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Social Media Influencers and Body Positivity
How a movement can influence Instagram engagement

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Masters in marketing

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Abstract

It is essential for influencers that they can create a connection with their followers in order to retain them. For this, it is necessary to interact with followers by providing them with the content they are looking for.

This study aims to show how the use of body-positive content can influence the interaction between influencers and followers, leading the latter to interact more frequently with influencers who produce body-positive-related content rather than those that produce content that does not address this movement.

Having this in mind, a research model and its hypotheses were developed. In order to test the hypotheses developed in the model, a questionnaire was conducted based on the literature, and two influencers were used for this, Sarah Nicole Landry to represent the Body Positivity side and Kylie Jenner to represent the non-Body Positivity side. Once the data were collected, they were analyzed on SPSS, thus reaching the conclusions drawn from this study.

Thus, it is concluded that effectively using body-positive content influences how users interact with influencers, and there is a greater probability of interacting with influencers' content when they approach the Body Positivity movement.

Resumo

É essencial para os influenciadores que estes consigam criar uma conexão com os seus seguidores de modo a conseguir retê-los. Para isto é necessário interagir com os seguidores, fornecendo-lhes o conteúdo que eles procuram.

Este estudo tem como principal objetivo mostrar como o uso de conteúdo body-positive pode influenciar a interação entre os influenciadores e os seguidores, levando estes últimos a interagirem mais frequentemente com os influenciadores que produzem conteúdo relacionado com o movimento Body Positivity ao invés daqueles que produzem conteúdo que não aborda este movimento.

Posto isto, foi desenvolvido um modelo de investigação e respetivas hipóteses. De modo a testar as hipóteses desenvolvidas no modelo foi realizado um questionário com base na literatura, tendo sido usadas para isto duas influenciadoras, Sarah Nicole Landry para representar o lado Body Positivity e Kylie Jenner para representar o lado não Body Positivity. Recolhidos os dados, procedeu-se à análise dos mesmos no SPSS, chegando assim às conclusões retiradas deste estudo.

Conclui-se assim, que efetivamente o uso de conteúdo body-positive influencia a maneira como os utilizadores interagem com os influenciadores, existindo uma maior probabilidade de interagir com o conteúdo dos influenciadores quando estes abordam o movimento Body Positivity.

Keywords: Social media, Instagram, Influenciadores, Positividade corporal, Interação

JEL: M31: Marketing
JEL: M39: Other

Table of Contents

List of figures

List of tables

1. Introduction

1.1. The relevance of the topic

The use of social media has been increasing by the day and among the various sites it is possible to highlight one that has gained great popularity, especially among young people, and that is Instagram, where users can share images and videos, and other users can view them, like them and comment on it. Besides this, users also have the option to apply filters to the content they want to share.

Social media has the power to increase social support and reduce social anxiety, and it's an opportunity for self-expression (Ellison *et al.*, 2007; RSPH, 2019), but besides these positive impacts, it can also have a negative impact leading to anxiety, depression, and envy because of comparisons that can lead to lower self-esteem and wellbeing (Gothenburg Research Institute, 2012; RSPH, 2019), as individuals are exposed to various comparison targets and several information about the desirable aspects of each comparison target's life on social media more than in everyday life (Appel *et al.*, 2016; Charoensukmongkol, 201).

With this, a new side of social media arises, the dark side, where is possible to find mistrust, deception, exploitation, fraud, and privacy violations (Baccarella *et al.*, 2018).

According to Kietzmann *et al.* (2011), social media functionality rests on a few key pillars: presence, reputation, conversations, groups, relationships, and identity, but Baccarella *et al.* (2018) proposed that each of these pillars can grow into the dark side. Regarding presence, there is monitoring and location tracking, for reputation it´s defamation and shaming and for conversations, there is disinformation, misinformation, and aggressive engagement. Regarding groups, there's in-group and out-group bias, in terms of relationships there is intimation, coercion, abuse, and threat, and for identity, there's the misuse of online self while sharing improper content and distribution. Fox and Moreland (2015) mention several triggers regarding social networking sites, such as social comparison and jealousy, lack of privacy and control, managing inappropriate or annoying content, relationship tension and conflict, and feeling trapped. However, even with these negative emotions, users end up always returning because of peer pressure, fear of missing out, and to keep up with content.

There has been a shift of paradigm in the last few years, as in the early ages of social media people used to hide their bodies on purpose to appear more attractive, thin, and socially acceptable (Sessions, 2009) and now it's possible to see that people prefer to see something real rather than something that is unrealistically perfect. Given this, social media takes an important role since it has the power to influence how social norms and cultural appearance standards are perceived, especially the idea that the ideal female body must be slim, known

as the "thin ideal" (Grabe *et al.*, 2008), so to fight this, emerged "The Body Positivity movement", also known as BoPo.

The movement intends to take a stand against beauty ideals and encourage people to appreciate and accept all bodies, representing different shapes, sizes, colors, features, and abilities (Cwynar-Horta, 2016). As it is going mainstream and big corporations, like Dove, and celebrities such as Lizzo and Lady Gaga are drawing attention to "real" women, it's possible to see a change in perceptions (Murray, 2013). The movement has been gaining a presence on social media platforms, where users use the platform to post pictures that challenge the dominant society ideals and with this express their feelings about those unrealistic ideals and receive love and acceptance instead of judgment. Among these individuals, there are the influencers, who developed their personal brands using social networks and use their voices for the greater good, creating connections with their audience.

Abidin (2015) refers to social media influencers as normal individuals who have a significant number of followers on a digital platform and use it to either: "push a political agenda; raise awareness of a political cause; or monetize their personal social media account(s) through sponsored advertising and brand promotion" (Fitzpatrick, 2018; Walker-Rettberg, 2018). However, there are other factors that determine influencer statuses, such as credibility and trustworthiness, potential audience reach, engagement rate, and the perceived impact of social media posts (Fitzpatrick, 2018). Influencers share personal aspects of themselves with their audience, which increases the sense of connection to their followers (Calvert, 2004; Hogan, 2010). By appearing accessible and relatable, influencers have the ability to persuade their followers to relate to them and create an emotional connection (Abidin, 2015; 2016; Marwick, 2015). In order to increase attention from the audience and the capacity to influence them, influencers can use their physical body. As consumers engage in body fascination behavior, the more power influencers receive, meaning that consumers are more likely to be influenced by them. This influence can be expressed in several forms, such as thoughts, feelings, behavior, and decisions.

Social media allows to push back against values that have been dominant and exclusive (Parker, M. A., & Bozeman, B, 2018), while body-positive images on social media can inspire the consumption of all bodies (Saguy & Ward, 2011) so influencers might feel the need to post this type of content. However, it's possible that this evolves into what others might need instead of the person's personal body-positive goals. (Gerlitz & Lury, 2014).

As young women are using social media more than ever (Pew Research Center, 2018), with Instagram being one of the most dominant places in terms of influencing behaviors and attitudes (Kasana, 2014), accounts dedicated to fighting against prior appearance ideals and that encourage the acceptance and appreciation of a diversity of body appearances might become crucial in creating and preserving a body-positive image, so it's important to

2

understand how body positivity plays on social media (Cohen et al., 2019). Delivering a wider range of diversity regarding appearances in media images and developing social networks which emphasize positive qualities that are not focused on appearance is crucial to promote positive body image (Paraskeva *et al.*, 2016), as through being exposed to bodies that don't follow the thin-ideal (Williamson & Karazsia, 2018) and self-compassion quotes on Instagram (Slater *et al.*, 2017) people feel more accepted in their own bodies.

In order for these to reach the public, digital platforms are used, which allow various forms of engagement (Calder *et al.*, 2009), involving brands, potential consumers, and other users who may turn into influencers. It's the way the media can be spread that creates more engagement and empowers individuals, especially consumers (Fuchs, 2017).

1.2. Contextualization

This study is pertinent as there are still not many studies regarding the influencers' content and their engagement strategy and how this links to the behavior of their followers as studies tend to focus on product endorsement by influencers (Belanche *et al.*, 2021; Lou *et al.*, 2019; Kim & Kim, 2021, Schouten *et al.*, 2019). Given this, there has not been a proper study regarding followers' responses to influencers' organic content in terms of liking, commenting, and sharing it.

Also, social media is changing the way people interact, allowing the user to be both the consumer and the creator, making it essential to understand what is being consumed. Besides this, even though there has been a rise of various movements, there are still not a lot of studies on it, namely the Body Positivity movement, which allows this dissertation to contribute to the academic knowledge of such an important topic nowadays, contributing also to studies about Instagram and influencers, that's a topic that has been growing interest throughout the years.

1.3. Research Questions and Objectives Definition

This study focuses on "Social media influencers and the Body Positivity movement". Its aim is to understand how consumers experience Body Positivity on Instagram in comparison with non-body positive content and if the consumers will behave differently towards these two.

Given this, with the present study the author will be able to draw conclusions in order to answer the following research questions:

1. The use of body-positive content impacts the engagement of influencers?
2. Does body-positive content have higher engagement levels?
3. Do Influencers who post body-positive content have higher engagement levels?

1.4. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is structured into six main chapters. First, the Introduction, where the topic is introduced, its importance and relevance it´s explained, and the research questions and objectives of the study are presented. Next, comes the Literature review, in which the concepts of social media, Instagram, Influencers, Body Positivity movement, and Engagement are presented. Next is presented the conceptual framework and hypotheses. After comes the fourth chapter, the Methodology, where the survey conducted is described in detail. The data is then analysed in the fifth chapter, along with the discussion of the results, the theoretical contributions, and managerial implications. To conclude, the sixth chapter is where the conclusions of the research are presented along with the limitations and future research recommendations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Social Media

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) social media is defined as a set of internet based applications that allow users to create and exchange content. It is a communication tool that lets people all over the world communicate with one another (Williams *et al.*, 2012). Some examples of these applications are Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, among others (Meikle, 2016).

Throughout the years' social media channels have changed, becoming very interactive and providing a rather quick response (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013) allowing individuals to communicate, change information, and interact with each other. (Cheung *et al.*, 2011; Holt, 2016). It is a convenient, widely available, and low-cost interaction channel (Momany & Alshboul 2016; Roth & Zawadzki, 2018; Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014).

Social media has the power to educate people about various things given its multitude of online information created, used, and circulated by consumers (Murugesan, 2007).

Nowadays, social media is more than ever present in people's lives, where tools are used to stay connected and produce viral content (Parker, M. A., & Bozeman, B, 2018). This has become a place where people go to get information about social norms and appearance standards (Bair *et al.*, 2012), being used all over the world by over 3 billion people with 89% of young adults checking their accounts daily, women being the ones who do it more frequently (Pew Research Center, 2018). Women normally use social media as key tools to challenge the neoliberal and hegemonic discourse around health (thinness) more frequently than men as they are more affected by weight stigma (Afful & Ricciardelli, 2015; Fikkan & Rothblum, 2012).

Social media users are simultaneous active creators of content and passive consumers (Kasana, 2014). When posting on social media, users try to portray the best version of themselves. They make sure to pose in the best way, select the best photos and then even do some editing before posting it to make sure any "flaw" is hidden or removed (Cohen *et al.*, 2019; Fox & Vendemia, 2016).

Through social media, daily virtual interactions occur, giving consumers the opportunity to learn about others' opinions, skills, and lives (Vogel *et al.*, 2015). Consumers look for information on goods and services, but they also feel engaged with the brands they like and with other consumers (Hanna *et al.*, 2011), leading companies to recognize the impact that social media has on their brands and communication strategies in order to create relationships and interactions (Booth & Matic, 2011).

2.2. Instagram

Instagram, a visual content-sharing online social network (Segev *et al*., 2018), was launched in October 2010 and since then has gained more than 3.4 billion users (Statista, 2022), offering a unique way to share videos and pictures through their phones with the possibility of applying various filters in order to change the appearance of an image (Roth & Zawadzki, 2018). Besides this, users can add captions and hashtags (#) to their content to describe it and mention or tag (@) other users in it. Naaman *et al*. (2010) refer to Instagram as a kind of social awareness stream such as Facebook and Twitter as it gives users the possibility to like and comment on others' posts and these actions will then appear in the "Updates" section where users can keep track of the engagement with their posts. Its goal is to bring people closer and connect them to the things they love. Besides this, it intends to build influence and create compelling content that's unique (Instagram, 2021). According to Statista (2022), Instagram positions itself as one of the most downloaded apps with 3.4 billion active users, and with this, brands create accounts trying to generate engagement among many consumers (Hsu & Lin, 2020; Socialbakers, 2018). It allows strong consumer engagement and influencer marketing appeals in a better way to the consumer than traditional, celebrity-based, mass media advertising (Evans *et al*., 2017; Mattke *et al*., 2018), as it makes consumers feel closer to their favorite influencers (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Its popularity has been growing in the last few years, being the platform with a higher level of use for interaction, co-creation, and engagement (Coelho *et al*., 2016). Since a large part of its focus is on the number of followers each profile has, this platform is efficient in B2C communication (Roth & Zawadzki, 2018).

In these last few years, Instagram has stood out as it allows users to capture and share their life with their friends through photos and videos instantaneously.

2.3. Influencers

Social media influencers can be classified as social media users who created an authentic online persona (Audrezet *et al*., 2020; Childers *et al*., 2018; Khamis *et al*., 2016) and with it gained a loyal and dedicated following (Casaló *et al*., 2020; Lou *et al*., 2019; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; De Veirman *et al*., 2019; Ki *et al*., 2020; Lou & Yuan, 2019), who engages with them constantly (Belanche *et al*., 2021; Ki *et al*., 2020; Ladhari *et al*., 2020). They are a source of information and innovation to followers, being considered opinion leaders or experts in their fields (Rahman *et al*., 2014; Audrezet *et al*., 2020; Jin *et al*., 2019; Ladhari *et al*., 2020), situated among celebrities and friends, and can even be described as "microcelebrities" (Evans *et al*., 2017). They originated from social media, being here where they produce what they are known for (Schouten *et al*., 2019; Tafesse & Wood, 2021). Alongside their followers, influencers build

their reputation through their content and social media activity. (Hu *et al.*, 2020; Schouten *et al.*, 2019). Influencers' choices, practices, and opinions are shown every time he or she exposes their daily lives on their social media through photos, videos, and texts, maintaining regular contact with their audience (Liu *et al.*, 2012).

By sharing personal content regarding their interests and lifestyle, influencers develop a bond with their followers (Audrezet *et al.*, 2020; Ki *et al.*, 2020; Ladhari *et al.*, 2020), who usually see the influencers as someone who is attractive, authentic, and similar to them (Jin *et al.*, 2019; Ki *et al.*, 2020; Schouten *et al.*, 2019; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Followers play an active role in the influencer's life as they, besides following them, engage with them, advocate for them and support them, which elevates the state of influence while also expanding the reach and impact of the influencers' messages (Jin *et al.*, 2019; Khamis *et al.*, 2016; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Social media influencers are often compared with traditional celebrities, given their achievements (De Veirman *et al.*, 2019; Knoll & Mathhes, 2016), however, studies find that followers identify themselves more with social media influencers rather than traditional celebrities (Jin *et al.*, 2019; Lou *et al.*, 2019; Schouten *et al.*, 2019), given that influencers are seen as more relatable and credible in comparison with celebrities (De Veirman *et al.*, 2019; Childers *et al.*, 2018; Schouten *et al.*, 2019), Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Influencers tend to focus on a more segmented audience that shares similar interests, becoming closer to their audience, and with this, they tend to appear more trustworthy (Lou & Yuan, 2019) or credible (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020) than traditional celebrities. Followers look for their opinions regarding purchasing decisions, which shows that social media influencers are truly relevant and can make an impact (Casaló *et al.*, 2020). The link between followers and influencers is established as the latest represents an ideal self and by having similar interests (Boerman, 2020).

Given this, a marketing strategy has been growing, Influencer marketing. This is defined as a marketing communication where influencers use their own social media pages to endorse a brand`s offerings (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2019).

Influencers have the ability to create perceptions about what companies are and offer, influencing the consumer in terms of choices and behaviors, as they have been "gaining a large share of voice in the market" (Booth & Matic, 2011, p. 184), thanks to their online profiles that accumulate millions of followers who engage with their posts.

Influencers are recognized as opinion leaders by companies, so they are a mean of communicating information, which facilitates its diffusion to the companies' online followers (Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014; Kapitan & Silvera, 2015). Consumers see influencers as more trustworthy and attractive, so companies can view them as potential brand ambassadors, acting as bridges between followers and companies/brands (Lim *et al.*, 2017), as they work as

role models for their followers in a constant process of communication. Companies make offers to the influencers to endorse their goods and services through posts on social media (Almeida *et al.*, 2018), being this a strategic marketing communication process that links both parts (Temperley & Tangen, 2006) that shows the quality and benefits of the brand's products in a natural and spontaneous way (Centeno & Wang, 2017; Jin & Phua, 2014). Influencers offer their image to the product they are endorsing, putting their identity and characteristics into the promoted good or service. With this, the message perceived by the followers will be more attractive and trustworthy which will be more likely for them to follow the influencers' recommendations (Lim *et al.*, 2017).

2.4. Body Positivity movement

The body-positive movement has its origins in the 1960s feminist-grounded fat acceptance movement (Afful & Ricciardelli, 2015) and has been growing to face the appearance-ideal messages in traditional and social media, rejecting those body ideals that are inaccessible and promoting positive and inclusive conceptualization of body image (Cwynar-Horta, 2016). This was not launched by one specific individual but by a diverse number of people that started to tell their own stories online (Sastre, 2014).

The movement encourages acceptance and appreciation of all bodies, no matter their appearance, shape, size, and features, consisting of any message, either written or visual, that challenges beauty ideals and motivates people to take control of their self-image (Sastre, 2014). It includes any individual or movement actions with the goal to condemn the norms set by society "(…) and instead promote self-love and acceptance of bodies of any shape, size, or appearance, including rolls, dimples, cellulite, acne, hairy bodies, bleeding bodies, fat bodies, thin bodies, and disabled bodies." (Cwynar-Horta, 2016, p. 38)

This allows people that normally are silenced by society standards to finally have a voice and be seen, contributing to a greater emotional, social, and psychological well-being (Swami *et al.*, 2017), being also associated positively with health-seeking behaviors, intuitive eating, and physical activity, and negatively related to dieting, alcohol consumption, and cigarette use (Andrew *et al.*, 2014, 2016). Content related to body positivity intends to show that all bodies deserve respect and with this promote a healthier and more positive relationship between one's body and itself.

Advocates for body positivity argue that by viewing a variety of body sizes it will empower women to join in healthier behaviors by breaking down weight stereotypes and perceived barriers regarding healthy behaviors (Haskins, 2015). A positive body image will lead to better psychological, social, and emotional well-being (Swami *et al.*, 2017), healthier behaviors

(Andrew *et al.*, 2014, 2016), and protects against exposure to thin-ideal (Andrew *et al.*, 2015; Halliwell, 2013).

Lately, it's evident a spread of body-positive content on social media, especially on Instagram (Cwynar-Horta, 2016).

2.4.1. Body Positivity on Instagram

The movement's popularity has been growing in recent years thanks to Instagram, where it's possible to see a rise in body-positive Instagram accounts (Cohen *et al.*, 2019). When searching the hashtag #bodypositivity on Instagram it shows 10.847.686 posts and #bodypositive displays 18.151.530 posts (Instagram, November 2022). The purpose of these posts is to raise the visibility and normalize bodies that were underrepresented in traditional media (Saguy & Ward, 2011), while some accounts are used to "share their journeys from body hatred and/or disordered eating to body acceptance and appreciation." (Kasana, 2014).

Posts related to the movement consist of a wider range of individuals regarding culturally based beauty ideals. Most of what is displayed are attributes that go against society's beauty ideals such as stomach rolls, skin blemishes, cellulite, and stretch marks, making this something unique "given that social media feeds are often referred to as high-light reels" (Steers *et al.*, 2014; Weinstein, 2017; Wiederhold, 2018). A study done by Rachel Cohen *et al.* (2019) reveals the diversity of body positivity posts going from cartoon images of a woman's cellulite and stomach fat with captions such as ". . .all those parts you see as flaws whenever you look in the mirror. . . they are natural, beautiful parts of the human body. . .", to messages of body acceptance/love to posts that promote positive feelings with images that state, "We get so worried about being pretty. Let's be pretty kind. Pretty funny. Pretty smart. Pretty strong.," for example.

When exposed to body-positive content on Instagram an immediate reaction is created in women's mood, body satisfaction, and body appreciation (Cohen *et al.*, 2019).

2.5. Engagement

Marketing studies have been giving more attention to consumer engagement as this has been classified as an important topic of research (Dessart *et al.*, 2015). The concept of engagement has been studied in different areas, such as marketing (Ashley & Tuten, 2014; Gambetti & Graffigna, 2010), management (Gruman & Saks, 2011; Mone & London, 2018), public policy (Jerit, 2007), and education (Kahu, 2013; Quaye & Harper, 2020), however, throughout the years, the term obtained various meaning, as there is no agreement on its definition (Cheung *et al.*, 2015; Calder *et al.*, 2009; Dessart *et al.*, 2015). According to Hollebeek & Chen (2014), engagement has various dimensions, has it requires an affective, behavioral and cognitive

loyalty in a relationship between a brand and a consumer. Dessart *et al.* (2015) took this and develop it, mentioning it as an existing relationship with a company, brand, or endorser.

When talking about social networks like Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, engagement is described as the process of consumers engaging with each other by participating in the communicating process, through likes, comments, shares and interaction (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Valentini *et al.*, 2018; Virtanen *et al.*, 2017).

When looking at studies on consumer behavior, engagement is described as a psychological procedure that generates loyalty (Bowden, 2009), behaviours that go beyond the buying action (Van Doorn *et al.*, 2010), and a level of dedication, interaction, enthusiasm and incorporation between the actors (Patterson *et al.*, 2006). According to Cheung *et al.* (2011), consumer engagement in online social platforms is defined as the degree of physical, cognitive, and emotional existence a customer has regarding their relationships with a specific online social platform.

2.5.1.   Instagram Engagement

When measuring engagement on Instagram there are two primary metrics to consider, likes and comments. The number of likes allows to understand how many users appreciate the publication and through comments users express their opinions and thoughts, creating discussions about the content published, which shows a deeper level of engagement (Bakhshi *et al.*, 2014). By liking and commenting on each other's comments users are creating value, which generates even more engagement (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Virtanen *et al.*, 2017). The probability of getting likes and comments increases when users show their faces in their posts which has an impact on their social engagement (Bakhshi *et al.*, 2014; Valentini *et al.*, 2018).

There are other factors to have in mind when referring to engagement, such as the number of followers, as it shows the degree of acceptance of the user profile, which can be used to measure engagement and also works as a metric of recognition and reach (Virtanen *et al.*, 2017), and interaction, that in the case of Instagram can be done in various ways, such as sharing the posts, viewing the stories, among others.

2.5.2.   Engagement and influencers

Each online platform has various indicators of digital engagement depending on its configurations (Lehmann *et al.*, 2012), such as the number of comments, the number of likes, the number of followers, click-through rates (CTR), the number of shares of a post, as well as the interaction with it (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Valentini *et al.*, 2018; Virtanen *et al.*, 2017).

Influencers work as mediators between the brand and the consumer, using their profile to act as an endorser for the brand and make followers feel engaged, so if the product shows the

personality of the influencer this will create more engagement, as it will communicate the product more efficiently and will be better accepted.

Likes and comments are important metrics to evaluate and maintain relationships, so marketers need to take this into consideration regarding their online promotions and communication strategies.

Followers engage with influencers by liking, commenting, and sharing their social media posts (Belanche *et al.*, 2021; Lou *et al.*, 2019) and with this, it's possible to understand the degree to which followers view influencers in a positive way, if they are willing to be influenced by them and if they engage in a constructive manner with their content.

In order to measure their success and maximize it, engagement is fundamental for influencers (Cotter, 2018). Influencers can be ranked based on their following, being the most typical categories the mega-influencer (>1 million followers) and macro-influencer (100,000 to 1 million followers). Micro- (10,000 to 100,000 followers) and nano-influencers (1,000 to 10,000 followers) are a niche of content creators that are supported by a smaller however highly engaged following (Ismail, 2018; Maheshwari, 2018; Turner, 2020).

3. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses development

This part of the study consists of the conceptual framework created alongside the hypotheses that were formulated to achieve results and draw conclusions. Both the model and the hypotheses were developed based on the previous research, presented in the Literature Review.

The hypotheses presented in this chapter will be then tested in the next chapter with the objective of understanding if there are differences in terms of engagement relating to body-positive content and non-body-positive content.

Figure 3.1. Proposed model
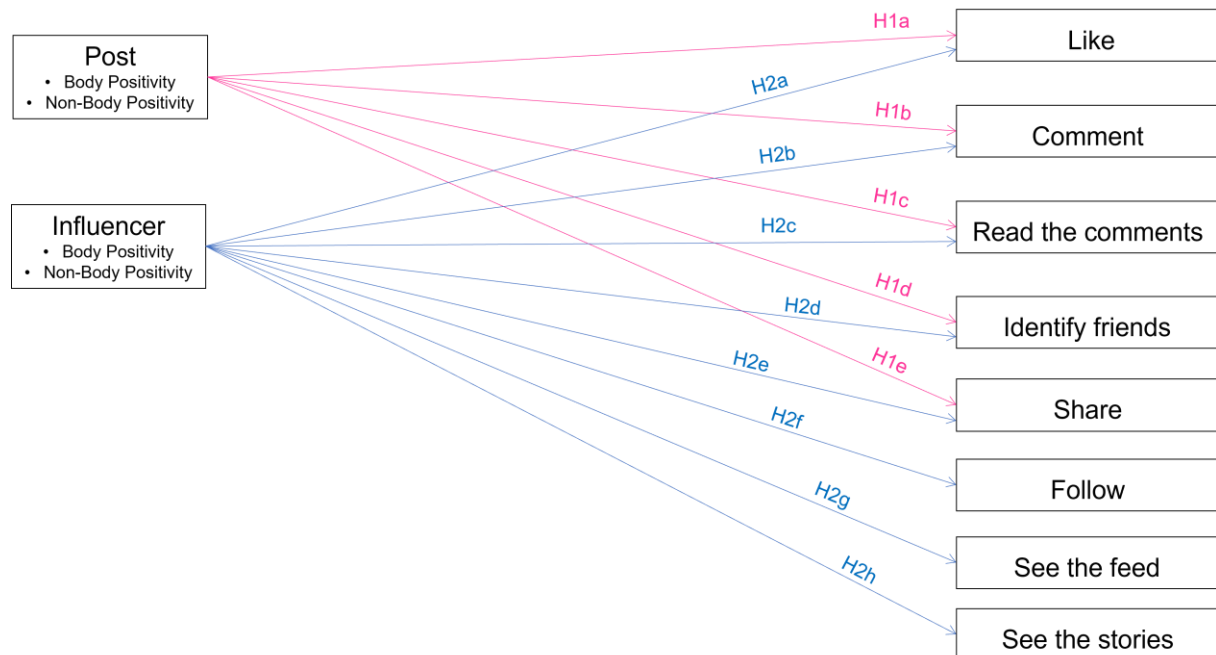
Source: Author's elaboration

Engagement is employed as the dependent variable, as its levels will depend on the type of content presented, either its Body Positivity or non-Body Positivity. As described in the literature review, engagement is a process that leads to loyalty (Bowden, 2009), and it´s characterized by the interaction between different actors (Patterson *et al.*, 2006), in this case, influencers and followers, and its capability to create connections. This interaction can be made through various actions, such as likes, comments, shares, and interactions (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Valentini *et al.*, 2018; Virtanen *et al.*, 2017).

From the framework presented (see figure 3.1.) were developed the following hypotheses.

H1: The type of content influences (a) the number of likes on the post; (b) the number of comments on the post; (c) the chance of reading the comments on the post; (d) the chance of identifying friends on the post; (e) the chance of sharing the post.

H2: The type of influencer influences (a) the number of likes; (b) the number of comments; (c) the chance of reading the comments on the influencer's content; (d) the chance of identifying friends on the influencer's content; (e) the chance of sharing the influencer; (f) the chance of following the influencer; (g) the chance of seeing the influencer's feed; (h) the chance of seeing the influencer's stories.

4. Methodology

This study intends to understand how a movement influences Instagram engagement. Various movements have awoken on Instagram, and this study focuses on one particular movement, Body Positivity, so it aims to understand how Body Positivity performs on Instagram and how this contributes to the influencer's engagement.

This section describes the methodological approach used in this study and explains how the data was collected.

4.1. Survey Design

The construct and respective items present in the survey developed for the current study were employed from scales used in previous research which were then adjusted and adapted to the present study. This information can be found in table 4.1.

To measure engagement, it was adapted the conceptualization of Tsai and Men's (2013), with some changes, so as to go according to the study in question Facebook was replaced with Instagram and taking into account the ways of interacting in these social networks it was necessary to make an adaptation. First, "companies" was replaced by the influencers under study (Sarah Nicole Landry and Kylie Jenner,), "liking/joining" was replaced by "follow" and was added the item "Like their posts". Then, the items "Watching videos on companies' Facebook pages" and "Viewing pictures on companies' Facebook pages" have been adapted to a single item, "See their feed" and added the item "See their stories". The item "Reading companies posts, user comments, or product reviews" was adapted to "Read other people comments", "Engaging in conversations on companies Facebook pages" was adapted to "Comment on the posts" and the items "Sharing companies Facebook posts on my own Facebook page" and "Recommending companies Facebook pages to my Facebook contacts" were adapted to one "Share on my feed/stories". The item "Uploading product-related video, audio, pictures, or images" was replaced with "Identify friends".

The items in the survey were all measured using a 5-point Likert Scale, where participants responded from 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely).

Besides this, were adapted five statements from a study on Body Positivity in Social Media Marketing done by Tinja Oinonen from Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (2021) in order to understand the opinions of the respondents on the topic in question. The questions are the following:

1. I think that different body types, ethnicities, and other appearance qualities are presented well on social media.
2. It's important to me that I relate to the content produced by the influencers on Instagram.

3. I often feel like I cannot relate to the influencers on Instagram.
4. It's essential that influencers stay consistent and genuine about the body-positive content they use on Instagram.
5. I think that body-positive content creates a better image of the influencer in the eyes of the "consumer".

These statements were all measured using a 5-point Likert Scale, where participants responded from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 4.1. Measurement Scales

Construct	Dimensions	Type of Likert-Scale	Source
Engagement	Like the post	5-Point Likert scale of probability (1- very unlikely to 5- very likely)	Tsai & Men's (2013)
	Comment on the post		
	Read other people's comments on the post		
	Identify friends on the post		
	Share the post on my feed/story		
	Follow the influencer		
	See the influencer feed		
	See the influencer stories		
	Read other people's comments on the influencer posts		
	Like the influencer posts		
	Comment on the influencer posts		
	Identify friends on the influencer posts		
	Share the influencer posts/stories on my Instagram		

Source: Author's elaboration

4.2. Fieldwork

To answer the research problem, an online survey was developed, and Google Forms was used to spread it. The survey is based on research on the subject, being that its material was collected from literature and online sources. First, a search was conducted to understand which influencers to highlight within the body-positive movement. According to an article written by Shireen Khandelwal for Vogue (https://www.vogue.in/wellness/content/instagram-influencers-championing-self-love-and-body-positivity-that-you-should-follow-now), there are 12 personalities one must follow to bring body positivity and self-love to their Instagram feed. Given this, an account was created on Instagram with the purpose to follow these people. After conducting a comprehensive timeline analysis of each profile, Sarah Nicole Landry was the influencer chosen to represent the body positivity side of this study, as she posts about her everyday life but always with a positive message behind her content. Sarah Nicole Landry is

a mom of four that after getting tired of social media and its habits of body perfection decided to change the way she presented herself to the world. She describes herself as a body confidence advocate speaker, writer, occasional model, weekly podcast host, and an ongoing student of life. Sarah is a blogger who focuses on self-love and on mental and physical well-being, having created a community that honors all the beautiful imperfections a body can have. As of November 2022, she has 2.2 million followers on Instagram. On the other side, to find an influencer to represent the non-body-positive content, a search was made about the bigger influencers on Instagram, where according to Influencer Marketing Hub (https://influencermarketinghub.com/br/principais-influenciadores/) 25 profiles stand out. After analysing each profile, Kyle Jenner was the influencer chosen given that her content fits in with what is intended for this study, as she posts about her everyday life not with the purpose to get a body-positive message to her audience but rather to flaunt her lifestyle. Kylie Kristen Jenner is an American media personality, businesswoman, and socialite born on August 10, 1997. She has two children and is the founder and owner of the cosmetic company Kylie Cosmetics. As of November 2022, she has 372 million followers on Instagram, making her the second-most-followed person on this network. After this, the survey was developed.

The survey was divided into four parts, being the first one crucial for the selection of which respondents belong to the audience this study intends to, as it asks if the respondents have an Instagram account. Since the study focuses on Instagram users, only those who answered yes previously move to section two. Section two refers to influencers, with the intent to understand more about the type of influencers the respondents interact with and how they do it. Moving to section three, the focus is on body positivity. Here lies the study's main goal, as the questions allow one to understand the respondents' views on the movement and make conclusions regarding the type of content and engagement. To finish, the last section is the information part where it's possible to make conclusions about the sample regarding gender, age, race, and BMI.

A pre-test was done to make sure that the questions were easy to understand and that everything was done correctly.

The survey can be found in Annex A.

The data was collected through an online survey created in Google Forms, which was then shared with friends and family and on social media platforms, namely Facebook and Instagram to collect answers virtually. On Facebook, it was shared on various groups whose purpose is to share academic research, where users answer other users' surveys in exchange for yours, and on Instagram it was shared through Instagram stories and direct messages.

Even though there were 342 answers, 34 had to be excluded from the sample since they didn't meet the eligibility criteria for this study, leaving it with a sample of 308 respondents.

4.3. Data analysis

To proceed to the analysis of the data collected, were performed various tests on SPSS, namely Chi-Square, Kruskal Wallis and Wilcoxon. Besides this were performed some descriptive statistics and created some word clouds.

To classify the sample through specific characteristics, such as gender, age, race and BMI, some descriptive statistics were performed. Besides this, descriptive statistics were also used to understand the behavior of the respondents, namely if they follow and know any influencer, if they follow any influencer that post body-positive content and if their friends post content related to Body Positivity. To understand the level of agreement of the respondents regarding the five statements were again performed descriptive statistics, where it was possible to see the mean given to each statement.

Regarding the categories of influencers the respondents follow, how they interact with the influencers, and what they would like to see influencers on Instagram be more open about, besides the outputs generated by Google Forms, word clouds were created on WordItOut, as this allows to have a better understanding of these variables.

A Chi-Square test was performed to test the proposition that post preference varies according to the respondents' demographic profile and, to understand where the differences are, were made crosstabulations.

A Kruskal Wallis-Test was performed to see if there are differences in the level of agreement in the five statements regarding the post chosen and then a crosstabulation between these two variables where it's possible to see the mean and understand where these differences are.

To test the hypotheses was performed a Wilcoxon test for both the Post and the Influencer. This allowed to compare if there are differences when engaging with body-positive and non-body-positive content. Then, to understand where these differences are were again performed descriptive statistics where the mean was analysed.

5. Results and Discussion

This chapter will be an analysis of the data collected from the survey, presenting results and findings of the research to then proceed to the discussion of the results and the presentation of the theoretical contributions and managerial implications.

With this, the main goal is to combine the theoretical knowledge with the results of the study, leading to conclusions regarding the topic, in order to understand if there are differences between the engagement regarding Body Positivity and non-Body Positivity content and what these are.

5.1. Sample profile

As mentioned in chapter 4.2, questions were included to know more about the type of influencers the respondents interact with and how they do it. The majority of the respondents (54.5%) claim to know influencers. Besides this, 66.6% say that they follow influencers that post body-positive content, while 57.1% say that their friends post this type of content. Of the 308 respondents, 275 follow influencers, corresponding to 89.3%. This information can be found in table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Descriptives (behavior towards influencers)

	Frequency	**Percentage (%)**
Do you know any influencers		
Yes	168	54.5%
No	140	45.5%
Do you follow any influencer that posts body positive content		
Yes	205	66.6%
No	103	33.4%
Do any of your friends post content related to body positivity		
Yes	176	57.1%
No	132	42.9%
Do you follow any influencers		
Yes	275	89.3%
No	34	10.7%

Source: Author's elaboration

In terms of the categories of influencers the respondents follow, how they interact with the influencers, and what they would like to see influencers on Instagram be more open about, besides the outputs generated by google forms, word clouds were created where it's possible to see what stands out.

Regarding the categories of influencers, it's possible to see that "Lifestyle" stands out (62.1%), followed by "Fashion" (58.2%), and "Beauty" (54.3%). On the other hand, there is "Luxury" (11%) and "Parenting" (15.2%) with a small representation. This information can be found on figure 5.1. and annex B.

Figure 5.1. Categories of influencers

Source: Author's elaboration

Regarding their interaction with influencers, two actions stand out, "Watch their stories" (81.4%) and "Like their posts" (68.5%). The other types of interactions have lower representation, with 12.9% mentioning that they comment on posts and 9.8% share the influencers' posts, while 10.2% said they don't interact with influencers. This information can be found on figure 5.2. and annex C.

Figure 5.2. Interaction with influencers
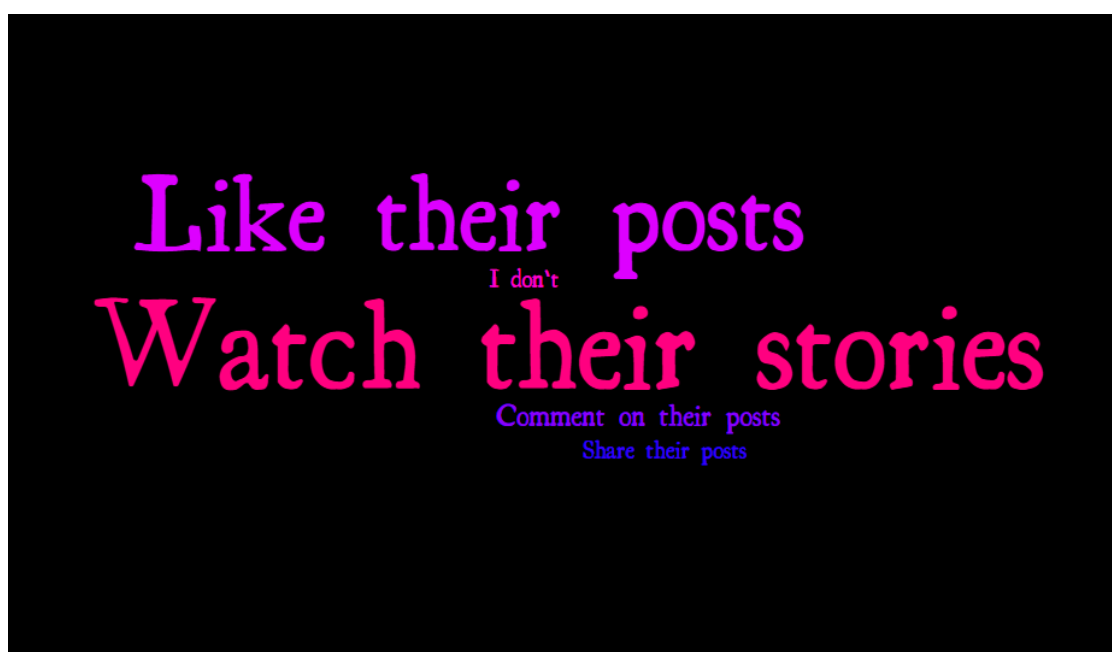
Source: Author's elaboration

When asked about what they would like to see influencers on Instagram be more open about, a topic stands out, "Different body shapes" (75.6%). Besides this, it's possible to see that more than half of the respondents are interested in seeing influencers be more open about tummy rolls (55.8%), stretch marks (54.9%), different skin conditions (53.9%), cellulite (52.3%), different skin colors (51.9%) and different ethnicities (50.6%). As well, 44.5% of the respondents say they want to see more about different disabilities, 40.9% mention different heights, and 35.1% refer to gender neutral. This information can be found on figure 5.3. and annex D.

Figure 5.3. Topics of interest

Source: Author's elaboration

At the end of the survey was collected sociodemographic data making it possible to classify the sample through specific characteristics such as gender, age, race, and BMI.

Regarding Gender, the majority are female (74%), corresponding to a total of 228 respondents, while the Male respondents represent 25.6% and 0.4% relates to Other. In terms of Age, the segment with higher significance is 18 to 24 years, more precisely with 55.8%; followed by the segment of 25 to 34 years with 32.5%. With a significantly low representation comes the under 18 with 2.6%, the over 44 with 4.2%, and the segment of 35 to 44 years with 4.9%. Concerning Race, the majority (75.3%) is White, corresponding to 232 respondents, followed by Asian with 11.7%, Hispanic or Latino, and Other, both with 5.2%, and Black or African American with 2.6%. Lastly, as regards BMI, 49.7% are in the normal category, 18.8%

are in the overweight one and 13% prefer not to say. This information can be found in table 5.2.

Table 5.2. Sociodemographic data

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	228	74%
Male	79	25.6%
Other	1	0.4%
Age		
<18	8	2.6%
18-24	172	55.8%
25-34	100	32.5%
35-44	15	4.9%
>44	13	4.2%
Race		
White	232	75.3%
Black or African American	8	2.6%
Asian	36	11.7%
Hispanic or Latino	16	5.2%
Other	16	5.2%
BMI		
<18.5	13	4.2%
18.5-24.9	153	49.7%
25-29.9	58	18.8%
30-34.9	21	6.8%
35-39.9	14	4.5%
>40	9	2.9%
Rather not say	40	13.0%

Source: Author's elaboration

5.2. Model testing

The current study was developed to understand how the Body Positivity movement on Instagram influences the engagement of the influencers who are a part of this movement and understand the differences, in terms of engagement levels, between Body Positivity content and non-Body Positivity content. With a sample of 308 respondents were reached the results of this study, which allows to address to main questions of the research and the hypotheses mentioned in the conceptual model presented in chapter 3. In the following paragraphs the results of the study will be discussed.

In order to compare the probability of engagement with a Body Positivity post and a non-Body Positivity post, the author used the paired test Wilcoxon. The results revealed the existence of differences on the probability of engagement to both groups. This information can be found in table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Engagement Post

	Mean		Wilcoxon Test	
	Body Positivity	Non-Body Positivity	Statistic	p
Like the post	3.34	2.45	-8.072	0.00
Comment on the post	1.89	1.65	-4.365	0.00
Read the post comments	3.37	2.41	-9.269	0.00
Identify friends on the post	2.12	1.79	-5.100	0.00
Share the post	2.03	1.62	-5.902	0.00

Source: Author's elaboration

The results of the tests revealed the rejection of all the null hypotheses and indicated the existence of differences regarding all the variables.

It is possible to see that the probability of engagement is higher for all variables regarding the Body Positivity post. The respondents mention that they likely will like the Body Positivity post (3.34), while the non-Body Positivity it's unlikely that they will like it (2.45). The same happens in terms of reading comments, as the respondents say that they will likely do it regarding the Body Positivity post (3.37) while regarding the non-Body Positivity they seem unlikely to do this (2.41). On the other hand, regarding commenting, identifying friends, and sharing the post, the respondents seem unlikely to do it for both posts, being that the probability of engagement becomes even lower when the post does not involve body-positive content.

To analyse the probability of engagement with the different influencers, the body-positive (Sarah Nicole Landry) and the non-body-positive one (Kylie Jenner), a paired test Wilcoxon was again performed, revealing the existence of differences on the probability of engagement with both the influencers. This information can be found in table 5.4.

Table 5.4. Engagement influencer

	Mean		Wilcoxon Test	
	Body Positivity	Non-Body Positivity	Statistic	p
Follow the influencer	2.84	2.27	-5.675	0.00
See the influencer feed	3.51	2.77	-7.605	0.00
See the influencer stories	3.32	2.66	-6.927	0.00
Read the comments on the influencer posts	3.24	2.39	-8.909	0.00
Like the influencer posts	3.22	2.21	-9.396	0.00
Comment on the influencer posts	1.91	1.60	-4.985	0.00
Identify friends on the influencer posts	2.00	1.74	-4.995	0.00
Share the influencer	1.95	1.59	-5.576	0.00

Source: Author's elaboration

The results of the tests leads to the rejection of all the null hypotheses, concluding that there are differences regarding all the variables.

Sarah Nicole Landry, the influencer who posts body-positive content, has a higher probability of engagement regarding all the variables. Regarding Sarah, the respondents seem likely to see the influencers feed (3.51) and stories (3.32), read the comments on the influencers post (3.24) and like their posts (3.22), while regarding Kylie they seem unlikely to do this. For both the influencers the respondents mention that is unlikely they will follow them, being that the probability is even lower when referring to non-body-positive influencer (2.27).

The actions that the respondents are more unlikely to do for both the influencers are sharing the influencer, commenting on the influencer posts, and identifying friends on the influencer posts, being that the probability is even lower when its regarding Kylie Jenner, the non-body-positive influencer.

The respondents were asked to classify their level of agreement regarding five statements, being that one meant they strongly disagree with it and five meant they strongly agree. This information can be found in table 5.5.

The first one ("I think that different body types, ethnicities, and other appearance qualities are presented well on social media") has a mean of 2.82, which means that the respondents disagree with the affirmation. On the other hand, all the other four statements have means above 3, meaning that the respondents agree with them. The fourth affirmation ("It's essential that influencers stay consistent and genuine about the body-positive content they use on Instagram") is the one with the highest mean, 3.93, followed by the fifth one ("I think that body-positive content creates a better image of the influencer in the eyes of the "consumer"), with a mean of 3.87, then the second one ("It's important to me that I relate to the content produced by the influencers on Instagram") with 3.63 and the third ("I often feel like I cannot relate to the influencers on Instagram") with 3.52.

Table 5.5. Descriptives statistics regarding the five statements

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I think that different body types, ethnicities, and other appearance qualities are presented well on social media	1	5	2.82	1.156
It's important to me that I relate to the content produced by the influencers on Instagram	1	5	3.63	1.200
I often feel like I cannot relate to the influencers on Instagram	1	5	3.52	1.093
It's essential that influencers stay consistent and genuine about the body-positive content they use on Instagram	1	5	3.93	1.057
I think that body-positive content creates a better image of the influencer in the eyes of the "consumer"	1	5	3.87	0.958

Source: Own elaboration

This data shows that the respondents care about consistency and genuineness regarding body-positive content and if the influencers use this type of content they will be seen in a better way. For the respondents, it's important that they relate to the content produced by the influencers on Instagram, however, they feel like sometimes they cannot relate to the influencers and that different body types, ethnicities, and other appearance qualities are not well represented on social media.

To understand if there are differences in terms of the level of agreement in the five statements, regarding the post chosen, was developed a Kruskal Wallis test. The results revealed the existence of differences in the distribution of the level of agreement to each statement based on the selected post.

Indeed, consumers that selected the Body Positivity post reported a higher average to the last four statements than consumers that selected the other post, while the first affirmation has a higher mean regarding the ones that chose post B, the non-Body Positivity one. This information can be found in table 5.6.

While respondents that chose post B agree that different body types, ethnicities, and other appearance qualities are well presented on social media, those who chose post A don't seem to agree with this statement. Those who chose post A show a higher level of agreement (4,07) regarding the importance of influencers staying consistent and genuine about the body-positive content they post on social media. Besides this, they agree that when influencers use body-positive content they see them in a better way (3.97) and they find it important to relate to the content that the influencers produce on Instagram (3.74), even though they feel like

frequently they can't relate to them (3.63). Those who chose post B also seem to have the same opinion but with a not so high level of agreement.

Table 5.6. Affirmations and post chosen

	Mean		Kruskal Wallis Test	
	Body Positivity post	Non-Body Positivity post	Value	Sig
I think that different body types, ethnicities, and other appearance qualities are presented well on social media	2.66	3.23	16.711	0.000
It's important to me that I relate to the content produced by the influencers on Instagram	3.74	3.35	6.834	0.009
I often feel like I cannot relate to the influencers on Instagram	3.63	3.26	5.813	0.016
It's essential that influencers stay consistent and genuine about the body-positive content they use on Instagram	4.07	3.57	10.329	0.001
I think that body-positive content creates a better image of the influencer in the eyes of the "consumer"	3.97	3.60	7.316	0.007

Source: Author's elaboration

To finish, was established a proposition to test if post preference (Body positivity or not) varies according to the respondent's demographic profile (Age, Gender, Race, BMI). This information can be found in table 5.7.

Table 5.7. Post chosen and demographic profile

		Age			Gender		Race		BMI					
		<25	25-35	>35	**Female**	**Male**	White	Other	<18.5	18.5-24.9	25-29.9	30-34,9	35-39.9	>40
	Body Positivity post	129	75	16	**181 (79,4%)**	**38 (48,1%)**	164	56	10	103	42	15	11	6
	Non-Body Positivity post	51	25	12	**47 (20,6%)**	**41 (51,9%)**	68	20	3	50	16	6	3	3
Chi-Square Tests	Statistic	3.430			**28.083**		0.252		1.526					
	p	0.180			**0.00**		0.616		0.910					

Source: Author's elaboration

Regarding Age, Race, and BMI, the results of the Chi-Square test have not rejected the hypothesis of independence of these variables with the post preference. On the other hand,

regarding Gender, it's concluded that there are differences in terms of gender when choosing the post (X2= 28.083; p= 0.00).

By doing a crosstabulation of the variable "Gender" with "Which post would you rather see in your Instagram feed?" it's possible to see that while most females choose Post A (79.4%), the one regarding Body Positivity, the majority of males choose post B (51.9%), the one non-Body Positivity. Besides this, is possible to see greater dispersion on the female side, as 79.4% chose post A and 20.6% chose post B, while the male side is more balanced, having 51.9% chosen post B and 48.1% chosen post A, showing that females are more likely to choose the body positivity post than males.

5.3. Discussion

As its possible to see in the conceptual model (see figure 3.1.) there are two independent variables, the type of post and the type of influencer, being that the dependent variable, engagement, represented by the actions present in the model, will depend on the type presented.

In order for the hypotheses to be supported by the results, p-values have to be lower than 0.5 and as its possible to observe in table 5.3 and in table 5.4 all p-values are lower than 0.5 leading to conclude that all the hypotheses are verified.

H1a hypothesizes that the type of content influences the number of likes on the post. The results (β = -8.072; p-value = 0.00) show that indeed the number of likes that the post receives is influenced by the type of content presented. By looking at the means of both type of contents, Body Positivity and non-Body Positivity, it's possible to see that the first type of content has a stronger chance of receiving likes (3.34) than the other one (2.45).

H1b proposes that the type of content influences the number of comments on the post. Looking at the results (β = -4.365; p-value = 0.00) it's possible to see that the number of comments that the post receives is influenced by the type of content presented. Looking at the means of both type of contents, Body Positivity and non-Body Positivity, one can state that the first type of content has a higher probability of getting comments (1.89) than the other one (1.65).

Regarding H1c, it proposes that the type of content influences the chance of reading the comments on the post. By looking at the results (β = -9.269; p-value = 0.00) one can conclude that the hypothesis is verified. By looking at the means, the probability of reading the comments on the Body Positivity post (3.37) is higher than the non-Body Positivity post (2.41).

H1d hypotheses that the type of content influences the chance of identifying friends on the post. The results (β = -5.100; p-value = 0.00) support this hypothesis. In fact, looking at the

means one can conclude that the chance of identifying friends on the post is higher on the Body Positivity post (2.21) comparing to the non-Body Positivity post (1.79).

H1e proposes that the type of content influences the chance of sharing the post. The results support this hypothesis (β = -5.902; p-value = 0.00). Looking at the means of both type of contents, Body Positivity and non-Body Positivity, one can state that the first type of content has a higher probability of getting comments (2.03) than the other one (1.62).

H2a evaluates if the type of influencer influences the number of likes. By looking at the results (β = -9.396; p-value = 0.00) one can conclude that the hypothesis is verified. Indeed, by looking at the means, it's possible to see that the mean is higher regarding the body-positive influencer (3.22) than the non-boy-positive (2.21).

Regarding H2b it proposes that the type of influencer influences the number of comments. The results support this hypothesis (β = -4.985; p-value = 0.00). By looking at the means of both influencers, the body-positive one (1.91) has an higher one than the non-body-positive (1.60).

H2c proposes that the type of influencer influences the chance of reading the comments on the influencer's content. Looking at the results (β = -8.909; p-value = 0.00) it's possible to see that the chance of reading comments is influenced by the type of influencer presented. If presented with a body-positive influencer the mean is higher (3.24) comparing to the non-body-positive influencer (2.39).

H2d hypothesizes that type of influencer influences the chance of identifying friends on the influencer's content. The results (β = -4.995; p-value = 0.00) show that indeed the probability of identifying friends is influenced by the type of influencer presented, having the body-positive influencer a higher mean (2.00) than the non-body-positive (1.74).

Regarding H2e it proposes that the type of influencer influences the chance of sharing the influencer. In fact, the results support this hypothesis (β = -5.576; p-value = 0.00) and looking at the means one can conclude that the body-positive has a higher chance (1.95) than the non-body-positive (1.59).

H2f refers that the type of influencer influences the chance of following the influencer, being this verified by the results (β = -5.675; p-value = 0.00). Indeed, looking at the means, it's possible to see that the mean is higher regarding the body-positive influencer (2.84) than the non-boy-positive (2.27).

H2g evaluates if the type of influencer influences the chance of seeing the influencer's feed. Indeed, as the results show (β = -7.605; p-value = 0.00), this hypothesis is verified. By looking at the means of both influencers it's possible to conclude that the body-positive one (3.51) has a higher chance of followers seeing their feed than the non-body-positive (2.77).

Lastly, H2h proposes that the type of influencer influences the chance of seeing the influencer's stories. This is supported by the results (β = -6.927; p-value = 0.00) and looking

at the means one can conclude that the body-positive influencer has a higher chance (3.32) than the non-body-positive (2.66).

Table 5.8. Hypotheses status

H1: The type of content influences

(a) the number of likes on the post	verified
(b) the number of comments on the post	verified
(c) the chance of reading the comments on the post	verified
(d) the chance of identifying friends on the post	verified
(e) the chance of sharing the post	verified

H2: The type of influencer influences

(a) the number of likes	verified
(b) the number of comments	verified
(c) the chance of reading the comments on the influencer's content	verified
(d) the chance of identifying friends on the influencer's content	verified
(e) the chance of sharing the influencer	verified
(f) the chance of following the influencer	verified
(g) the chance of seeing the influencer's feed	verified
(h) the chance of seeing the influencer's stories	verified

Source: Own elaboration

Body-positive content can be classified as information type of content as it educates people on embracing, accepting and appreciating themselves and others (Sastre, 2014). As Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013) refer, the number of likes, comments and shares are higher when presented with information content and as this study shows the engagement levels raise when presented with this type of content. As mentioned in the literature review, body-positive content awakens positive feelings, making an individual feel better psychological, social and emotional (Swami *et al.*, 2017), so when facing a choice, individuals will opt for the one that will make them feel better. By engaging with this type of content users get psychological benefits out of it (Cohen *et al.*, 2019). Haskins (2015) mentions that body-positive content has the power to create a more inclusive and empowering environment for all users, regarding their shape or size, which consequently makes people feel better, so they rather engage with this type of content instead of content with unrealistic standards. Being Instagram strongly based on appearance (Barbato & Tiggemann, 2018) the majority of the posts on this network are

influenced by the standards imposed by society (Bryant, 2018) and with the rise of the Body Positivity movement users have become more aware of how unrealistic this can be, as people chose to post an idealized version of themselves (Bryant, 2018; Fardouly *et al.*, 2015) instead of accepting themselves for who they are. However, as people are educating themselves and there is starting to have a shift of perceptions, it´s possible to see a change, as this study shows, where people choose to engage with something real rather than something unrealistically perfect.

5.4. Theoretical contributions

The principal theoretical contributions of this study are regarding the consumer behavior towards online movements within the Marketing field, more precisely the Digital Marketing. The digital has been growing interest in the last few years and there are still a lot to uncover about it, so this study will contribute to it. Since there are little studies focusing on Instagram, this study comes to try to shorten an existing gap in the literature regarding this topic. Other than contributing to the studies about Instagram it also gives insights regarding influencers and how the consumers engage with them.

Besides this, it also contributes to the studies regarding the Body Positivity movement. Even though the topic has been growing, there is still limited research on it (Camarneiro, 2017). This study helps to elucidate that this movement can have more impact on the engagement of the influencers, rather than just posting regular content, and this is an interesting finding as it can change the way influencers use their social media so they can get better engagement levels, which contributes to other interesting studies regarding the reliability of the influencers, as if they are using the movement because they truly believe in it and are behind it or they just see it as a way to generate higher engagement levels.

5.5. Managerial implications

Besides the theoretical contributions, the present study also has some practical implications to take into consideration.

By providing insights it becomes easier to evaluate the engagement strategy to then develop the right actions that will benefit it as it allows to have better understanding of the behavior of the consumer and realize what they are more attracted towards.

This study revealed that followers are not keen on following the influencers, commenting on their posts, identifying friends on those, and sharing them, so influencers should focus on strategies that would lead their followers to do these more often, leading them to better engagement levels. This study also shows that in order to generate engagement, influencers have to provide content to their audience that is important, meaningful, and relevant to them.

By using motivating and inspiring content, the message transmitted to the audience will have a difference impact, generating more positive feelings.

Instagram is a very visual application, and its content is demonstrated through videos and images, and it often focuses on the physical appearance so when addressing a topic such as Body Positivity it opens the door to a change of perceptions, leading to a better and more real space, where people feel they can be themselves without the fear of being judged. Also, users by seeing influencers touching on these topics end up feeling more connected to them, which will consequently benefit the influencers regarding their engagement levels as consumers will be more attracted to them.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Instagram has the power to raise awareness, foster online communities, and encourage social chance globally (Kasana, 2014), so keeping this in mind, this social networking site allows body-positive advocates a global platform where they can promote a more inclusive and positive message, reframing those ideals that have been dominating social media. When using body-positive content is important that influencers stay consistent and genuine about what they are communicating and by doing this they create a better image of themselves in the mind of their followers, especially given the fact that they believe that different body types, ethnicities, and other appearance qualities are misrepresented on social media. Instagram users are mostly content consumers and as this study shows they are more open to like influencer posts and read other people comments on it rather than commenting themselves or identifying friends. Besides this they are more open to see the feed and the stories of the influencer rather than following or sharing the influencer.

To conclude, it is possible to say that all the hypotheses were verified, and the findings of this study allow to answer to the three research questions presented in chapter 1.3. Regarding the first question (The use of body-positive content impacts the engagement of influencers?), indeed the use of content related to Body Positivity can have an impact on the engagement of the influencers. In terms of the second question (Does body-positive content have higher engagement levels?) this study showed that when the content was related to Body Positivity the engagement levels were higher in comparison with non-Body Positivity content. For the last question (Do Influencers who post body-positive content have higher engagement levels?), it's possible to say that influencers that focus on body-positive content have in fact higher engagement levels. This study shows that having a lot of followers does not mean higher engagement levels (De Veirman et al., 2017; Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017), as Sarah Nicole Landry has 2.2 million followers (as of November,2022) while Kylie Jenner has 372 million (as of November,2022) and, as it was possible to see throughout this study, the respondents are more likely to engage with Sarah Nicole Landry than with Kyle Jenner. This can happen because followers want to engage with influencers whom they feel are personable, authentic, and relatable (Belanche et al., 2021; Jin et al., 2019; Lou and Yuan, 2019; Schouten et al., 2019), and when the follower base reaches a significant level, followers may start to feel a disconnection with the influencers, weakening their engagement, concluding that the number of followers can be negatively associated with influencer engagement. To reinforce this idea, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) mention that when influencers have a more modest follower base users tend to trust them more rather than those with larger follower bases. This study shows that it's important for followers to relate to the content produced by the influencers, however often they feel like they can't. It`s concluded that the size of the follower base is not

enough to connect the influencer to their followers, it's important that these can inspire and make their followers feel like they are seen, and their needs are being listened to, so by using content like the body-positive one it's a good way to achieve this.

Another conclusion brought by this study is that females are more attracted to Body Positivity content while males prefer other types of content.

Despite the conclusions reached with this study it's important to take into consideration some limitations.

First, the study has low representativeness, since 308 people are not enough to demonstrate if the movement can effectively influence engagement levels. Besides this, most of the respondents are white, limiting the analysis and conclusions that could be made about race, being that skin color is an important aspect to keep in mind when talking about the movement.

Next, the respondents didn't have the complete information and context about the influencers presented to them, they had a small introduction and a few posts, which shows a small sample of each influencer, being that their responses could vary if the posts seen of the influencers were others. Other than this, there were presented two influencers, one that is very well-known and one that has a smaller following. Having this in mind, it's possible that the respondents could already know one of the influencers or even both and have preconceived ideas about them that could affect their judgment when answering the questions.

This study focuses on Instagram but for future research, it would be interesting to expand it to other platforms, such as TikTok which has been growing in popularity more and more each day and focuses only on video content, being popular for its trends, which a lot of them focus on the appearance of the creator instead of the content produced. Besides this, influencers have now, more than ever, an impact on people's lives, so future research should explore the role of influencers on social media since they can be highly influential.

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Annexes

Social Media Influencers and Body Positivity

This questionnaire was developed to collect information for a dissertation in the scope of the master's in Marketing at ISCTE. The goal is to understand how consumers experience body positivity in Instagram and how they will behave towards the influencers who produce body positive content.

The questionnaire should only take around 7 minutes to complete and it is fully confidential.

Thank you for your time and assisting me with this research!

Section 1

Do you have an Instagram account?
- o Yes
- o No

Section 2 – Influencers

Do you follow any influencers?
- o Yes
- o No

If yes, what categories of influencers do you follow?
- ☐ Beauty
- ☐ Fashion
- ☐ Travel
- ☐ Lifestyle
- ☐ Parenting
- ☐ Health and Fitness
- ☐ Luxury
- ☐ Pets and Animals
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Sports

How do you interact with the influencers that you follow?

- ☐ Watch their stories
- ☐ Like their posts
- ☐ Comment on their posts
- ☐ Share their posts
- ☐ I don't

Do you know any influencers?

- o Yes
- o No

Section 3 – Body Positivity

Body positivity is a social movement focused on the acceptance of all bodies, regardless of size, shape, skin tone, gender, and physical abilities, while challenging present-day beauty standards as an undesirable social construct. It´s focus is on appreciating the functionality and health of the human body, instead of its physical appearance.

Do you follow any influencer that posts body-positive content?

- o Yes
- o No

Do any of your friends post content that is related to body positivity?

- o Yes
- o No

I would like to see influencers on Instagram be more open about the following qualities

- ☐ Different body shapes
- ☐ Tummy rolls
- ☐ Stretch marks
- ☐ Cellulite
- ☐ Different skin conditions
- ☐ Different skin colors
- ☐ Different ethnicities
- ☐ Different heights
- ☐ Gender neutral
- ☐ Different disabilities

On a scale from 1 to 5, being 1 strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree, please classify the following

1. I think that different body types, ethnicities, and other appearance qualities are presented well on social media.
2. It's important to me that I relate to the content produced by the influencers on Instagram.
3. I often feel like I cannot relate to the influencers on Instagram.
4. It's essential that influencers stay consistent and genuine about the body-positive content they use on Instagram.
5. I think that body-positive content creates a better image of the influencer in the eyes of the "consumer".

Which posts would you rather see in your Instagram feed?

o A

jillianmercado ✓

jillianmercado I present to you my rebirth. I have learned so many wonderful things about myself during these couple of months. New levels of love and gratitude that I have never had the opportunity to focus and analyze. I wanted to convey that feeling with this cover. I'm so beyond happy to share this with you all.

This cover is particularly special for me also because it's my first of 2021 with my new team at @CAA, such a beautiful way to start the year! It also gave me the opportunity to talk about my journey with self love as a disabled woman, who has had the realization of how beautiful my body truly is. Being disabled and having a body that has a physical disability has never been something that I personally disliked. I realized how society has been very tactfully infiltrated to think that I should.

My body is mine. There's no fixing that, you can't fix perfection.

Society is the one that needs to respect it and understand how beautiful it is. I hope that this cover can bring the sense of assurance to those who are disabled and need that representation too.

thank you @glamourUK & @joshsmithhosts for having me on your January 2021 digital cover!

photo by my lovely and talented friend: @helena_luuu
@lushootsfilm
and makeup by: @jennybouton

image description: A beautiful latinx woman (me) sitting on a beach bed wearing a light blue two-piece suit, slightly open that you can see a little bit of my boobs but not too much. My hands are laying on my crossed legs. A cover for a GlamourUK

Gostos: **jameelajamil** e **9 121 outras pessoas**

o B

kimkardashian ✓

kimkardashian VOGUE US

Photographer: @carlijnjacobs
Fashion Editor: @mr_carlos_nazario
Makeup: @mariodedivanovic
Hair: @chrisappleton1
Nails: @kimkimnails @nailsbydiem
Entertainment Director: @sergiokletnoy

Ver todos os 24 510 comentários

simoneharouche Yessssss kimmy!!!! 🔥🔥🔥

parishilton So stunning! 🔥 Congrats gorgeous! 😍🙈

9 de fevereiro • Ver tradução

Gostos: **winnieharlow** e **4 111 233 outras pessoas**

43

kendalljenner ✓

1 414 587 gostos

kendalljenner Harper's Bazaar 150th anniversary issue. @harpersbazaarus stay tuned...

Ver todos os 97 496 comentários

jenatkinhair 👏👏👏👏👏

13 de abril de 2017

On a scale from 1 to 5, being 1 very unlikely and 5 very likely, please rate the probability of interacting with this post on Instagram

thebirdspapaya ✓

87 910 gostos

thebirdspapaya This is not me then and me now.

This is me.
Collectively now.

I would not be who I am now without them.
The past versions of me, that is.
I have used their images before.
In ways that were just...so misguided.

Now I wish I could hug them.
Truly.
I just wish I could reach in and hug them.
Tell them,
You are so good.
You are doing so much.
You are going to be ok.

I can't speak to the magnitude of difficulty past versions of me had in navigating.
It's honestly too hard.
I just wanted to feel good.
I just wanted to be good.

(Who was telling me I wasn't already?)

They always say it's like finding yourself.
Which really made me run
in the wrong direction.
Because honestly, I didn't have to.
Find myself, that is.
I just had to come home.
Not to just now.
But to all of me.
All parts.
Past. Present. Unknown.

Tell them,
You are so good.
You are doing so much.
You are going to be ok.

I can't speak to the magnitude of difficulty past versions of me had in navigating.
It's honestly too hard.
I just wanted to feel good.
I just wanted to be good.

(Who was telling me I wasn't already?)

They always say it's like finding yourself.
Which really made me run
in the wrong direction.
Because honestly, I didn't have to.
Find myself, that is.
I just had to come home.
Not to just now.
But to all of me.
All parts.
Past. Present. Unknown.

We are collectively one.
Collectively worthy.
Collectively good.
Collectively home.

And I can't go back and tell them that.
But I can live holding onto every bit of who they, collectively, made me.

44

1. Like the post
2. Comment on the post
3. Read other people's comments on this post
4. Identify friends on this post
5. Share this post on my feed/story

On a scale from 1 to 5, being 1 very unlikely and 5 very likely, please rate the probability of interacting with the influencer on Instagram

"Sarah Nicole Landry (aka @thebirdspapaya) is a blogger whose experience with self-love has become well-known. Uncovering the relationship between detrimental dieting rituals and the effects it has on one's mental and physical self, Landry has highlighted the boundaries of the human body. She routinely expresses the dangers of relying on external validation to celebrate one's physical self and has created a community that honors the beautiful imperfections of all bodies, including cellulite and stretch marks." - Vogue, 2021

thebirdspapaya Believe it or not our body is not a question to be answered.

It does not demand an explanation to others.
Or a reason why.
We do not owe the story.
We do not have to speak a word, if we don't want to.

While I love to tell the tales of my own.
The things we've done.
The way we've stretched and molded to life.
There is not a command to tell it.

And to be honest?
I wonder if it helped to speak (or explain) it at all.

Because the absolute silence as I stand and exist, is an entire statement itself.
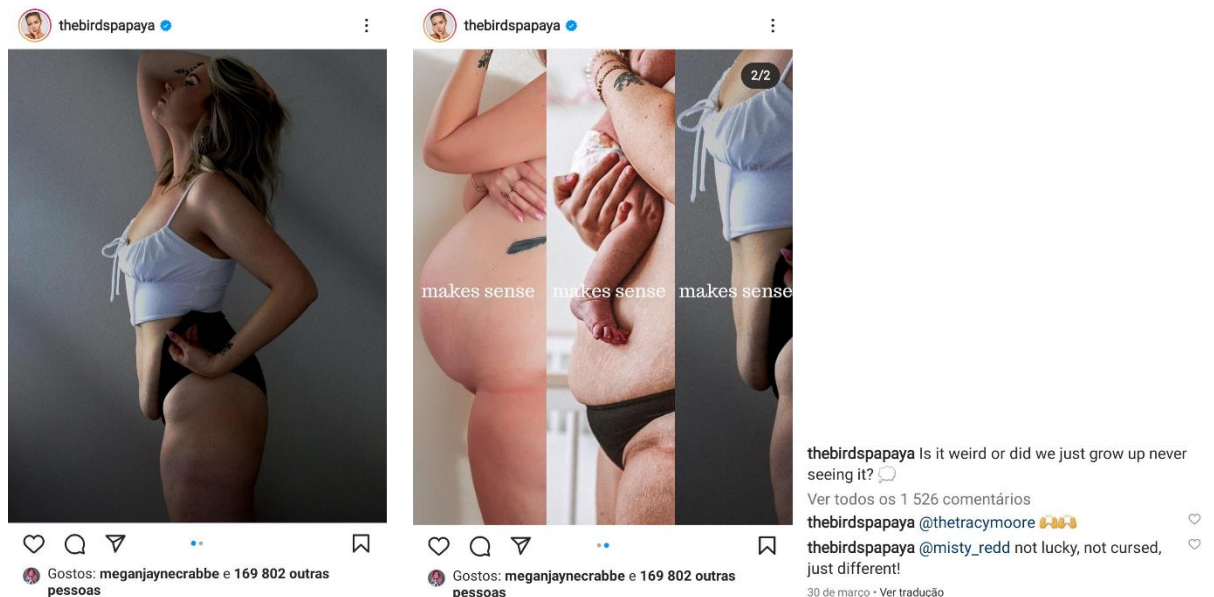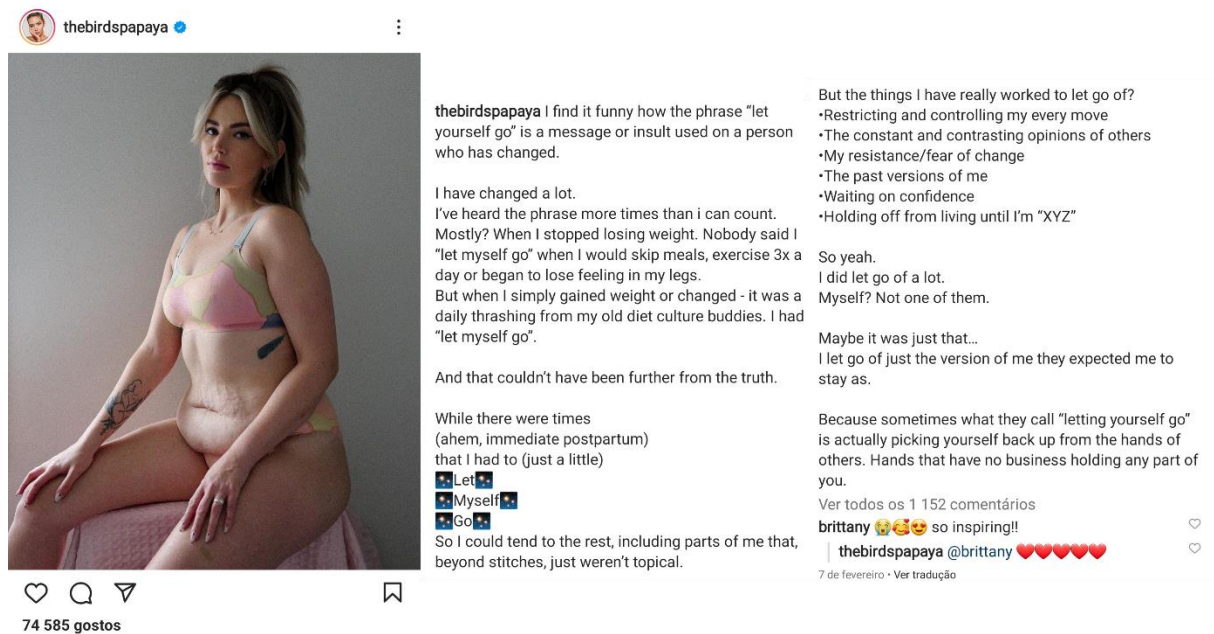
One I hope to live more of.

Just here.
Just living.
Just being.

Not because *of*
Not worthy *for*

Just am.

54 687 gostos

thebirdspapaya I find it funny how the phrase "let yourself go" is a message or insult used on a person who has changed.

I have changed a lot.
I've heard the phrase more times than i can count. Mostly? When I stopped losing weight. Nobody said I "let myself go" when I would skip meals, exercise 3x a day or began to lose feeling in my legs.
But when I simply gained weight or changed - it was a daily thrashing from my old diet culture buddies. I had "let myself go".

And that couldn't have been further from the truth.

While there were times
(ahem, immediate postpartum)
that I had to (just a little)
✨Let✨
✨Myself✨
✨Go✨
So I could tend to the rest, including parts of me that, beyond stitches, just weren't topical.

But the things I have really worked to let go of?
•Restricting and controlling my every move
•The constant and contrasting opinions of others
•My resistance/fear of change
•The past versions of me
•Waiting on confidence
•Holding off from living until I'm "XYZ"

So yeah.
I did let go of a lot.
Myself? Not one of them.

Maybe it was just that...
I let go of just the version of me they expected me to stay as.

Because sometimes what they call "letting yourself go" is actually picking yourself back up from the hands of others. Hands that have no business holding any part of you.

Ver todos os 1 152 comentários
brittany 😭🥰😍 so inspiring!!
thebirdspapaya @brittany ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️
7 de fevereiro • Ver tradução

74 585 gostos

Gostos: meganjaynecrabbe e 169 802 outras pessoas

makes sense   makes sense   makes sense

thebirdspapaya Is it weird or did we just grow up never seeing it? 💭
Ver todos os 1 526 comentários
thebirdspapaya @thetracymoore 🙌🏼🙌🏼
thebirdspapaya @misty_redd not lucky, not cursed, just different!
30 de março • Ver tradução

Gostos: meganjaynecrabbe e 169 802 outras pessoas
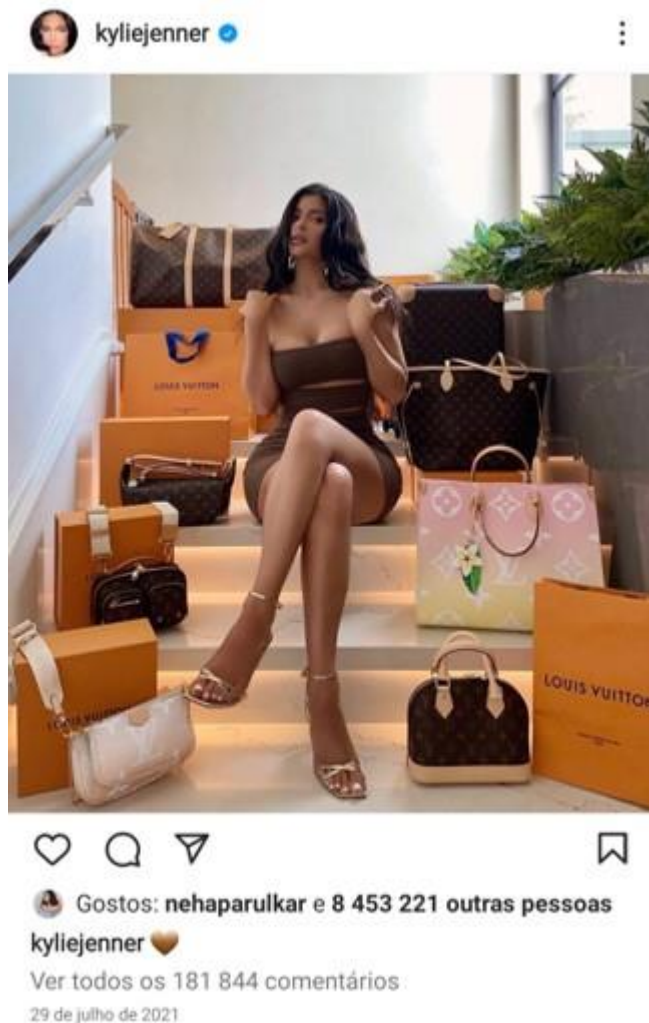
1. Follow
2. See their feed
3. See their stories
4. Read other people's comments on their posts
5. Like their posts
6. Comment on their posts
7. Identify friends on their posts
8. Share posts/stories on my Instagram

On a scale from 1 to 5, being 1 very unlikely and 5 very likely, please rate the probability of interacting with this post on Instagram

1. Like the post
2. Comment on the post
3. Read other people's comments on this post
4. Identify friends on this post
5. Share this post on my feed/story

On a scale from 1 to 5, being 1 very unlikely and 5 very likely, please rate the probability of interacting with the influencer on Instagram

"Kylie Kristen Jenner (born August 10, 1997) is an American media personality, socialite, model, and businesswoman. She starred in the E! reality television series Keeping Up with the Kardashians from 2007 to 2021 and is the founder and owner of cosmetic company Kylie

Cosmetics. She is currently the most-followed woman and the second most-followed person on Instagram." - Wikipedia, 2022

1. Follow
2. See their feed
3. See their stories
4. Read other people's comments on their posts
5. Like their posts
6. Comment on their posts
7. Identify friends on their posts
8. Share posts/stories on my Instagram

Section 4 – Information

Gender

- o   Female
- o   Male
- o   Other

Age

- o <18
- o 18 years to 24 years
- o 25 years to 34 years
- o 35 years to 44 years
- o >44

Race

- o White
- o Black or African American
- o Asian
- o Hispanic or Latino
- o Other

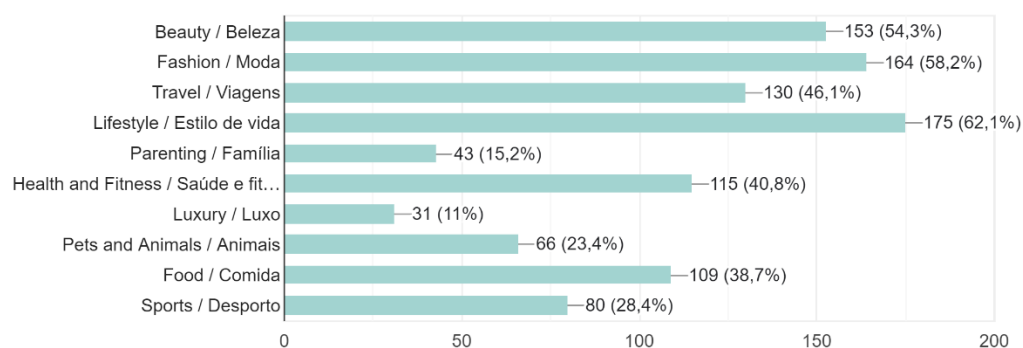BMI (BMI = weight % (height * height))

- o <18.5
- o 18.5 – 24.9
- o 25 – 29.9
- o 30 – 34.9
- o 35 – 39.9
- o >40
- o Rather not say

Annex B

If yes, what categories of influencers do you follow? / Se sim, quais categorias de influenciadores segue?
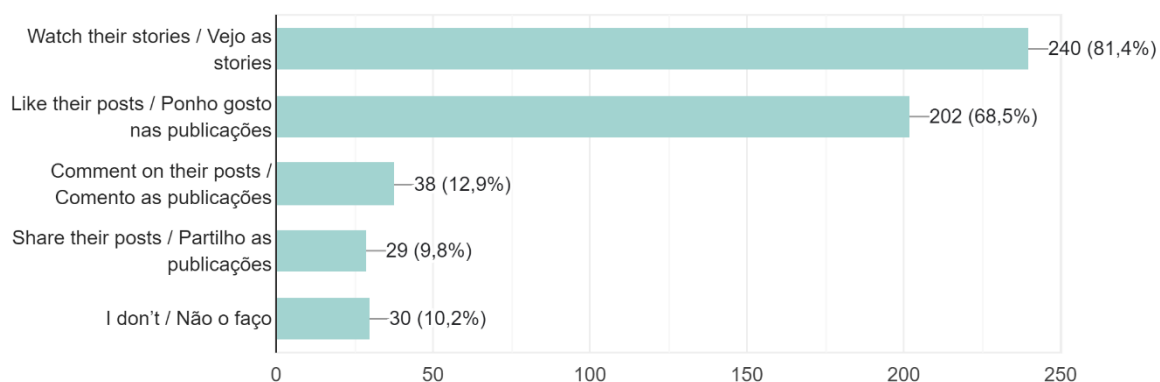
282 respostas

Annex C

How do you interact with the influencers that you follow? / Como interage com os influenciadores que segue?

295 respostas

Response	Value
Watch their stories / Vejo as stories	240 (81,4%)
Like their posts / Ponho gosto nas publicações	202 (68,5%)
Comment on their posts / Comento as publicações	38 (12,9%)
Share their posts / Partilho as publicações	29 (9,8%)
I don't / Não o faço	30 (10,2%)

Annex D

I would like to see influencers on Instagram be more open about the following qualities / Eu gostaria de ver os influenciadores no Instagram serem mais abertos sobre as seguintes qualidades

308 respostas

Quality	Value
Different body shapes / Diferen…	233 (75,6%)
Tummy rolls / Rolinhos ("pnéus…	172 (55,8%)
Stretch marks / Estrias	169 (54,9%)
Cellulite / Celulite	161 (52,3%)
Different skin conditions / Difer…	166 (53,9%)
Different skin colors / Diferente…	160 (51,9%)
Different ethnicities / Diferentes…	156 (50,6%)
Different heights / Diferentes al…	126 (40,9%)
Gender neutral / Género neutro	108 (35,1%)
Different disabilities / Diferente…	137 (44,5%)

50