


**PERCEPTION OF THE AUTHENTICITY OF DIGITAL INFLUENCERS IN THE  
PROMOTION OF HAIR PRODUCTS**

**PERCEPCIÓN SOBRE LA AUTENTICIDAD DE LOS INFLUENCERS DIGITALES  
EN LA PROMOCIÓN DE PRODUCTOS CAPILARES**

**PERCEPÇÃO DA AUTENTICIDADE DE INFLUENCIADORES DIGITAIS NA  
PROMOÇÃO DE PRODUTOS CAPILARES**

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**ABSTRACT**

In a world saturated with promotions and recommendations, consumers increasingly seek a genuine connection with the influencers they follow. This need for authenticity reflects a shift in social expectations regarding the relationship with the brands and products they consume. For consumers, influencer recommendations can be perceived as an extension of their lifestyle and values, generating a need for deeper connection. For influencers, authenticity becomes a key asset, as their credibility depends on consistency and sincerity with the products they promote. Brands, in turn, must understand how influencers' authenticity impacts purchasing decisions, which is essential for designing effective marketing strategies. This study explores how Brazilian consumers perceive the authenticity of digital influencers in hair product promotion. To facilitate this research, a quantitative questionnaire was administered to a group of participants. A total of 157 valid responses were collected and subjected to descriptive statistical analysis. The results suggest that consumers tend to value influencers whose image and recommendations align with their values and lifestyle. Perceived authenticity may increase when influencers demonstrate genuine product use. However, promoting products from different brands or a lack of consistency between the influencer and the product could diminish this perception.

**Keywords:** Digital Influencers. Authenticity. Hair Products. Brazilian Consumer Perception. Transparency.

**RESUMEN**

En un mundo saturado de promociones y recomendaciones, los consumidores buscan cada vez más una conexión genuina con los influencers que siguen. Esta necesidad de autenticidad refleja un cambio en las expectativas sociales respecto a la relación con las marcas y los productos que consumen. Para los consumidores, las recomendaciones de los influencers pueden ser percibidas como una extensión de su estilo de vida y valores, lo que genera una necesidad de conexión más profunda. Para los influencers, la autenticidad se convierte en un activo clave, ya que su credibilidad depende de la coherencia y sinceridad con los productos que promocionan. Por su parte, las marcas deben comprender cómo la autenticidad de los influencers impacta en las decisiones de compra, lo que resulta esencial

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para diseñar estrategias de marketing efectivas. Este estudio explora cómo los consumidores brasileños perciben la autenticidad de los influencers digitales en la promoción de productos capilares. Para viabilizar esta investigación, se aplicó un cuestionario de naturaleza cuantitativa a un grupo de participantes. Se recolectaron 157 respuestas válidas, las cuales fueron sometidas a un análisis estadístico descriptivo. Los resultados sugieren que los consumidores tienden a valorar más a los influencers cuya imagen y recomendaciones se alinean con sus valores y estilo de vida. La autenticidad percibida podría aumentar cuando los influencers muestran un uso genuino de los productos. Sin embargo, la promoción de productos de diversas marcas o la falta de coherencia entre el influencer y el producto podría disminuir esta percepción.

**Palabras clave:** Influencers Digitales. Autenticidad. Productos Capilares. Percepción del Consumidor Brasileño. Transparencia.

## RESUMO

Em um mundo saturado de promoções e recomendações, os consumidores buscam cada vez mais uma conexão genuína com os influenciadores que seguem. Essa necessidade de autenticidade reflete uma mudança nas expectativas sociais em relação ao relacionamento com as marcas e produtos que consomem. Para os consumidores, as recomendações de influenciadores podem ser percebidas como uma extensão de seu estilo de vida e valores, gerando uma necessidade de conexão mais profunda. Para os influenciadores, a autenticidade se torna um ativo fundamental, pois sua credibilidade depende da consistência e sinceridade com os produtos que promovem. As marcas, por sua vez, devem entender como a autenticidade dos influenciadores impacta as decisões de compra, o que é essencial para o desenvolvimento de estratégias de marketing eficazes. Este estudo explora como os consumidores brasileiros percebem a autenticidade dos influenciadores digitais na promoção de produtos para cabelo. Para facilitar esta pesquisa, um questionário quantitativo foi aplicado a um grupo de participantes. Um total de 157 respostas válidas foram coletadas e submetidas à análise estatística descritiva. Os resultados sugerem que os consumidores tendem a valorizar influenciadores cuja imagem e recomendações se alinham com seus valores e estilo de vida. A autenticidade percebida pode aumentar quando os influenciadores demonstram uso genuíno do produto. No entanto, promover produtos de marcas diferentes ou a falta de consistência entre o influenciador e o produto pode diminuir essa percepção.

**Palavras-chave:** Influenciadores Digitais. Autenticidade. Produtos para Cabelo. Percepção do Consumidor Brasileiro. Transparência.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The interaction between people and brands is in a constant process of evolution, both in the modes of communication and in the messages that are transmitted. Technological advances in the media are crucial to facilitate this transformation, which has led to the coining of a term for this phenomenon: "midiamorphosis" (Rocha, 2020). In this context, social networks emerge as the most contemporary form of communication, where individuals, companies, and platforms connect through relevant and engaging content (Kiso, 2020). Social media removes geographic and demographic barriers, promoting social inclusion and a sense of belonging. They foster meaningful connections and more horizontal relationships, which influences consumers' purchasing decisions, which are based on social opinions and collective knowledge (Kotler et al., 2017).

Understanding social dynamics allows businesses to influence consumer decisions through subtle suggestions and social proof. Influencers, with their large following, can guide public opinion and consumer behavior through recommendations that act as social validation. This relationship highlights the connection between trust, social proof, and the influence of perceived authority (Berger, 2017). Therefore, the way in which influencers persuade their audience becomes a clear example of how beliefs and behaviors can be transformed, underlining the importance of credibility and relevance in the message (Shimp & Andrews, 2013). In this sense, a consumer who trusts an influencer is more likely to follow their suggestions and maintain a positive attitude towards the product, which, in turn, increases their purchase intention (Chetioui et al., 2020).

Kotler et al. (2019) emphasize that effective communication in marketing is not limited to the transmission of information; it is crucial to understand how the communicator and the audience interact. In this sense, the authenticity and credibility of digital influencers are essential to attract audiences, raising questions about the meaning of being authentic and how consumers perceive representations in the digital environment (Kotler et al., 2017). The Institute of Market Studies [ISEM]; IC Media; Newlink (2021) reinforces

that influencers need to be transparent in their collaborations with brands, which helps build trust. In addition, consumers value clarity on whether an influencer is compensated for promoting products; This transparency is crucial for discerning between genuine reviews and paid promotions.

Han (2015) points out that the search for authenticity can lead to a communicative superficiality, where the presentation of images predominates over the depth of human

experiences. This invites us to reflect on how these dynamics impact consumer behavior, especially in the choice of products. According to Kotler et al. (2019), in the purchase evaluation stage, consumers tend to classify brands and form purchase intentions. Although they usually opt for their preferred brands, the opinions of others can influence their decisions.

According to the Brazilian Association of the Personal Hygiene, Perfumery and Cosmetics Industry [ABIHPEC] (2022), Brazil ranks second worldwide in product launches in the personal hygiene, perfumery and cosmetics sector, and ranks fourth in consumption of beauty products. A report by McKinsey (2023), estimates that by 2027, the revenues of this sector in the global market will reach a projected annual growth rate of 6%, slightly outpacing other consumer segments.

According to the statistics portal for data, research and market studies Statista (2021), sales of personal hygiene products and cosmetics in Brazil were R\$124.5 billion in 2021, and are expected to exceed R\$130 billion by 2026. In this context, Statista (2024) highlights that Brazil has become the fifth country with the most social media users, with a growth of 23% since 2019, reaching more than 176 million users. At the same time, spending on influencer advertising has grown by more than 10%. The number of users is expected to continue to increase, suggesting that both companies and influencers will continue to invest in this South American market.

In this sense, Kotler et al. (2017) stress that the authenticity and credibility of influencers are essential, acting as social connectors. This direct and reliable connection with the public becomes particularly relevant in competitive markets, where brands seek to stand out through a positive and genuine public perception.

This research focuses on analyzing how Brazilian consumers perceive the authenticity of digital influencers who promote hair products, which is essential to understand how the messages of these influencers are received and processed.

## **2 MATERIAL AND METHODS**

This work was structured through a bibliographic survey, as defined by Gil (2008), which consists of the review of previously published studies and works to obtain a deeper knowledge about the investigated topic. In this process, keywords such as perception of authenticity, digital influencers, promotion of hair products, brand-consumer interaction, social networks, attractive content, purchasing decisions, credibility, social proof and consumer behavior were used, with a particular focus on the Brazilian context. These

keywords guided the search for relevant information in various databases and academic sources, facilitating the identification of theories and findings that supported the research. Among the main sources used for the bibliographic survey are "Google Scholar", "Sophia Biblioteca", "Scientific Electronic Library Online" [SCIELO] and "ResearchGate", which offered resources such as digital libraries, platforms and repositories that allowed access to articles, studies, theses and academic works, as well as relevant scientific literature.

To know the perceptions about the authenticity of digital influencers in the promotion of hair products in Brazil, an exploratory methodology was chosen. According to authors such as Arias (2012), this type of methodology allows detailing and characterizing the phenomenon under study, facilitating a deeper understanding of the variables involved. According to Arias (2012), this type of research is suitable for addressing little-studied topics, providing a preliminary view that helps to identify the relevant variables. This approach was complemented with quantitative measurement elements, with the aim of evaluating the impact that digital influencers have on purchasing decisions. In exploratory research, the variables or factors that may be linked to the phenomenon under study are analyzed. This process concludes when there is clarity about the variables considered relevant, that is, when a good knowledge of the subject is acquired (Hernández et al., 2014).

The focus of the research is quantitative, since it seeks to obtain statistical data that allow the analysis of the perceptions of the consuming public. According to Creswell (2010), quantitative research is characterized by the collection and analysis of numerical data to identify patterns and relationships between variables, facilitating the identification of patterns and trends in participants' responses.

Data collection for this study was done through a structured questionnaire, which is a research tool used to collect direct information from participants. According to Lakatos and Marconi (2010), the questionnaire facilitates the collection of data in a systematic and standardized way, which allows a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the answers. Its importance lies in the ability to capture perceptions, opinions, and behaviors of respondents efficiently, ensuring consistency in responses and comparability of data.

Data collection was carried out through non-probabilistic sampling, depending on the type of convenience, prepared via "Google Forms", where participants were selected based on the accessibility of the researcher, the questionnaire was distributed through "WhatsApp", "Instagram" and "LinkedIn" groups. This type of sampling is chosen when seeking to obtain

information quickly and efficiently, allowing access to individuals who are easily available and willing to participate (Hernández et al. 2014).

The implementation of the research was carried out in three phases. The first consisted of the design and development of the questionnaire, which was elaborated from the bibliographic survey previously carried out. The questionnaire was structured in seven sections. The first section presented a detailed introduction about the objectives and focus of the study, followed by a consent question to request authorization from research participants.

The second, third, fourth, and fifth sections included an exclusion question in each, with the purpose of filtering participants based on their social media use, hair product consumption, and digital influencer tracking .

The sixth section was dedicated to the collection of sociodemographic and behavioral data, providing a key profile of the participants for the analysis. Finally, the seventh section, with specific questions, aimed at addressing the main objective of the study: to examine how Brazilian consumers perceive the authenticity of digital influencers who promote hair products.

The second phase consisted of a pre-test, which included a perception question designed to identify possible deficiencies in the questionnaire. The main objective of this phase was to evaluate the feasibility of the instrument for large-scale application, thus ensuring the validity and correct understanding of the questions by the participants. According to Sampieri et al. (2014), the pre-test is a crucial stage in the development of data collection instruments, it allows identifying possible problems in the wording or formatting of the questions, and adjusting the questionnaire to improve its clarity and effectiveness. Thanks to this preliminary stage, the elements of the questionnaire were optimized to obtain more accurate and reliable answers.

The pre-test was carried out between December 10 and 16, 2024, obtaining 52 responses, of which 29 were valid. Responses from participants living in Brazil, over 18 years of age, who used hair products and followed digital influencers were considered valid . As no drawbacks were identified during this phase, large-scale implementation proceeded.

The third phase focused on large-scale implementation between December 17, 2024 and January 14, 2025, in which a total of 156 responses were collected. Throughout the analysis process, a data purge was carried out, excluding some responses for various reasons. In relation to the use of hair products, 7% of the participants indicated that they did not use them, 6% indicated that they did not follow an influencer and 7% stated that they did

not know or follow any influencer who promotes hair products, which led to the exclusion of 27 responses. In addition, one participant who did not reside in Brazil was discarded, reducing the number of valid responses to 128. These, added to the 29 valid answers obtained during the pre-test stage, totaled 157 valid answers used for the analysis. This procedure ensured the quality of the data included in the study. The rigor in the selection of participants ensured that the results obtained were representative of the public defined in the research.

The results obtained from the collected data were presented through the use of descriptive statistics, which, according to Creswell (2010), consists of the organization, summary, and presentation of the data in a way that facilitates their interpretation. Descriptive statistics is key to the initial understanding of the data, since it allows identifying trends and distributions of the variables analyzed without making additional inferences, being an appropriate approach to present the findings of this study. For the analysis of the data obtained, the "Excel" tool was used, which optimized the organization of the information and made possible both a specific and comprehensive analysis of the responses.

In accordance with Resolution No. 510 of the National Health Council [CNS], Apr 7, 2016, this research did not require the presentation of the project to the Research Ethics Committee [CEP] because it falls within the exceptions established in Article 1, sole paragraph. Notably, the study was classified as public opinion research with unidentified participants, ensuring that no personal data was handled that could compromise individuals' privacy. These characteristics allowed the study to be carried out without the need for additional ethical assessment, thus contributing to a deeper understanding of perceptions about the authenticity of digital influencers in the promotion of hair products.

### **3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis of the demographic data obtained through the questionnaire provides a detailed view of the profile of the participants. Gender, age, educational level and monthly income were considered as key variables. According to the results presented in Table 1, 88.6% of the participants were women, which highlights a relevant female representation in the sample, this data suggests that within this group analyzed, the consumption of hair products could be mostly associated with the female group. In relation to educational level, a significant proportion of respondents have higher education. In terms of monthly income, 70.80% of the participants are in the range of 2 to 4 minimum wages, with a current minimum wage of R\$ 1,412.00, in accordance with Law 14,848, of May 1, 2024. The lowest proportion

corresponds to participants with incomes above 20 minimum wages, representing only 1.72%, which indicates a lower participation of high-income individuals in the sample.

**Table 1**

*Demographics*

Sex	%	Age	%	Educational level	%	Minimum wages	%
Female	88.6	18-24	12,7	Completed Intermediate	2,55	From 2 to 4	10,16
				Postgraduate Degree	2,55	From 4 to 10	1,27
				Incomplete Upper	3,82	From 10 to 20	1,27
				Incomplete Upper Complete	3,82		
		25-34	69,6	Incomplete Master's Degree	0,64	From 2 to 4	52,24
				Complete Master's Degree	1,92	From 10 to 20	1,58
				Incomplete Intermediate	2,56	From 4 to 10	15,78
				Incomplete Intermediate	3,82		
				Degree Incomplete Higher	9,97		
				Degree Incomplete	3,56		
				Postgraduate Degree	9,33		
				Complete Higher	37,8		
		45-54	0,64	Incomplete postgraduate degree	0,64	From 2 to 4	0,64
		55-64	3,04	Incomplete postgraduate degree Complete	1,27	From 10 to 20	3,04
				postgraduate degree	1,77		
		65 or more	2,55	Complete postgraduate degree Incomplete	0,64	From 2 to 4	0,85
				postgraduate Higher	0,64	From 4 to 10	0,85
				incomplete	1,27	From 2 to 4	0,85
Male	11.4	18-24	0,64	Incomplete postgraduate degree	0,64	From 2 to 4	0,64
		25-34	7	Full PhD Full Master's Degree Full Higher	0,64	From 4 to 10	1,90
				Complete postgraduate degree Incomplete	0,64		
				postgraduate degree	1,27	From 2 to 4	5,10
					1,45		
					3,00		



35-44	3,19	Complete Superior	3,19	More than 20 salaries	3,19
		Incomplete postgraduate degree	0,32	More than 20	0,32
65 or more	0,64	Complete Mastery	0,32	From 2 to 4	0,32

Source: Original research results.

The results obtained in this study reveal a high rate of social media use among the participants. According to the data presented in Table 2, 100% of respondents indicated that they use social platforms. In terms of frequency of use, 94.7% of participants reported using social media several times a day, while 2.4% use it once a day, 1.9% between two and three times a week, and 1.0% use it once a week or less regularly.

**Table 2**

*Social media use and frequency among participants*

Frequency of social media use	Percentage of responses
Use of social networks	100%
Several times a day	94,7%
Once a day	2,4%
2 to 3 times a week	1,9%
Once a week or less	1,0%

Source: Original research results.

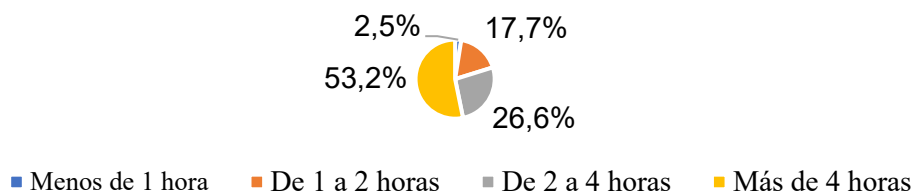
These findings are in line with previous studies, such as the "We Are Social" report (2024), which positions Brazil among the countries with the highest daily connection time to social platforms. Similarly, the analysis of "Data Reportal" (2024) reports that 66.3% of the Brazilian population is an active user of social networks, which reinforces the consistency of the results obtained in this research. For their part, Kotler et al. (2017) highlight that, due to the nature of social networks as a space for interaction, these platforms tend to generate communities that grow rapidly, which makes them one of the most influential forms of digital connection.

### 3.1 SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE PATTERNS

In relation to the average daily time spent using social networks as shown in Figure 1, 53.2% of respondents indicated that they spend more than 04h00min a day on these platforms, which is the highest percentage. The second most representative group, with 26.6%, indicated that their daily use time is between 02h00min and 04h00min. The lowest percentages corresponded to participants who reported spending between 01h00min and 02h00min per day, with 17.7%, and those who used social networks for less than 01h00min, with 2.5%. This pattern of responses suggests a predominance of prolonged social media use among respondents.

**Figure 1**

*Average daily time on social media*

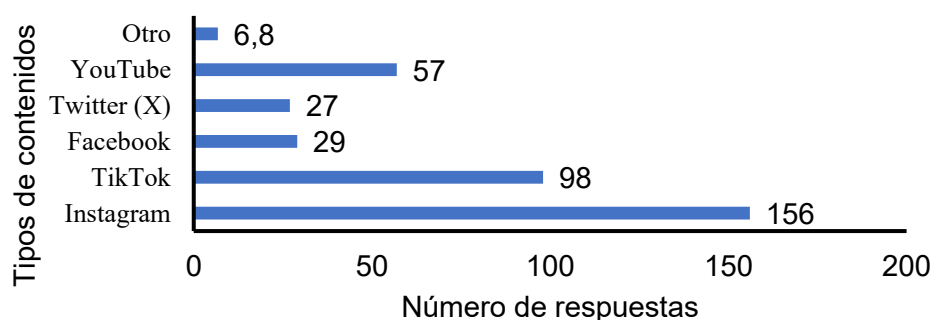


Source: Original research results.

In the question regarding the most used social networks, presented in Figure 2, the respondents had to mark up to three options. The "Instagram" platform was the most responded, receiving 156 responses. In second and third place, respectively, came the platforms "TikTok" with 98 responses and "YouTube" with 57 responses.

**Figure 2**

*Most used social networks*

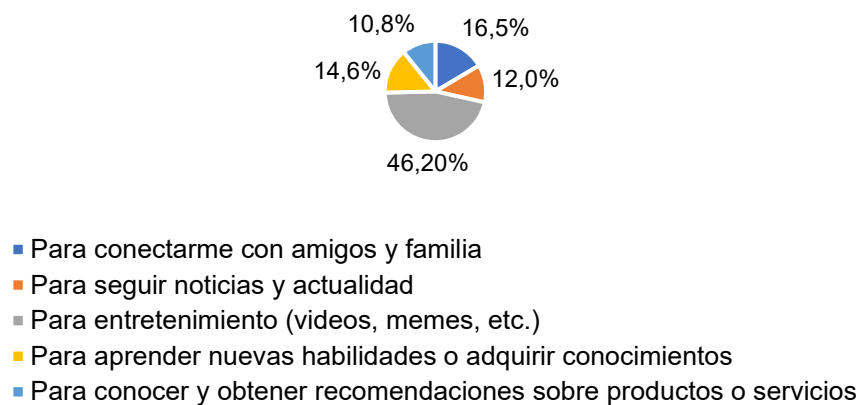


Source: Original research results.

The question about the main reason for using social networks, as presented in Figure 3, showed that most of the participants use them for entertainment purposes, reaching 46.20%. Second, 16.5% of participants said they use them to stay connected with friends and family. 14.6% of those surveyed indicated that their main motivation is the acquisition of new skills or knowledge, while 12% use social networks to find out about news and current affairs. Finally, 10.8% of participants use these platforms to learn about and obtain recommendations on products or services.

**Figure 3**

*Main reason for using social networks*

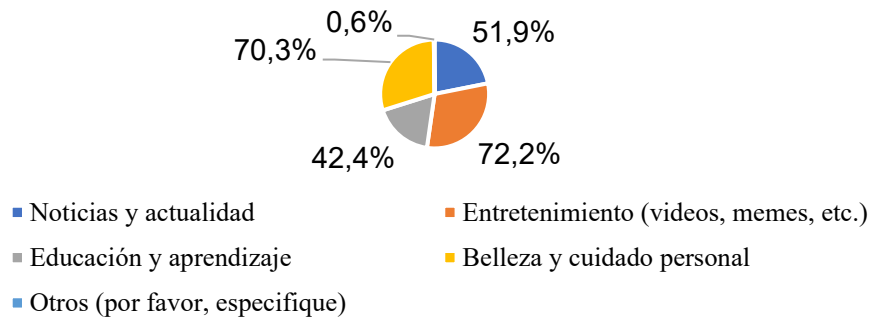


Source: Original research results.

As illustrated in Figure 4, in relation to the type of content most searched for by participants on social media, respondents were able to select up to three categories. The results showed that 72.2% of the participants searched for content related to entertainment, while 70.3% were interested in beauty and personal care topics. 51.9% indicated that their search focused on news and current affairs, followed by 42.4% who selected education and learning. Finally, 0.6% of the participants opted for content related to motherhood, work and religion.

**Figure 4**

*Most searched content type on social media*

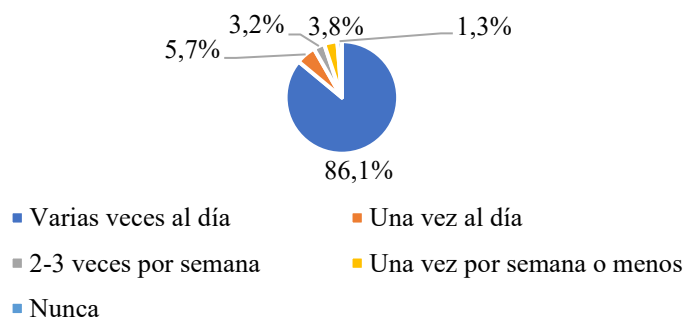


Source: Original research results.

Regarding the frequency of interaction of the participants with the content on social networks, the results obtained and presented in Figure 5 showed that the majority of the participants, 86.1%, interact several times a day. Next, 5.7% indicated that they interact once a day, while 3.8% do so once a week or less frequently. 3.2% mentioned interacting two to three times a week, and finally, 1.3% said that they never interact with content on social networks.

**Figure 5**

*Frequency of content interaction on social networks*

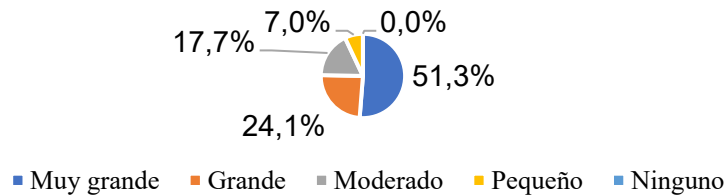


Source: Original research results.

Figure 6 shows the results on the impact of social networks on the decision to purchase hair products, according to the perception of the participants. According to the data obtained, 51.3% of the participants indicated that this impact is very large, while 24.1% described it as large. 17.7% considered the impact to be moderate, while another 7% assessed it as small. These results highlight the considerable influence of social media on hair product purchasing decisions, suggesting that this factor plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior.

**Figure 6**

*Impact of social media on the purchase decision*



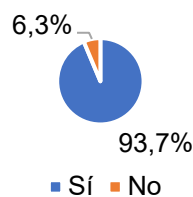
Source: Original research results.

Solomon (2018) points out that social networks have transformed purchasing decisions by offering platforms for direct interaction between brands and consumers, which influences the perception of brands. Kotler et al. (2021) highlight that social networks allow brands to establish personalized connections, fostering digital communities that increase trust, in line with Godin (2018) adds that these networks allow brands to form authentic associations, which strengthen trust, credibility, and emotional interaction, which effectively influences purchasing decisions.

When participants were asked if they had ever bought or been interested in buying a product recommended by an influencer, 93.7% answered affirmatively, while 6.3% indicated that they had not, as can be seen in Figure 7.

**Figure 7**

*Impact of influencer recommendations on purchasing decisions*



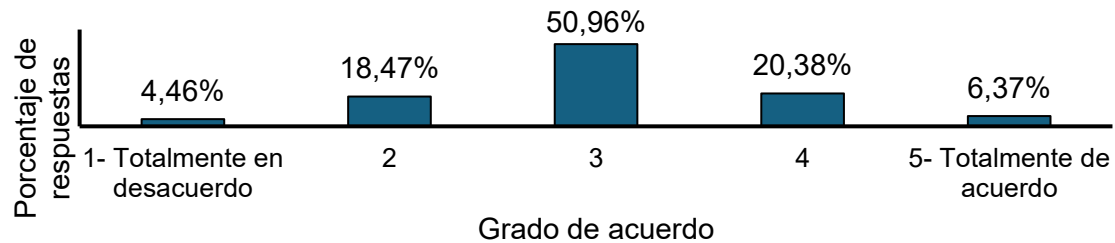
Source: Original research results.

### 3.2 PERCEPTIONS OF INFLUENCER AUTHENTICITY IN THE PROMOTION OF HAIR PRODUCTS

Figure 8 shows the results on the participants' consideration of the authenticity of influencers when promoting hair products. 50.96% of the participants adopted a neutral stance, reflecting the diversity of opinions on this topic. Full details of the other responses are available in the chart below.

**Figure 8**

*Considering influencers as authentic when promoting hair products*



Source: Original research results.

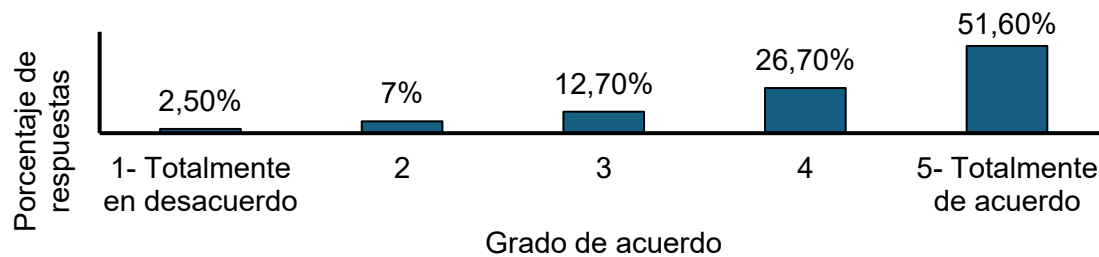
According to "Rakuten Advertising" (2024), authenticity is a key factor for consumers, as 84% would stop following an influencer if they perceive a lack of genuineness. This aligns with the results obtained. For their part, Balaban et al. (2022) argue that the perception of authenticity affects the acceptance of influencers' messages and the way in which the brand they promote is perceived. This concept is reflected in the results obtained, as participants expressed divided opinions, with a significant neutral proportion regarding the authenticity of the influencers.

Finally, Audrezet et al. (2020) identified two key approaches to authenticity: passionate authenticity and transparent authenticity. While some followers value authenticity based on the influencer's genuine interest, others prefer transparency about the product or service promoted. This finding may explain the varied responses in the results, where a significant portion of the participants were not convinced of the authenticity of the influencers when promoting hair products.

The analysis of the responses on the degree of agreement of the participants in relation to their interest in the topic of hair care and hair products reveals that 51.60% completely agreed, while 26.70% expressed agreement. On the other hand, 12.70% adopted a neutral position, 7% expressed disagreement and, finally, 2.50% totally disagreed. These results indicate a high level of general interest among participants in topics related to hair care and associated products, suggesting a significant disposition towards the consumption of products in this area. Figure 9 graphically illustrates these distributions, providing a clear picture of participants' perceptions of the relevance of hair products in their daily lives.

**Figure 9**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "I understand and/or am interested in topics related to hair care and/or hair products"*

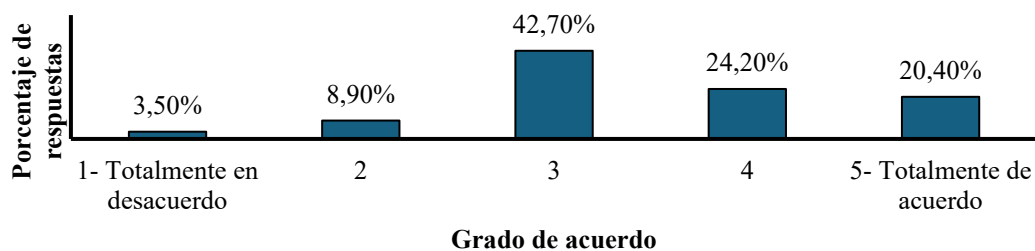


Source: Original research results.

The results reflected in Figure 10, on the impact of influencer recommendations on purchasing decisions show a diverse distribution of opinions. 42.70% of respondents adopted a neutral stance, while 44.60% (24.20% agree and 20.40% strongly agree) acknowledged a positive influence on their purchasing decisions. In contrast, 8.90% expressed disagreement and 3.50% strongly disagreed.

**Figure 10**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "The recommendations of the 'influencers' impacted some of my purchasing decisions"*

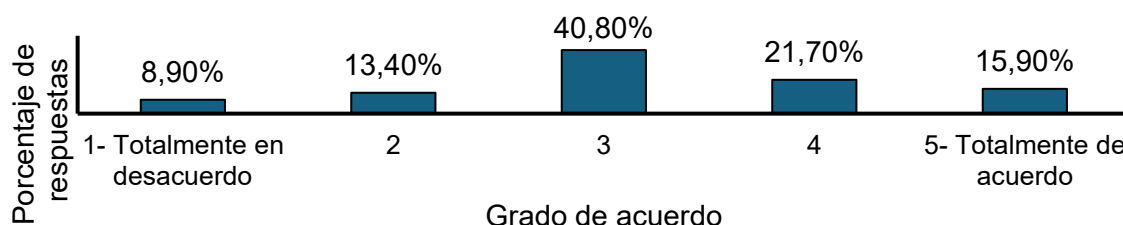


Source: Original research results.

Following on from the previous question, participants were asked about their perception of whether they consider hair product recommendations made by digital influencers to be more reliable than traditional advertising. The results obtained, presented in Figure 11, show that a significant proportion of the participants adopted a neutral position, with 40.80% of the total. 21.70% expressed agreement, while 15.90% completely agreed. In contrast, 13.40% said they disagreed and 8.90% strongly disagreed.

**Figure 11**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "I consider that hair product recommendations made by digital influencers are more reliable than traditional advertising"*



Source: Original research results.

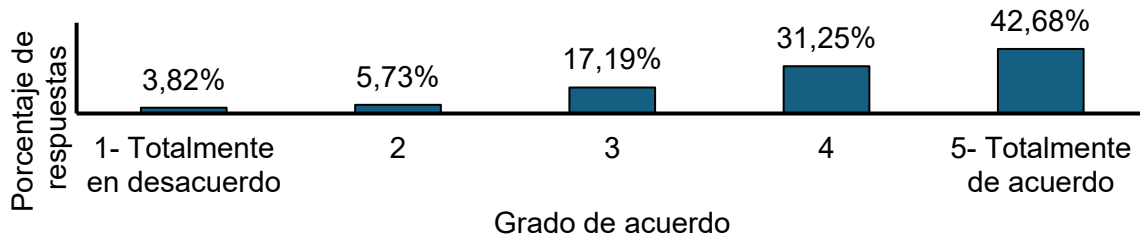
These results reflect the diversity of opinions regarding the reliability of influencer recommendations compared to traditional advertising strategies. According to Statista (2023), Brazil leads in Latin America with 44% of consumers who have made purchases based on the recommendations of digital influencers. However, the data from this research show that a considerable proportion of the participants took a neutral stance on the reliability of these recommendations compared to traditional advertising. This suggests that while influencers can have an impact on purchasing decisions, the perception of their trustworthiness varies among consumers. According to Solomon (2018), influencers are perceived as more trustworthy due to the emotional and authentic connection they establish with their followers, which contrasts with traditional advertising, which is often perceived as more impersonal commercial messages. On the other hand, Kotler et al. (2017) suggest that the perception of trustworthiness towards influencers is usually higher than that of traditional advertising, due to the personal and authentic relationship that they manage to create with their audience, which increases the trust they generate.

Regarding trust in influencers' recommendations that seem genuine and show real results, it is observed that a significant majority, composed of 42.68% of the participants, indicated that they strongly agree. In addition, 31.25% of the respondents said they agreed, which reinforces a positive perception of these influencers. However, 17.19% opted for a neutral position, while a minority expressed disagreement, 5.73%, and 3.82% strongly disagreed. These data underline that influencers' credibility is closely linked to their perceived authenticity, as can be seen in Figure 12.



**Figure 12**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "I trust the recommendations of influencers when they seem genuine and show real results"*

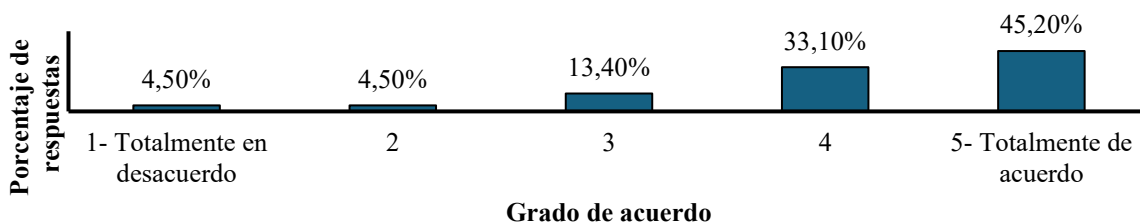


Source: Original research results.

The question regarding the degree of agreement of the participants regarding the perception that influencers who show real results and use hair products in their daily lives are considered more authentic revealed a varied distribution of responses, as observed in Figure 13. The highest percentage of participants, 45.20%, expressed total agreement, while 33.10% indicated agreement. 13.40% adopted a neutral position, while 4.50% disagreed and 4.50% strongly disagreed.

**Figure 13**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "I perceive that digital influencers who show real results and use hair products in their daily lives are more authentic"*



Source: Original research results.

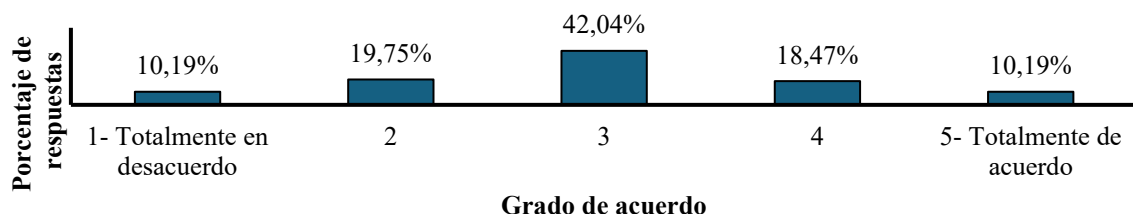
The results obtained in the research underline the relevance of authenticity in the promotions carried out by influencers. According to Chen (2023), trust and authenticity are key aspects in influencer marketing, and recommendations from real people, who share products they truly like, are more persuasive than traditional commercials. This is reflected in the survey results, where a large majority of participants perceive influencers who show real results as more authentic. This authenticity generates a greater emotional connection and trust with the audience, which, as Peng (2023) suggests, translates into more effective

recommendations. On the other hand, Latam Intersect PR (2025) highlights a growing trend in Latin America, including Brazilians, towards a preference for genuine reviews and Content User Generated (UGC) content, over recommendations from large influencers, due to the growing distrust of the latter.

In relation to the consideration of the transparency of digital influencers with respect to commercial agreements with hair product brands, Figure 14 shows a varied distribution of responses. 42.04% of the participants adopted a neutral stance, which suggests a lack of clarity or lack of knowledge on the subject. In contrast, 19.75% expressed disagreement, while 10.19% strongly disagreed, suggesting considerable doubt or mistrust about the transparency of these agreements. On the other hand, 18.47% of respondents agreed, and 10.19% expressed total agreement with the transparency of influencers. These results highlight that transparency remains a critical aspect that influencers need to address more explicitly, in order to strengthen their relationship of trust with consumers.

**Figure 14**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "I consider digital influencers to be transparent about the commercial agreements they have with hair product brands"*



Source: Original research results.

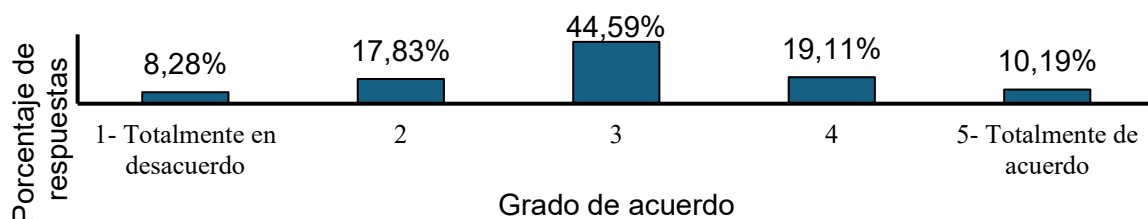
The Institute of Market Studies [ISEM]; IC Media; Newlink (2021) stresses that transparency in commercial agreements is essential to generate trust in consumers, who must be aware of the commercial relationships behind each recommendation, being essential that influencers inform when they receive compensation for promoting a product and that they claim to have tried it before recommending it. In this sense, Lee and Eastin (2021) highlight that transparency is a key aspect in the relationship between influencers and their followers, who expect them to be frank and clear about any financial ties with brands. Similarly, Van Dam and Van Reijmersdal (2019) state that transparency implies not only the sincerity of "influencers" when disclosing their business associations, but also the need for them to be

explicit and clear with their followers about paid agreements and content, thus strengthening the transparency of their recommendations.

In Figure 15, it is possible to analyze the perception of the participants in relation to whether influencers really use and trust the hair products they promote, the results show a varied distribution. 44.59% adopted a neutral stance, reflecting a lack of certainty or an intermediate position on this aspect. On the other hand, 19.11% expressed agreement and 10.19% expressed total agreement, indicating a moderate level of trust in the "influencers" who demonstrate that they use the products they promote. However, 17.83% disagreed, and 8.28% strongly disagreed, underscoring considerable skepticism towards the authenticity of these recommendations.

**Figure 15**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "I perceive that the influencer really uses and trusts the hair products they promote"*

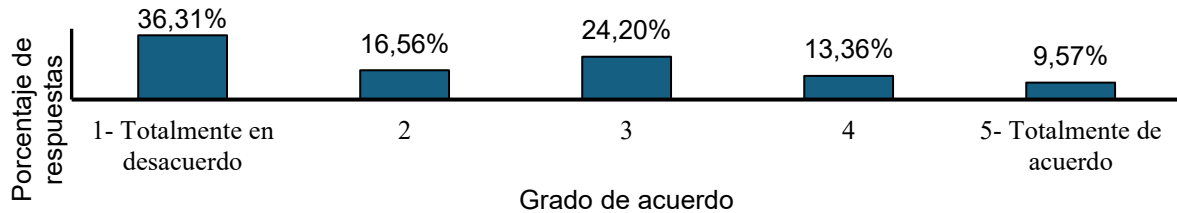


Source: Original research results.

In relation to the participants' perception of the influence of the number of followers of an influencer on the authenticity of the promotion of hair products, the results show a varied distribution. 36.31% of the participants expressed total disagreement, indicating that they do not consider that the number of followers influences the perception of authenticity. In contrast, 24.20% adopted a neutral stance, without expressing a clear opinion on the relationship between followers and authenticity. On the other hand, 16.56% disagreed, 13.36% agreed, and 9.57% strongly agreed, suggesting that this group does not associate the number of followers with authenticity in the promotion of hair products. These findings suggest that, although a majority of participants do not see a clear relationship between the number of followers and the perception of authenticity, a smaller proportion do. Figure 16.

**Figure 16**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "I consider that the number of followers of an influencer guides my perception of their authenticity in the promotion of hair products"*

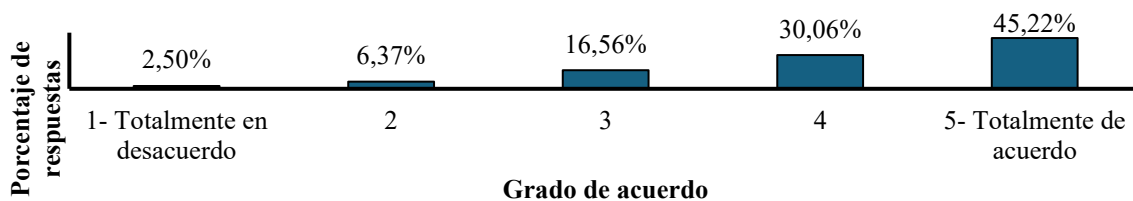


Source: Original research results.

As shown in Figure 17, the results show that the majority of participants consider that digital influencers are more effective in promoting hair products when their lifestyle is related to the use of such products. 45.22% of the participants stated that they totally agreed, while 30.06% indicated that they agreed. 16.56% adopted a neutral position, and 6.37% expressed disagreement, while 2.50% strongly disagreed. These results indicate that the association between the influencer's lifestyle and the genuine use of the promoted products is perceived as an important factor for their effectiveness in promotion.

**Figure 17**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "I believe that digital influencers are more effective in promoting hair products when they have a lifestyle related to the use of those products"*



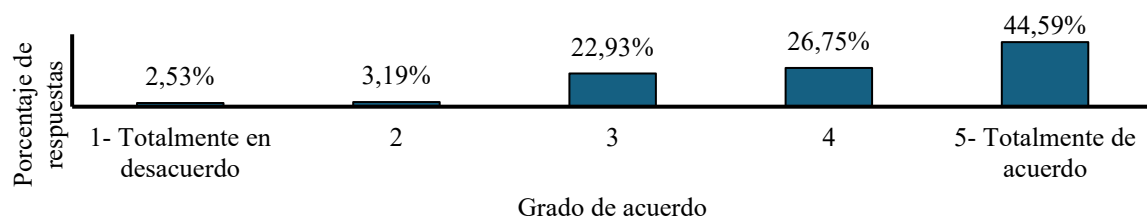
Source: Original research results.

According to Ardley et al. (2022), followers consider influencers' recommendations more authentic and effective when their lifestyle is aligned with the products they promote. In the same vein, Lehman et al. (2019) state that an influencer's authenticity is perceived when their internal values are consistently reflected in their behavior. For his part, Peng (2023) stresses that the main strength of influencer marketing lies in the emotional and personal connection that influencers manage to establish with their followers, a relationship that is further strengthened when they integrate products naturally into their lifestyle.

In Figure 18, it can be seen that 44.59% of the participants strongly agree that the authenticity of a digital influencer increases when they frequently interact with their followers about the products they promote, 26.75% agreed with the statement, while 22.93% adopted a neutral stance. 3.19% disagreed, and 2.53% strongly disagreed. These results suggest that the constant interaction between the influencer and their followers is seen as a key factor to increase the perception of authenticity in the promotion of products.

**Figure 18**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "The authenticity of a digital influencer increases if they frequently interact with their followers about the products they promote"*

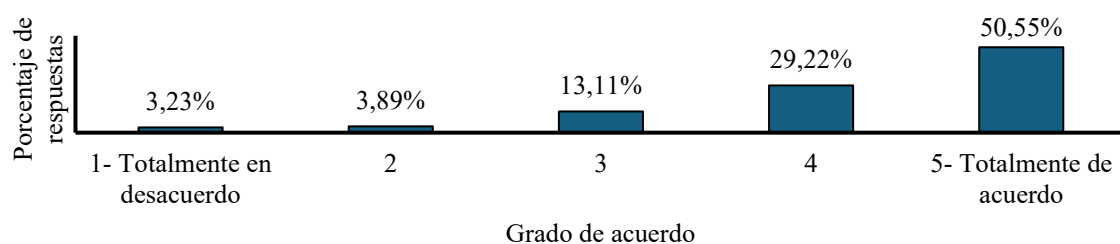


Source: Original research results.

The results presented in Figure 19 reveal that most of the participants consider that trust in influencers increases when they share personal experiences related to the use of hair products, with 50.55% of the respondents expressing total agreement and 29.22% agreeing with this statement. For their part, 13.11% adopted a neutral position, while 3.89% disagreed, and 3.23% totally disagreed. This data suggests that sharing personal experiences could be a key factor in increasing the authenticity and perceived trustworthiness of influencers in the promotion of hair products.

**Figure 19**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "Influencers are more trustworthy when they share personal experiences related to the use of hair products"*

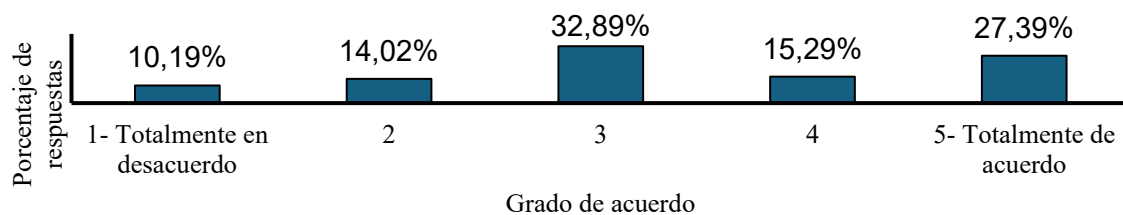


Source: Original research results.

According to the data presented in Figure 20, the perception of an influencer's authenticity can tend to decrease when they frequently promote hair products from different brands within the same product category (hair tonics, hair straighteners, etc.). 32.89% of the participants adopted a neutral position in this statement, while 27.39% totally agreed, and 15.29% expressed agreement. In contrast, 14.02% said they disagreed, and 10.19% totally disagreed. These results suggest that the frequent promotion of multiple brands that offer products from the same category by influencers could generate doubts about their authenticity among their followers.

**Figure 20**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "When an influencer frequently promotes hair products from different brands, but from the same category, I perceive that their authenticity decreases"*

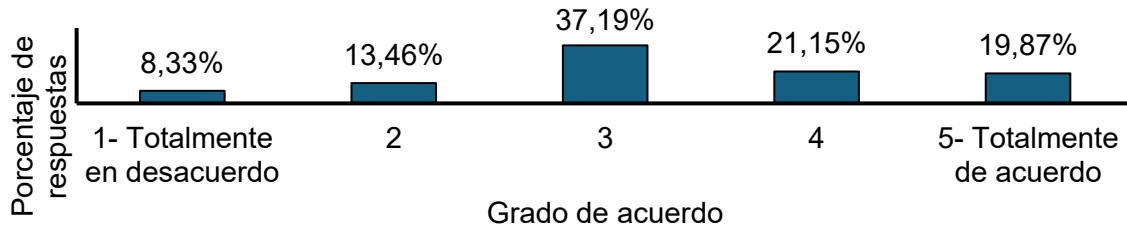


Source: Original research results.

Figure 21 shows the relationship between transparency about the financial compensation received by influencers when promoting hair products and participants' trust in their recommendations. 37.19% of respondents adopted a neutral stance, suggesting that clarity on this aspect does not have a decisive impact on their confidence. On the other hand, 41.2% indicated that they agreed with some degree, and 21.79% expressed total disagreement, suggesting that, despite the importance of transparency, not all participants perceive this factor as relevant to establishing a relationship of trust with influencers. These results show that, although financial compensation can influence trust, its impact is not uniform, and its relevance varies among different followers.

**Figure 21**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "Transparency about the financial compensation that influencers receive to promote hair products increases my confidence in their recommendations"*

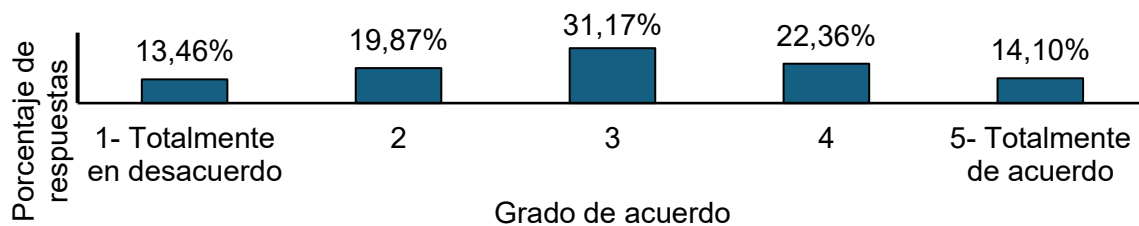


Source: Original research results.

Figure 22 reflects the participants' perception of the authenticity of influencers when they mention that they are being paid to promote hair products. The results show a division in the opinion of the respondents. 31.17% of participants adopted a neutral stance, suggesting that the financial compensation factor does not substantially affect their judgment of the influencer's authenticity. On the other hand, 22.36% agreed, and 14.10% said they strongly agreed, which could indicate that the disclosure of compensation would reduce their perception of authenticity. However, 19.87% expressed disagreement with the statement and 13.46% of the participants strongly disagreed, suggesting that the mention of compensation does not diminish their perception of authenticity in the influencer. In summary, these results underscore an ambiguous and varied perception regarding the impact that financial compensation has on the perceived authenticity of influencers.

**Figure 22**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "My perception of the authenticity of an 'influencer' decreases if they mention that they are being paid to promote hair products"*



Source: Original research results.

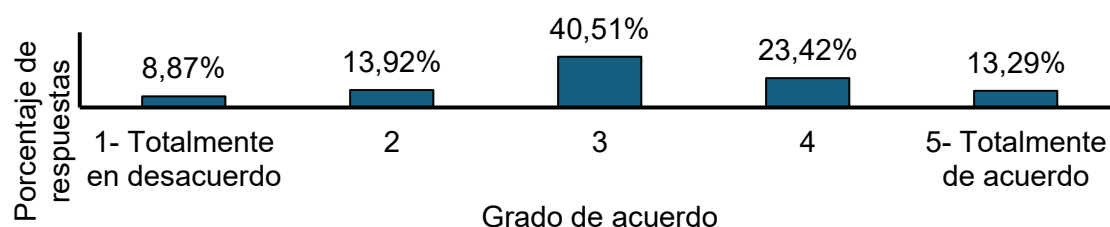
According to Wojdyski et al. (2008), the revelation that an influencer is receiving financial compensation significantly influences followers' perceptions of the authenticity of the

sponsor. In this sense, the authors explain that transparency implies being clear and open about trade agreements, which differs from trust, since a person can be trustworthy without necessarily expressing it explicitly. On the other hand, Van Dam and Van Reijmersdal (2019) argue that influencers should be transparent about their relationship with the brand and about any sponsored content, to avoid confusion among consumers. This clarity is critical to maintaining the perception of authenticity. Likewise, Coelho et al. (2024) highlight that in Brazil, guidelines have been established for digital influencers, even if they are not considered legal providers, to assume ethical and transparent responsibility when disseminating commercial content. Despite not being directly regulated by the Consumer Protection Code, they can be liable under the 2002 Civil Code's theory of fault, which means they must make it clear when their content is sponsored.

The distribution of participants' perceptions of whether influencers actually use and believe in the products they promote reflects a variety of opinions. 40.51% adopted a neutral stance, which could indicate skepticism or a lack of clarity or sufficient information to form a definitive opinion. 23.42% expressed agreement, suggesting that they consider that they effectively use the products they promote. 13.29% said they strongly agreed, reflecting an even stronger perception of this statement. On the other hand, 13.92% disagreed, and 8.87% expressed total disagreement, suggesting that for some the perception decreases if they do not believe that influencers actually use the products they promote. These results, reflected in Figure 23, show a diverse distribution of opinions.

**Figure 23**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "I frequently perceive that the 'influencer' really uses and believes in the products they promote"*



Source: Original research results.

In relation to the participants' perception of the authenticity of influencers who promote hair products that they do not seem to use in their daily lives, the results show that the

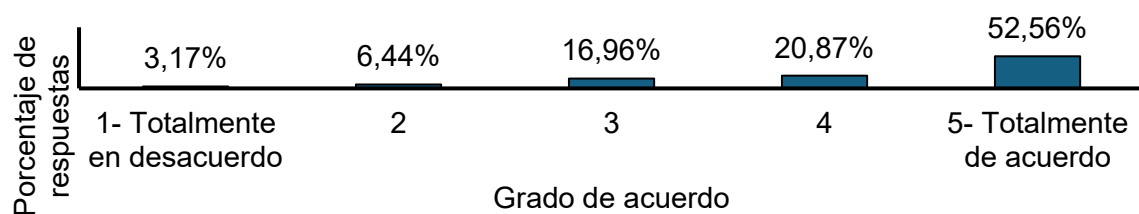


majority, with 52.56%, fully agreed with the statement. 20.87% of those surveyed said they agreed, while 16.96% adopted a neutral position. In contrast, 6.44% expressed disagreement, and 3.17% strongly disagreed. These results are reflected in Figure 24.

This pattern indicates that a considerable part of the participants are attentive and critical of the behavior of influencers and have probably perceived a lack of authenticity when they promote products that do not seem to be part of their daily routine.

**Figure 24**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "At some point I have noticed that an 'influencer' promotes a hair product that he seems not to use in his daily life"*



Source: Original research results.

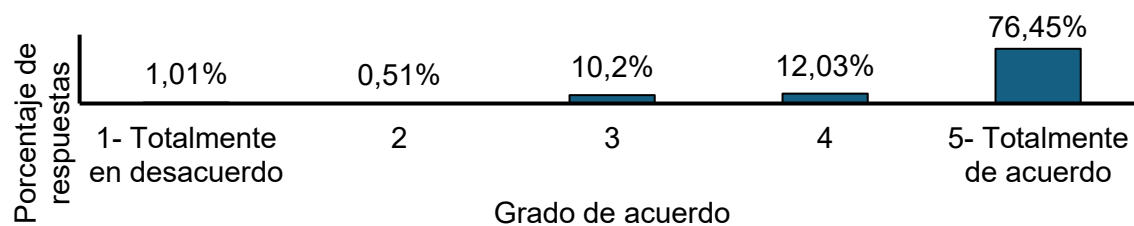
In this sense, Shoenberger et al. (2020) argue that authenticity is critical to the success of marketing strategies, as consumers tend to respond favorably to brands perceived as authentic, the promotion of products that are not part of an influencer's daily life can be seen as a lack of authenticity, which could negatively affect consumer perception, as reflected in the results of this study. For their part, Lee and Eastin (2021) highlight that consumers' perceptions of authenticity are structured through factors such as sincerity and genuine endorsements. In the context of this study, if consumers perceive that the influencer does not use the product they are promoting, this lack of sincerity is likely to negatively impact their willingness to follow the influencer or purchase the recommended product. Ardley et al. (2022) state that consistency between the influencer's image and the products they promote is key for consumers to consider the recommendation authentic.

The results on the importance of transparency of influencers regarding their experiences with the products they promote show a clear preference for authenticity. 76.45% of participants strongly agreed with the statement that influencers must be transparent and actually use the products they recommend to be considered authentic. 12.03% agreed, while 10.2% adopted a neutral stance. At the opposite extreme, 0.51% expressed disagreement and 1.01% strongly disagreed. These results reflect the high valuation of authenticity and

transparency in the relationship between influencers and their followers, as shown in Figure 25.

**Figure 25**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "It is important that 'influencers' are transparent about their experiences with the products they recommend and that they actually use them so that they are considered authentic"*

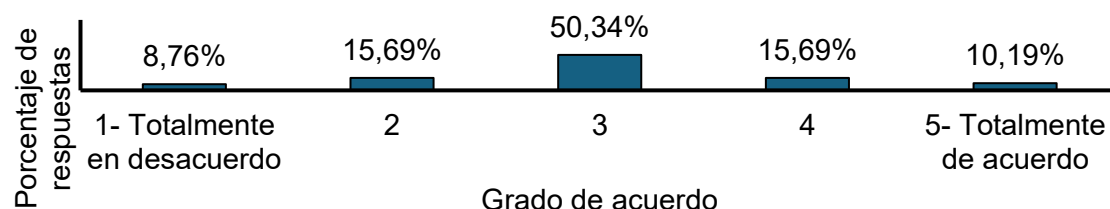


Source: Original research results.

Regarding the perception of whether influencers really use the hair products they promote, it is observed that 50.34% of the participants adopted a neutral stance, which could indicate skepticism or lack of clear information, on the other hand, 8.76% strongly disagreed, 15.69% expressed disagreement, and another 15.69% agreed with the statement. In addition, 10.19% said they totally agreed. These results reflect a diversity of opinions about the authenticity of influencers in relation to the use of the products they promote, as illustrated in Figure 26.

**Figure 26**

*Degree of agreement with the statement "I consider that 'influencers' use the hair products they promote."*



Source: Original research results.

Table 3 presents the results on the level of importance of the attributes associated with digital influencers in the context of the research, the attributes of trustworthiness and respect

are the most valued by the participants, with 78.95% and 63.59%, respectively, considering them very important. This suggests that followers prioritize digital influencers perceived as trustworthy and respected in their field, highlighting the relevance of credibility and the emotional connection between the influencer and their audience, contributing to loyalty. The experience was highly considered very important by 61.54% of the participants, highlighting the importance of knowledge and perceived authority. In contrast, physical attractiveness was considered relevant, but with a lower weighting, only 54.49% perceived it as very important. These findings indicate that, although attractiveness is a factor that can initially attract followers, attributes related to trust could be decisive for the overall perception of the influencer.

**Table 3**

*Level of importance of influencer attributes*

Attribute	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Important
Reliability	78,95%	10,08%	7,51%	2,38%	1,08%
Experience	61,54%	26,41%	8,62%	2,15%	1,28%
Physical attractiveness	54,49%	23,72%	14,30%	3,85%	3,64%
Respect	63,59%	23,02%	9,62%	2,56%	1,21%

Source: Original research results.

According to the results obtained, the attributes most valued by the followers of the influencers are reliability, experience and respect. These findings coincide with the statements of Shimp (2009), who argues that trustworthiness is closely associated with the trust placed in a source, especially when this source has credibility. On the other hand, Ardley et al. (2022) suggest that consumers consider influencers' endorsements to be genuine when there is a credible connection between them and the products they promote. According to the EY-Parthenon (2024) study, digital influencers have a significant impact on the purchasing decisions of Brazilian consumers. 61% of the interviewees indicated that their purchase choices are influenced by the recommendations of these influencers and 73% have purchased products exclusively based on their suggestions, which highlights the relevance of credibility and trust in these relationships. Peng's findings (2023) demonstrate the importance of credibility and perceived experience, followers value digital influencers they consider expert and trustworthy, as this generates a relationship of loyalty and respect.

Regarding physical attractiveness, the results show that, although it is a factor that cannot be underestimated, it is less important compared to other attributes such as reliability and experience, in this context, Masuda et al. (2022) argue that, although physical attractiveness may play a relevant role as an initial factor of attraction, it is not determinant in the formation of relationships for deep social relationships. According to the authors, when followers perceive that they share values and attitudes with the influencer, the relationship becomes more emotional, which, in turn, favors greater interaction and engagement with the content.

### 3.3 IMPACT AT THE TIME OF PURCHASE

The results on the factors that influence the decision to purchase hair products, presented in Table 4, show that quality is the most determining factor, with 80.70% of the participants considering it very important, followed by price 52.90%. The brand occupies a secondary place, with 39.70% of responses. Influencer recommendations are perceived as important by only 24.57% of respondents, while 41.30% remain neutral, suggesting a less decisive influence.

Product availability and natural ingredients are also important factors, with 36.94% of participants considering them very important. The opinions of friends and family carry significant weight, with 52.87% rating them as very important. Finally, advertising campaigns have a smaller impact, with 44.23% of respondents being neutral about it.

**Table 4**

*Factors that affect the purchase decision*

Factor	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Nothing Important
Price	52,90%	25,80%	15,30	4,70%	1,30%
Brand	39,70%	36,00%	14,90%	7,50%	2,50%
Quality	80,70%	10,70%	1,50%	6,50%	0,60%
Influencer recommendations	7,50%	24,57%	41,30%	19,13%	7,50%
Product Availability	36,94%	31,85%	26,08%	3,21%	1,92%
Natural ingredients	36,94%	23,57%	23,57%	12,1%	3,82%
Reviews from friends and family	52,87%	21,02%	17,83%	7,01%	1,91%

Advertising campaigns	11,54%	13,46%	44,23%	19,87%	10,9%
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Source: Original research results.

Customer satisfaction is proportionally related to the perception of quality (Silva et al., 2021), which is in line with the classic model of consumer behavior (Kotler et al., 2017), which states that purchasing decisions are mainly based on the perception of value. Solomon's theory (2017) highlights that consumers make purchasing decisions influenced by a combination of personal, social, psychological, and economic factors. In particular, the price and availability of the product are determining factors that impact the purchase decision, as consumers adjust their decisions based on accessibility, perceived value and their economic capacity.

A small portion of the participants felt that the recommendations of these influencers significantly influence their decisions. This finding aligns with studies that indicate that consumers, although exposed to influencers' recommendations, may be skeptical about the authenticity and relevance of these suggestions, especially when they do not perceive a genuine connection with the promoters of these products (Peng, 2023). This phenomenon could be related to the way in which consumers validate information, which has migrated the trust of authoritarian figures towards a greater valuation of recommendations from close groups, such as family and friends (Kotler et al., 2017).

On the other hand, product availability has also been identified as a relevant factor, confirming the theory that consumers value accessibility and convenience of purchase positively. Kotler et al. (2017) argue that the availability of a product is fundamental in the purchase process, since an easily accessible product is more likely to be acquired, especially if it meets consumer expectations. Availability is therefore a key feature that can make or break the purchase decision, depending on the consumer's shopping experience.

Likewise, natural ingredients emerge as an important factor in the purchase decision, reflecting the growing trend towards the consumption of more sustainable and ethical products. The market study carried out by the Economic and Commercial Office of the Embassy of Spain in São Paulo (2023), shows that consumers of hair products in Brazil are increasingly interested in products that are not only effective, but also aligned with their values of well-being and sustainability, reflected in the growing demand for natural products. This is consistent with the concept of conscious consumption, which highlights the preference for products that comply with ethical and ecological principles (Alves, 2022).

As for social references, the opinions of friends and family remain one of the most reliable sources of information for consumers, reinforcing the idea that close social relationships have a significant impact on purchasing decisions. According to Kotler et al. (2024), reference groups, especially family and friends, have a direct influence on individuals' purchasing beliefs and behaviors.

Finally, advertising campaigns were perceived as less influential in the purchase decision, with a large part of the participants showing a neutral attitude towards this factor. This finding coincides with the shift in consumer trust, which has shifted from a vertical structure (where advertising campaigns had greater power) to a more horizontal one, where consumers trust more in the opinions of their social circle and in the perceived authenticity of the recommendations they receive (Kotler et al., 2017).

#### **4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The present study achieved the proposed objective, to analyze how Brazilian consumers perceive the authenticity of digital influencers who promote hair products, providing a study on the factors that influence it. It was possible to identify that coherence between the influencer's lifestyle and the promoted products, as well as transparency and interaction with followers, are essential to strengthen perceived authenticity. Likewise, emotional connection and trust were revealed as key elements to foster lasting relationships between influencers and their followers. From a practical point of view, the results suggest that brands should select influencers whose image and values are aligned with the products they promote, ensuring an authentic and coherent relationship. For those influencers who promote multiple brands, it is essential that they maintain authenticity and transparency in their recommendations, as overexposure to various products could lead to a perception of inconsistency and affect the trust of their followers.

Despite its contribution, the study has some limitations, such as its exclusive focus on Brazilian consumers, which restricts the ability to generalize the results to other geographical or cultural contexts. In addition, by focusing on the perception of authenticity with respect to hair products, it would be relevant to expand the research to other types of consumer products. Another important aspect is that the literature review revealed a lack of depth on the specific components of authenticity, especially from the consumer's perspective, not comprehensively addressing how consumers define, perceive, and interpret the authenticity of digital influencers, and its impact on purchasing decisions. It is suggested that future

research explore the impact of influencers on the promotion of different types of products and conduct long-term studies to observe how consumers' perceptions of authenticity evolve.

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