

Digital Influencers and Congruent Content Generates Opportunities for Gifts: A Study on Parent's Purchase Decisions

Digital Influencer e conteúdo congruente gera oportunidade para presente: estudo sobre a decisão de compra dos pais

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Resumo

O presente artigo objetiva compreender melhor a relação entre a influência digital de usuários e a avaliação dos pares como variáveis favoráveis ao consumo de produtos. Dessa forma, foi estruturada uma pesquisa experimental com foco em analisar de que forma se dá a relação entre esses construtos. A partir de uma amostra não-probabilística por conveniência, usando a técnica *snowball*, participaram 89 pais de todos o Brasil nessa pesquisa. O estudo contribui com a literatura ao entender que os digital influencers podem até possuir um apelo positivo para a intenção de compra, mas ainda não se obteve correlação efetiva para a compra efetiva. Contudo, a validação desses usuários tem sido e será cada vez mais crucial para a tomada de decisão dos compradores.

Palavras-chave: marketing digital, digital influencer, decisão de compra, produtos infantis

Abstract

This article aims to better understand the relationship between the digital influence of users and peer evaluation as variables favorable to product consumption. Therefore, experimental research focused on analyzing how the relationship between these constructs occurs. From a non-probabilistic sample for convenience, 89 parents from all over Brazil participated in this research using the snowball technique. The study contributes to the literature by understanding that digital influencers may positively appeal to purchase intent but did not detect a compelling correlation for practical purchase. However, the validation of these users has been and will be increasingly crucial for buyers' decision-making processes.

Keywords: digital marketing, digital influencer, purchase decision, children's products

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Recebido em: 27/02/2022

Aprovado em: 05/10/2022

Introduction

Promotional marketing tools have emerged to bring information to consumers about products and services. The means used for this delivery went through a revolution with the advent of the Internet and social media. In these virtual spaces, users not only search for information, but produce their own content that is instantly available to other Internet users (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2017). It is through advances in information and communication technologies that consumers start adding value to brands, feeding virtual word-of-mouth about their consumption habits and preferences (Kannan, 2017; Lira, Silva Júnior & Costa, 2020).

Due to the speed of these advances, new trends are continually emerging and some produce very significant effects on the behavior of demand. Currently, we can mention, for example, the consolidation of the role of so-called digital influencers. According to Hwang and Zhang (2018), these figures stand out for their work in producing content exclusively for social networks. Market research points to the fact that consumers trust these professionals, and this trust generates conversion - 76% of Brazilian internet users have already made purchases of products announced by digital influencers, according to the QualiBest Institute (2019).

For 72% of generation Z respondents, digital influencers may be responsible for a large part of the purchase decisions they make daily. However, it is clear that studies that target digital influencers in the literature are inexpressive (Barreiro, Dinis & Breda, 2019).

On the other hand, the opinion of other consumers with similar profiles and needs remains a solid reference for individuals. It is common for these groups to be formed by people with specific needs that make them feel distant from the mass of consumers, as in the case of fathers and mothers (Rossman, 2007). The exchange of information between these peers generates some sort of support community, in which the participants trust and where they feel free to share their own pains (Niela-Vilén et al., 2014). According to Rossman (2007), this exchange generates a pattern of consumption among peers.

Thus, consumers are influenced by several sources and, during decision-making processes, use all of them. In the case of parents, they are formed by the wishes of their own children, by the influence of peers and by the recommendations of digital influencers. The latter, however, have very wide audiences and niches, which are not always compatible with the parents' interests and purchase objectives. Therefore, it may be more interesting for this audience that the speech of influencers is congruent with the product they are advertising.

For this reason, this study tests the congruence between influence and purchase decisions and contemplates relevant findings for several segments, bringing a reflection on the niches and whether a more specific action is necessary when using this digital influence strategy.

As contributions of this article, there is the need for frequent validation of respondents from other users and the indication of a tendency to search for this validation by digital means, especially with digital influencers. In addition, it is highlighted that, for brands that want to use influencers, the approximation between the content of the digital influencer must be congruent with the company's values. This last finding is in line with what Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan (2017) state.

The use of experimental research is necessary, therefore, in a context in which researchers seek a rigorous method and have the need to verify the relationships between variables (Lakatos & Marconi, 2017).

In view of the discussed variables, we understand the relevance of digital influencers on product consumption, as well as peer reviews, and the importance of aligning advertisers' discourses with the products being evaluated. Therefore, this experimental research aims to analyze how the relationship between the speech congruence variable and the influence of peer's variable takes place in the process of buying children's products.

Theoretical Reference

Purchase of children's products

The purchase of children's products is a process that suffers several influences, especially from the children themselves. The behavior of parents when shopping (Faria et al., 2017), the child's increasingly participative opinion in this process (Freitas-da-Costa, França Lima, & Santos, 2012), the media (Souza, 2018) and even the packaging (Tiwasing & Sahachaisaeree, 2012) can make up the necessary criteria for the effective acquisition of a children's product.

In Brazil, the segment has strong expressiveness, guaranteeing a higher sales volume than that which occurs on holidays such as Valentine's Day or Mother's Day, with a turnover of R \$ 1.66 billion in digital commerce in 2016 (EBIT, 2016). It is essential, therefore, to realize how relevant this market is and how much parents and guardians of children are influenced in the face of digital marketing (Crispim, 2018).

Children who are now natives of this digital environment end up, in turn, being influenced by the media speeches present on social networking sites such as YouTube and Instagram. Thus, it is common for them to shape their desires and preferences according to the discourses that these influencers bring in their videos and/or other content that the child audience consumes (Leão, Pressler, & Macedo, 2016).

Involvement in purchase decisions

The expressive growth in the use of the Internet and the infinity of data available on the global web made it the greatest support channel during decision-making processes (Garcia et al., 2016). Most consumers search for information and need it to purchase the products they want. Other aspects such as price, emotional appeal and

availability also influence the consumer's journey, as well as involvement in purchase decisions (Campos, Dietrich, & Loureiro, 2017).

The audience on platforms such as YouTube searches, above all, for tutorials and information, which confirms the increasing number of channels and profiles in this media aimed at creating specialized content (Correia, 2016). In a survey conducted by Santos (2019), 88.7% of respondents found in digital influencers the necessary notions to make their purchases, from basic products to luxury items.

Speech Congruence

Currently, users of social networks can be producers of free and voluntary content on any subject they want to expose. For Shirky (2011), when we buy equipment that makes it possible to consume digital content, we also buy a machine to produce it. Thus, the author ends up elucidating the power that users of these technologies have when they also become protagonists and providers of information, a role that was previously only played by major media channels.

The voluntary aspect, that is, the possibility of being accessed according to the user's will, is what makes social media content so attractive. In general, the content is available to be consumed where, when how and if consumers so desire. In addition, content becomes the new ad, passing on relevant information to the consumer to help them achieve their purposes (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2017).

Digital influencers are individuals who excel in producing content for digital social networks and, because of their popularity, become an authority in their respective niches (Hwang & Zhang, 2018). Some, however, have a very comprehensive work and their audience is made up of a very heterogeneous demand. There are still cases of influencers who start their profiles with a focus on a certain subject, but with the growth of their channels they start to meet new demands, often according to the interaction of their followers.

Many companies have seen the reach of these professionals on social media as an opportunity to promote themselves, making paid partnerships and even electing some of them as brand ambassadors. The use of digital influencers enables brands to connect with consumers who are impacted by influencers' content (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019).

Therefore, it is understood that there is a high involvement of the opinion of these professionals in purchase decisions of their followers. And, because of that, brands have invested in advertising through these channels. However, there is still no clarity as to the influence role that the congruence of the influencers' discourse with the product being advertised has on purchase decisions. In this context, the following hypothesis is formulated:

- H1 A high congruence of the digital influencer's discourse with the advertised product, compared to a low congruence, positively affects the purchase of children's products.

Peer influence

When parents understand the complexity of the task of educating and raising children, they look to other parents for information and emotional support to deal with this challenge (Rossman, 2007). With the consolidation of social media as an information channel, these spaces became important online support platforms. This provides for the welcoming of these users, who need the knowledge of their peers and are also available to collaborate in these groups, generating a network for the exchange of experiences (Niela-Vilén et al., 2014).

Parents use these digital platforms and interact with their peers, who help them with information and induce them to certain consumption patterns (Rossman, 2007). When it comes to family consumption habits, studies generally bring not only the relevance of marketing for decision making, but also aspects such as the influence of other parents (Niela-Vilén et al., 2014), lifestyles, patterns of consumption (LeCroy et al., 2019; Vázquez et al., 2019) and price (Vieira & Matos, 2012). However, a gap was found regarding the influence of so-called digital influencers on the intention of parents to buy children's products, which is the theme proposed by this article. In view of this, the second hypothesis is formulated, namely:

- H₂ The presence of peer influence compared to the absence of influence positively affects the purchase of children's products.

Influence of peers and professionals on social media

Despite studies pointing to children more and more as influencers in the family buying process (Freitas-da-Costa, França Lima, & Santos, 2012), it is undeniable that there are other factors that stand out in the choice of a certain product. Since children already actively participate in the choice of their cell phone and use it for fun and communication (Claro, Menconi & Loreto, 2012), the question arises on how parents seek information to know what is best for their children.

The behavior of online shopping has grown in recent years, but Internet users remain wary of the recommendations of companies and, therefore, turn to their peers in search for organic and reliable evaluations (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2017). Companies are already beginning to realize the effects of this change in logic and starting to reach users in the multiple channels they occupy (Tan et al., 2014).

The behavior of peers influences the purchasing process of consumers, who tend to align their expectations with that of colleagues and the like. This timeless phenomenon becomes more visible with the ease of interaction between people and the possibility of exchanging experiences between subjects (Lee et al., 2011). Virtual communities have been formed to raise awareness about certain brands and discuss consumer practices related to their daily lives (Lee et al., 2006). Consumers, therefore, seek these virtual spaces to validate their decisions and information with other users (Oliveira et al., 2020).

Through this digital atmosphere, searches for information appear on YouTube channels, Instagram profiles and digital influencers, who are not so close to consumers, but who, in general, have more expertise on the subject they are looking for (González-Romo, García-Medina, & Macdonald, 2016). It is already known that there is indeed a positive interaction between persuasion from bloggers and the intention to purchase the advertised products, which are more desired once they are exposed by digital celebrities (Nunes et al., 2018). Thus, based on the analyzed theoretical arguments, some hypotheses are formulated:

- H3a Individuals persuaded by an advertising message containing a congruent youtuber and with peer influence tend to buy more children's products than individuals persuaded by an advertising message containing a congruent youtuber and without peer influence.
- H3b Individuals persuaded by an advertising message containing a congruent youtuber and with peer influence tend to buy more children's products than individuals persuaded by an advertising message containing an incongruent youtuber and with peer influence.
- H3c Individuals persuaded by an advertising message containing a congruent youtuber and with peer influence tend to buy more children's products than individuals persuaded by an advertising message containing an incongruent youtuber and without peer influence.

Control Variables

To measure and control the maximum influences on the variables in question, two control variables are used. The purpose of verifying the influence of this type of variable is to neutralize the interference in the analysis of the relationships between dependent and independent variables. The importance of studying these concepts is relevant, but it is known that realization does not exempt or exhaust the object of research from other external influences (Lakatos & Marconi, 2017). Therefore, the control variables used are: use of the internet and opinion search.

Using the internet, we seek to understand whether the frequency of social media access and digital content have a considerable influence on the responses of the research participants. Using the scale validated by Mayaute and Blas (2014) of this construct, such authors point out some important aspects, for example, the interferences in the routines and social relationships of individuals who spend a lot of time connected. The voluntary aspect and the possibility of being accessed according to the user's will is what makes social media content so attractive. The content is available to be consumed where, when how and if consumers so desire (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2017).

It is also known that consumers seek opinions to make decisions about the product they intend to buy. Thus, with the analysis of the control variable opinion search, it is verified to what extent the openness to persuasion of others can intervene in the interviewees' ability to choose. Using the Flynn, Goldsmith and Eastman (1996)

scale, we expect to analyze the effects of information research, even if the literature on opinion seeking is less explored than that of opinion leadership.

Research Method

The present study has a quantitative bias and is based on the experimental approach, as it seeks to understand the relationships between the analyzed variables through their direct manipulation in an experimental research (Cozby, 2003).

Experimental research has been widely used in studies on consumer behavior, and this is reflected in the ability to repeat the experiment and obtain, under the same conditions, the same results (Costa Hernandez, Basso, & Brandão, 2014). The groups that participated in the study were exposed to 4 different scenarios and were analyzed from the interaction with only 1 of the presented scenarios, which characterizes a between-subjects procedure.

Presentation of variables

In experiments there are some types of variables, mainly those of control, dependent and independent. Dependent variables refer to the phenomena that need to be discovered and what relationship they establish with the independent variable, usually manipulated to obtain the degree of influence it offers in the relationship established in the study (Lakatos & Marconi, 2017). Therefore, the variables that are interpreted in this research are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Research variables

| Type of variable | Research variable |
|-----------------------|---|
| Independent variables | - Youtuber's congruence - Peer influence (moderator) |
| Dependent variables | - Purchase intention - Involvement in purchase decisions |
| Control variables | - Use of the internet - Opinion search |

Source: prepared by the authors (2019).

To measure the control, dependent and independent variables, the following scales are used (see Table 2). In the case of independent variables, the authors themselves built an item for each one. It is known that unique items can present problems of validity. However, for the operationalization of this study, this format is necessary in view of the absence of previous scales. In any case, to minimize the validation problems, the items were created guaranteeing the conceptual consistency of the constructs.

Regarding the dependent variables, Mittal (1989) is used to analyze the involvement in purchase decisions, and, for the purchase intention, the scale of Toni and Mazzon (2013). With the control variables, the scales of Flynn, Goldsmith and Eastman (1996) are used for opinion search and Mayaute and Blas (2014) for use of the internet. Table 2 shows the detailed information.

Table 2
Composition of the collection instrument

| Construct | Items (dimensions and variables) | Code |
|--|---|--|
| Opinion search (OS) (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996) | When I think of buying a children's product, I ask other people for advice. I don't like talking to other people before buying a children's product. I rarely ask other people what children's product to buy. I like to have opinions from other people before buying a children's product. I feel more comfortable buying a children's product when I get other people's opinions. When choosing a children's product, other people's opinions are not important to me. | OS01 OS02 OS03 OS04 OS05 OS06 |
| Use of the internet (UI) (Mayaute & Blas, 2014) | I feel a great need to stay connected on social networks. I need more and more time to solve my problems related to social networks. The time I used to spend connected to social media is no longer satisfying, I need more. As soon as I wake up, I'm already connecting to social networks. I don't know what to do when I'm disconnected from social networks. I get in a bad mood if I can't connect to social networks. I feel anxious when I can't connect to social networks. Logging in and using social media gives me relief, it relaxes me. When I enter social media, I lose track of time. Generally, I spend more time on social media than I originally planned (intended). I think about what may be happening on social networks. I must control my activity of connecting to social networks. I can disconnect from social media for several days. I can't control my prolonged and intense use of social media. Even when I do other activities, I still think about what happens on social networks. I invest (spend) a lot of time daily connecting and disconnecting from social networks. I stay connected to social networks for a long time. I am aware of the notifications (messages, photos, etc.) that are sent to me on social networks to my cell phone or my computer. I stop taking care of my friends or family for being connected to social networks. I neglect my tasks and studies for being connected to social networks. Even when I'm in class, I connect to social networks without being seen. My partner (wife, girlfriend, husband, boyfriend), friends, or family members, have argued with me for my dedication and the time I spend on social media. When I'm in class without connecting to social media, I feel bored. I believe that the intensity and frequency with which I enter and use social networks is a problem. | UI01 UI02 UI03 UI04 UI05 UI06 UI07 UI08 UI09 UI10 UI11 UI12 UI13 UI14 UI15 UI16 UI17 UI18 UI19 UI20 UI21 UI22 UI23 UI24 |
| Involvement in the Purchase Decision (IPD) (Mittal, 1989) | When choosing between various types and brands of this product available on the market, you would say: Do you think that the various types and brands of this product available on the market are all very similar or are they all very different? How important would it be for you to make the right choice of this product? When making your selection of this product, would you be concerned with the outcome of your choice? | IPD01 IPD02 IPD03 IPD04 |
| Purchase Intention (PI) (Toni & Mazzon, 2013) | There is a high probability that I will buy this product. I would recommend this product to my friends or relatives. This product would be a good buy. | PI01 PI02 PI03 |
| Peer Influence (PINF) Our own authorship (2020) | On the scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree), position yourself according to the following statement: It is possible to state that the presented message is issued by parents. | PINF01 |
| Product Congruence (PC) Our own authorship (2020) | On a scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree), how much does the content of this youtuber correspond to the presented product? | PC01 |

Source: prepared by the authors.

Sample selection

The sample was selected in a non-probabilistic way for convenience, through the snowball technique (Cozby & Bates, 2012), being disseminated in digital media, such as Facebook and WhatsApp groups. The participants are parents distributed

throughout Brazil, and the choice for this approach was due to the accessibility of information and research subjects in a digital way.

The sample size required for the experiment was obtained using the G * Power software, which allows calculating the required size of the population to be studied. Thus, a minimum total of 24 respondents per treatment group or 96 respondents was

Data Collection

In this research, the interviewees were from a non-probabilistic sample and, being selected through the snowball technique, they are formed by people invited through social media to participate in the experiment. With Qualtrics software, each respondent received a different version of the experiment, according to the quadrant assigned to them. Therefore, each one responded to a different version among the 4 proposed by the experimental design. The final data collection was carried out between December 4, 2019, and December 12, 2019.

It is worth noting that, for the manipulation to be performed, two youtubers were used: one that was believed to be less congruent with children's products (Whindersson Nunes); and another with a closer relationship with that audience (Maisa Silva). In addition, manipulation included a couple with children and a couple without children to validate the prospect of peer influence.

A pre-test was carried out on November 13, 2019, to November 17, 2019, using the Google Forms tool and with 30 respondents, with the objective of fine-tuning the information collection instrument, which created for researchers the need for changes in scenarios. It was necessary, therefore, to insert a new digital influencer and a new product to obtain the expected results and ensure that the manipulation was being observed in the experiment.

With the second pre-test done with 30 new respondents, on November 26, 2019, to November 30, 2019, confirming the manipulation, the research software called Qualtrics was used as a platform for data collection and the entire research was structured in it. Through this online questionnaire instrument, it was possible to deliver a different type of scenario to each user at random, ensuring that the experiment was reliable as proposed by the explicit methodological procedures.

Data analysis

For data analysis, univariate and multivariate statistics were used by means of the statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics. The dimensions were investigated using descriptive statistics, such as means (M), frequencies and standard deviations (SD). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to infer the reliability of the scale items, adopting the index starting at 0.7 (Hair Jr. et al., 2009). Regarding the checking of manipulations, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to understand the discrepancies between the means.

Finally, to understand the relationships between the hypotheses, the two-way ANOVA technique was used, through which the moderating role of the treatment variables present in the study was analyzed. In the case of control variables, ANCOVA was used to understand the peculiarities of the control variables.

Empirical Research

The present study addresses the effects of youtuber's (digital influencers) discourse congruence and peer influence (in this case, other parents) on the purchase of children's products by interviewed parents. Given the above, in the next sections, the design and procedures applied in this research will be commented, as well as the results and a discussion regarding the obtained information.

Method

Design and procedures. To carry out this study, an experimental factorial design (2x2), between subjects (Discourse congruence: with congruence vs. without congruence) x2 (Peer influence: with influence vs. without influence) was elaborated. Speech congruence was manipulated by means of two images present during collections. The first image shows the influencer Whindersson Nunes (without congruence) and the second the artist Maisa Silva (with congruence). Both stimuli were validated through two pre-tests with 60 participations.

Initially, two filter questions were designed to limit participation in the research (1) to fathers and mothers and (2) those who knew the digital influencers included in the manipulation. Therefore, the questions "Do you have children?" and "Do you know this YouTube?" composed the preliminary questions that respondents needed to answer.

To guarantee the manipulation of discourse congruence, the interviewees answered a question, assessed using a seven-point Likert scale, namely: "On the scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree), how much is the content of this YouTube congruent (correspondent) with the presented products?", with answer 1 for 'without congruence' and 7 for 'with congruence'. Next, the following question was asked, regarding peer influence: "On the scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree), position yourself according to the following statement: It is possible to state that the presented message is issued by parents", where 1 corresponds to 'without influence' and 7 to 'with influence'.

In the dependent variables Purchase Intention and Involvement in the Purchase Decision, scales were used to measure the impact of the independent variables in the performed manipulation, also using the seven-point Likert scale to measure the interference: answer 1 stands for 'I totally disagree' and 7 for 'I totally agree'.

Then, an attention question was inserted in the questionnaire to test the participants' attention when reading the questions and answering the alternatives. The question asked for an action to be taken, as noted below: "We would like to know what food you find most delicious. In fact, we are wondering if participants are following instructions correctly. To show that you are following the instructions, choose the 'other' option from the list below and type Lasagna". As alternatives, the questionnaire had 'Macarronada', 'Feijoada', 'Salads' and 'Other. Which?'. Through this attention check, 5 questionnaires were invalidated from the total and, therefore, excluded from the final sample.

Questions were used for the control variables to identify whether other aspects inherent to manipulation could be influenced or neglected by the researchers.

Therefore, it was necessary to question the use of the Internet and the opinion search variables. In the first scale, some habits regarding the use of the internet were asked on a scale of 1 (Never) to 4 (Always). For the opinion search, the seven-point Likert scale was applied, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Finally, to obtain some information about the demographic profile of the participants, it was asked about gender, age, level of education, region of Brazil where they live, approximate value of family's average monthly income and how many people lived with them.

Results

Participants. A sample of 101 people participated in the experimental research, most of them residing in the Northeast region of Brazil (97.8%). Of this total, 12 participants were eliminated through the attention test, resulting in 89 participating parents. Regarding their demographic profile, the following data provides some information about the studied sample: 49.4% are male and 50.6% are female; the average age is 36.58 years old ($SD = 9.54$); the average monthly income is R\$ 12,280.13 ($SD = 52975.60$); and 41.6% of the participants have postgraduate degrees (specialization, MBA, master's or doctorate).

Manipulation check. Regarding speech congruence, manipulation was checked by asking the question "On the scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree), how much the content of this YouTube is congruent (correspondent) with the presented product", which obtained the following averages: $M_{\text{with congruence}} = 4.51$, $SD = 2.242$; $M_{\text{without congruence}} = 3.45$, $SD = 2.017$, $t(87) = 2.335$, $p < 0.05$. The results thus present a congruence between the stimuli presented to the interviewees, confirming the choice of Maisa Silva as congruent and Whindersson Nunes as incongruent.

Regarding the moderating independent variable, Peer Influence, manipulation through the question "On the scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree), position yourself according to the following statement: It is possible to state that the presented message is issued by parents" obtained the following results: $M_{\text{with influence}} = 4.02$, $SD = 2.360$; $M_{\text{without influence}} = 2.32$, $SD = 1.814$, $t(82.451) = 3.824$, $p < 0.01$. The data, therefore, demonstrate that the manipulation of the variable was successful.

Hypothesis testing. To test the hypotheses, the two-way ANOVA test was used, along with Cronbach's Alpha to ensure the reliability of the scales of the following variables: Purchase intention ($\alpha = 0.923$, with 3 items); Involvement in Purchase Decisions ($\alpha = 0.707$, with 4 items); Use of the internet ($\alpha = 0.940$, with 24 items); and Opinion Search ($\alpha = 0.730$, with 6 items). In the latter, it was necessary to invert items OS02, OS03 and OS04 to obtain such values.

In the case of the first dependent variable, Purchase Intention, the relationship between it and the independent variables, YouTube congruence and parental influence, are described in Table 3 below.

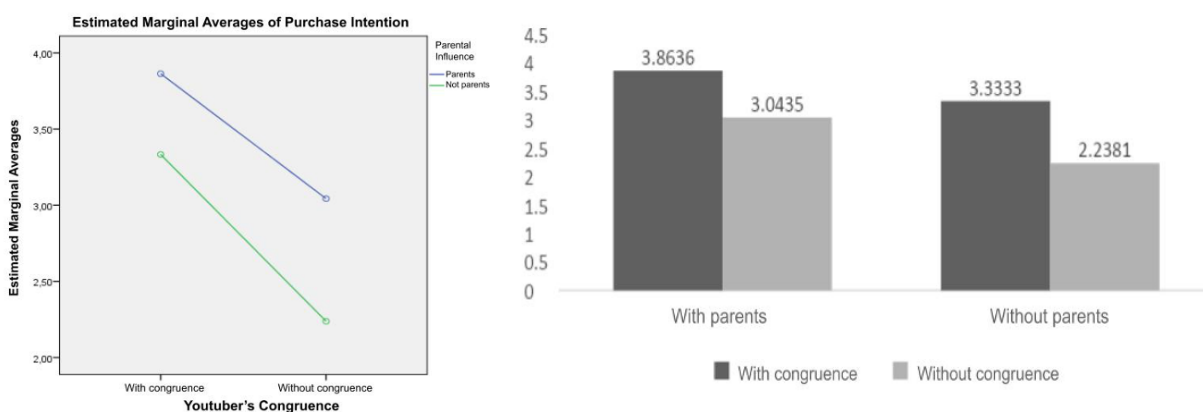
Table 3
Descriptive statistics

| Dependent variable: purchase intention | | | | |
|--|--------------------|-------|--------------------|----|
| Youtuber's congruence | Parental influence | Mean | Standard Deviation | N |
| With congruence | With Parents | 3,863 | 1,923 | 22 |
| | Without Parents | 3,333 | 1,984 | 23 |
| | Total | 3,592 | 1,951 | 45 |
| Without congruence | With Parents | 3,043 | 1,793 | 23 |
| | Without Parents | 2,238 | 1,135 | 21 |
| | Total | 2,659 | 1,552 | 44 |
| Total | With Parents | 3,444 | 1,882 | 45 |
| | Without Parents | 2,810 | 1,709 | 44 |
| | Total | 3,131 | 1,817 | 89 |

Source: Research data

Based on the above, the results indicate that the dependent variable Purchase Intention has a direct effect on the independent variable Youtuber's Congruence ($F(1,85) = 6.639, p > 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.072$), but there is no influence on the moderating independent variable Peer Influence, not even providing interaction between the independent variables. In addition, the relationship between the independent variables, as previously stated, does not show any significant effect ($F(1) = 0.137, p > 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.002$), which can be better understood through Figure 1.

Figure 1
Interaction between independent variables with Purchase Intention



Source: Research data.

The obtained results invalidate hypothesis H₁, whose statement is "A high congruence of the digital influencer with the advertised product compared to a low congruence of the digital influencer positively affects the purchase of children's products". That is observed in the analyzed graphs, in which there is no correlation between the independent variables. It is worth noting, however, that the Purchase Intention has a direct effect from youtuber's congruence but is not influenced by the parents. Therefore, another hypothesis also invalidated is H₂: "The presence of peer influence compared to the absence of influence positively affects the purchase of children's products".

When analyzing the other dependent variable, using the two-way ANOVA, some considerations could be obtained. Involvement in Purchase Decisions ($\alpha = 0.707$, with 4 items) generates the data that can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics

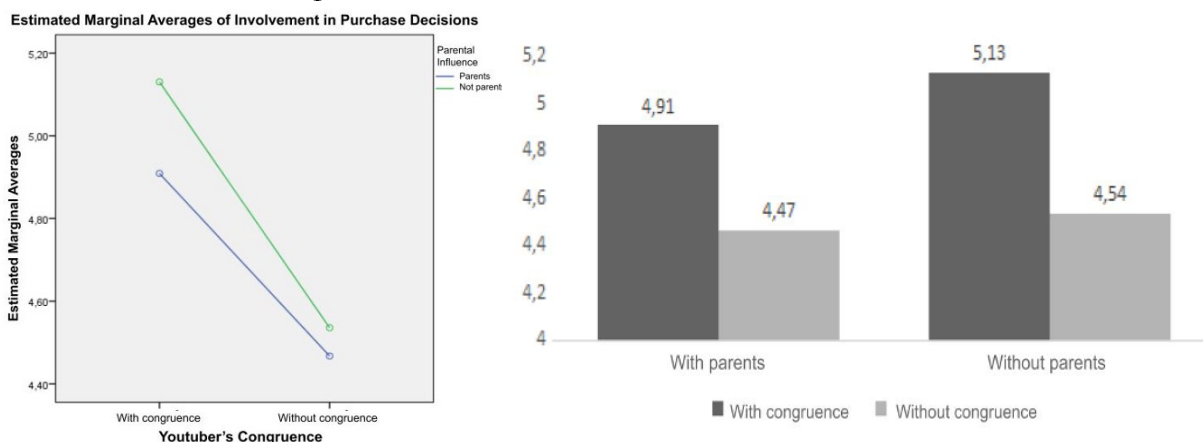
| Dependent variable: Involvement in Purchase Decisions | | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------|--------------------|----|
| Youtuber's congruence | Parental influence | Mean | Standard Deviation | N |
| With congruence | With Parents | 4,909 | 1,514 | 22 |
| | Without Parents | 5,130 | 1,313 | 23 |
| | Total | 5,022 | 1,403 | 45 |
| Without congruence | With Parents | 4,467 | 1,588 | 23 |
| | Without Parents | 4,535 | 1,243 | 21 |
| | Total | 4,500 | 1,418 | 44 |
| Total | With Parents | 4,683 | 1,551 | 45 |
| | Without Parents | 4,846 | 1,300 | 44 |
| | Total | 4,764 | 1,427 | 89 |

Source: Research data

The results demonstrate that there is no main effect of any independent variable or interaction between them ($F(1,85) = 2.938, p > 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.033$). It is noticed that the congruence of the youtuber's discourse and peer influence have little effect on the Involvement in Purchase Decisions, which will be more explicit in the graph shown below, represented in Figure 2.

Thus, the findings reject the hypothesis "H3. A: Individuals persuaded by an advertising message containing congruent youtuber and with peer influence tend to buy more children's products than individuals persuaded by an advertising message containing congruent youtuber and without peer influence", "H3. B: Individuals persuaded by an advertising message containing congruent youtuber and peer influence tend to buy more children's products than individuals persuaded by an advertising message containing incongruent youtuber and peer influence" and "H3. C: Individuals persuaded by an advertising message containing congruent youtuber and peer influence tend to buy more children's products than individuals persuaded by an advertising message containing incongruent youtuber and without peer influence".

Figure 2
Interaction between independent variables with Involvement in Purchase Decisions



Source: Research Data.

Additional testing. To test the control variables, ANCOVA was used. Regarding the control variable use of the Internet ($F(1,84) = 2.393, p > 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.028$), there is no main effect on the others, and there is no change in previous results. In the analysis of Opinion Search ($F(1,84) = 6.705, p > 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.74$), this control variable has a main effect on the dependent variable Purchase Intention but does not change the previous results.

Discussion of Results

The experimental research proposed by this article aims at identifying whether there is a relationship between Youtuber's Discourse Congruence and Peer Influence on the Purchase Intention of children's products and on the Involvement in Purchase Decisions. What is observed is the lack of interaction between the variables, different from what was expected. The independent variable Discourse Congruence still has a main effect on Purchase Intention, which can be explained by the increasing search for opinion in spaces such as social networking sites.

With all the hypotheses denied, the present study brings as a contribution the perspective that youtubers (digital influencers) in fact have a positive appeal for the purchase of products (Nunes et. Al, 2018) and that their speech, when aligned with the proposals of a brand, enhances the purchase intention of the products (Correia, 2016), but there is still no correlation with the actual purchase.

The importance of congruence between the influencer's content and the purpose of the brand can be explained by the source's expertise. Some studies, like Kang & Nankung (2019), point out that endorsers who specialize in the products they advertise and endorse tend to be more reliable and, therefore, more persuasive regarding consumer behavior. In this case, a congruent speech could demonstrate greater specialization and persuasive strength.

As this same phenomenon does not affect the involvement in the purchase, it is possible that speech congruence is not enough to captivate consumers in the process that involves decision making. The reason for this result may lie in the opinion leadership of digital influencers (Avelino, Silva & Leal, 2020).

Since followers of digital influencers often form opinions based on the interests of these endorsers, the purchase decision can be directly affected without necessarily getting consumers involved in the pre-decision steps. This result contributes to studies of influencers' endorsement by indicating that the speech of these individuals, once coherent with the endorsed brand, is relevant, going against the endorsement of multiple products (Singh & Banerjee, 2018).

The results also point out that the endorser-product congruence seems more imposing on the purchase decision than the opinion of similar, which in this study is represented by other parents. This is in line with the current consumption trend, strongly affected by the content generated by other users (Silva, Mendes-Filho & Corrêa, 2017). For some time, decisions have been based on groups and individuals that the consumer is close to. However, this has passed on to groups and individuals who share evaluations and experiences after using the products, just as digital influencers do.

In general, the findings of the studies suggest an increasingly digital future, in which the search for the opinion of influencers and content generated by other users will influence the decision to buy a product or not. Less and less, groups and individuals with whom there is similarity will have a persuasive voice on the consumption decision. It will be in the digital environment, mediated by influencers, that the individuals will make their choice.

Conclusion

This research aims at analyzing the effect of the congruence of the youtuber discourse and the influence of peers on the purchase intention and involvement in parents' purchase decisions. In all, the 89 research participants brought relevant information to the scenario of buying children's products, not reacting as much to stimuli as the presence of parents recommending toys as they did in the case of digital influencers present in manipulations.

Thus, the research findings highlight the positive effect that influencers have on the purchase decision and bring new perspectives. First, the importance of having congruence between the speech, the behaviors and the content produced by influencers and the product to be announced. This fact calls attention to the need for more specific niches among public figures on the internet.

Furthermore, it is observed that the opinion of influencers has become more relevant than the recommendations of similar consumers. This observation breaks paradigms of traditional marketing studies, which have always considered word-of-mouth as the main factor when making decisions.

In terms of managerial implications, the article brings some reflections for brands that wish to make associations with digital influencers. In a context in which consumers are increasingly less willing to receive advertisements, the content created by these influence profiles can bring the brand closer to its stakeholders, if they are congruent with the company's values and the content developed by the digital influencer (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2017).

It is therefore suggested that marketers format advertising campaigns by selecting endorsers based on the themes with which they have an affinity. Therefore, it must adopt a segmentation strategy in the endorsement. This niche trend seems to go against the advertisement of multiple products, suggesting that, for the type of product studied here, specialization and coherence is more important than broadness.

As a limitation, it is observed that the sample was lower than expected by the authors. It is understood that the filter questions were the main limiting factors of a larger scope for the research, because, to participate, the respondent needed to be a father or mother and to know the youtubers in question.

Therefore, a longer research time is recommended to collect as much data as possible. In addition, to expand the work's relevance, the actual purchasing could be worked on in a future study to verify whether there is a gap between the intention and the implementation of the action of purchasing. Finally, it is recommended to adopt qualitative research to deeply understand peer indifference in purchase decisions, refusing the theoretical assumptions.

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