionnaire stimuli. The fictitious posts were created in such a way as to look as real as possible, using a good content description and hashtag as well, but photos could not be

taken with a professional camera. Consequently, the definition of the pictures were not optimal.

Therefore, future research, could replicate this study, taking into consideration the limitations mentioned above, and trying to improve them. Specifically, new studies could focus on a defined country, or maybe two, and then make a comparison between them. Also the choice of the sample's generation could be different, in order to understand how the phenomenon may vary from generation to generation. It might be interesting to replicate the study to people who are regular customers of luxury brands and who purchase non-sporadically, and that, as a consequence, have deep product knowledge.

Another consideration might be the distinction between all the contents that can be created on the two social media platforms (i.e. how Instagram effect change with post or stories; how TikTok effect change with videos with music or spoken video).

### **3.5. Conclusions**

Even if with some limitations, I hope that this research helped take a step forward on the topic of social media and how it can be optimally leveraged by luxury brands, and that future studies will be developed

starting from it. The themes analyzed have the chance to help luxury brands in developing a conscious advertisement campaign on social media platforms, which may often prove to be not so straightforward, given the high level of competition in this market and among brands on social media in general. The fact that the results have revealed that Instagram has a greater impact than TikTok, does not mean that the latter does not have the potential for growth in luxury product sponsorship. It should, in fact, continue to keep an eye on it and monitor its developments, as it may overtake Instagram in the future.

In addition, although the mediator (perceived quality of luxury products) did not show significance within the research, it does not mean that it is not a key factor to consider when it comes to sponsoring luxury products on social media, as given the high price the consumer is willing to pay, expectations about its quality will always be high.

I believe that luxury world and social media world are extremely fascinating, and they also have many aspects in common, as they are both constantly changing and always on the cutting edge. For this reason, I hope that research will continue to move forward so that the best combination can be found, to allow these two worlds to go hand in hand.

## REFERENCES

Aiello, G., Donvito, R., Godey, B., Pederzoli, D., Wiedmann, K. P., Hennigs, N., ... & Singh, R. (2009). An international perspective on luxury brand and country-of-origin effect. *Journal of Brand Management*, 16(5-6), 323-337.

Anderson, M., & Jiang, J. (2018). Teens, social media & technology 2018. *Pew research center*, 31(2018), 1673-1689.

Annie Jin, S. A. (2012). The potential of social media for luxury brand management. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 30(7), 687-699.

Arrigo, E. (2018). Social media marketing in luxury brands. *Management Research Review*, 41(6), 657–679. <https://doi.org/10.1108/mrr-04-2017-0134>

Bakir, A., Gentina, E., & de Araújo Gil, L. (2020). What shapes adolescents' attitudes toward luxury brands? The role of self-worth, self-construal, gender and national culture. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 57, 102208. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102208>

Bazi, S., Filieri, R., & Gorton, M. (2020). Customers' motivation to engage with luxury brands on social media. *Journal of Business Research*, 112, 223–235. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.02.032>

Berne-Manero, C., & Marzo-Navarro, M. (2020). Exploring How Influencer and Relationship Marketing Serve Corporate Sustainability. *Sustainability*, 12(11), 4392. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12114392>

Bruner, G. C. (2012). *Marketing scales handbook: A compilation of multi-item measures for consumer behavior & advertising research*. GCBII Productions LLC.

De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). Marketing through Instagram influencers: the impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), 798–828. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035>

Dobre, C., Milovan, A.-M., Duțu, C., Preda, G., & Agapie, A. (2021). The Common Values of Social Media Marketing and Luxury Brands. The Millennials and Generation Z Perspective. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, 16(7), 2532–2553. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jtaer16070139>

Duffett, R. (2020). The YouTube Marketing Communication Effect on Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural Attitudes among Generation Z Consumers. *Sustainability*, 12(12), 5075. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12125075>

Fetis, A. H., Algharabat, R. S., Aljafari, A., & Rana, N. P. (2022). Do Social Media Marketing Activities Improve Brand Loyalty? An Empirical Study on Luxury

Fashion Brands. *Information Systems Frontiers*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10796-022-10264-7>

Francis, T., & Hoefel, F. (2018). True Gen': Generation Z and its implications for companies. *McKinsey & Company*, 12, 1-10.

Glucksman, M. (2017). The rise of social media influencer marketing on lifestyle branding: A case study of Lucie Fink. *Elon Journal of undergraduate research in communications*, 8(2), 77-87.

Godey, B., Pederzoli, D., Aiello, G., Donvito, R., Wiedmann, K., & Hennigs, N. (2013). A cross-cultural exploratory content analysis of the perception of luxury from six countries. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22(3), 229–237. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jpbm-02-2013-0254>

Gupta, D. G., Shin, H., & Jain, V. (2023). Luxury experience and consumer behavior: a literature review. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 41(2), 199-213.

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

Herrando, C., & Martín-De Hoyos, M. J. (2022). Influencer endorsement posts and their effects on advertising attitudes and purchase intentions. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12785>

Husic, M., & Cicic, M. (2009). Luxury consumption factors. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: an international journal*, 13(2), 231-245.

Jacob, I., Khanna, M., & Rai, K. A. (2020). Attribution analysis of luxury brands: An investigation into consumer-brand congruence through conspicuous consumption. *Journal of Business Research*, 116, 597–607. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.007>

Jin, S. V., & Ryu, E. (2020). Instagram fashionistas, luxury visual image strategies and vanity. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 29(3), 355-368.

Karlak, H. (2022). Perceptions of luxury brands on Tik Tok and understanding the impact of? Tik Tok's unique features on luxury consumers in today's digital world.

Kay, S., Mulcahy, R., & Parkinson, J. (2020). When less is more: the impact of macro and micro social media influencers' disclosure. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 36(3-4), 248–278. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257x.2020.1718740>

Khan, S. (2018). Instagram as a marketing tool for luxury brands. *International Journal of Management, Business and Research*, 8(2), 126.

Kim, J. H. (2020). Luxury brands in the digital age: perceived quality and gender difference. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 30(1), 68-85.

Ko, E., & Megehee, C. M. (2012). Fashion marketing of luxury brands: Recent research issues and contributions. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(10), 1395-1398.

Kong, H. M., Witmaier, A., & Ko, E. (2021). Sustainability and social media communication: How consumers respond to marketing efforts of luxury and non-luxury fashion brands. *Journal of Business Research*, 131, 640-651.

Lau, M. M., Ng, P. M. L., Chan, E. A. H., & Cheung, C. T. Y. (2023). Examining purchase intention for luxury fashion: integrating theory of reasoned action, with affect-behavior-cognition (ABC) model, identity and social identity theories. *Young Consumers*, 24(1), 114-131.

*Luxury market rebounds in 2021, set to return to historic growth trajectory*. (n.d.).

Bain. <https://www.bain.com/about/media-center/press-releases/2021/luxury-report-2021/>

Lee, J. E., & Watkins, B. (2016). YouTube vloggers' influence on consumer luxury brand perceptions and intentions. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(12), 5753–5760. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.171>



Leung, F. F., Gu, F. F., & Palmatier, R. W. (2022). Online influencer marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 50(2), 226–251. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-021-00829-4>

Lim, X. J., Mohd Radzol, A. R. b., Cheah, J.-H. (., & Wong, M. W. (2017). The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Purchase Intention and the Mediation Effect of Customer Attitude. *Asian Journal of Business Research*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.14707/ajbr.170035>

Park, M., Im, H., & Kim, H.-Y. (2020). “You are too friendly!” The negative effects of social media marketing on value perceptions of luxury fashion brands. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 529–542. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.07.026>

Loureiro, S. M. C., & de Araújo, C. M. B. (2014). Luxury values and experience as drivers for consumers to recommend and pay more. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 21(3), 394-400.

Närvänen, E., Kirvesmies, T., & Kahri, E. (2020). Parasocial relationships of Generation Z consumers with social media influencers. *Influencer marketing*.

Park, J., Hyun, H., & Thavisay, T. (2021). A study of antecedents and outcomes of social media WOM towards luxury brand purchase intention. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 58, 102272.

Shin, H., Eastman, J., & Li, Y. (2022). Is it love or just like? Generation Z's brand relationship with luxury. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 31(3), 394-414.

Tajvidi, M., Richard, M.-O., Wang, Y., & Hajli, N. (2020). Brand co-creation through social commerce information sharing: The role of social media. *Journal of Business Research*, 121, 476–486. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.06.008>

Tynan, C., McKechnie, S., & Chhuon, C. (2010). Co-creating value for luxury brands. *Journal of business research*, 63(11), 1156-1163.

Uzelac, M., & Lučić, A. (2020, April). The Investigation of Saving Habits of Generation Z's Young Adults. In *Proceedings of the 35th International Business Information Management Association Conference (IBIMA): Education Excellence and Innovation Management: A* (Vol. 2025, pp. 14940-14952).

Vrontis, D., Makrides, A., Christofi, M., & Thrassou, A. (2021). Social media influencer marketing: A systematic review, integrative framework and future research agenda. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(4), 617–644. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12647>

# APPENDIX 1 – QUESTIONNAIRE

## First block: Introduction

Hi everyone,

I'm a Marketing student and I'm conducting a survey for my Master's degree thesis.

I'm going to show you a post of an influencer promoting a luxury bag on social media from the fictional brand "Linea".

Please, pay attention to the post and by taking it in mind, answer the following questions.



## Second block randomized: Instagram influencer with 1 MLN followers



**Third block randomized: Instagram influencer with 10k followers**



**Third block randomized: TikTok influencer with 10k followers**



**Fourth block randomized: TikTok influencer with 1 MLN followers**



## Fifth block: Dependent Variable

Considering what you have just seen, please answer the following statements:  
(considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

1                      2                      3                      3                      4                      5

After seen this post, I would buy the product

The post has increased my purchase intention towards the product

The post has a positive impact on my purchase intentions towards the product



## Sixth block: Mediation effect

Considering what you have just seen, please answer the following statements:  
(considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree)

1            2            3            4            5            5            6            7            8            9

The promotion of the product by the influencer has an influence on my perceptions of its overall quality

The promotion of the product by the influencer has a positive impact on my perceptions of its quality

The influencer's endorsement of the product influences my perception of its premium quality

I consider the influencer's promotion has an indication of high quality for the product



### Seventh block: Control Variable

Considering your own experience in luxury products, please answer the following statements: (considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

I have extensive experience in luxury products

I can differentiate the quality of luxury products from non-luxury ones

I have had previous experience in using luxury products



### Eighth block: Age

How old are you?



## Ninth block: Gender

Please select your gender

Male
Female
Non-binary / third gender
Prefer not to say



## APPENDIX 2 – OUTPUT SPSS

Affidabilità

Scala: ALL VARIABLES

### Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	222	100,0
	Escluso <sup>a</sup>	0	,0
	Totale	222	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

### Statistiche di affidabilità

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,921	3

### Statistiche elemento-totale

	Media scala se viene eliminato l'elemento	Varianza scala se viene eliminato l'elemento	Correlazione elemento- totale corretta	Alpha di Cronbach se viene eliminato l'elemento
Considering what you have just seen, please answer the following statements: (considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) - After seen this post, I would buy the product	3,2793	3,243	,843	,884
Considering what you have just seen, please answer the following statements: (considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) - The post has increased my purchase intention towards the product	3,3288	3,299	,873	,864
Considering what you have just seen, please answer the following statements: (considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) - The post has a positive impact on my purchase intentions towards the product	3,1847	2,821	,821	,913

Affidabilità

Scala: ALL VARIABLES



### Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	222	100,0
	Escluso <sup>a</sup>	0	,0
	Totale	222	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

### Statistiche di affidabilità

Alpha di Cronbach N. di elementi

,915	4
------	---

### Statistiche elemento-totale

	Media scala se viene eliminato l'elemento	Varianza scala se viene eliminato l'elemento	Correlazione elemento- totale corretta	Alpha di Cronbach se viene eliminato l'elemento
Considering what you have just seen, please answer the following statements: (considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree) - The promotion of the product by the influencer has an influence on my perceptions of its overall quality	7,5946	27,536	,705	,929
Considering what you have just seen, please answer the following statements: (considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree) - The promotion of the product by the influencer has a positive impact on my perceptions of its quality	8,1351	27,801	,855	,875

Considering what you have just seen, please answer the following statements: (considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree) - The influencer's endorsement of the product influences my perception of its premium quality	8,1261	26,084	,850	,875
Considering what you have just seen, please answer the following statements: (considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree) - I consider the influencer's promotion has an indication of high quality for the product	8,2387	28,020	,836	,881

Affidabilità

Scala: ALL VARIABLES

### Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	222	100,0
	Escluso <sup>a</sup>	0	,0
	Totale	222	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

### Statistiche di affidabilità

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,929	3

### Statistiche elemento-totale

	Media scala se viene eliminato l'elemento	Varianza scala se viene eliminato l'elemento	Correlazione elemento- totale corretta	Alpha di Cronbach se viene eliminato l'elemento
Considering what you have just seen, please answer the following statements: (considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree) - The promotion of the product by the influencer has a positive impact on my perceptions of its quality	5,0315	13,099	,857	,896
Considering what you have just seen, please answer the following statements: (considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree) - The influencer's endorsement of the product influences my perception of its premium quality	5,0225	12,031	,837	,916
Considering what you have just seen, please answer the following statements: (considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree) - I consider the influencer's promotion has an indication of high quality for the product	5,1351	12,887	,876	,881

Affidabilità

Scala: ALL VARIABLES

### Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	222	100,0
	Escluso <sup>a</sup>	0	,0
	Totale	222	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

### Statistiche di affidabilità

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,868	3

### Statistiche elemento-totale

	Media scala se viene eliminato l'elemento	Varianza scala se viene eliminato l'elemento	Correlazione elemento- totale corretta	Alpha di Cronbach se viene eliminato l'elemento
Considering your own experience in luxury products, please answer the following statements: (considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) - I have extensive experience in luxury products	7,7252	10,064	,783	,789
Considering your own experience in luxury products, please answer the following statements: (considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) - I can differentiate the quality of luxury	6,4505	10,393	,666	,886

products from non-luxury ones				
Considering your own experience in luxury products, please answer the following statements: (considering that 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) - I have had previous experience in using luxury products	7,0045	8,185	,813	,754

Analisi univariata di varianza

### Fattori tra soggetti

		N
Tipologia_post	,00	113
	1,00	109
Tipologia_influencer	,00	113
	1,00	109

### Test di effetti tra soggetti

Variabile dipendente: Purchase\_mean

Origine	Somma dei quadrati di tipo III	df	Media quadratica	F	Sig.
Modello corretto	13,252 <sup>a</sup>	3	4,417	6,228	<,001
Intercetta	553,093	1	553,093	779,801	<,001
Tipologia_post	5,352	1	5,352	7,546	,007
Tipologia_influencer	4,754	1	4,754	6,703	,010
Tipologia_post *	3,541	1	3,541	4,993	,026
Tipologia_influencer					
Errore	154,622	218	,709		
Totale	726,000	222			
Totale corretto	167,874	221			

a. R-quadrato = ,079 (R-quadrato adattato = ,066)

Analisi univariata di varianza

### Fattori tra soggetti

		N
Tipologia_post	,00	113
	1,00	109
Tipologia_influencer	,00	113
	1,00	109

### Test di effetti tra soggetti

Variabile dipendente: Purchase\_mean

Origine	Somma dei quadrati di tipo III	df	Media quadratica	F	Sig.
Modello corretto	25,410 <sup>a</sup>	4	6,352	9,676	<,001
Intercetta	51,353	1	51,353	78,221	<,001
Experience_mean	12,157	1	12,157	18,518	<,001
Tipologia_post	5,500	1	5,500	8,378	,004
Tipologia_influencer	5,060	1	5,060	7,707	,006
Tipologia_post * Tipologia_influencer	2,891	1	2,891	4,404	,037
Errore	142,464	217	,657		
Totale	726,000	222			
Totale corretto	167,874	221			

a. R-quadrato = ,151 (R-quadrato adattato = ,136)

Matrice

Run MATRIX procedure:

```
***** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2
*****
```

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.  
[www.afhayes.com](http://www.afhayes.com)  
 Documentation available in Hayes (2022).  
[www.guilford.com/p/hayes3](http://www.guilford.com/p/hayes3)

```
*****
```

```
*****
```

```
Model : 8
      Y : DV_mean
```

X : Post  
M : M\_mean  
W : Influ

Sample  
Size: 222

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

OUTCOME VARIABLE:  
M\_mean

Model Summary

df2	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1
218,0000	,2100	,0441	3,2761	3,3522	3,0000
		,0198			

Model

	coeff	se	t	p
LLCI	ULCI			
constant	3,0351	,2397	12,6599	,0000
2,5626	3,5076			
Post	-,4637	,3406	-1,3615	,1748
-1,1349	,2075			
Influ	-,4637	,3406	-1,3615	,1748
-1,1349	,2075			
Int_1	-,1644	,4861	-,3381	,7356
-1,1224	,7937			

Product terms key:

Int\_1 : Post x Influ

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2
p				
X*W	,0005	,1143	1,0000	218,0000
				,7356

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

OUTCOME VARIABLE:  
DV\_mean

Model Summary

df2	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1
217,0000	,7260	,5271	,3658	60,4685	4,0000
		,0000			

Model	coeff	se	t	p
LLCI	ULCI			
constant	,7693	,1055	7,2898	,0000
,5613	,9773			
Post	,0925	,1143	,8096	,4190
-,1327	,3178			
M_mean	,3246	,0226	14,3405	,0000
,2800	,3692			
Influ	,1104	,1143	,9659	,3352
-,1149	,3356			
Int_1	-,4520	,1625	-2,7821	,0059
-,7723	-,1318			

Product terms key:

Int\_1 : Post x Influ

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2
p				
X*W	,0169	7,7399	1,0000	217,0000
,0059				

-----

Focal predict: Post (X)  
Mod var: Influ (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

Influ	Effect	se	t	p
LLCI	ULCI			
,0000	,0925	,1143	,8096	,4190
-,1327	,3178			
1,0000	-,3595	,1168	-3,0785	,0023
-,5897	-,1293			

\*\*\*\*\* DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y \*\*\*\*\*

Conditional direct effects of X on Y

Influ	Effect	se	t	p
LLCI	ULCI			
,0000	,0925	,1143	,8096	,4190
-,1327	,3178			
1,0000	-,3595	,1168	-3,0785	,0023
-,5897	-,1293			



Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:

INDIRECT EFFECT:

Post	->	M_mean	->	DV_mean
Influ	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
,0000	-,1505	,1154	-,3775	,0673
1,0000	-,2038	,1134	-,4380	-,0014

Index of moderated mediation (difference between conditional indirect effects):

	Index	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Influ	-,0533	,1580	-,3638	,2475

\*\*\*\*\* ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS \*\*\*\*\*

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:

95,0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:

5000

----- END MATRIX -----

Frequenze

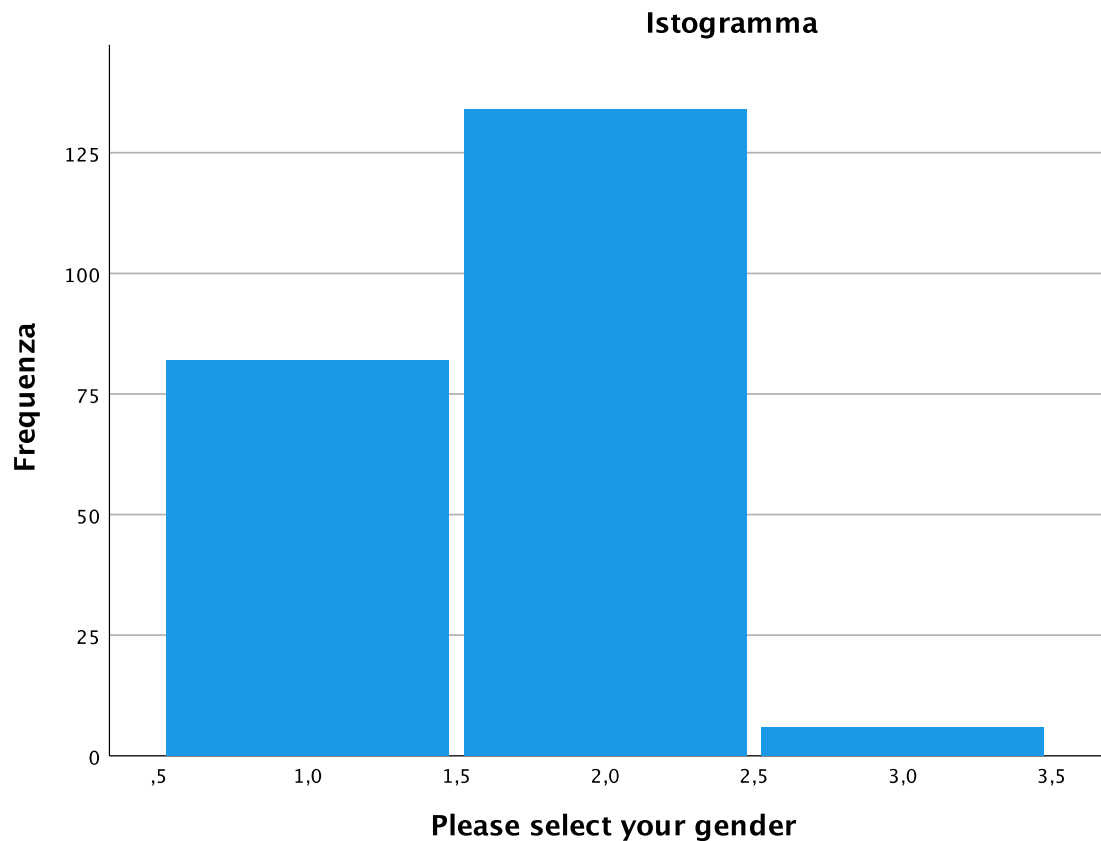
### Statistiche

Please select your gender

N	Valido	222
	Mancante	0
	Errore standard della media	,036
	Deviazione std.	,530

### Please select your gender

	Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulativa
Valido Male	82	36,9	36,9	36,9
Female	134	60,4	60,4	97,3
Non-binary / third gender	6	2,7	2,7	100,0
Totale	222	100,0	100,0	



Analisi univariata di varianza

### Fattori tra soggetti

		N
Tipologia_post	,00	113
	1,00	109
Tipologia_influencer	,00	113
	1,00	109

### Statistiche descrittive

Variabile dipendente: DV\_mean

Tipologia_post	Tipologia_influencer	Medio	Deviazione std.	N
,00	,00	1,7544	,93122	57
	1,00	1,7143	,90883	56
	Totale	1,7345	,91630	113
1,00	,00	1,6964	,97084	56
	1,00	1,1509	,41120	53
	Totale	1,4312	,79776	109
Totale	,00	1,7257	,94725	113
	1,00	1,4404	,76293	109
	Totale	1,5856	,87156	222

### Test di effetti tra soggetti

Variabile dipendente: DV\_mean

Origine	Somma dei quadrati di tipo III	df	Media quadratica	F	Sig.
Modello corretto	13,252 <sup>a</sup>	3	4,417	6,228	<,001
Intercetta	553,093	1	553,093	779,801	<,001
Post	5,352	1	5,352	7,546	,007
Influ	4,754	1	4,754	6,703	,010
Post * Influ	3,541	1	3,541	4,993	,026
Errore	154,622	218	,709		
Totale	726,000	222			
Totale corretto	167,874	221			

a. R-quadrato = ,079 (R-quadrato adattato = ,066)

Analisi univariata di varianza

### Fattori tra soggetti

		N
Tipologia_post	,00	113
	1,00	109
Tipologia_influencer	,00	113
	1,00	109

### Statistiche descrittive

Variabile dipendente: M\_mean

Tipologia_post	Tipologia_influencer	Medio	Deviazione std.	N
,00	,00	3,0351	1,80243	57
	1,00	2,5714	1,79755	56
	Totale	2,8053	1,80702	113
1,00	,00	2,5714	2,00778	56
	1,00	1,9434	1,59826	53
	Totale	2,2661	1,83909	109
Totale	,00	2,8053	1,91264	113
	1,00	2,2661	1,72478	109
	Totale	2,5405	1,83867	222

### Test di effetti tra soggetti

Variabile dipendente: M\_mean

Origine	Somma dei quadrati di tipo III	df	Media quadratica	F	Sig.
Modello corretto	32,947 <sup>a</sup>	3	10,982	3,352	,020
Intercetta	1420,312	1	1420,312	433,538	<,001
Post	16,524	1	16,524	5,044	,026
Influ	16,524	1	16,524	5,044	,026
Post * Influ	,375	1	,375	,114	,736
Errore	714,189	218	3,276		
Totale	2180,000	222			
Totale corretto	747,135	221			

a. R-quadrato = ,044 (R-quadrato adattato = ,031)

## **SUMMARY**

### **Introduction**

In the modern period, a distinct demographic cohort known as "Generation Z," which was born between 1995 and 2010, has arisen. This generation, dubbed "Digital Natives," has grown up in a culture where digital technology is ubiquitous. They were involved in technology from a young age, which has given them unique talents such as the capacity to swiftly collect and assimilate information, mostly via search engines and social media platforms (Mckinsey & Company, 2018).

Understanding Generation Z's habits and preferences is critical, with a focus on social networks as their primary communication channels (Uzelac et al., 2020). In addition to providing entertainment, these channels transmit news and brand updates. Brands must thus acknowledge the need of tailoring their strategies to match the specific needs and values of this group (Uzelac et al., 2020).

Generation Z is marked by its unrelenting demand for authenticity, which influences how people see brands. Companies that wish to appeal to this age must prioritize self-expression rather than ownership, and address the ethical challenges created by their goods. Companies must carefully balance mass production with personalized experiences in light of the

changing customer landscape, all while adhering to moral norms (McKinsey & Company, 2018).

The aspirations and individuality of this audience must now be mirrored in the premium brands that were formerly a status symbol (Dobre et al., 2021). As a result, luxury corporations' marketing strategies have shifted dramatically, depending on social media platforms to express authenticity, moral beliefs, personalized experiences, and relationships with influencers (Bazi et al., 2020).

As a result of the rise of social media, Generation Z has become an important market for luxury brands (Lau et al., 2022). Influencers with a large following on social media are changing Generation Z's perceptions of luxury brands (Dobre et al., 2021). They cultivate deep ties with their followers, allowing them to influence cultural trends and lifestyles as well as promoting products (Leung et al., 2022). As a result, companies have turned to influencer marketing to boost outcomes, raise brand recognition, and reach out to new customers (Berne-Manero, 2020).

Influencer marketing success is dependent on selecting micro and macro influencers that share the same values as the company and are trustworthy, engaging, and authentic (Vrontis et al., 2020). Corporations may actively include customers in the creation of their brand's image through these collaborations. Despite having less followers, micro

influencers are specialists in specific sectors and may be especially useful for emerging businesses seeking visibility (De Veirman et al., 2017). However, macro influencers, who have a larger following than micro influencers, contribute tremendous credibility, especially when endorsing luxury brands (Berne-Manero, 2020).

Another critical component in the influencer marketing environment is the social media platform you pick. Influencer collaborations thrive on Instagram and TikTok, two platforms popular among Generation Z. Because of its compelling images and original content, Instagram is the ideal social media medium for luxury businesses (Park et al., 2021). TikTok's concise and captivating films create a unique challenge and opportunity for luxury firms (Hayden, 2022). It is critical to understand the links between these two social media platforms and influencers in order to identify their impact on Generation Z purchase intentions.

This study aims to delve into the intricate interplay between social media platforms (Instagram and TikTok), influencer typology (Micro and Macro influencers), luxury product quality perception, and customers' prior experiences in order to shed light on the complex relationship between Generation Z, luxury brands, and digital marketing.

## **Theoretical background**

### *Generation Z consumers*

People born between 1995 and 2010 are referred to as "digital natives" or "Generation Z" due to their early exposure to various types of technology. As a result, today's young people are adept at rapidly gathering vast volumes of knowledge from a number of sources, including social media and search engines, according to McKinsey & Company (2018). Because Generation Z spends a substantial percentage of their time on social media platforms for activities such as news, brand updates, and leisure (Uzelac et al., 2020), social media has become the key way of reaching them.

The key feature that distinguishes Generation Z from other generations is their extensive use of and immediate understanding of technology. According to Haenlein et al.'s 2020 research, their attitudes to various types of media consumption differ, as they favor streaming services to traditional television, Spotify to radio, and traditional advertisements to social media platforms. Notably, Generation Z is marked by an insatiable quest for the truth, which has a significant influence on how members of this generation view and evaluate enterprises. Companies must keep three essential characteristics in mind (McKinsey & Company, 2018):



viewing consumption as a gateway to access rather than ownership; recognizing consumption as a method of self-expression and as an ethical problem as well.

As a result, firms should reconsider their methods for giving value to their clients, striking a balance between mass production and personalized interactions. Furthermore, while resolving marketing and workplace ethics concerns, it is critical to align one's activities with both marketing language and ethical concepts (McKinsey & Company, 2018). It is critical to remember that members of Generation Z meticulously study their purchases ahead of time, seeking as much information as possible. According to McKinsey & Company (2018), brands should carefully select the marketing campaigns they use and properly communicate the message they desire to convey.

#### *Generation Z consumers and luxury brands*

Luxury items are viewed differently by Generation Z than by earlier generations. They regard them as manifestations of themselves and their ideals, not just status symbols (Dobre et al., 2021). As a result of this trend, luxury firms have had to modify their marketing methods in order to appeal to Generation Z buyers. High costs, outstanding quality, exclusivity, and social position are all linked with luxury brands. These

firms were initially cautious to embrace social media, believing that it might jeopardise their exclusivity. They did, however, see the need to interact with Generation Z and began exploiting social media channels to redefine luxury and promote their brand (Bazi et al., 2020).

Luxury brands have used a variety of methods, many of which are based on the usage of social media. Transparency, authenticity, ethical practises, personalised experiences, and cooperation with influencers are among these tactics (Bazi et al., 2020). In their choice of premium brands, Generation Z places a high focus on authenticity and sustainability. They look for companies that share their social values and prioritise openness in business practises, particularly in manufacturing processes (Kong et al., 2021).

Influencers have become crucial in influencing Generation Z's purchasing intentions. Luxury businesses use influencers to increase their fame and attractiveness within this group, and they frequently drive social trends in the process (Dobre et al., 2021). The major involvement of social media is a common thread throughout all methods. According to research, the perceived advantages of social media connect favourably with the perceived benefits of premium brand items among Generation Z buyers. As a result, virtually all luxury businesses now prioritise their social media presence (Dobre et al., 2021).

### *Generation Z consumers' purchase intention of luxury products*

According to Bain and Company (2021) study, Generation Z has the greatest global effect and is predicted to contribute 70% of the growth of the luxury business by 2025. The significance of social media platforms in reaching this demographic cannot be overstated. These platforms allow you to quickly obtain extensive information about businesses and particular products. Furthermore, the ease with which information, experiences, and points of view may be transmitted has led in the construction of communities on social networks, which has enhanced the urge to purchase certain things (Lau et al., 2022). In addition, the advent of influencers has increased Generation Z's need for luxury. Influencers represent a lifestyle to their followers, and when they suggest a luxury product, it piques their followers' desire for ownership, as ownership would bring them closer to the influencer (Dobre et al., 2021).

Authenticity is very important to Generation Z. They want items that tell a narrative, which is a hallmark of high-end firms. Each of their products comes with a professionally developed story that describes why a particular product is exceptional (Dobre et al., 2021).

The significance of this generation to luxury brands has been acknowledged. As a result, they've created things that are priced and tailored to appeal to a younger audience. This is a significant step forward

and demonstrates their efforts to engage this demographic (Shin et al., 2020).

It is apparent that Generation Z represents a large portion of premium brand purchasers. Brands are becoming more aware of this and are trying with different techniques to communicate with younger customers in the most natural way possible.

### *Influencer marketing*

Customers in Generation Z have lost trust in traditional advertising in today's atmosphere. Using influencers to promote a brand is a tried and true method of gaining people's attention (Leung et al., 2022). Because of the dynamic character of social media platforms, where consumers are active players rather than passive recipients, content produced on them is highly trusted (Vrontis et al., 2020). Furthermore, according to study, influencer advertising are more memorable and direct than TV commercials (Berne-Manero, 2020).

Influencer marketing is a strategy for businesses, helping to increase purchase intent, brand engagement, brand awareness, and customer base development (Berne-Manero et al., 2020). This strategy needs careful selection of an influencer and coordination with them (Leung et al., 2022). Brands employ this strategy to include influencer followers in

shaping the brand image, making them feel actively involved in the process (Vrontis et al., 2020).

Online influencers, according to Leung (2022), are individuals, groups, or even virtual avatars with a substantial social media following. They are considered digital thought leaders with significant social impact on their followers. Their success is built on the timely and engaging dissemination of information.

Influencer audiences are frequently relatively homogeneous, with a shared interest in the influencer's unique content (e.g., fitness, fashion, travel, cuisine). This allows businesses to track changes in consumer preferences when an influencer's audience shifts in response to user interests (Leung et al., 2022). As a result, there is less risk of pushing high-end items to an uninterested audience.

Consumers place a high value on influencers, with many viewing them as approachable persons who regularly communicate with their following. This results in a strong, long-lasting relationship (Leung et al., 2022).

For effective message distribution, the right influencer must be matched with the brand's image and values (Vrontis et al., 2020). Furthermore, trustworthiness and authenticity in content transmission are important considerations. Influencers must be truthful in their product

endorsement, avoiding deceptive tactics to influence their followers' decisions. Furthermore, postings should feel honest rather than too promotional, since this may reduce customer trust in both the company and the endorsed product (Park et al., 2020).

When a company enters into a contract with an influencer, the influencer is tasked with creating content about the company and its products. This is done in exchange for payment, which may be monetary or non-monetary incentives such as free products or discounts, according to pre-established agreements. While influencers have considerable creative flexibility, they must follow the regulations of the company (Leung et al., 2022).

### *The promotion of luxury products through Instagram and TikTok*

The recent popularity of Instagram and TikTok has given rise to a thriving social media influencer industry (Haenlein et al., 2020). These platforms cater to a variety of target demographics, mostly based on factors such as their debut date and particular features that may appeal to younger audiences to varying degrees (Haenlein et al., 2020). Instagram, which started in 2010, and TikTok, which debuted in 2018, have swiftly become two of Generation Z's most popular social media platforms. Instagram users can upload both photographs and videos, however

TikTok users can only upload videos. This, combined with their primarily young user base, makes them particularly suitable to influencer marketing as compared to platforms like Twitter, which are typically used for personal entertainment and are less adapted to brand promotion through influencers (Haenlein et al., 2020).

Luxury enterprises' usage of social media influences consumer purchasing intentions (Lee et al., 2016). While all luxury brands have a presence on Instagram, not all have created or are just getting started on TikTok. Many businesses were initially apprehensive to communicate with clients on a platform so distinct from others, particularly one dominated by a very young generation (Hayden, 2022). They do, however, use both networks to sell their products through influencers at the moment.

Instagram has become an attractive medium for collaborations between influencers and luxury brands due to its global reach (Vinerean, 2019). Because of its visual-centric nature, which is perfectly connected with the luxury fashion industry (Jin et al., 2019), it is recognized as the most suited social media platform for these types of firms (Park et al., 2021). Instagram improves purchase intentions for a multitude of reasons, including visual beauty, unique and innovative material, and active participation and contact with influencers (Park et al., 2021).

While research on the relationship between TikTok and luxury brands is limited, certain insights may be gained. Instagram posts may be more effective than TikTok videos in influencing luxury goods purchase intentions. TikTok is totally video-based, with short, informal, and entertaining clips that may limit exposure and comprehension of luxury things (Hayden, 2022). TikTok is primarily associated with entertainment, but Instagram is frequently associated with fashion and luxury items. Customers' expectations and perceptions of sponsored luxury products may be influenced by this distinction (Karlak, 2022).

Hayden (2022) discovered that Gen Z's perspective of luxury brands on TikTok is neutral, with consumers not displaying particularly strong reactions to luxury brand marketing on the platform. Given these reasoning, the following is the study's first hypothesis:

H1: The type of social media platforms influence purchase intention. Sponsorship of a luxury product via Instagram post generates higher purchase intention, compared to a TikTok post.



*The moderating role of influencers' typology: differences between Micro and Macro influencers*

There are two different types of influencer: Micro influencers and macro influencers. Micro influencers often have 1,000 to 10,000 followers, whereas Macro influencers have more than 100,000 (De Veirman et al., 2017).

The difference between Micro and Macro influencers in terms of customer perception on social media platforms is a source of debate. In general, micro influencers obtain higher engagement from their followers by creating more personalized and direct messages on social media, and they typically consider their followers to be friends. Macro influencers, on the other hand, are socially desirable, which makes them more adept at establishing goodwill for a firm and so increasing its appeal (Berne-Manero et al., 2020). Moreover, they are perceived as more trustworthy, knowledgeable, and respectable, especially when advertising a notable luxury brand with the goal of increasing sales (Berne-Manero et al., 2020). According to study, the greater an influencer's number of followers, the more favorable customer sentiments towards them (De Veirman et al., 2017). Micro influencers, on the other hand, thrive in specialized topics since they have a more personal contact with their followers and provide more opportunities for participation (De Veirman

et al., 2017). They are typically more suited for advertising new businesses seeking attention. However, it is vital to remember that micro influencers may have less competence in creating unique and high-quality material, making it harder to effectively market goods from well-known luxury brands (Haenlein et al., 2020).

While the social media platform used by an influencer to promote a luxury product is indisputably crucial in establishing a consumer's level of purchase intent, the kind of influencer (Micro vs. Macro) also plays a significant impact that should not be overlooked.

Considering all of these elements, the second hypothesis of this study may be put as follows:

H2: Influencer's typology moderate the relationship between the type of social media platform and purchase intention. Sponsorship of a luxury product by a Macro influencer increases purchase intentions, more than sponsoring the same product by a Micro influencer.

#### *The mediating role of perceived quality of luxury products*

Consumers place a high value on the perceived quality of luxury goods, and it greatly impacts their purchasing decision. This view is strongly related to the brand's reputation, since buyers choose businesses

recognized for their superior workmanship and attention to detail. Customers that are confident in a brand's exceptional product quality develop trust, which leads to a solid and long-term connection (Kim, 2020). Furthermore, a high quality perception imbues a product with exclusivity and superiority, heightening the sensation of luxury and status (Lau et al., 2023). The perceived quality of a luxury item is very important in the user experience, needing outstanding durability and long-term resilience (Kim, 2020).

Husic and Cicic (2008) found that luxury consumption is substantially impacted by a variety of characteristics, including product quality, which has a favorable impact on the connection. Their research confirmed that excellent quality is an important signal for every well-known and well-established business.

Consumers frequently evaluate product quality based on their own direct encounters with the product. There are two forms of quality: subjective (which varies from one customer to the next) and objective (which is a universally agreed-upon estimate of quality). Consumers frequently assess the quality of a luxury item by comparing it to similar offers from other companies. Recognizing the assessed brand's difference and superiority suggests high quality (Park et al., 2020). To summarize,

perceived quality may have a considerable impact on consumer choices, steering consumers towards one brand over another.

The perceived quality of the product might impact customers' overall judgement in the context of advertising luxury products on social media.

Posts should therefore strive to express the excellent quality of the marketed goods, making it look more desired and enticing (Kim, 2020).

Given its significant effect in product assessments, perceived quality might moderate the link between social platform type (Instagram vs. TikTok) and customer purchase intention.

H3: Perceived quality of luxury products mediate the relationship between type of social media platform and purchase intention.

#### *Consumers previous experience for luxury products*

The term, "previous experience" refers to a person's knowledge, personal interactions, and overall involvement with luxury things. This familiarity may be gained through a variety of means, including previous purchases, luxury domain research, and interactions with knowledgeable consumers (Loureiro et al., 2013). Prior experience with luxury products is an essential factor that can influence a consumer's purchasing intentions, perception of product quality, and overall enjoyment. A higher level of

expertise enables individuals to swiftly and efficiently judge whether a product truly represents luxury, which assists in their purchasing decision (Loureiro et al., 2013). Previous research has found that having a greater level of knowledge raises awareness of premium brands and their differentiating product qualities (Ko et al., 2011).

Consumer experience will be an essential control variable in the future research since it can mitigate the effect of other variables in the purchasing process. A customer with extensive knowledge of luxury things, for example, may be less influenced by the choice of social media platform or influencer since they are capable of independently evaluating featured products. Such customers are more skeptical about their purchases, and influencers have less of an impact on their decisions. They have specific preferences and expectations when it comes to acquiring luxury items. Furthermore, regardless of advertising technique or choice of brand ambassadors, clients who have had long-term contacts with a brand and have a solid understanding of its products are more likely to trust the firm (Wiedmann et al., 2009).

As a result, for the study to be trustworthy, this variable must be included as a control measure, providing a better understanding of the purchase dynamics in the luxury sector, particularly in the context of social media and influencer engagement.

## **Methodologies**

### *Research design and stimuli*

To test the previously mentioned hypothesis, a survey was created using the Qualtrics platform. This survey was then distributed to participants through an anonymous link using the Prolific platform. The study employed a between 2X2 subject design, with respondents randomly assigned to four distinct settings. In each situation, a fictional brand-sponsored Instagram or TikTok post showcasing a bag was shown. Two of these instances included Instagram posts and two TikTok videos. Some individuals had interactions with a Macro influencer, while others had interactions with Micro influencer. Participants were asked to reply to questions concerning their purchase intentions and the perceived quality of the given bag after viewing one of these scenarios. Participants were also questioned about their background and previous experience with luxury products as a control variable. Finally, two demographic questions (age and gender) were inserted at the conclusion of the study. All factors were examined using pre-validated measurements from earlier research studies. All responses were completely anonymous and could not be linked to specific persons.

### *Survey structure and measurement*

The questionnaire was divided into nine blocks:

- Block 1 - Introduction and instructions.
- Blocks 2-5 - Four different scenarios were offered.
- Block 6 - Participants rated their purchase intent on a 5-point scale.
- Block 7 - Participants assessed perceived bag quality on a 9-point scale.
- Block 8 - Participants rated their experience with luxury products on a 7-point scale.
- Block 9 - Age and gender demographic questions were included.

### *Sample and data collection*

222 of the 237 original responses survived data cleaning. Each response took around 90 seconds.

The study focused on active TikTok and Instagram users aged 18-28 to attract Generation Z consumers.

The gender split was 36.9% male, 60.4% female, and 2.7% non-binary/third gender. The bulk of responders (67.7%) were between the ages of 23 and 28, with the remaining 32.9% aged 18 to 22.

### *Scales reliability*

The study evaluated the reliability of the survey scales utilized, taking into account their critical significance in research validity. The purchase intention, perceived quality, and past experience scores were adapted from previous research (Gordon et al., 2012) and tested for consistency. Cronbach's alpha was 0.921 for purchase intention (5-point Likert scale). For what concern perceived quality (9-point Likert scale), the cronbach's alpha was initially 0.915. After deleting one answer ("The promotion has an influence on my perceptions of its overall quality"), it change into 0.929.

Cronbach's alpha was 0.868 for previous familiarity with premium items (7-point Likert scale).

All of these high Cronbach alpha values indicate that the various scales are reliable, supporting their applicability for this study.

### *Measurement of variables*

Following data cleaning, descriptive statistics, and scale validation, two important variables were developed: 'Post\_typology' (coded 1 for TikTok and 0 for Instagram) and 'Influencer\_typology' (coded 1 for Micro influencer and 0 for Macro influencer). Following that, hypothesis testing was performed in the conceptual framework, as well as the calculation of



means for the dependent variable ('DV\_mean'), control variable ('CV\_mean'), and mediator ('M\_mean').

### *Two-way ANOVA*

To evaluate the H1 and H2 hypotheses, the study used a two-way ANOVA test. According to H1, the kind of social media platform impacts purchase intention, with Instagram posts outperforming TikTok postings. According to H2, influencer typology moderates this association, with Macro influencers providing larger buy intentions than Micro influencers.

According to descriptive data, Instagram postings resulted in a greater mean purchase intention (M=1.73) than TikTok posts (M=1.43). Furthermore, Macro influencers had a higher mean (M=1.72) than Micro influencers (M=1.44).

When the relationship between post type and influencer typology was considered, an Instagram post with a Macro influencer had the highest mean (M=1.75). In the sample, this combination emerged as the favored situation.

The investigation also showed the impact of post typology on customer purchase intention ( $p = 0.007$ ). The existence of a Macro influencer was similarly significant ( $p = 0.010$ ). Finally, all H1 and H2 hypotheses were

validated, confirming that Instagram postings and Macro influencers play critical roles in increasing purchase intentions for luxury goods.

### *ANCOVA*

The study evaluated the impact of a control variable, 'Previous experience with luxury items.' Before doing the ANCOVA analysis, the mean value of this variable was calculated and labelled as 'CV\_mean.' According to the ANCOVA results, the control variable 'Previous experience with luxury items' has a substantial influence on the model.

### *Process*

The study used mediation analysis to test the hypothesis (H3) that perceived quality of luxury items mediates the association between social media platform type and purchase intent. This analysis was carried out with SPSS Process Model 8, Version 4.2 and a regression analysis. Post typology was the independent variable (X), DV\_mean was the dependent variable (Y), M\_mean was the mediator (M), and influencer typology was the moderator (W).

The results showed that the effects of X on M and W on M were not statistically significant. Furthermore, the main impact with mediation (X on Y via M\_mean) was not statistically significant. However, the

mediator (M\_mean) had a considerable impact on product purchase intent. M\_mean's indirect influence on X was positive and statistically significant.

These data point to a moderation impact rather than a mediation effect.

As a result, hypothesis H3 is not supported.

## **General discussion and implications**

### *Summary of main findings*

The purpose of this study was to investigate the dynamics of the luxury product market, social media, and their influence on the purchasing intentions of Generation Z customers. As independent variables, the study focused on two social media platforms, Instagram and TikTok. It looked at how luxury product sponsorship on various platforms affected customer views, taking into account both the type of influencer (micro vs. macro) and perceived product quality as moderating factors.

Two of the three hypotheses were verified by the findings. To begin, the kind of social media platform had a substantial impact on Generation Z customers' purchasing intentions, with Instagram having a bigger impact than TikTok. Furthermore, the type of influencer was important, with macro influencers having a greater positive impact on consumers than

micro influencers. The hypothesis about the mediating influence of perceived product quality, on the other hand, was not substantiated.

These findings can help luxury businesses create efficient advertising strategies. The report emphasizes the significance of platform selection and influencer selection, particularly when targeting younger customers. Notably, TikTok's potential in this area has yet to be completely realized, given the site is still relatively new and mostly popular among youthful users.

#### *Theoretical implications*

The study provides important theoretical insights on the interaction between the luxury market with social media, particularly for Generation Z customers.

For starters, it emphasizes the varied influence of social media platforms, emphasizing the distinctive impact of Instagram and TikTok on users' purchase intentions. The findings add to the body of knowledge by throwing light on the intricacies of displaying material across multiple social platforms, underlying the importance of personalized advertising methods.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the critical role of influencers in promoting luxury products on social media. Notably, it proves that Macro

influencers have a greater positive influence than Micro influencers, putting a focus on the fact that the efficiency of marketing initiatives rooted in influencers is dependent on the importance of the influencer. This discovery adds to the current body of knowledge about the dynamics of influencer types and consumer purchase behaviors.

The study also sheds light on Generation Z's purchasing behaviors when it comes to luxury goods, offering significant insights into their tastes and habits, particularly in the areas of social media and luxury goods.

While previous research has comprehensively explored many elements, this study fills a critical vacuum by looking into the relationships between TikTok and luxury businesses, providing insights into effective tactics for using these social media platforms.

### *Managerial implications*

The research sought to investigate the dynamics of luxury brand advertising on social media platforms, with a focus on targeting Generation Z customers. Instagram and TikTok were picked for their strong user engagement and diverse product description tactics.

Platform selection (favoring Instagram for maximum impact on Generation Z), influencer selection (preferring well-known figures with a large following for enhanced credibility), and content creation

(prioritizing relevance to Generation Z preferences) are key managerial considerations. For adaptive marketing tactics, it is important to keep a close eye on new trends.

While the mediator "perceived product quality" did not show statistical significance in the study, it is still an important factor in marketing decisions. Brands should guarantee that their luxury items are viewed as authentic, high quality, and deserving of their price tag, which impacts customer purchase intentions favorably.

#### *Limitations and future research*

The research looks into the possibilities of Instagram and TikTok for advertising luxury items, focusing on the impact of influencers and content development tactics. Although two of the three hypotheses were validated, there are some significant restrictions to consider.

The first constraint concerns the sample size, which consisted of 222 respondents. Increasing the sample size might possibly produce more nuanced results. Furthermore, geographic origin was not investigated, which might provide insights into regional variances and respondents' luxury purchasing habits, such as frequency of purchases or preferred shopping channels, were not investigated.

The second constraint involves the questionnaire's stimulus. While every attempt was made to show imaginary postings as accurately as possible, the quality of the photographs was reduced owing to a lack of professional equipment.

Future studies might solve these shortcomings by concentrating on specific countries and comparing their answers. Exploring different age cohorts may also reveal variations in the occurrence. Targeting loyal premium brand customers with in-depth product knowledge might yield useful data. Furthermore, comparing the effects of different content types on the two platforms (e.g., posts, stories, videos with music or spoken videos) on customer perceptions may generate different results.

### *Conclusions*

This study adds to our understanding of how luxury brands might strategically use social media channels. It strives to assist luxury firms in developing efficient advertising campaigns, a process that may be difficult given the market's competitive nature. While the study shows that Instagram has a higher influence than TikTok, it is important not to disregard TikTok's potential for future development in luxury goods sponsorship. It is recommended that you keep an eye on TikTok's progress.

Although the perceived quality of luxury items was not shown to be significant in this study, it is still an important component in luxury product sponsorship on social media. Given the high cost of luxury products, customers' quality standards will always be crucial.

The convergence of the luxury and social media worlds is a vibrant and engaging environment that is always evolving. Further study is intended to increase our understanding, with the goal of finding the best synergy between these two areas for mutual growth and success.