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Does social commerce (s-commerce) influence Instagram buying behavior: an empirical research

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Master in Marketing

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"Working hard is important, but there's something that matters even more, believing in yourself." – Harry Potter.

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ABSTRACT

The development of social media platforms has brought on a new electronic commerce (e-commerce) paradigm called social commerce (s-commerce), which takes place via social media. Instagram has shifted towards this reality, by creating Instagram Shopping, a feature that enables brands to showcase and sell their products, and gives consumers access to social knowledge and experiences, by allowing them to interact. However, the purchase process design differs depending on whether the consumer is in the United States of America (USA), where the “Checkout” feature allows them to complete a purchase directly on Instagram, or outside the USA, where users are forward to the merchants' website. Nevertheless, Instagram has long-term plans to make “Checkout” available outside of the USA.

Hence, for brands to leverage these opportunities, it is important to study this new paradigm and understand what drives consumers to use and purchase from Instagram Shopping. This study aims to examine whether consumers perceiving Instagram Shopping as useful and transactions on social media as easy, influences their trust, and the extent to which it impacts their usage and purchase intentions.

Data collection took place via an online questionnaire (quantitative research) built based on existing literature. The analysis was then split into Study 1 – Portugal, Study 2 – USA and a comparison between the two. The results show that perceived usefulness and ease of transaction are good predictors of trust, leading to higher usage and purchase intention, presenting higher values for the American respondents.

Keywords: social commerce, social media, Instagram, trust, intention to use, purchase intention

JEL Classification System: M30 (Marketing and Advertising - General); M31 (Marketing and Advertising - Marketing)

RESUMO

O desenvolvimento das redes sociais fez nascer um novo paradigma de comércio eletrónico (e-commerce) chamado comércio social (s-commerce). O Instagram transformou-se ao criar o Instagram Shopping, que permite às marcas expor e vender os seus produtos, e permite aos consumidores adquirirem conhecimento e experiências sociais, ao permitir interações. No entanto, o processo de compra difere consoante o consumidor esteja nos Estados Unidos da América (EUA), onde a funcionalidade "Checkout" permite concluir uma compra diretamente no Instagram, ou fora dos EUA, onde os utilizadores são encaminhados para o website do vendedor. No entanto, o Instagram tem planos de longo prazo para disponibilizar o "Checkout" fora dos EUA.

Assim, para que as marcas possam aproveitar estas oportunidades, é importante estudar este novo paradigma e compreender o que leva os consumidores a usar e comprar no Instagram Shopping. Este estudo tem como objetivo perceber se a perceção de utilidade perante o Instagram Shopping e a perceção de facilidade das transações nas redes sociais, influencia a confiança dos consumidores e até que ponto impacta a intenção de usar e comprar no Instagram Shopping.

A recolha de dados fez-se através de um questionário online, tendo como base a literatura existente. A análise foi dividida em Estudo 1 – Portugal, Estudo 2 – EUA e uma comparação entre os dois. Os resultados mostram que a perceção de utilidade e de facilidade de transação são bons preditores de confiança, o que consequentemente leva a uma maior intenção de usar e comprar, apresentando valores mais elevados para os norte-americanos.

Keywords: social commerce, redes sociais, Instagram, confiança, intenção de usar, intenção de comprar

Sistema de Classificação JEL: M30 (Marketing and Advertising - General); M31 (Marketing and Advertising - Marketing)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context and Relevance

Over the past few years, the world has witnessed many technological innovations and developments. For instance, Internet has been around for many years, nonetheless, it is constantly and continuously shaping the way brands approach their consumers and market their products. Smartphones are now an essential part of today's modern life, most of the times connected to the internet, constantly in the hands of consumers all over the globe. In the first quarter of 2022, 90,7% of global users accessed the internet via smartphone (Statista, 2022g). Information is, therefore, more accessible than ever.

Amongst other activities, smartphones are used to access social media platforms. In 2021, approximately 56% of people worldwide were social media users, and this share is projected to increase to 74% by 2027. As of 2022, social networking is one of the most popular activities, counting with 4.59 billion social media users (Statista, 2022n). The growth of social media platforms, such as Instagram, has given rise to a new electronic commerce (e-commerce) paradigm called social commerce (s-commerce). Social commerce can be briefly defined as the exchange of goods and services, that have financial value, via social media (Che et al., 2017) and users employ social networking sites (SNSs) features as means for collaboration and sharing online shopping experiences (Kim & Park, 2013). In s-commerce, consumers get social knowledge about products and brands through browsing social media and the content created by others (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013).

Surrounded by major social media platforms, Instagram is the fourth biggest social media app, ranked by number of monthly active users (Statista, 2022d). As of February 2021, 39% of people were Instagram users (Statista, 2022n). In recent years, Instagram has shifted to the social commerce paradigm, by recognizing the huge potential of social networks. Instagram created the Instagram Shopping feature, which makes it possible for brands to present products, product images, prices and information to consumers, and is continuously developing and launching new social commerce features and tools (Herzallah et al., 2021).

The rise of s-commerce on Instagram presents immense challenges and opportunities for brands, as it allows them to be closer to their consumers, target them in an efficient way and foment trust towards the brand. However, Instagram Shopping does not offer the same features everywhere. At the moment, the purchasing journey differs depending on whether the consumer is located in the United States of America (USA) or anywhere else in the world. For those located in the USA, the "Checkout" feature makes it possible for consumers to complete a purchase directly on Instagram. This includes browsing and selecting the items, introducing payment and delivery information, and ultimately completing the purchase. However,

everywhere else, including Portugal, users interested in purchasing a product or service are forward to the merchants' website, having the need to create a new account and reintroduce the payment and delivery information for every different brand website. However, Instagram has long-term plans to make “Checkout” available to businesses outside of the USA (Instagram, 2022a). Accordingly, it becomes important for brands to understand what characteristics influence consumers intention to use and purchase from a rising s-commerce platform such as Instagram. Furthermore, it is relevant to comprehend the differences between Portugal (a European country) and the USA, which is pioneer in the new Instagram Shopping features.

1.2. Research Aim

The purpose of the present study is to assess and compare consumers’ usage and purchase intention on Instagram Shopping in Portugal and the USA. Thus, a thorough investigation will be conducted in order to better understand this new s-commerce paradigm on Instagram. This study further aims to provide an examination on whether consumers perceiving Instagram Shopping as useful and the transactions on social media as easy, influences their trust, and the extent to which this relationship would impact their usage and purchase intentions. This investigation focused on the two previously mentioned samples, leading to a comparison between the two. To properly conduct this research, secondary and primary data is collected.

Bearing this in mind, the present dissertation aims to cover the following objectives: Firstly, to explore the concept of s-commerce, how it is evolving and how does trust play a role in this new paradigm; Secondly, to evaluate the impact of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of transaction on trust and, consequently, its influence on usage and purchase intention on Instagram Shopping. The next objective is to present a comparison between two different Instagram Shopping realities (both differing in terms of features and consumer behavior): Portugal and the USA. Finally, this research aims to provide theoretical and managerial contributions for brands in order to increase trust amongst consumers and benefit from the use of this s-commerce platform in the finest way possible.

To be able to address these objectives, it is important to start by conducting primary research focused on s-commerce, its antecedents and evolution and how does trust arise in the social media environment. It is also relevant to understand the online world, which includes social media, providing a deep dive into Instagram Shopping and how does consumers’ trust shape this reality. Afterwards, there is the need to gather relevant data (through the form of an online survey on the constructs under analysis, with pre-defined scales), to be then treated and analyzed with the support of SPSS, leading to relevant conclusions related to the research problematic. Hence, the aim of the study is to provide insights that will make it possible answer

the following research questions: Firstly, how much do consumers' perceptions of the usefulness of Instagram Shopping and ease of transaction in social media stores impact their trust in social media stores? The second one being what is the role of trust in the purchase intent of consumers regarding Instagram Shopping? And finally, does trust in social media stores and the intention to use Instagram Shopping significantly influence purchase intention?

1.3. Dissertation Structure

The present Master Thesis is written in the form of "Dissertation". It is divided in six major chapters, as described in Figure 1.1. The first chapter's (introduction) purpose is to introduce the topic under study, contextualization, and its relevance. The second chapter (literature review) serves as research ground to understand the key concepts under study. The third chapter illustrates and explains the conceptual model of this study, its variables, and the reasons behind their choice. Furthermore, in this chapter the research hypotheses are discriminated. Then, methodology offers an explanation on how the research was designed and projected, the chosen method to collect and analyze data and how it will be treated. Next, the results chapter presents an analysis and discussion of the data collected. Finally, the main theoretical conclusions and managerial implications are summarized, limitations are pointed out and future researched is suggested.

Figure 1.1 - Dissertation's Structure

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. From e-commerce to s-commerce

Electronic Commerce (e-commerce) has been extensively studied since the early 1990's (Chang et al., 2005) and it can be defined as the use of internet to facilitate, carry out and process business transactions, including a buyer and a seller, and involving an exchange of goods or services for money (DeLone & McLean, 2004). According to Brusch and Rappel (2022), some authors believe that e-commerce has enormous market potential, and some even believe that this type of online commerce is growing exponentially. In fact, many businesses have had to adapt to this online reality. In this context, internet is a useful marketing tool that provides the possibility for domestic and global transactions, by becoming a unifying network for information sharing and delivery (Brusch & Rappel, 2020). E-commerce has brought great changes to the retail market by uncovering new opportunities and is today an important aspect of marketing strategies and consumer relationships (Brusch & Rappel, 2020).

One form of online commerce that is part of e-commerce, however, needs be distinguished from it, is mobile commerce (m-commerce) which includes transactions to exchange goods (including all activities from the purchasing process) that have monetary value and that occur through wireless technologies such as mobile devices and mobile internet (Brusch & Rappel, 2020). This is relevant since smartphones have become an indispensable part of modern life. Nevertheless, consumer behavior in m-commerce differs from e-commerce. It is different to perform a search on a laptop or in a smaller screen of a smartphone, being the last one characterized by more interruptions (Brusch & Rappel, 2020; Goh et al., 2015). Mobile devices can be used for various types of information search, such as check product availability, compare prices, locate products and businesses, ask friends for advice, and read product reviews. The universality of mobile internet makes shopping independent from time and place (Brusch & Rappel, 2020). According to the same authors, e-commerce revenues almost doubled, between 2014 and 2017, from 1.3 trillion U.S. dollars to 2.3 trillion U.S. dollars. In 2021, for retail e-commerce, sales worldwide were already 5.211 billion U.S. dollars and are expected to reach the 7.528 billion U.S. dollars in 2025 (Statista, 2022l). In the first quarter of 2017, 75% of all Internet users purchased a product online (Statista, 2017). As expected, increased mobile use of the Internet and the further development of social networks are responsible for substantial changes in consumer behavior (Leong et al., 2018). According to Statista (2017), and unsurprisingly, in 2017, 53% of Internet users worldwide used mobile devices for online shopping.

Most activities happening in the spectrum of m-commerce, like mobile transactions, take place via mobile applications, more commonly called apps, which are small software programs designed for mobile devices and allow users to perform several activities, such as email,

calendar, web browsing, social networking and, of course, mobile shopping. Therefore, app commerce can be considered a subtype of m-commerce, in which purchases can be made via apps (Hsiao & Chen, 2016).

Alongside with m-commerce, social networks have also presented new business opportunities for companies that are willing to engage in the latest trends of interaction. The growth of social networking sites (SNSs) brought to light a new e-commerce paradigm by the name of social commerce (s-commerce). S-commerce users see SNSs as a tool that allows them to share online shopping experiences, product and service reviews and information (Kim & Park, 2013), which has impacted the consumers' perception and behavior by making the purchase journey easier for consumers (Liang et al., 2011).

Nowadays, consumers rather search for information about the product on social media platforms than a firm's own website, gaining knowledge about the products which then helps consumers to evaluate products and to make better purchasing decisions (Hajli et al., 2013). Thus, social media empowers consumers to share information and knowledge for their friends, family, and other consumers online about products and brands (Liang et al., 2011). In today's connected world, the ease of information sharing and access is precious for consumers in their decision-making process and for building consumer trust. Furthermore, s-commerce users make informed purchases and obtain the best prices by exchanging trustworthy information on certain products and services, which is a unique strength of s-commerce (Kim & Park, 2013).

Social Commerce is a recent phenomenon since it is based on the use of social media, and it can be briefly defined as the exchange of goods and services that have financial value via social media (Yadav et al., 2013). S-commerce websites have several unique characteristics and applications, including recommendation systems, consumer's reviews space, discussion boards, and allow consumers to write and rate a review, all of which are called social commerce components (SCCs) (Che et al., 2017; Hajli, 2015). Within s-commerce, consumers have access to social knowledge and experiences that allow them to better comprehend their online purchases and make more informed purchase decisions (Chen et al., 2017; Huang & Benyoucef, 2015). S-commerce empowers consumers, by allowing them to have an active role as value cocreators in the commercial process, as they can easily rate products and brands marketed online, share their recommendations with other consumers, and contribute to the collective content on social media platforms (Alalwan et al., 2019). Forecasts suggest that the value of social commerce sales will reach around 2.9 trillion U.S. dollars by 2026 (Statista, 2022o; Statista, 2021c).

S-commerce can be considered a part of e-commerce, but distinct from it (Brusch & Rappel, 2020). E-commerce can be differentiated from s-commerce in terms of business goals, consumer connection and system interactions (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013). Regarding

business goals, e-commerce focuses on improving efficiency, implementing strategies such as one-click buying and recommendations based on consumers' past shopping behavior, while s-commerce is mostly oriented towards social goals such as sharing information, collaboration, and networking. Concerning consumers connections, s-commerce involves online communities and aims to enhance conversations and interactions while in e-commerce consumers act more on the individual level. Lastly, it is possible to highlight the differences between the two in terms of system interaction since s-commerce develops more social and interactive approaches (letting consumers express themselves and share information and opinions with other consumers and with the business itself) while e-commerce information is rarely sent back to the business or shared with other consumers (Chen et al., 2017).

On the same note, s-commerce also distinguishes itself from m-commerce through the use of social media, although s-commerce can be mobile and can therefore be considered part of m-commerce. As social media platforms tend to be accessed via apps, s-commerce can likewise be considered a part of app commerce (Brusch & Rappel, 2020).

Nowadays, consumers often seek other people's opinion, whether those being friends and family or complete strangers, before making a purchase. In s-commerce consumers make their purchase decisions by participating in online social media to acquire social knowledge about the product they are looking into purchasing (Huang & Benyoucef, 2015).

2.2. Understanding the Online World

2.2.1. Web 2.0

The trend of social commerce is brought about by the merging of Web 2.0 technologies, e-commerce opportunities, and online communities (Lai, 2010). Web 2.0 is a term that was first used to describe a new way in which World Wide Web started to be utilized as a platform where content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative way (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). For once, applications such as personal web pages, and the idea of content publishing belong to the era of Web 1.0, they were replaced by blogs, and collaborative projects in Web 2.0. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In the end, Web 2.0 can be characterized as "the online activities, sites, and applications that allow individuals to interact in online communities, directly exchange information with one another and create their own content online" (Langaro et al., 2018; Hamilton, 2007) and the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies has allowed e-commerce to evolve (Wiese, 2021).

Representative characteristics of Web 2.0 Social Commerce include harnessing collective intelligence – the competitive advantage of Web 2.0 Social Commerce sites lies on the critical mass of buyers and sellers, creating a network effect, an architecture of participation, by

leveraging algorithmic data management and consumer self-service to reach out to the entire Web, relying on word-of-mouth marketing, market disruption, and arguing on the consensus. (Lai, 2010).

Overall, there are two types of social commerce websites: first there are the websites based on Web 2.0 concepts and technologies, like Amazon, eBay, Alibaba, which do not especially consider social features like content sharing and interactions between consumers, but allow their users to contribute with online reviews, ratings, and rankings (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013). Secondly there are the upgraded e-commerce platforms, that take place on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, that leverage data from the user purchase pricing and purchase history, among other factors (Esmaeili et al., 2020). This study will focus on this last type of s-commerce website. Therefore, to better comprehend this concept, it is important to understand the universe in which it is inserted: social media.

2.2.2. Social Media

Social Media can be defined as a "group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media includes several types of apps and platforms, like Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp, Snapchat, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

Social media is becoming more than just a source of information or a place where people can express their opinions and communicate with one another. According to Wiese (2021) consumers are moving towards SNSs as a new and alternative channel for shopping. In fact, social media is moving from just 'social' to commercial as well. Instagram is no longer used only for social networking but also for business purposes and for shopping. SNSs are the ideal platforms to provide shopping opportunities as these platforms already have considerable user bases, giving them access to millions of possible consumers (Cha, 2009). Social media has evolved into a relevant part of the Internet experience having more than 4.5 billion users in 2022 (Statista, 2022j). In 2022, internet users are spending, on average, a total of 145 minutes, that is 2 hours and 25 minutes scrolling through social media (Statista, 2022a). Instagram is the fourth biggest social media app, ranked by number of monthly active users (Statista, 2022h Statista, 2022i).

2.2.3. Instagram

Instagram is a "free photo and video sharing app available on iPhone and Android" (Instagram, 2019). People can upload photos or videos to the app and share them with their followers or with a certain group of friends. On this social media platform, people can also view, comment and like posts shared by their friends. It is available for anyone aged 13 and over.

Instagram is being accessed by almost 39% of the total Internet users worldwide (Statista, 2022d). In 2021 there were 1.21 billion monthly active users on Instagram, making up over 28% of the world's internet users (Statista, 2021b), being 30,3% of them aged between 18 and 24 years old and 31,7% of them aged between 25 and 34 years old (Statista, 2022c). Instagram is one of the fastest-growing online photo social web services, however the academic research related to this media is limited (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Individuals spend more time on Instagram than other similar sites, suggesting it is of importance to research this media type (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016).

Recent research has identified two main types of social commerce: traditional e-commerce websites that add social tools to facilitate social interaction and sharing, and social networking sites that incorporate commercial features to allow transactions and advertisements (Che et al., 2017; Zhang & Benyoucef, 2016), as for example, Instagram, where consumers have more opportunities to interact with other users and share their own content and experience (Alalwan et al., 2019). Due to the high level of interactivity on social media platforms, consumers are also able to create their own content and share their own experience with an audience. In recent years, Instagram has shifted to the social commerce paradigm, by recognizing the huge potential of social networks and is continuously developing and launching new social commerce features and tools (Herzallah et al., 2021), by the name of Instagram Shopping.

2.2.4. Instagram Shopping

Instagram Shopping (www.instagram.com), launched on May 2020, aiding many business shift their business models to online selling, during the Covid-19 crisis (Instagram, 2020). It is part of a very recent phenomenon by the name of instant shopping, which makes it possible for brands to present products, product images, prices and information to consumers and can be defined as “a subtype of e-commerce that takes place via social media”, it can also be done via mobile apps (Brusch & Rappel, 2020). This feature has a social component through its interaction possibilities: commenting, sharing and liking are possible actions that users can perform, offering users a seamless shopping experience (Brusch & Rappel, 2020). Products can be viewed directly on the Instagram app. In the case that consumers wish to know more in-depth information, users can do so without media discontinuity: Information is always available with a single click on the article (Brusch & Rappel, 2020). Instagram Shopping comprises a set of features across Instagram that allow individuals to shop through photos and videos. It gives businesses an immersive storefront for people to explore their products (Instagram, n.d.-d, n.d.-b, 2020).

Instagram Shopping features include (Instagram, 2022b):

- *Shops:* A customizable storefront that allows individuals to shop directly on business profiles.
- *Shopping tags:* Tags that feature products from the business catalogue that can direct consumers to purchase those products from their website or in app.
- *Shop in Explore:* A tab in Explore that lets people browse tagged shoppable content from brands and creators.
- *Collections:* A set of products that businesses can arrange for their shop to help consumers find the products they love.
- *Product detail page:* A product-focused page that showcases relevant information of an item, such as pricing and product descriptions. These details are pulled from the product catalogue.
- *Ads with product tags:* Businesses can boost new or existing shopping posts in Ads Manager and Instagram to increase the reach of their shoppable content.

Moreover, Instagram Shopping allows consumers to initiate the purchase process, by clicking on a “blue button”. The purchase process can be carried out easily and quickly, as this button does not require much effort to navigate. This fast and seamless purchasing process creates new opportunities for consumers and brands, but also generates some risks (Brusch & Rappel, 2020).

At this moment, there are differences in the purchase process design, as the “blue button” can perform two different actions, depending on where consumers are located. For those located in the United States of America (USA), this “blue button” is called “Checkout”. Everywhere else this button forwards users interested in buying to the merchants' website and, in the case of Portugal, it is called “Ver no site” (Figure 2.1) (Instagram, n.d.-c, n.d.-a).

In the USA, when a consumer taps to view a product from a brand’s shopping post, they will see a “Checkout on Instagram” button on the product page. By tapping on this button, various options such as size or color are presented for the consumers to choose from (Figure 2.2). Afterwards, they will be able to proceed to payment without ever leaving Instagram. Furthermore, consumers only need to enter their name, email, billing information and shipping address the first time they check out. Once the first order is complete, this information is securely saved for convenience the next time people shop. Consumers also receive notifications about shipment and delivery right inside Instagram, so they can keep track of the purchase (Instagram Blog, 2019).

Checkout on Instagram is only available to all eligible business and creator accounts in the USA. However, Instagram has long-term plans to make “Checkout” feature available to businesses outside of the USA (Instagram, 2022a).

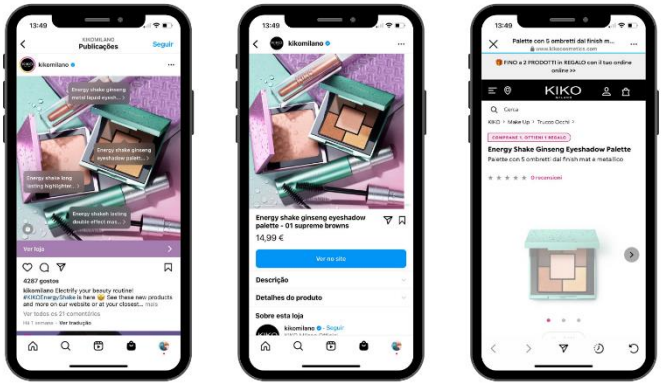

Figure 2.1 - Instagram Shopping "Ver no site" button

Source: Kiko Milano’s Instagram page (@kikomilano)

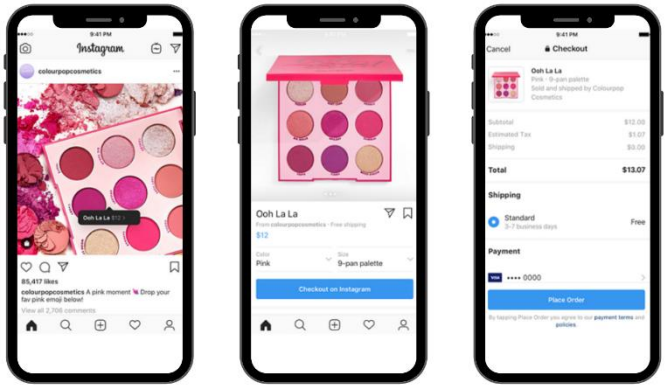

Figure 2.2 - Instagram Shopping "Checkout" button

Source: adapted from Marketeer (https://marketeer.sapo.pt/ja-pode-ir-as-compras-no-instagram-sem-sair-da-app/)

For businesses that use Checkout on Instagram, consumers can also see (Instagram, 2022c):

1. *Product launches*: A way for businesses to announce their product launches on Instagram, where people can preview details and set reminders to purchase as soon as it is available.

2. *Shopping partner permissions*: A set of permissions that businesses can extend to partners on Instagram to increase the reach of products. A shopping partner

is an account that gives or receives permission to tag products or link a shop to another account.

2.3. Consumer Behavior and Trust on s-commerce

When considering making a purchase, consumers gather information to aid their decision. In social commerce, consumers make their purchase decisions by participating in online social media to acquire social knowledge about the product they want (Huang & Benyoucef, 2015). In fact, the purchase stimulus can arise by browsing social media (Chen et al., 2017) where consumers can also look at comments, information and recommendations from other consumers or even solicit opinions from their friends and followers (Zheng et al., 2013). Before visiting a physical store, in most cases, consumers have already made their decision. In reality, online and offline buyers search for information that aids their purchasing decision on social media platforms (Chen et al., 2017).

The act of purchasing a product from any website or specifically a social media store, requires trust on consumers' side. Trust has great impact and relevance far beyond s-commerce, due to the intrinsic human need to comprehend their social surroundings and how others behave (Gefen, et al., 2003). According to Luhmann (1979), trust is the belief that others will react in predictable and expectable ways or, as Gefen (2000) put it, the confidence a person has in their favorable expectations of what other people will do, based, most of the times, on previous interactions. In the context of commerce, trust between two transacting parties comprises a set of preconceived ideas about the integrity, ability and benevolence of the transaction partner to deliver what has been promised (Sembada & Koay, 2021; Gefen et al., 2003). On an e-commerce context, and consequently on an s-commerce scenario, trust is critical, consumers must be able to trust the vendor not to engage in opportunistic behavior, and so it is a key component of online commerce (Sembada & Koay, 2021).

Although s-commerce is a subtype of e-commerce, it has some unique characteristics that enable the formation of trust. According to Kim and Park (2013), there are several factors that make social commerce trustworthy, such as information quality, communication, and word of mouth (WOM) effects since these are created by consumers themselves. Therefore, by increasing the level of social trust, the chances of interactions either between consumers and business organizations or between consumers themselves improves and increases (Aladwani, 2018).

Since online transactions are deeply unregulated and psychologically distant, often consumers find that building trust is too complex and opt to give up on purchasing goods online (Gefen, 2000), hence cultivating and managing consumer trust has been a priority on the agenda of companies that market digitally (Grewal et al., 2004). The ease of transacting will lead consumers to place higher trust in social media stores, meaning that consumers will build

trust in social media stores when they are able to easily find information about the purchase procedures and get updates on their purchased item status (Nirmalya, 1996; Sembada & Koay, 2021). Previous studies have found that the lack of trust is one of the main reasons leading to consumers being hesitant on making internet purchases or avoiding them (Kim & Park, 2013), and, according to Jones and Leonard (2008) distrust is the core reason for online firms to fail on forming positive relationships between consumers. In fact, building trust is more important for s-commerce firms than for other firms because s-commerce is built on SNSs, which allow users to create and share content with other users easily. Therefore, trust gained by addressing consumers' complaints and anxiety that cause uncertainties can help s-commerce firms to build a stable and sustainable growth and exploit their economic potential (Kim & Park, 2013).

However, little is known about the effect of social commerce on consumers' intention to use and purchase intention on social media platforms, such as Instagram. In today's online world, social interactions on the Internet, particularly social media platforms, shape new forms of interconnectivity and relationships between users, thus, the study of trust might be influenced by the SNSs on which users interact (Wiese, 2021). According to Wiese (2021), previous research suggests that users' trust comes from social interactions which significantly influences their intention to participate in potential business activities on a given SNS. Accordingly, the more a user trusts an SNS, the more likely the he/she is to engage in s-commerce (Han & Windsor, 2011). Thus, developing trust will help consumers overcome perceptions of risk and insecurity (Hong & Cha, 2013; McKnight et al., 2002) and bring consumers one step closer to actually purchasing a product.

2.4. Usage and Purchase Intentions

S-commerce makes active use of WOM through SNSs, which can be seen as a key factor influencing consumers' trust (Kim & Park, 2013). Previous studies have considered the variable purchase intention for trust performance. Purchase intention has been defined as the likelihood of the future purchase of a service or product (Kim & Park, 2013; Richardson et al., 1996). Previous studies have investigated the relationship between trust and purchase intentions. For example, Yoon (2002) studied the relationships between various factors such as antecedents of trust (transaction security, website features, and search functions), consequences of trust (purchase intentions), and a mediating variable (website awareness) and found that trust on the website has a significant effect on online purchase intentions (Kim & Park, 2013; Yoon, 2002). Previous studies have also studied the antecedent perceived usefulness, finding that it has a positive significant influence on intention to use (Brusch & Rappel, 2020). Kim and Park (2013), investigated the effects of trust in purchase intentions and found that trust was positively related to this variable. Even though previous studies have

examined the relationship between trust and purchase intentions, very few focused on an s-commerce perspective. Trust in s-commerce is more likely to be a precondition than an option because of the nature of SNSs (Kim & Park, 2013), in this particular case, Instagram. Therefore, there is a need to study the effects of trust on purchase intentions in the context of s-commerce.

2.5. Generation Z and the impact of Covid 19

Generation Z (Gen Z), are often called “digital natives” for being the first generation to have grown up surrounded by the digital world (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). Gen Zs are the newest generation born between 1995 and early 2010s and are characterized as individualistic, pragmatic, open-minded and socially responsible (Priporas et al., 2020). Members of this generation have a high education, are technologically savvy, innovative and creative (Priporas et al., 2017). They consume content more than any other generation, spending nearly 11 hours a day scrolling, liking and sharing material across all their devices (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). They check Instagram at least five times a day and are highly likely to be exposed to digital advertising on social media (Chen, 2018; Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). Generation Z is the largest generation, constituting approximately 32% of the global population in 2019 (Miller and Lu, 2018) and is expected to have a significant impact on consumer sales on a global basis, therefore it is important to take this generation into consideration when conducting research regarding social media and online commerce (McKinsey, 2018).

Aside from generational factors, in the past two years, consumer behavior has been influenced both by the COVID-19 pandemic itself and by government restrictions. As visits to physical stores were restricted, consumers of all generations, during the pandemic, were more likely to buy goods and services online, causing purchases in this space to grow higher and higher and so, there was a significant shift toward online spending. The COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing, and staying at home pushed consumers to shop online (Gu et al., 2021).

According to Statista (2021a), in the USA, 20% of people spent between 2 and 3 additional daily hours on social media during the pandemic and 17,8% spent more than 3 additional hours per day on social media than they did before the pandemic. Furthermore, the average share of internet users who purchased online increased from 53% before the pandemic (2019) to 60% following the onset of the pandemic (2020/21) (UNCTAD, 2022). Taking into consideration the acceleration of online commerce, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it becomes even more relevant to study the online commerce spectrum.

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

3.1. Conceptual Model

In recent years, a few studies have been conducted regarding the effect of perceived usefulness (PU) on intention to use (IU), other regarding the influence of perceived ease of transaction (PET) on trust in social media stores (TSMS) and others studying the influence of trust on purchase intentions (PI) and intention to use (IU). However, up to the moment when this dissertation is being written, there are no studies focusing on the influence of these variables specifically on Instagram Shopping. Furthermore, there is no specific scientific proof of the relation between trust and purchase intention and intention to use on this category.

Bearing this in mind, and according to the information collected in the previous chapter, the conceptual research framework was elaborated in order to study how consumers perceive the usefulness and the ease of transactions on Instagram Shopping and assess how these dimensions influence trust, as well as whether it leads to higher intention to use and purchase on Instagram Shopping (Figure 3.1).

3.2. Research Hypothesis

Having the conceptual model defined, the hypothesis can now be formulated and tested to verify if those are confirmed or refuted by the analysis of the data that was gathered through the questionnaire.

Brusch & Rappel (2020) studied the effect of perceived usefulness on intention to use and found that perceived usefulness has a meaningful influence on intention to use, in the context of s-commerce. On the other hand, Sembada & Koay (2021) investigated the influence of perceived ease of transaction on trust and consequently trust on intention to shop in the Indonesian market. The relationship between ease of transaction and trust was found to be significant and positive. The authors also found that the indirect relationship of perceived ease of transaction on purchase intention through trust was mostly significant and positive, although, in this case, it was moderated by another variable, perceived control over alternate means. Lastly, Kim & Park (2013) researched how trust impacts purchase intention, finding that trust in s-commerce had a significant and positive influence on purchase intention. Based on this information, the present study assumes the following hypotheses:

H1: *Perceived usefulness positively influences trust in social media stores.*

It is expected that by perceiving Instagram Shopping as useful, consumers will have higher trust levels in social media stores.

H2: *Perceived ease of transaction positively influences trust in social media stores.*

Following the same logic, it is expected that by perceiving transactions on Instagram Shopping as easy, consumers will then have higher levels of trust in social media stores. Consumers build trust when they are able to easily find information about the procedures of purchase and get updates on their purchasing process (Nirmalya, 1996).

H3: *Trust in social media stores positively influences intention to use.*

H4: *Trust in social media stores positively influences purchase intention.*

When trusting social media stores, it is expected that consumers would have higher chances of using Instagram Shopping and purchasing from it.

H5: *Intention to use positively Influences purchase intention.*

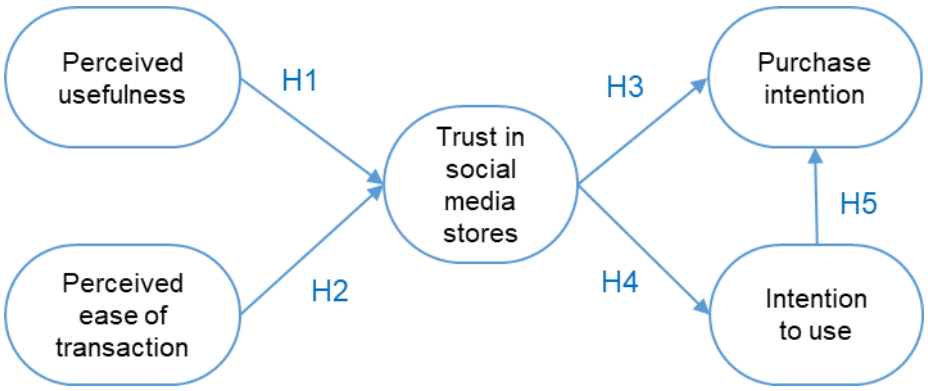

Figure 3.1 - Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Approach

The purpose of this study and research is to unveil conclusions regarding Instagram Shopping as an s-commerce platform, by testing the proposed hypothesis, based on the literature. Furthermore, the goal is to present a comparison between Portuguese and American Instagram users. There are several characteristics that distinguish these two countries in terms of social commerce behaviors. Instagram users in the USA have access to a set of Instagram Shopping features that have not yet been made available in the rest of the world. Apart from location, there are also cultural and behavioral differences between these two countries. Thus, it makes it interesting to compare and analyze the two and assess whether it influences the results of this study. Quantitative research techniques seek to quantify data and apply some form of statistical analysis (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Accordingly, quantitative research will be conducted leading to quantitative conclusions.

Since this study aims to understand the consumer's purchase and usage intention on Instagram Shopping, the method selected for this research was questionnaire survey method (quantitative research), in order to have more data to draw the conclusions and test the proposed hypothesis. This quantitative method allows to quantify data and subsequently apply a statistical analysis, it is simple to administer, and the data obtained are consistent since the responses are limited to the alternatives presented. Moreover, this method allows to reach an audience that would be unreachable any other way, for example, respondents from the USA.

This research follows a descriptive research structure, having the research questions and hypotheses been previously formulated. Furthermore, the single cross-sectional format was used, having data and information collected from only one sample of respondents. The questionnaire consists of an online survey, aiming to reach a significant audience, distributed online, mostly through social media platforms and via email, with a snowball effect and through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk; https://www.mturk.com/). It targeted both male and female users of Instagram. The questionnaire contains questions based on already existing literature, shaped to fit the purpose of this study, namely pre-defined scales questions. Final conclusions will be conceptualized from the existent data, through SPSS analysis.

4.2. Questionnaire

4.2.1. Development and Data Collection

In structured data collection, a formal questionnaire is prepared, the questions are asked in a prearranged order and most questions are fixed-response alternative questions that require the respondent to select from a predetermined set of responses (Malhotra & Birks, 2007).

The questionnaire design and data collection took place in Qualtrics Survey Software, with fixed-response alternative questions and pre-defined scales. The use of fixed-response questions reduces the variability in the results and makes coding, analysis and interpretation of data relatively simple (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). There are several ways that this research benefited from an online survey, such as the speed of data collection, the low costs, the higher quality of responses, the overseas reach, the removal of interviewer bias, the increase in data quality and the ability to contact certain target groups (in this particular case, Instagram users) (Malhotra & Birks, 2007).

Only one survey was developed, containing questions allowing to split the survey into two samples: Instagram users from Portugal and Instagram users from the USA. It would be also possible to distinguish those who have or have not interacted with Instagram Shopping, being the last ones the minority (~22%). People living in the USA are the only ones who have access to the “Checkout” feature of Instagram. This feature allows consumers to complete a purchase (pay and choose delivery address) directly on the Instagram App. The survey was available in both Portuguese and English, as the goal was to get answers not only from Portugal but also from the United States of America (USA).

The questionnaire began with a small introduction revealing the purpose of the study, followed by a paragraph explaining that it was part of a master dissertation, that the questionnaire was destined to Instagram users, the duration of the survey and assuring the confidentiality of data. The first two questions were elimination questions, regarding the willingness to voluntarily answer the survey and excluding respondents who did not have an Instagram account (since those who did not have an Instagram account did not have a suitable profile for the main objective of the investigation). This ensured that all participants are familiar with the use of this social media platform. After this introductory part, the survey was then divided into 4 sections.

Since Instagram Shopping is a recent function and the “Checkout” feature is only available to users in the USA at this time, and not yet available on the Portuguese market, it can be assumed that some participants, specially from Portugal, are not very familiar with this Instagram function (~22%, as mentioned above). Therefore, the respondents were shown images and given an explanation, in the first section, regarding what Instagram Shopping consisted of. This explanation was followed by a question regarding whether respondents had

ever interacted (interact = click on posts with product tags on Instagram Feed or Stories, search for products on Instagram, purchase products through Instagram, search for Shops on Instagram, open an Instagram Shop ad, etc.) with an Instagram Shopping feature. The second section was related to consumers perception of Instagram and social media stores in general where different constructs were being analyzed, such as trust in social media stores and perceived ease of transaction. The third section related to consumer's perceptions and intentions regarding Instagram Stores, where more constructs were being analyzed, such as purchase intention, intentions to use and perceived usefulness. The last section included three demographic questions, regarding gender, age, and location.

4.2.2. Data Measurement and Scales

The questions were developed based on scales found in the literature to measure each variable. Table 4.1 below presents the variables, the respective scale's author, and the number of items for each variable. The full list can be found in Appendix B.

Table 4.1 - Variables, Scale's Authors, and Number of Items

Variables	*Scale's Author*	*N^{er} of Items*
Perceived Usefulness	(Brusch & Rappel, 2020)	4
Perceived Ease of Transaction	(Sembada & Koay, 2021)	4
Trust in Social Media Stores	(Sembada & Koay, 2021)	3
Purchase Intentions	(Kim & Park, 2013)	4
Intention to Use	(Brusch & Rappel, 2020)	4

For most questions, the respondents were required to rate the items on a 7-point Likert Scale, from 1 – Strongly disagree to 7 – Strongly agree. The questions on consumer's age, gender and location were used as control variables and were presented as multiple-choice questions or list. Gender was measured between "female", "male" and "non-binary/third gender". Age was measured and divided in four groups ("1" to "7" denotes Under 18 years old, 18-24 years old, 25-34 years old, 35-44 years old, 45-54 years old, 55-64 years old and over 65 years old, respectively). Location was measured from the list of countries presented in Qualtrics.

4.2.3. Pre-test

Before implementing the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted. This pilot test allowed to assess whether the questionnaire needed any revisions or alterations before being implemented. Thus, the questionnaire was sent to 30 respondents (15 in English, and 15 in

Portuguese) aiming to get feedback on its structure, flow, comprehensibility, feasibility, concept understandability, and duration and identify potential errors, misleading questions, or any additional problems. Afterwards, some changes on wording were required so that the questions became clearer and more cohesive, a deeper explanation of the concept Instagram Shopping was developed, for those who had never interacted with this Instagram feature. Finally, after all the corrections were implemented, the final questionnaire was administered and was available to public from July to August 2022.

4.2.4. Universe and Sample

The universe considered for this study included everyone with an Instagram account, located in Portugal and the USA. The sample was selected under convenience sampling, links to the online questionnaire were published on Facebook Groups, WhatsApp, Instagram, and other social media channels using snowball sampling. Furthermore, in order to obtain a significant sample of American respondents, the questionnaire was also distributed using MTurk.

A total of 649 responses were registered. Out of these 649 responses obtained, 27 respondents did not have an Instagram account, which was mandatory to be considered eligible for the present study. Therefore, only 622 respondents were eligible. From these, 135 were incomplete responses and so these were not considered, leaving 487 responses remaining. Of these 487 respondents, 224 were from the USA, 228 from Portugal and 35 from other parts of the world. The last ones were also disregarded from this study. In the end, the present study is composed of a 452 valid sample of respondents, which yields an effective response rate of 70%, out of which only 99 had never interacted with Instagram Shopping (~22%).

The questionnaire was split into two sections containing the same set of questions with slight differences in phrasing. The first section was presented to those who had already interacted with Instagram Shopping and the second to those who had not, e.g.: “Using Instagram *makes* it easier for me to shop” and “Using Instagram *would make* it easier for me to shop”, respectively. For this analysis and simplification reasons, the phrasing of first set of questions was considered. The results will be analyzed, considering two different samples: Portugal and the USA. All statistical analysis will be performed for both samples separately and then compared.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Data Treatment

The first step for the data treatment was to export all the data collected in the questionnaire from Qualtrics as an Excel file. The data was then imported into the software IBM SPSS Statistics 28 to compute the tests. Using this software, the following analysis was made: Descriptive analysis, Multiple Regression Analysis and Simple Regression Analysis. Initially, it was necessary to identify the correct type of variable for each item being evaluated. Gender and location were inserted as nominal variables. Age was treated as an ordinal variable. For the remaining items, for which it was used a 7-Point Likert Scale, a scale variable was used. The following sections are divided in “Study 1 – Portugal” where the Portuguese sample is analyzed, followed by “Study 2 – United States of America” which comprises the American respondents’ analysis and finally “Two Countries Comparison – Portugal *vs* United States of America”, presenting a comparison between the results from the two countries’ respondents.

5.2. STUDY 1 – Portugal

5.2.1. Respondents Profile

According to Statista (2022b), as of March 2022, Portugal had almost 6 million active Instagram users, 23,9% of those aged between 18 and 24 years old, and 27,7% between 25 and 34 years old (Statista, 2022b).

In order to facilitate data interpretation, the age was presented to respondents as a multiple-choice question, with 7 different age groups. The data obtained demonstrates that the majority of the sample is composed by those between 18 and 24 years old (55,26%), followed by people aged between 25 and 34 years old, which represents 27,19% of the sample. These are followed by those aged between 35 and 44 and between 45 and 54 years old, both with 7,46%. Finally, people aged between 55 and 64 years old with 1,75% and people younger than 18 and older than 65, composing only 0,88% of the sample. This distribution can be visualized in the pie chart from Figure 5.1 - Age Distribution – Portugal. Regarding gender, 68,42% of the respondents were women while 31,14% of the respondents were men. Only 0,44% identified as non-binary/third gender (Figure 5.2).

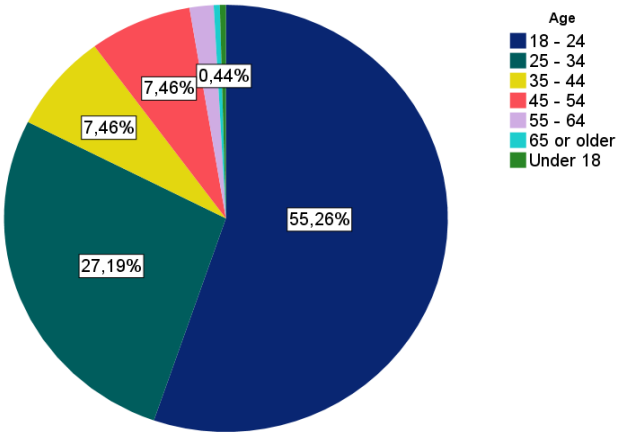

Figure 5.1 - Age Distribution – Portugal

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

Figure 5.3 shows the count and percentage of Portuguese respondents who have/ have not interacted with Instagram Shopping. It is considered an interaction with Instagram Shopping to click on posts with product tags on Instagram Feed or Stories, to search for products on Instagram, to purchase products through Instagram, to search for Shops on Instagram, or to open an Instagram Shop ad. Although the majority has in fact interacted with Instagram Shopping (65,35%), there is a considerable share of respondents who had never interacted with it (34,65%), which might influence the results, since around a third of the sample is less knowledgeable of this feature, although all the respondents were offered an explanation about what Instagram Shopping consists of.

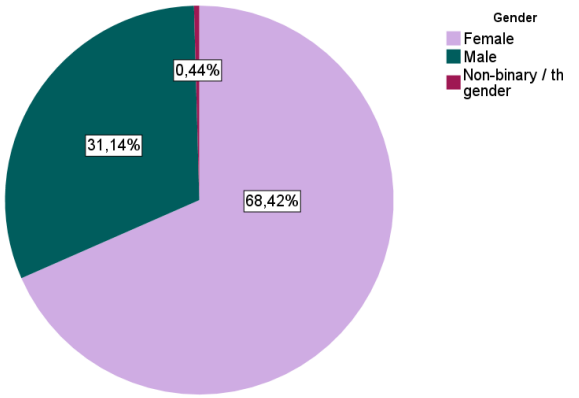

Figure 5.2 - Gender Distribution – Portugal

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

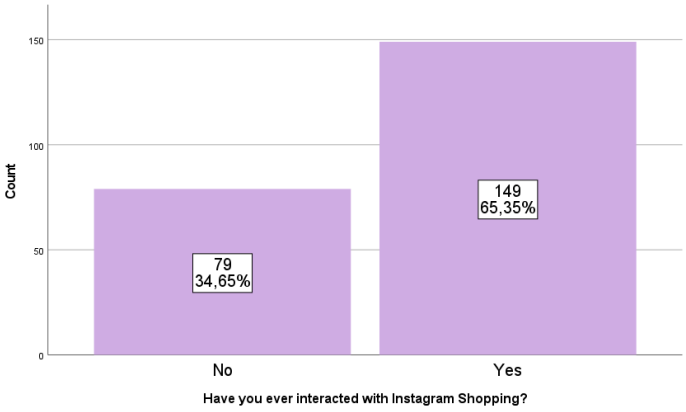

Figure 5.3 – Interactions with Instagram Shopping – Portugal

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

5.2.2. Descriptive Statistics

The following section provides the Descriptive Analysis elaborated through SPSS Statistics 28. Both the Mean and Standard Deviation were computed for all items and to the new subscales represented as constructs and computed accordingly, as well as the maximum and minimum values for each item.

Perceived Usefulness

The construct perceived usefulness was composed by 4 variables. The values for the Mean and Standard Deviation of each item are displayed in Table 5.1. PU_3 – *"Using Instagram Shopping enables me to accomplish shopping tasks more quickly"* was the item with the highest mean value, 4,71. Although respondents tend to slightly agree that Instagram Shopping enables them to perform shopping tasks quicker, they also tend to slightly disagree that using Instagram Shopping helps them to make better purchasing decisions (PU_1 mean = 3,71).

The construct PU_PT representing perceived usefulness from Portuguese respondents was obtained through computing the mean of the items PU_1, PU_2, PU_3 and PU_4. PU_PT has mean value of 4,38 and Standard Deviation of 1,096. The Mean value is higher but relatively close to the middle value in the Likert Scale from 1 to 7, indicating that the respondents tend to reveal neutral levels of perceived usefulness, between neither agree nor disagree and somewhat agree.

Table 5.1 - Descriptive Statistics for PU

		MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
PU_1	Using Instagram Shopping can help me to make better purchasing decisions	1	7	3,71	1,305
PU_2	Using Instagram Shopping makes it easier for me to shop	1	7	4,60	1,319
PU_3	Using Instagram Shopping enables me to accomplish shopping tasks more quickly	1	7	4,71	1,387
PU_4	Using Instagram Shopping helps me to perform many things more conveniently	1	7	4,50	1,394
PU_PT		1,00	7,00	4,3827	1,09650

Perceived Ease of Transaction

Perceived ease of transaction was composed by 4 variables. The values for the Mean and Standard Deviation of each item are displayed in Table 5.2.

The item with higher mean value, 5,16, was PET_2 – *"I find that interactions with social media shops do not require a lot of mental effort"*. The construct PET_PT representing perceived ease of transaction from Portuguese respondents was obtained through computing the mean of the items PET_1, PET_2, PET_3 and PET_4, having a mean value of 4,79 and Standard Deviation of 0,95. The Mean value is higher than the middle value in the Likert Scale from 1 to 7, however, only slightly above, indicating that the Portuguese respondents tend to be between neutral to slightly agreeing that transactions on Instagram Shopping are easy.

Table 5.2 - Descriptive Statistics for PET

	I find that interactions with social media shops…	MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
PET_1	… Are largely clear and understandable	1	7	4,79	1,190
PET_2	… Do not require a lot of mental effort	1	7	5,16	1,169
PET_3	… Are effortless to do	1	7	5,05	1,205
PET_4	… Provide me with all the information I need	1	7	4,17	1,270
PET_PT		1,00	6,75	4,7939	0,95045

Trust in Social Media Stores

Trust in social media stores (TSMS) was composed by 3 variables. The values for the Mean and Standard Deviation of each item are displayed in the Table 5.3. TSMS_2 – *"Social media shops are honest with me if I purchase products"* was the item with the highest mean value, 4,64, revealing that respondents tend to somewhat agree that social media stores are honest with their consumers.

The construct TSMS_PT represents trust in social media stores from the Portuguese respondents and was obtained through computing the mean of the items TSMS_1, TSMS_2 and TSMS_3. Overall, the mean for TSMS_PT is equal to 4,52 with a Standard Deviation of 0,915, indicating that the Portuguese respondents tend to slightly agree that Social Media stores are trustworthy.

Table 5.3 - Descriptive Statistics for TSMS

		MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
TSMS_1	Social media shops are competent in keeping their promise	2	7	4,59	0,955
TSMS_2	Social media shops are honest with me if I purchase products	2	7	4,64	1,008
TSMS_3	Social media shops don't take advantage of me if I purchase products	1	7	4,35	1,230
TSMS_PT		2,00	7,00	4,5234	0,91485

Intention to Use

Intention to use (IU) was composed by 4 variables. The values for the Mean and Standard Deviation of each item are displayed in the Table 5.4. IU_4 – *"I have strong intentions to buy via Instagram Shopping"* was the item with the lowest mean value, 3,65. Therefore, on average, Portuguese respondents tend to slightly disagree to having strong intentions to buy via Instagram Shopping. The remaining items all present mean values between 4,07 and 4,25.

The construct IU_PT represents intention to use Instagram Shopping from Portuguese respondents and was obtained through computing the mean of the items IU_1, IU_2, IU_3 and IU_4. Overall, the mean for IU_PT is equal to 4,02 with a Standard Deviation of 1,381, which indicates that the Portuguese respondents tend to be neutral regarding their intention to use Instagram Shopping.

Table 5.4 - Descriptive Statistics for IU

		MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
IU_1	Given the chance, I intend to shop by Instagram Shopping	1	7	4,25	1,510
IU_2	I will recommend Instagram Shopping to others	1	7	4,07	1,399
IU_3	I'm considering using Instagram Shopping	1	7	4,11	1,560
IU_4	I have strong intentions to buy via Instagram Shopping	1	7	3,65	1,642
IU_PT		1,00	7,00	4,0197	1,38138

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention (PI) was composed by 4 variables. The values for the Mean and Standard Deviation of each item are displayed in the Table 5.5. PI_2 – *"Given the opportunity, I would consider purchasing products on Instagram Shops in the future"* was the item with higher mean value, 4,59. The remaining items all present mean values even closer to 4 (middle value on the Likert scale).

The construct PI_PT representing purchase intention from Portuguese respondents was obtained through computing the mean of the items PI_1, PI_2, PI_3 and PI_4. PI_PT has mean value of 4,35 and Standard Deviation of 1,408. Equivalent to the previous construct (PU_PT), the mean value is higher but relatively close to the middle value in the Likert Scale from 1 to 7, indicating that the respondents tend to reveal neutral levels of purchase intention.

Table 5.5 - Descriptive Statistics for PI

		MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
PI_1	I am likely to purchase products/services on Instagram Shops	1	7	4,33	1,523
PI_2	Given the opportunity, I would consider purchasing products on Instagram Shops in the future	1	7	4,59	1,453
PI_3	It is likely that I will actually purchase products on Instagram Shops in the near future	1	7	4,22	1,529
PI_4	Given the opportunity, I intend to purchase products on Instagram Shops	1	7	4,27	1,586
PI_PT		1,00	7,00	4,3531	1,40848

5.2.3. Exploratory Analysis

In this section, SPSS 28 was used to perform the following tests: reliability analysis, simple and multiple regression analysis. Subsequently, the output will be analyzed and described in order to create the statistical ground for conclusions.

5.2.3.1. Reliability Analysis

A reliability test aims to assess the reliability of the sample. This analysis was conducted through the statistical program SPSS 28. In order to assess the reliability of the study, the Cronbach's Alphas were computed for all items and constructs. Cronbach's alpha is a way of assessing the reliability by comparing the amount of shared variance, or covariance, among the items making up a construct to the amount of overall variance. So, if the construct is reliable, there should be a great deal of covariance among the items relative to the variance. It provides a numerical value for the consistency of data, ranging between 0 and 1 and a value of 0,6 or less generally indicates unsatisfactory internal consistency reliability. The coefficient alpha value tends to increase with an increase in the number of scale items (Malhotra & Birks, 2007).

The results can be found in the Table 5.6 below. They show that for all constructs the alpha values are higher than 0,7, thus indicating high reliability values, being the lowest alpha value equal to 0,794 and belonging to the construct Perceived Ease of Transaction. On the other hand, Purchase Intention presents the highest alpha value, 0,943.

Table 5.6 - Reliability analysis for all items

CONSTRUCT	ITEMS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
PERCEIVED USEFULNESS	PU_1; PU_2; PU_3; PU_4	0,827
PERCEIVED EASE OF TRANSACTION	PET_1; PET_2; PET_3; PET_4	0,794
TRUST IN SOCIAL MEDIA STORES	TSMS_1; TSMS_2; TSMS_3	0,814
INTENTION TO USE	IU_1; IU_2; IU_3; IU_4	0,924
PURCHASE INTENTION	PI_1; PI_2; PI_3; PI_4	0,943

5.2.4. Regression Analysis

In order to understand the relationships between the different constructs and to test this study's conceptual model and hypothesis, simple and multiple regression analyses were conducted. Whereas a simple regression is characterized as a model with a single independent variable,

a multiple regression analysis describes a model with two or more independent variables, allowing to examine the impact of two or more variables on a dependent variable (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Thus, the model was split into 4 regressions to facilitate the analysis.

5.2.4.1. Assumption of the Multiple Regression

In order to verify if the model can be used for further statistical inference, this means to be able to generalize conclusions to the population, all the assumptions of the linear regression must hold. If the assumptions are not fulfilled, the results can only be used to characterize the sample itself. The conceptual model of this research was explored in four different analyses, all of which underlined the same assumptions. This is possible since the independent variables, in all configurations, are the same and always valid. Since the present model has two dependent variables, the verification of the assumptions was performed twice, first with intention to use as the dependent variable and then purchase intention as the dependent variable. For all intervals, the confidence level is 95%.

For the assumptions to hold, the linear regression must fulfill the following requirements: Linearity of the model; The mean of the residual component must be zero; The independent variables must not be correlated with the residual terms; There must be no correlation among the residual terms; The variance of the random term is constant; The residuals follow a normal distribution; And there must be no correlation among the explanatory variables. For this sample of respondents, it is possible to assume, by construction, that the model is linear and, therefore, the assumption “Linearity of the model” holds:

$$\boldsymbol{Intention\ to\ Use} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times Perceived\ Usefulness + \beta_2 \times Perceived\ Ease\ of\ Transaction + \beta_3 \times Trust\ in\ Social\ Media\ Stores + \varepsilon$$

$$\boldsymbol{Purchase\ Intention} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times Perceived\ Usefulness + \beta_2 \times Perceived\ Ease\ of\ Transaction + \beta_3 \times Trust\ in\ Social\ Media\ Stores$$

Furthermore, all the assumptions hold except one: the residuals do not seem to follow a normal distribution, for neither of the dependent variables (Figure 5.4 and Figure 5.5). The SPSS outputs for all the other assumptions can be seen in Appendix C.

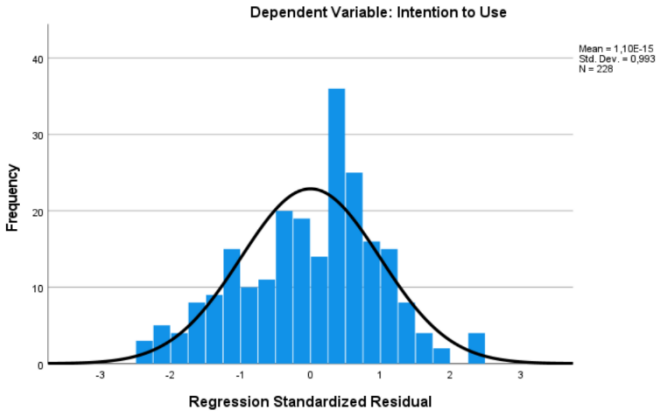

Figure 5.4 - Histogram - Distribution of the residuals (IU as the dependent variable)

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

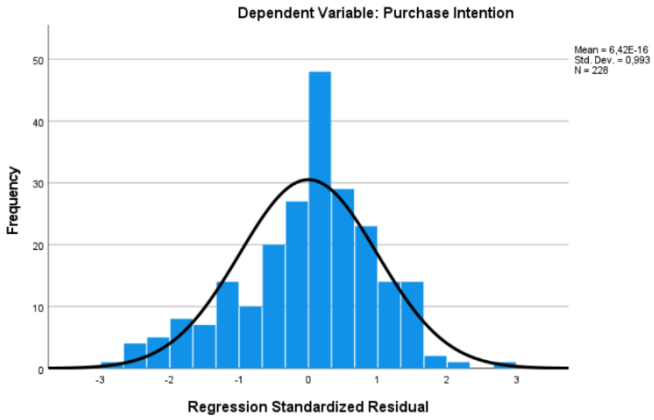

Figure 5.5 - Histogram - Distribution of the residuals (PI as the dependent variable)

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

As some of the previous assumptions don't hold, the model can only be used to characterize the sample under analysis and conclusions cannot be generalized for the population.

5.2.4.2. Multiple Regression – PET and PU as independent variables and TSMS as the dependent variable

Bearing in mind the conceptual model, the impact of each variable must be determined. This multiple regression aims to evaluate whether the constructs perceived ease of transaction and perceived usefulness (as independent variables) positively influence the construct trust in social media stores (dependent variable) (H1, H2). From SPSS the following output was obtained:

Table 5.7 - Multiple Regression, TSMS as the dependent variable

MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS	SIG	R SQUARE
	B	STD. ERROR	B		
(CONSTANT)	1,915	0,283		<,001	
PU	0,318	0,061	0,330	<,001	0,286
PET	0,248	0,053	0,297	<,001	

From the table above and looking at the regression coefficients it is now possible to write the adjusted regression equation:

$$TSMS = 1{,}915 + 0{,}318PU + 0{,}248PET + \varepsilon$$

PU and PET are the explanatory variables in this model. The variable PU has a standardized regression coefficient of 0,330, which means that, all other variables held constant, an increase of one in PU is associated with an average increase of 0,330 units in TSMS. Following the same logic, the variable PET has a lower regression coefficient of 0,297, thus every unit increase in PET leads to a 0,297 increase of TSMS.

Both PU (sig <0,001) and PET (sig <0,001) are significant in the model, leading to the conclusion that there is statistical evidence that PU and PET significantly influence TSMS. These results support the hypotheses:

H1: *Perceived usefulness positively influences trust in social media stores.*

H2: *Perceived ease of transaction positively influences on trust in social media stores.*

The R Square has a value of 0,286, meaning that the explanatory variables in the model, PU and PET, explain 28,6% of the variation in TSMS. This is considered a weak value since ideally the R Square should be higher than 0,5.

5.2.4.3. Simple Regression – TSMS as independent variable and PI as the dependent variable

This regression intents to evaluate whether the construct trust in social media stores (as independent variable) positively influences purchase intention (dependent variable) (H3). From SPSS the following output was obtained:

Table 5.8 - Simple Regression, PI as the dependent variable

MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS	SIG	R SQUARE
	B	Std. Error	B		
(CONSTANT)	0,969	0,413		0,02	0,236
TSMS	0,748	0,09	0,486	<,001	

Following the same logic as before, and looking at the regression coefficients, the adjusted regression equation can be obtained:

$$PI = 0{,}969 + 0{,}748\, TSMS + \varepsilon$$

TSMS is now the explanatory variable in this model. It has a standardized regression coefficient of 0,486, meaning that an increase of 1 unit in TSMS is associated with an average change of 0,486 units in PI. TSMS is significant in this model (sig <0,001), leading to the

conclusion that there is statistical evidence that TSMS significantly influences PI. These results support the hypotheses:

H3: *Trust in social media stores positively influences purchase intention.*

The R Square has a value of 0,236, meaning that 23,6% of the variation of PI is explained by TSMS. Again, this is considered a weak value.

5.2.4.4. Simple Regression – TSMS as independent variable and IU as the dependent variable

Like the previous regression, this model intents to evaluate whether the construct trust in social media stores (as independent variable) positively influences intention to use (dependent variable) (H4). From SPSS the following output was obtained:

Table 5.9 - Simple Regression, IU as the dependent variable

MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS	SIG	R SQUARE
	B	Std. Error	B		
(CONSTANT)	0,885	0,412		0,033	0,211
TSMS	0,693	0,089	0,459	<,001	

Examining the regression coefficients, the adjusted regression equation can be obtained:

$$IU = 0{,}885 + 0{,}693\,TSMS + \varepsilon$$

TSMS has a standardized regression coefficient of 0,459, meaning that an increase of 1 unit in TSMS is associated with an average change of 0,459 units in IU. TSMS is significant in this model (sig <0,001), leading to the conclusion that there is statistical evidence that TSMS significantly influences IU. These results support the hypotheses:

H4: *Trust in Social Media Stores positively influences Intention to Use*

The R Square has a value of 0,211, meaning that TSMS explains 21,1% of the variation in IU. Like the above, this is considered a weak value.

5.2.4.5. Simple Regression – IU as independent variable and PI as the dependent variable

This simple regression intents to evaluate whether the construct intention to use (as independent variable) positively influences purchase intention (dependent variable) (H5). From SPSS the following output was obtained:

Table 5.10 - Simple regression, PI as the dependent variable

MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS	SIG	R SQUARE
	B	Std. Error	B		
(CONSTANT)	0,717	0,133		<,001	0,787
IU	0,904	0,031	0,887	<,001	

Examining the regression coefficients, the adjusted regression equation can be obtained:

$$PI = 0{,}717 + 0{,}904\, IU + \varepsilon$$

IU has a standardized regression coefficient of 0,887, meaning that an increase of 1 unit in IU is associated with an average change of 0,887 units in PI. IU is significant in this model (sig <0,001), leading to the conclusion that there is statistical evidence that IU significantly influences PI. These results support the hypotheses:

H5: *Intention to Use positively influences Purchase Intention*

The R Square has a value of 0,787, meaning that IU explains 78,7% of the variation in PI. Contrasting with the above, this is considered a strong value, since R Square is higher than 0,5.

5.3. STUDY 2 – United States of America

5.3.1. Respondents Profile

As of January 2022, the United States of America had 159.75 million active Instagram users (Statista, 2022f). In the USA, in 2020, 54% of people older than 18 years old had made a purchase via social media (Statista, 2022m).

In the same way as the Portuguese sample, and in order to facilitate data interpretation, the Age was presented to respondents as a multiple-choice question, with 7 different age groups. The data obtained demonstrates that the most significant age group, composing almost half of the sample, is the one where individuals are aged between 25 and 34 years old

(46,43%), followed by people aged between 35 and 44 years old, which represents 16,52% of the sample. This is followed by 15,63% of people aged 18 and 24 years old, 12,95% between 45 and 54, 8,04% between 55 and 64 years old. The remaining 0,45% are people older than 65. This distribution can be visualized in the pie chart from Figure 5.6. From there it is possible to conclude that the majority of the respondents (62,06%) were under 34 years old.

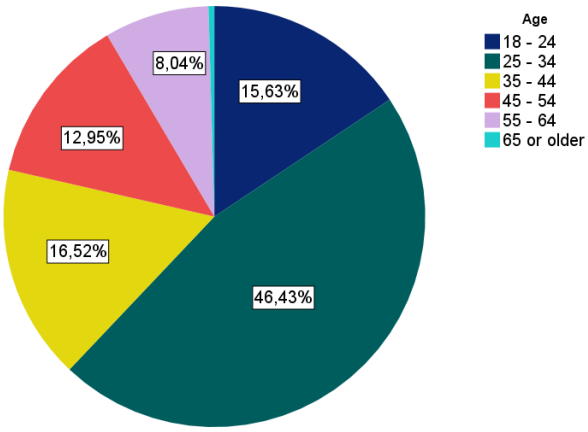

Figure 5.6 - Age Distribution – USA

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

Regarding gender, 44,20% of the respondents were women while 55,80% of the respondents were men (Figure 5.7). Figure 5.8 shows the count and percentage of Americans who have/have not interacted with Instagram Shopping. It is clear that the great majority has interacted with Instagram Shopping (92,41%), which can improve the quality of the results.

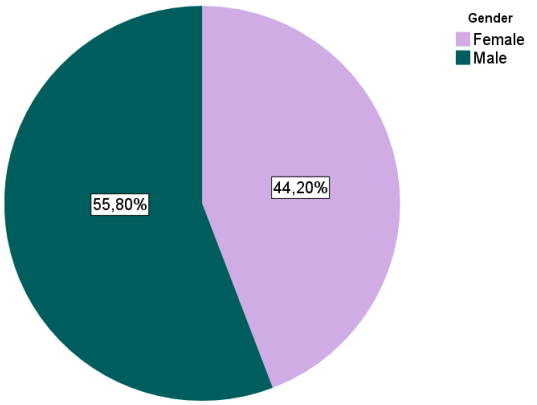

Figure 5.7 - Gender Distribution – USA

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

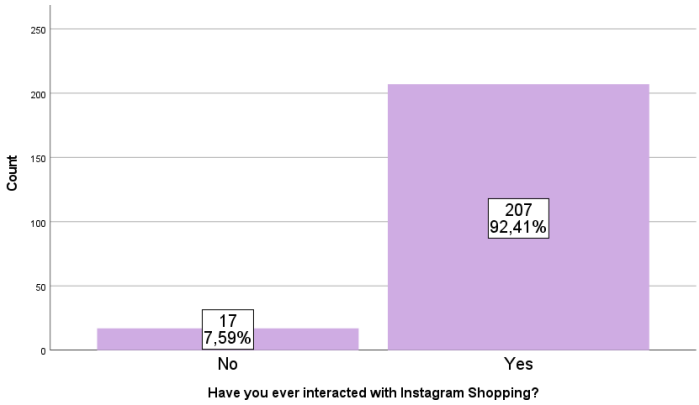

Figure 5.8 - Interactions with Instagram Shopping – USA

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

5.3.2. Descriptive Statistics

The following section provides the Descriptive Analysis elaborated through SPSS Statistics 28. Both the Mean and Standard Deviation were computed for all items and to the new subscales represented as constructs and computed accordingly, as well as the maximum and minimum values for each item.

Perceived Usefulness

Perceived usefulness (PU) was composed by 4 variables. The values for the Mean and Standard Deviation of each item are displayed in the Table 5.11. PU_3 – *"Using Instagram Shopping enables me to accomplish shopping tasks more quickly"* was the item with higher mean value, 5,55. All the four items present mean values higher than 5.

The construct PU_USA representing perceived usefulness from American respondents was obtained through computing the mean of the items PU_1, PU_2, PU_3 and PU_4. PU_USA has mean value of 5,41 and Standard Deviation of 1,01. The Mean value is more than one value higher than the middle value in the Likert Scale from 1 to 7, indicating that the respondents tend to agree that Instagram Shopping is useful.

Table 5.11 - Descriptive Statistics for PU

		MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
PU_1	Using Instagram Shopping can help me to make better purchasing decisions	1	7	5,26	1,324
PU_2	Using Instagram Shopping makes it easier for me to shop	1	7	5,40	1,234
PU_3	Using Instagram Shopping enables me to accomplish shopping tasks more quickly	1	7	5,55	1,328
PU_4	Using Instagram Shopping helps me to perform many things more conveniently	1	7	5,45	1,355
PU_USA		1,00	7,00	5,4141	1,09990

Perceived Ease of Transaction

The construct perceived ease of transaction (PET) was composed by 4 variables. The values for the Mean and Standard Deviation of each item are displayed in the Table 5.12. The item with the highest mean value, 5,46, was PET_3 – *"I find that interactions with social media shops are effortless to do"*, however all items have a mean value ranging between 5,31 and 5,46.

The construct PET_USA representing perceived ease of transaction from American respondents was obtained through computing the mean of the items PET_1, PET_2, PET_3 and PET_4. PET_USA has mean value of 5,42 and Standard Deviation of 1,045. The mean value is higher than the middle value in the Likert Scale from 1 to 7, indicating that the respondents tend to reveal high levels of perceived ease of transaction.

Table 5.12 - Descriptive Statistics for PET

	I find that interactions with social media shops:	MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
PET_1	… Are largely clear and understandable	1	7	5,41	1,220
PET_2	… Do not require a lot of mental effort	1	7	5,37	1,256
PET_3	… Are effortless to do	1	7	5,46	1,305
PET_4	… Provide me with all the information I need	1	7	5,43	1,307
PET_USA		1,00	7,00	5,4163	1,04467

Trust in Social Media Stores

Trust in social media stores (TSMS) was composed by 3 variables. The values for the Mean and Standard Deviation of each item are displayed in the Table 5.13. TSMS_1 – *"Social media shops are competent in keeping their promise"* was the item with the highest mean value, 5,36, revealing that respondents tend to agree that social media stores usually keep their promises to their consumers.

The construct TSMS_USA represents trust in social media stores from American respondents and was obtained through computing the mean of the items TSMS_1, TSMS_2 and TSMS_3. Overall, the mean for TSMS_USA is equal to 5,32 with a Standard Deviation of 1,107, indicating that the American respondents tend to agree that Social Media stores are trustworthy.

Table 5.13 - Descriptive Statistics for TSMS

		MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
TSMS_1	Social media shops are competent in keeping their promise	1	7	5,36	1,182
TSMS_2	Social media shops are honest with me if I purchase products	2	7	5,30	1,252
TSMS_3	Social media shops don't take advantage of me if I purchase products	1	7	5,29	1,346
TSMS_USA		2,00	7,00	5,3170	1,10677

Intention to Use

Intention to use (IU) was composed by 4 variables. The values for the Mean and Standard Deviation of each item are displayed in the Table 5.14. IU_3 – *"I'm considering using Instagram Shopping"* was the item with the highest mean value, 5,49, being that the remaining items all present mean values between 5,27 and 5,37.

The construct IU_USA represents intention to use Instagram Shopping from American respondents and was obtained through computing the mean of the items IU_1, IU_2, IU_3 and IU_4. Overall, the mean for IU_USA is equal to 5,34 with a Standard Deviation of 1,318, which

indicates that the American respondents tend to have fairly high intentions to use Instagram Shopping.

Table 5.14 - Descriptive Statistics for IU

		MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
IU_1	Given the chance, I intend to shop by Instagram Shopping	1	7	5,27	1,431
IU_2	I will recommend Instagram Shopping to others	1	7	5,24	1,438
IU_3	I'm considering using Instagram Shopping	1	7	5,49	1,455
IU_4	I have strong intentions to buy via Instagram Shopping	1	7	5,37	1,527
IU_USA		1,00	7,00	5,3438	1,31826

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention (PI) was composed by 4 variables. The values for the Mean and Standard Deviation of each item are displayed in the Table 5.15. PI_3 – *"It is likely that I will actually purchase products on Instagram Shops in the near future"* was the item with the highest mean value, 5,46, meaning that, on average, American respondents agree that they are likely to purchase products on Instagram Shopping in the future.

The construct PI_USA representing purchase intention from American respondents was obtained through computing the mean of the items PI_1, PI_2, PI_3 and PI_4. PI_USA has mean value of 5,393 and Standard Deviation of 1,245. The mean value is higher than the middle value in the Likert Scale from 1 to 7, indicating that the respondents tend to reveal high levels of purchase intention.

Table 5.15 - Descriptive Statistics for PI

		MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
PI_1	I am likely to purchase products/services on Instagram Shops	1	7	5,35	1,422
PI_2	Given the opportunity, I would consider purchasing products on Instagram Shops in the future	1	7	5,38	1,296
PI_3	It is likely that I will actually purchase products on Instagram Shops in the near future	1	7	5,46	1,391
PI_4	Given the opportunity, I intend to purchase products on Instagram Shops	1	7	5,38	1,428
PI_USA		1,00	7,00	5,3929	1,24482

In fact, all the constructs mentioned above, PU_USA, PET_USA, TSMS_USA, IU_USA and PI_USA present very consistent and similar mean values, ranging between 5,32 and 5,42.

5.3.3. Exploratory Analysis

In this section, SPSS 28 was used to perform the following tests: reliability analysis, simple and multiple regression analysis. Subsequently, the output will be analyzed and described in order to create statistical ground for conclusions.

5.3.3.1. Reliability Analysis

A reliability test aims to assess the reliability of the sample. This analysis was conducted through the statistical program SPSS 28. In order to assess the reliability of the study, the Cronbach's Alphas were computed for all items and constructs, providing a numerical value for the consistency of date, ranging between 0 and 1. A value of 0,6 or less generally indicates unsatisfactory internal consistency reliability. The coefficient alpha value tends to increase with an increase in the number of scale items (Malhotra & Birks, 2007).

The results can be found in Table 5.16 below. They show that for all constructs the alpha values are higher than 0,7, thus indicating high reliability values, being the lowest alpha value equal to 0,839 and belonging to the construct Perceived Ease of Transaction. On the other hand, Intention to Use presents the highest alpha value, 0,923.

Table 5.16 - Reliability analysis for all items

CONSTRUCT	ITEMS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
PERCEIVED USEFULNESS	PU_1; PU_2; PU_3; PU_4	0,860
PERCEIVED EASE OF TRANSACTION	PET_1; PET_2; PET_3; PET_4	0,839
TRUST IN SOCIAL MEDIA STORES	TSMS_1; TSMS_2; TSMS_3	0,850
INTENTION TO USE	IU_1; IU_2; IU_3; IU_4	0,923
PURCHASE INTENTION	PI_1; PI_2; PI_3; PI_4	0,920

5.3.4. Regression Analysis

Following the same procedure used for the Portuguese sample, in order to understand the relationships between the different constructs and to test this study's conceptual model and hypothesis, simple and multiple regression analyses were conducted. Thus, the model was split into 4 regressions to facilitate the analysis.

5.3.4.1. Assumption of the Multiple Regression

As it happened for Study 1, in order to verify if the model can be used for further statistical inference, all the assumptions of the linear regression must hold. If the assumptions are not fulfilled, the results can only be used to characterize the sample itself. The conceptual model of this research was explored in four different analyses, all of which underlined the same assumptions. This is possible since the independent variables, in all configurations, are the same and always valid. Since the present model has two dependent variables, the verification of the assumptions was performed twice, first with intention to use as the dependent variable and then purchase intention as the dependent variable. For all intervals, the confidence level is 95%.

For the assumptions to hold, the linear regression must fulfill the following requirements: Linearity of the model; The mean of the residual component must be zero; The independent variables must not be correlated with the residual terms; There must be no correlation among the residual terms; The variance of the random term is constant; The residuals follow a normal distribution; and there must be no correlation among the explanatory variables. For this sample of respondents, it is possible to assume, by construction, that the model is linear and, therefore, the assumption "Linearity of the model" holds:

$$\boldsymbol{Intention\ to\ Use} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times Perceived\ Usefulness + \beta_2 \times Perceived\ Ease\ of\ Transaction + \beta_3 \times Trust\ in\ Social\ Media\ Stores + \varepsilon$$

$$\boldsymbol{Purchase\ Intention} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times Perceived\ Usefulness + \beta_2 \times Perceived\ Ease\ of\ Transaction + \beta_3 \times Trust\ in\ Social\ Media\ Stores$$

Furthermore, all the assumptions hold except two: the variance of the random term does not seem to be constant (Figure 5.9 and Figure 5.10), and the residuals do not seem to follow a normal distribution, for neither of the dependent variables (Figure 5.11 and Figure 5.12). The SPSS outputs for all the other assumptions can be seen in Appendix D.

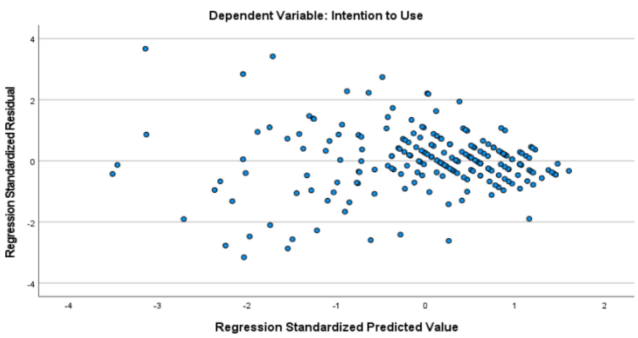

Figure 5.9 - Scatterplot - Distribution of the residuals (IU as the dependent variable)

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

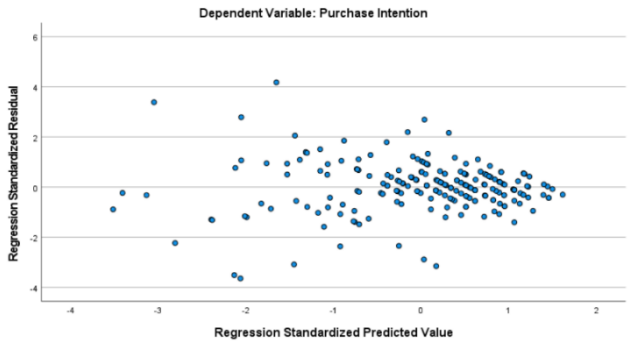

Figure 5.10 - Scatterplot - Distribution of the residuals (PI as the dependent variable)

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

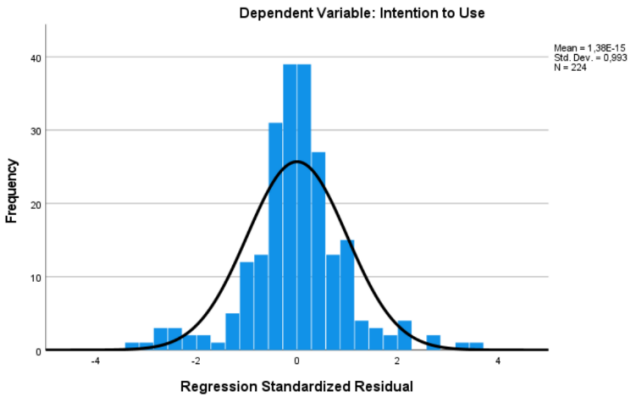

Figure 5.11 - Histogram - Distribution of the residuals (IU as the dependent variable)

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

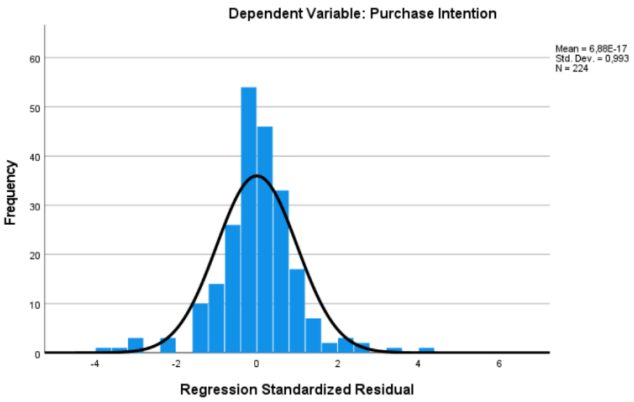

Figure 5.12 - Histogram - Distribution of the residuals (PI as the dependent variable)

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

As two of the previous assumptions don't hold, the model can only be used to characterize the sample under analysis and conclusions cannot be generalized for the population.

5.3.4.2. Multiple Regression – PET and PU as independent variables and TSMS as the dependent variable

Bearing in mind the conceptual model, the impact of each variable must be determined. This multiple regression aims to evaluate whether the constructs perceived ease of transaction and perceived usefulness (as independent variables) positively influence trust in social media stores (dependent variable) (H1, H2). From SPSS the following output was obtained:

Table 5.17 - Multiple Regression, TSMS as the dependent variable

MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS	SIG	R SQUARE
	B	Std. Error	B		
(CONSTANT)	0,297	0,227		0,193	0,703
PU	0,331	0,053	0,312	<,001	
PET	0,596	0,051	0,593	<,001	

From the table above and looking at the regression coefficients it is now possible to write the adjusted regression equation:

$$TSMS = 0{,}297 + 0{,}331PU + 0{,}596PET + \varepsilon$$

PU and PET are the explanatory variables in this model. The variable PU has a standardized regression coefficient of 0,312, which means that, all other variables held constant, an increase of 1 unit in PU is associated with an average change of 0,312 units in

TSMS. Following the same logic, the variable PET has a higher regression coefficient of 0,593, thus every unit increase in PET leads to a 0,593 increase of TSMS. Both PU (sig <0,001) and PET (sig <0,001) are significant in the model, leading to the conclusion that there is statistical evidence that PU and PET significantly influence TSMS. These results support the hypotheses:

H1: *Perceived usefulness positively influences trust in social media stores.*
H2: *Perceived ease of transaction positively influences trust in social media stores.*

The R Square has a value of 0,703, meaning that the explanatory variables in the model (PU and PET) explain 70,3% of the variation in TSMS. This is considered a very good value since R square is considerably higher than 0,5.

5.3.4.3. Simple Regression – TSMS as independent variable and PI as the dependent variable

This regression intends to evaluate whether the construct trust in social media stores (as independent variable) positively influences purchase intention (dependent variable) (H3). From SPSS the following output was obtained:

Table 5.18 - Simple Regression, PI as the dependent variable

MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS	SIG	R SQUARE
	B	Std. Error	B		
(CONSTANT)	*0,489*	*0,235*		*0,038*	*0,672*
TSMS	*0,922*	*0,043*	*0,82*	*<,001*	

Following the same logic as before, and looking at the regression coefficients the adjusted regression equation can be obtained:

$$PI = 0{,}489 + 0{,}922\, TSMS + \varepsilon$$

TSMS is now the explanatory variable in this model. It has a standardized regression coefficient of 0,82, meaning that an increase of one unit in TSMS is associated with an average change of 0,82 units in PI. TSMS is significant in this model (sig <0,001), leading to the conclusion that there is statistical evidence that TSMS significantly influences PI. These results support the hypotheses:

H3: *Trust in social media stores positively influences purchase intention*

The R Square has a value of 0,672, meaning that TSMS explains 67,2% of the variation of PI. Again, this is considered a good value as it explains over 50% of PI's variation.

5.3.4.4. Simple Regression – TSMS as the independent variable and IU as the dependent variable

Like the previous regression, this model aims to evaluate whether the construct trust in social media stores (as independent variable) positively influences the construct intention to use (dependent variable) (H4). From SPSS the following output was obtained:

Table 5.19 - Simple Regression, IU as the dependent variable

MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS	SIG	R SQUARE
	B	Std. Error	B		
(CONSTANT)	0,187	0,252		0,459	0,663
TSMS	0,97	0,046	0,814	<,001	

Examining the regression coefficients, the adjusted regression equation can be obtained:

$$IU = 0{,}187 + 0{,}97\,TSMS + \varepsilon$$

TSMS has a standardized regression coefficient of 0,814, meaning that an increase of 1 unit in TSMS is associated with an average change of 0,814 units in IU. TSMS is significant in this model (sig <0,001), leading to the conclusion that there is statistical evidence that TSMS significantly influences IU.

These results support the hypotheses:

H4: *Trust in social media stores positively influences intention to use*

The R Square has a value of 0,663, meaning that TSMS explains 66,3% of the variation of IU. Like the above, this is considered a strong value.

5.3.4.5. Simple Regression – IU as independent variable and PI as the dependent variable

Finally, this regression aims to evaluate whether the construct intention to use (as independent variable) positively influences the construct purchase intention (dependent variable) (H5). From SPSS the following output was obtained:

Table 5.20 - Simple Regression, PI as the dependent variable

MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS	SIG	R SQUARE
	B	Std. Error	B		
(CONSTANT)	0,680	0,125		<,001	0,872
IU	0,882	0,023	0,934	<,001	

Examining the regression coefficients, the adjusted regression equation can be obtained:

$$PI = 0{,}680 + 0{,}882\, IU + \varepsilon$$

IU has a standardized regression coefficient of 0,934, meaning that an increase of one unit in TSMS is associated with an average change of 0,934 units in PI. IU is significant in this model (sig <0,001), leading to the conclusion that there is statistical evidence that IU significantly influences PI. These results support the hypotheses:

H5: *Intention to Use positively influences Purchase Intention*

The R Square has a value of 0,872, meaning that IU explains 87,2% of the variation in PI. Like the above, this is considered a very good value for R Square.

5.4. TWO COUNTRIES COMPARISON – Portugal *vs* United States of America

After carefully analyzing the results for each sample (Portugal and United States of America) and taking into consideration all the information, to draw relevant conclusions, the results must be compared, and differences/similarities highlighted.

5.4.1. Respondents Profile

Firstly, it is relevant to identify the differences in respondents' profile. The Portuguese sample is mainly composed by women while USA respondents are, on their majority, men. Regarding age, Portugal presents a younger sample of respondents while for the USA, ages are more evenly distributed between the different age groups. Regarding interactions with Instagram

Shopping, there is a noteworthy difference between the two countries. While 92,41% of Americans have already interacted with Instagram Shopping, only 65,35% of Portuguese people have done the same. This does not come as a surprise since Instagram Shopping is more popular amongst Americans. This can influence the results from both countries since American respondents are more knowledgeable of this feature.

Figure 5.13 - Interactions with Instagram Shopping by location
Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

5.4.2. Descriptive Statistics

Perceived Usefulness

According to the previous results and analysis, regarding perceived usefulness, the item with the lowest mean value for the American sample was PU_1 – *"Using Instagram Shopping can help me to make better purchasing decisions"*, with a mean value of 5,26. For the Portuguese sample the same item presented a mean value of 3,71 (also the lowest value). This result indicates that while Americans tend to agree that Instagram Shopping can help them make better purchase decisions, Portuguese people tend to be neutral or even disagree with it.

The constructs PU_PT (mean = 4,38) and PU_USA (mean = 5,41) have more than 1 value mean difference. While Portuguese respondents tend to have neutral levels of perceived usefulness, American respondents tend to agree that Instagram Shopping is useful.

Perceived Ease of Transaction

When analyzing the means of perceived ease of transaction, it is noticeable that Americans have higher levels of perceived ease of transaction (mean PET_USA = 5,42) than Portuguese people (mean PET_PT = 4,79). However, both countries' respondents reveal fairly high levels of PET.

Purchase Intention

Purchase Intention, measuring the likelihood of the future purchase of a service or product, for the Portuguese sample (PI_PT), has a mean value of 4,35. Once more, the USA sample has a higher mean value of 5,39. Portuguese seem to be, on average, neutral regarding their purchase intention on Instagram Shopping, while Americans have higher values of intention to purchase on Instagram.

Intention to Use

For the Portuguese sample, the item IU_4 – *"I have strong intentions to buy via Instagram Shopping"* was the item with the lowest mean value, 3,65. Indicating that Portuguese people on average disagree to having strong intentions to buy via Instagram Shopping. For the same item, the American sample revealed a mean value of 5,37, considerably above the previous one, showing that Americans agree to having strong intentions to buy via Instagram Shopping.

Overall, the mean value for IU_PT is 4,02 which indicates that the Portuguese respondents tend to be, once again, neutral regarding their intention to use Instagram Shopping. On the other hand, the mean value for IU_USA is 5,34 which indicates that the American respondents tend to have higher intentions to use Instagram Shopping.

Trust in Social Media Stores

Presenting more similar mean values for the two samples than the previous ones is trust in social media stores. The mean value for TSMS_PT is 4,52, indicating that the Portuguese respondents tend to slightly agree that Social Media stores are trustworthy. A similar scenario occurs for the American sample, presenting a mean value for TSMS_USA equal to 5,32, indicating that the American respondents tend to agree that Social Media stores are trustworthy.

In fact, all the constructs mentioned above, for the American sample, PU_USA, PET_USA, TSMS_USA, IU_USA and PI_USA present very consistent and similar mean values, ranging between 5,32 and 5,42. As for the Portuguese sample, these values range between 4,02 and 4,79.

5.4.3. Regression Analysis

5.4.3.1. Multiple Regression – PET and PU as independent variables and TSMS as the dependent variable

In order to evaluate whether the constructs perceived ease of transaction and perceived usefulness (as independent variables) positively influence trust in social media stores (dependent variable) (H1, H2), a multiple regression analysis is presented. The two samples present very distinct R Square values. For Portugal, this value is 0,286 while for the USA this value is 0,703. Therefore, for the same model and variables, but for a different sample, the explanatory variables in the model (PU and PET) explain considerably less of the variation in TSMS for the Portuguese sample than it does for the American one.

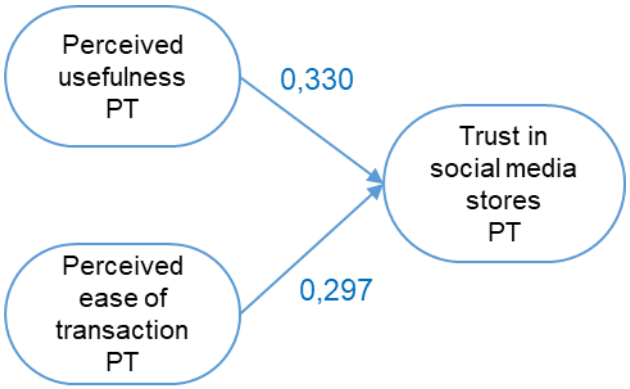

Figure 5.14 - Regression Coefficients Portugal (TSMS as dependent variable)

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

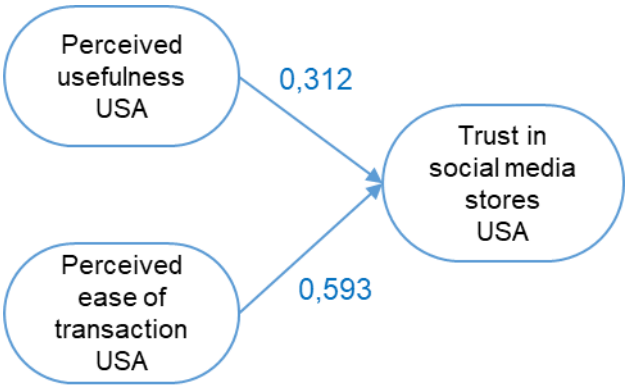

Figure 5.15 - Regression Coefficients USA (TSMS as dependent variable)

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

PU and PET are the explanatory variables in this model. The variable PU_PT has a regression coefficient of 0.330, higher but similar to the one from the USA (0,312). The fact that these values are very close, indicates that there is not a significant difference between the effect of PU on TSMS for the two samples.

However, the variable PET_PT has a lower regression coefficient of 0,297, thus every unit increase in PET_PT leads to a 0,297 increase of TSMS. For the US sample, this value almost doubles (0,593). Therefore, for American people, ease of transaction on Instagram Shopping has a higher impact on their trust in social media stores. For both samples and both variables, there is statistical evidence that PU and PET significantly influence TSMS, since the significance value is lower than 0,001.

5.4.3.2. Simple Regression – TSMS as independent variable and PI as the dependent variable

This regression intends to evaluate whether the construct trust in social media stores (as independent variable) positively influences purchase intention (dependent variable) (H3). For this regression, and similarly to the previous one, the R Square for the two samples is very different. For Portugal, R Square = 0,236. At the same time, this value almost triples for the American sample (0,672). Therefore, TSMS explains almost three times more of the variation in PI for the American sample than for the Portuguese.

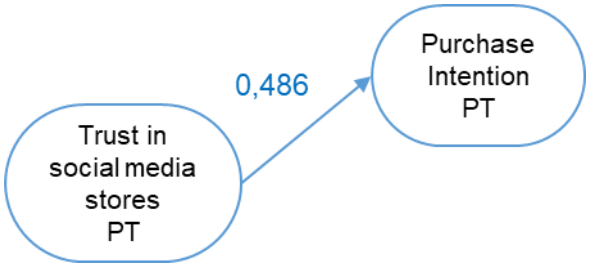

Figure 5.16 - Regression Coefficients Portugal (PI as dependent variable)

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

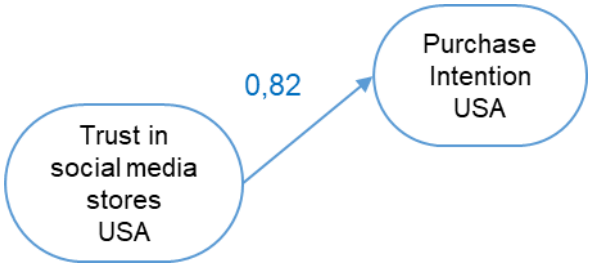

Figure 5.17 - Regression Coefficients USA (PI as dependent variable)

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

TSMS is now the explanatory variable in this model. TSMS_PT has a regression coefficient of 0,486, meaning that an increase of 1 unit in TSMS_PT is associated with an average change of 0,486 units in PI_PT. TSMS_USA has a considerably higher regression coefficient of 0,82. Although for both samples, TSMS positively influences PI, the average increase per unit of TSMS is higher for the USA. For both samples there is statistical evidence that TSMS significantly influence PI, since the significance is lower than 0,001.

5.4.3.3. Simple Regression – TSMS as independent variable and IU as the dependent variable

Like the previous regression, this model intents to evaluate whether the construct trust in social media stores (as independent variable) positively influences the construct intention to use (dependent variable) (H4). The R Square for the two samples is considerably different. For Portugal, R Square = 0,211 (the lowest value of the four regressions). In contrast, this value more than triples for the American sample (0,663). Once more, TSMS in the American sample explains more than three times more the variation in PI than in the Portuguese sample of respondents.

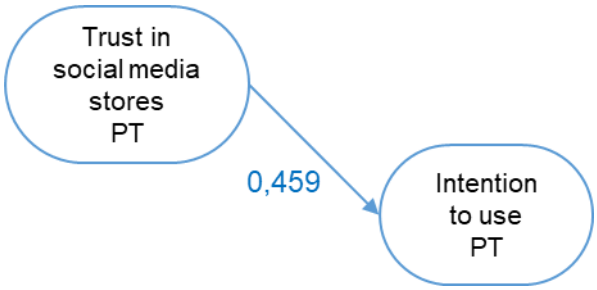

Figure 5.18 - Regression Coefficient Portugal (IU as dependent variable)

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

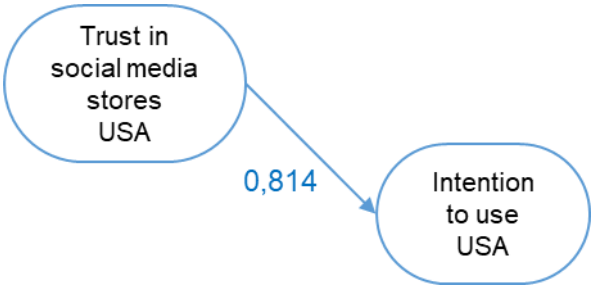

Figure 5.19 - Regression Coefficient USA (IU as dependent variable)

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

TSMS_PT has a regression coefficient of 0,459, meaning that an increase of 1 unit in TSMS is associated with an average change of 0,459 units in PI. Following the same tendency as the previous ones, TSMS_USA has a higher regression coefficient of 0,814. For American people, trust in social media stores considerably and positively leads to a higher intention to use Instagram Shopping than it does for Portuguese people. For both samples and both variables, there is statistical evidence that TSMS significantly influences IU, since significance is lower than 0,001.

5.4.3.4. Simple Regression – IU as independent variable and PI as the dependent variable

Finally, this model intents to evaluate whether the construct intention to use (as independent variable) positively influences the construct purchase intention (dependent variable) (H4). Contrasting with the previous regressions, the R Square for the two samples is both similar and higher than 0,5. For Portugal, R Square = 0,787 and for the American sample the same

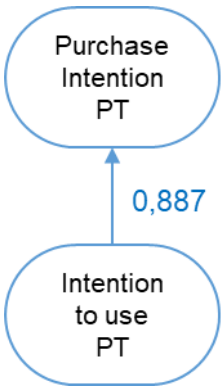

Figure 5.20 - Regression Coefficients Portugal (PI as dependent variable)

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

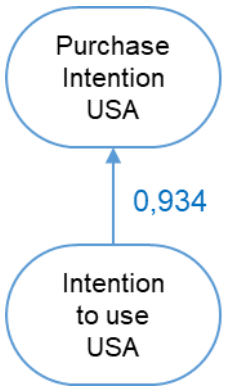

Figure 5.21 - Regression Coefficient USA (PI as dependent variable)

Source: Author's elaboration, 2022

value equals to 0,827. In this case, the variation of PI is considerably explained by the explanatory variable in the model (IU) for both samples.

IU_PT has a regression coefficient of 0,887, meaning that an increase of 1 unit in IU is associated with an average change of 0,887 units in PI. With a similar value, IU_USA has a higher regression coefficient of 0,934. For both countries, IU leads to very high intention to purchase on Instagram Shopping. For both samples and both variables, there is statistical evidence that IU significantly influences PI since significance is lower than 0,001.

The following table presents a summary of the hypotheses under analysis and the extent to which each study contributed to validate them.

Table 5.21 - List of hypothesis and validation

HYPOTHESIS	VALIDATED?	STUDY 1	STUDY 2
H1: *perceived usefulness positively influences trust in social media stores*	Yes	✓	✓
H2: *perceived ease of transaction has a positively influences trust in social media stores*	Yes	✓	✓
H3: *trust in social media stores positively influences intention to use*	Yes	✓	✓
H4: *trust in social media stores positively influences purchase intention*	Yes	✓	✓
H5: *intention to use positively influences purchase intention*	Yes	✓	✓

6. CONCLUSIONS

As indicated by several authors, including Hajli et al. (2013) there is rather little research in the field of social commerce, and one of the main focus of social commerce research has been to empirically test constructs that are thought to be influential in the adoption of social commerce (Sembada & Koay, 2021). This study aimed to measure the impact of chosen variables on intention to use and purchase from Instagram Shopping and present a comparison of the results obtained for two countries: Portugal and the United States of America. To this end, a conceptual model was built, containing relevant constructs determined by a literature study. The model was then operationalized and evaluated by means of an online survey, targeting both Portuguese and American respondents. Both samples consisted mainly of people aged between 18 and 34 years old. The analysis of the survey showed that the different measures for assessing validity and reliability support the model and the research hypotheses could be accepted. Although there are some studies investigating the influence of trust on intention to use and purchase intention, there are very few that focus on the social commerce context and none that specifically investigates these constructs in the context of Instagram Shopping in Portugal and the USA, comparing the two. This research consequently investigated the influence of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of transaction and trust, by measuring the impact of these variables on intention to use and purchase intention. Since no study has examined the influence of perceived usefulness and ease of transaction on trust and consequently its impact on usage and purchase intention in the context of Instagram Shopping, the present study contributes to the literature by providing new insights into the relationships between these constructs.

This section will revisit the research objectives in the form of theoretical and managerial implications. To do so, a summary of the literature review findings and empirical research investigation will be presented. This shall lead to conclusions related to the hypothesis and research questions of this study. Furthermore, limitations of this study will be outlined, and future research suggested.

6.1. Theoretical Contributions

Concerning the theoretical contributions provided by this research, the Research Questions must now be taken into consideration and answered.

The first research question related to how much do consumers' perceptions of the usefulness of Instagram Shopping and ease of transaction in social media stores impact their trust in social media stores. This study supported that trust in social media stores is driven by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of transaction. According to Brusch & Rappel (2020), perceived usefulness significantly and positively influences the intention to use. However, there is no study investigating the relationship between these variables mediated by trust.

Perceived ease of transaction has also been found to positively and significantly influence trust (Sembada & Koay, 2021), although in this case, this relationship was moderated by another variable, perceived control over alternate means. According to the present study, and in agreement with the literature, it is possible to conclude that, for both samples under analysis, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of transaction significantly and positively influence trust in social media stores, validating the formulated hypothesis. However, while for the Portuguese respondents, these constructs only explain 28,6% of the variance in trust in social media stores, the same constructs explain more than 70% of the trust in on Study 2 (American respondents).

Furthermore, for respondents from the USA, the ease of transaction on Instagram Shopping considerably impacts their trust in social media stores. This can be due to their higher familiarity with this Instagram feature and the fact that, for them, Instagram Shopping offers the possibility to complete a purchase directly inside the app, in two to three simple steps. As it does not involve leaving the app nor any further steps to complete a purchase, they perceive it as being easier than the Portuguese respondents who need to leave Instagram app, open the brand's website, create an account or login to their account, insert payment and delivery information, etc.

The second research question stated: What is the role of trust in the purchase intent of consumers regarding Instagram Shopping? Results provide evidence that intention to use Instagram Shopping can be predicted by trust in social media stores. In fact, the more consumers trust social media stores, the more likely they are to use Instagram Shopping. In both studies, trust positively and significantly influences the usage intention, being that in Study 1 trust has an impact of 0,459 in intention to use while in Study 2 the same relationship has a value of 0,814. Trust in social media stores explains 21,1% and 66,3% of the variation in intention to use in Study 1 and Study 2, respectively.

Since there's no previous studies on the influence of trust on usage intention in the context of Instagram Shopping, these findings provide new and relevant conclusions on this subject. However, according to Brusch & Rappel (2020), perceived usefulness positively and significantly influences intention to use. Therefore, it is safe to assume that perceived usefulness, mediated by trust, also has a positive influence on intention to use.

Finally, the third research question: Does trust in social media stores and the intention to use Instagram Shopping significantly influence purchase intention? This study supported the hypothesis that trust in social media stores is the predictor of purchase intention on Instagram Shopping. The data collected and the results show that trust does positively and significantly influence purchase. This means that consumers tend to develop higher levels of intention to shop when they in fact trust the social media store. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that, in Study 2 (US respondents), trust in social media stores leads to higher levels of purchase

intention than in Study 1. When looking at the regression analysis, the coefficient value almost doubles from Study 1 to Study 2. Another factor that should be pointed out is that, once again, trust in social media stores explains considerably more of the variation in purchase intention in Study 2 than it does in Study 1. For instance, for US respondents, 67,2% the variance in purchase intention is explained by trust in social media stores, while only 23,6% of it is explained by the same construct in Study 1.

Additionally, the influence of intention to use on purchase intention was also measured. Results indicate that, for both studies, intention to use significantly and highly positively influence purchase intention, looking at regression coefficient values like 0,887 (Study 1) and 0,934 (Study 2). This is the relationship that presents the smallest gap between studies. This may happen because, probably, someone who uses Instagram Shopping is directly more likely to purchase from it, no matter where they are located. Therefore, the challenge might be getting consumers to use Instagram Shopping, because once they do, they are more likely to purchase from it. These findings are supported by the ones in literature. For example, Sembada & Koay (2021) and Kim & Park (2013) both found that trust positively and significantly influences purchase intention. The more consumers trust an s-commerce site (in this case, Instagram Shopping), the more likely they are to show purchase intentions.

As a concluding observation, the study found that constructs from Study 2, this is US respondents, present the highest means. The mean values for this sample range between 5,32 and 5,42, being perceived ease of transaction the construct with the highest mean value, indicating that respondents tend to perceive transactions in social media stores as easy. As for the Portuguese sample, these values range between 4,02 and 4,79, being the highest value also corresponding to ease of transaction. However, constructs from the US sample are found to have a bigger impact on one another than the ones from the Portuguese sample, which shows that Instagram Shopping in the US is seen as more useful, trustworthy and people intend to use it more and consequently purchase from it.

Given all the beforementioned, one can say that if consumers trust social media stores, agree that transactions on these platforms are easy and perceive Instagram Shopping as useful, they are likely to continue using it and consequently purchase from it.

6.2. Managerial Implications

This dissertation provides an examination on whether consumers perceiving Instagram Shopping as useful and transactions in social media as easy influences their trust, and the extent to which this relationship would impact their usage and purchase intentions. This investigation focused on two separate samples, leading to a comparison between the two. The results of this study, combined with the literature review, led to relevant implications that should be pointed out for a better understanding of the topic.

Integrating social commerce on their strategy is becoming crucial for the success of many brands. In fact, some brands even start to sell their products and services in social media before they extend to different platforms. This study shows that managers would benefit from cultivating trust amongst their potential consumers and followers, conveying a sense of usefulness and ease of transaction. In fact, the more a consumer trusts a social media store, the more likely he or she is to purchase from it, which is overall the goal of every brand: to sell.

The results also suggest that s-commerce is becoming more relevant for both Portuguese and American consumers. Therefore, managers with a solid understanding of the factors influencing trust are better positioned to transform their businesses into trusted s-commerce firms (Kim & Park, 2013). Every company or brand looking into launching s-commerce sites should take necessary steps to guarantee that their managers understand the importance of trust.

Many consumers remain reluctant to purchase products and services from Instagram Shopping because some brands present in this app are likely to be less trustworthy than others online because of the nature of SNSs. In Portugal, in order to complete a purchase, consumers must leave the Instagram app (which they are already familiar with) to, in most cases, an unknown website from a known or unknown brand. Thus, they are leaving their "safe space" to another completely different, that might make them feel less comfortable. On the other hand, in the USA, as consumers can already complete the purchase directly on Instagram, the uncertainty factor is eliminated, leading them to perceive that this purchase is trustworthy and the transaction easy, since they already trust the platform beforehand. Therefore, s-commerce marketers should place great emphasis on increasing the level of consumers' trust.

In this regard, the results provide s-commerce managers with a better understanding of two s-commerce characteristics that they should focus on to improve consumers' trust, those being usefulness and ease of transaction. Sometimes, a brief explanation of how the purchase process works would be enough to ensure a higher sense of trust amongst consumers, and consequently gain a competitive advantage.

Furthermore, given that Instagram is working on extending the "Checkout" feature from USA to the rest of the world, this would be a good time for managers to consider investing on an s-commerce strategy if they have not done so yet. Companies should rethink the way they sell their products online. Instagram has a growing potential for brands to target their consumers and sell their products to those that might be really interested in purchasing them. Besides, people are spending increasingly more time on social media platforms, including Instagram (Statista, 2022a), and so this is a good time for companies to invest in this platform. Digital is not the future anymore but rather the present and Instagram is a good place for brands to showcase their products. However, managers should bear in mind that Instagram Shopping, as well as other s-commerce platforms, is very dynamic and constantly changing

and evolving, and so managers should lookout for constant innovation and be aware of the algorithm.

6.3. Limitations

Despite the best efforts to conduct this study in the most accurate way possible, every study has its limitations, which may provide suggestions for future research. Thus, the interpretation of the results should be mindful of this study boundaries.

The first limitation relates to the sample size. Although 622 answers were collected, only 487 were considered valid, due to uncomplete answers and errors. Therefore, the sample ended up being quite smaller, limiting generalization of the study. Likewise, even though both studies were composed of samples around the same size (Study 1 – 228 respondents; Study 2 – 224 respondents), these are not considered large enough to be representative. Regarding the Portuguese sample, there were 34,65% of the respondents who were not familiar with Instagram Shopping and although they were offered an explanation on the subject, it might have influenced the results.

Moreover, it should be noted that the survey was only scheduled at a single point in time, being therefore a cross-sectional study, due to lack of time and resources. A longitudinal study would make it possible to observe changes in the variables and their correlations with time. It could be interesting to observe consumers behavior on Instagram over a period of time, during which they became more familiar with Instagram Shopping. It would also be relevant to examine the changes in behavior when the “Checkout” feature becomes available for the Portuguese consumers. Another limitation can arise from the fact that this study focuses only on Portugal and the USA. Results could be different if other countries were introduced, such as, for example, an Asian and African country, promoting a more diverse sample.

Finally, since data was collected through an online survey, there’s no way to assure the environment in which the surveys were answered and no way to assure the respondents honesty to these questions. The fact that the survey only contained closed-answer questions, to facilitate data interpretation, could leave out some important information that, when considered, would change the results.

6.4. Future Research

The results of this study provide interesting avenues for future research. First, it would be wise for future researchers to extend the research model in order to increase the percentage of the variance explained in trust by incorporating other key variables, such as perceived ease of use (Brusch & Rappel, 2020), perceived security of transaction (Sembada & Koay, 2021) or even the Social Commerce Constructs (Alalwan et al., 2019). Furthermore, other individual characteristics, like household income, may influence the extent to which s-commerce users

develop a tendency to trust, use and purchase from s-commerce. Past experience may be another crucial factor for researchers to consider.

To perform a longitudinal study would also be relevant for future research, as some characteristics do not remain stable over time and are, in some cases, influenced by experience. An experimental design to better measure consumer responses to s-commerce, in a controlled environment, would be a good starting point for future research. Future investigations would also benefit from exploring other countries and s-commerce platforms. For example, a study could benefit from including countries from all five continents. Furthermore, TikTok is becoming an s-commerce platform itself. TikTok became popular during the Covid-19 pandemic and is rapidly growing in number of users, and is expected to keep this tendency (Statista, 2022k). Therefore, this would be an interesting platform to focus future studies on.

In the end, however, Instagram Shopping can be considered a promising development in online shopping, and it should make shopping online even more attractive, easy, and accessible for both buyers and sellers.

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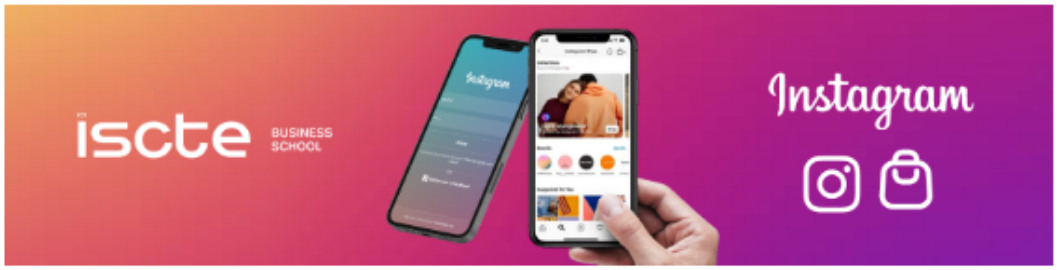
APPENDICES

Appendix A – Online Survey



English

Dear participant,

Thank you in advance for agreeing to participate in this survey.
My name is Sara Bonifácio, and I am in the 2nd year of the Master in Marketing at Iscte Business School. As part of my master's thesis, this questionnaire was developed for every Instagram user, specially those who have already interacted with an Instagram Shop. The questionnaire will last approximately 7 minutes, and there are no right or wrong answers.
Confidentiality of all data (intended solely for academic purposes) is guaranteed.
Further, I request that you answer honestly and spontaneously to all the questions.

Thank you very much for your cooperation!
Any questions or clarifications, do not hesitate to contact me: sglbo@iscte-iul.pt

Sara Bonifácio
Prof. Ricardo Godinho Bilro

Do you agree to participate in this survey voluntarily?

Yes

No

→

0% 100%

English

Do you have an Instagram account?

Yes

No

←

→

0% 100%

English

Instagram Shopping is a set of features across Instagram that let people shop through photos and videos. It gives businesses an immersive storefront for people to explore the best products.

Instagram Shopping features include:
Instagram Shops; Shopping tags; Shop in Explore; Collections; Product detail page; Ads with product tags. (Examples are shown in the image below)

The **Checkout** feature allows people to complete a purchase directly on the Instagram App (select from various options such as size or colour, then proceed to payment and shipping address without leaving Instagram). After the first purchase, this information is securely saved for convenience the next time people shop.
NOTE: At this time, the checkout feature is only available to customers in the US.

Have you ever **interacted** with the Instagram Shopping features? **(Interact =** click on posts with product tags on Instagram Feed or Stories, search for products on Instagram, purchase products through Instagram, search for Shops on Instagram, open an Instagram Shop ad, etc.**)**

Yes

No

I find that interactions with **social media shops**...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
...Are largely clear and understandable	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...Do not require a lot of mental effort	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...Are effortless to do	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...Provide me with all the information I need	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Rate your level of agreement with each statement:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Social media shops are competent in keeping their promise	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Social media shops are honest with me if I purchase products	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Social media shops don't take advantage of me if I purchase products	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Rate your level of agreement with each statement:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Using Instagram Shopping can help me to make better purchasing decisions	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Using Instagram makes it easier for me to shop	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Using Instagram Shopping enables me to accomplish shopping tasks more quickly	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Using Instagram Shopping helps me to perform many things more conveniently	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Rate your level of agreement with each statement:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am likely to purchase products/services on Instagram Shops	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Given the opportunity, I would consider purchasing products on Instagram Shops in the future	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is likely that I will actually purchase products on Instagram Shops in the near future	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Given the opportunity, I intend to purchase products on Instagram Shops	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Rate your level of agreement with each statement:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Given the chance, I intend to shop by Instagram Shopping	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will recommend Instagram Shopping to others	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I'm considering using Instagram Shopping	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have strong intentions to buy via Instagram Shopping	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

English

Gender

Male

Female

Non-binary / third gender

Age

Under 18

18 - 24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65 or older

Location

→

0% 100%

Appendix B – Constructs, scales, and authors

CONSTRUCT	CODE	SUBCODE	SCALES	SOURCE
PERCIEVED USEFULNESS	PU	PU_1	Using Instagram Shopping can help me to make better purchasing decisions	(Brusch & Rappel, 2020)
		PU_2	Using Instagram Shopping makes it easier for me to shop	
		PU_3	Using Instagram Shopping enables me to accomplish shopping tasks more quickly	
		PU_4	Using Instagram Shopping helps me to perform many things more conveniently	
PERCIEVED EASE OF TRANSACTION	PET		*I find that interactions with social media shops:*	(Sembada & Koay, 2021)
		PET_1	… Are largely clear and understandable	
		PET_2	… Do not require a lot of mental effort	
		PET_3	… Are effortless to do	
		PET_4	… Provide me with all the information I need	
TRUST IN SOCIAL MEDIA STORES	TSMS	TSMS_1	Social media shops are competent in keeping their promise	(Sembada & Koay, 2021)
		TSMS_2	Social media shops are honest with me if I purchase products	
		TSMS_3	Social media shops don't take advantage of me if I purchase products	
PURCHASE INTENTION	PI	PI_1	I am likely to purchase products/services on Instagram Shops	(Kim & Park, 2013)
		PI_2	Given the opportunity, I would consider purchasing products on Instagram Shops in the future	
		PI_3	It is likely that I will actually purchase products on Instagram Shops in the near future	
		PI_4	Given the opportunity, I intend to purchase products on Instagram Shops	
INTENTION TO USE	IU	IU_1	Given the chance, I intend to shop by Instagram Shopping	(Brusch & Rappel, 2020)
		IU_2	I will recommend Instagram Shopping to others	
		IU_3	I'm considering using Instagram Shopping	
		IU_4	I have strong intentions to buy via Instagram Shopping	

Appendix C – Linear Regression Assumptions Portugal (SPSS Output)

Intention to Use as dependent variable:

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	PU_PT, TSMS_PT, PET_PT[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: IU_PT

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,614[a]	,377	,369	1,09723	1,982

a. Predictors: (Constant), PU_PT, TSMS_PT, PET_PT

b. Dependent Variable: IU_PT

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	163,483	3	54,494	45,264	<,001[b]
	Residual	269,678	224	1,204		
	Total	433,161	227			

a. Dependent Variable: IU_PT

b. Predictors: (Constant), PU_PT, TSMS_PT, PET_PT

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-,393	,439		-,895	,372		
	PET_PT	,075	,091	,051	,821	,413	,709	1,411
	TSMS_PT	,361	,094	,239	3,838	<,001	,714	1,400
	PU_PT	,552	,078	,438	7,070	<,001	,724	1,382

a. Dependent Variable: IU_PT

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

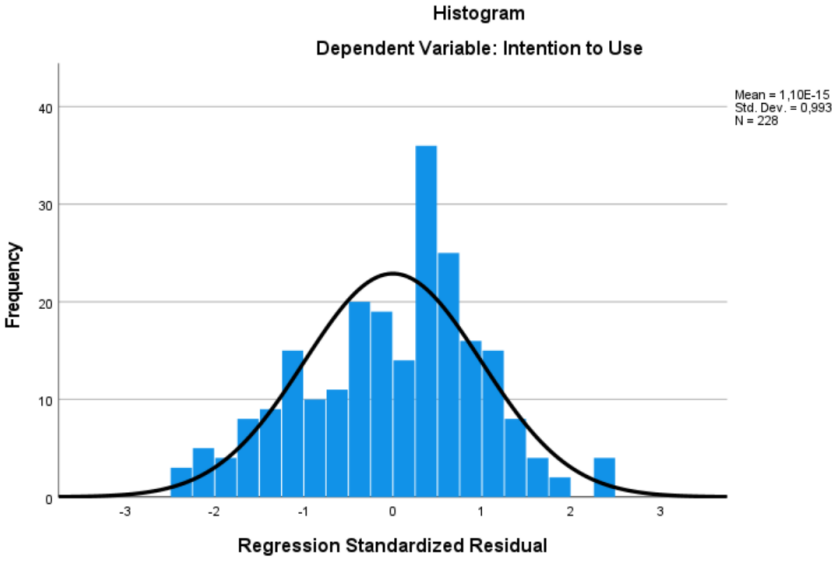
Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions			
				(Constant)	PET_PT	TSMS_PT	PU_PT
1	1	3,928	1,000	,00	,00	,00	,00
	2	,033	10,986	,14	,04	,05	,96
	3	,021	13,786	,04	,45	,84	,00
	4	,019	14,544	,82	,51	,11	,04

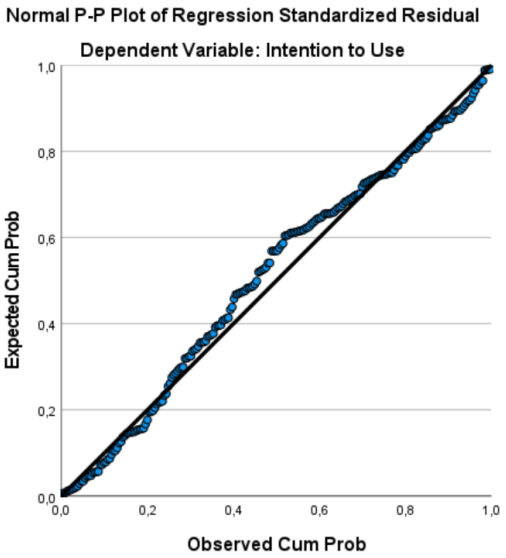
a. Dependent Variable: IU_PT

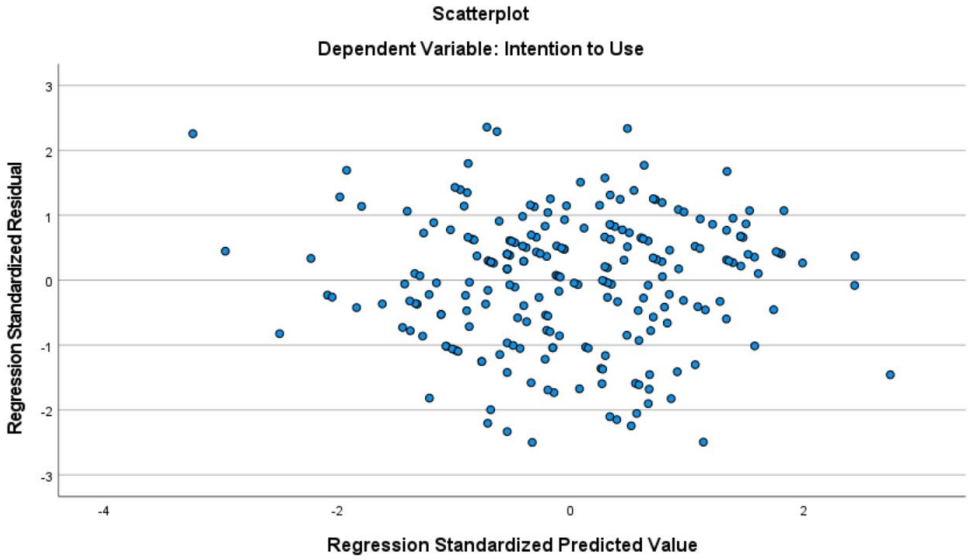
Residuals Statistics[a]

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	1,2727	6,3480	4,0197	,84864	228
Residual	-2,74202	2,58763	,00000	1,08996	228
Std. Predicted Value	-3,237	2,743	,000	1,000	228
Std. Residual	-2,499	2,358	,000	,993	228

a. Dependent Variable: IU_PT


Histogram
Dependent Variable: Intention to Use
Mean = 1,10E-15
Std. Dev. = 0,993
N = 228
Frequency
40
30
20
10
0
-3
-2
-1
0
1
2
3
Regression Standardized Residual


Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual
Dependent Variable: Intention to Use
Expected Cum Prob
1,0
0,8
0,6
0,4
0,2
0,0
0,0
0,2
0,4
0,6
0,8
1,0
Observed Cum Prob



Correlations

Correlations

		PET_PT	TSMS_PT	PU_PT	RES_1
PET_PT	Pearson Correlation	1	,464**	,453**	,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	1,000
	N	228	228	228	228
TSMS_PT	Pearson Correlation	,464**	1	,446**	,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	1,000
	N	228	228	228	228
PU_PT	Pearson Correlation	,453**	,446**	1	,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		1,000
	N	228	228	228	228
RES_1	Pearson Correlation	,000	,000	,000	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1,000	1,000	1,000	
	N	228	228	228	228

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Purchase Intention as dependent variable:

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	PU_PT, TSMS_PT, PET_PT[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: PI_PT

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,596[a]	,355	,346	1,13865	2,134

a. Predictors: (Constant), PU_PT, TSMS_PT, PET_PT

b. Dependent Variable: PI_PT

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	159,907	3	53,302	41,112	<,001[b]
	Residual	290,421	224	1,297		
	Total	450,328	227			

a. Dependent Variable: PI_PT

b. Predictors: (Constant), PU_PT, TSMS_PT, PET_PT

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-,176	,455		-,386	,700		
	PET_PT	,088	,094	,059	,931	,353	,709	1,411
	TSMS_PT	,456	,098	,296	4,663	<,001	,714	1,400
	PU_PT	,467	,081	,363	5,760	<,001	,724	1,382

a. Dependent Variable: PI_PT

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

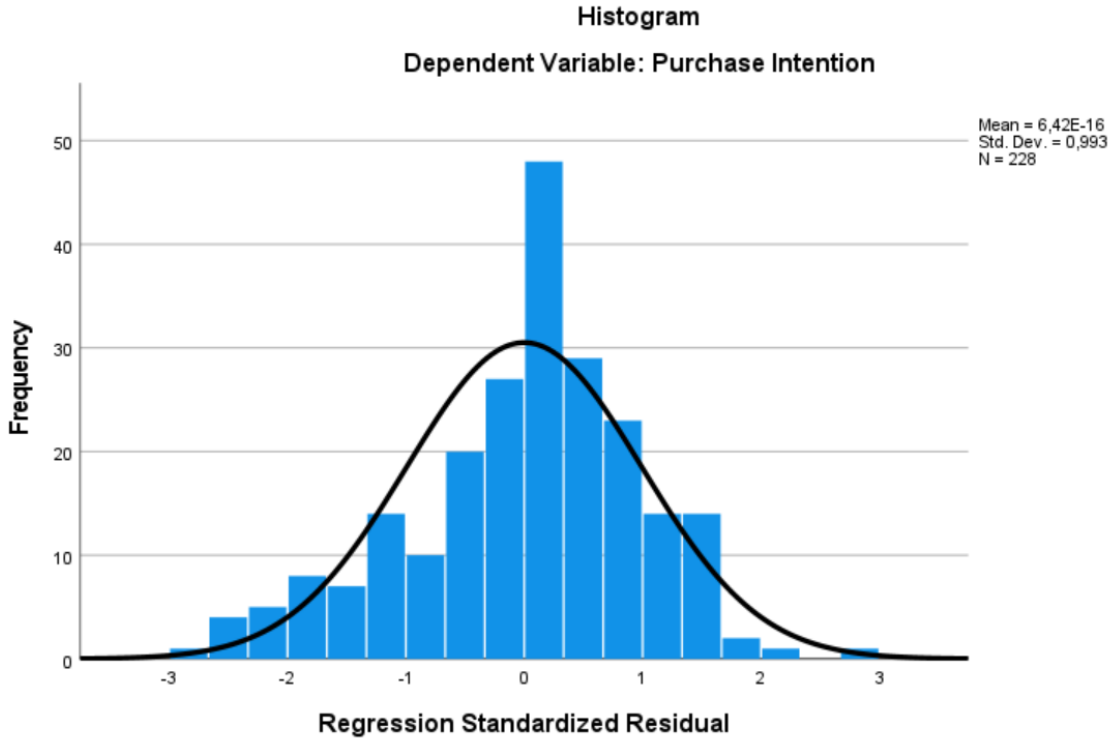
Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions			
				(Constant)	PET_PT	TSMS_PT	PU_PT
1	1	3,928	1,000	,00	,00	,00	,00
	2	,033	10,986	,14	,04	,05	,96
	3	,021	13,786	,04	,45	,84	,00
	4	,019	14,544	,82	,51	,11	,04

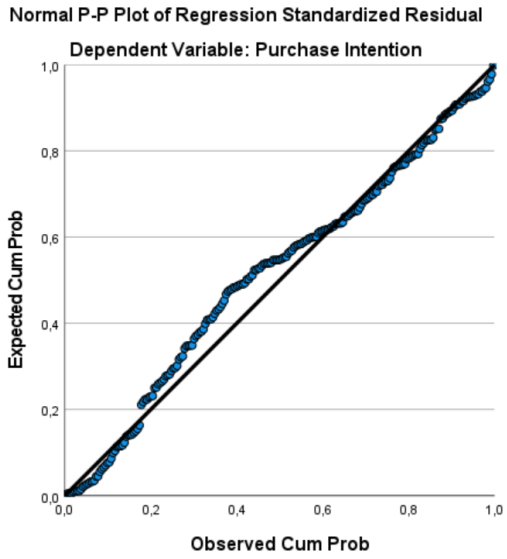
a. Dependent Variable: PI_PT

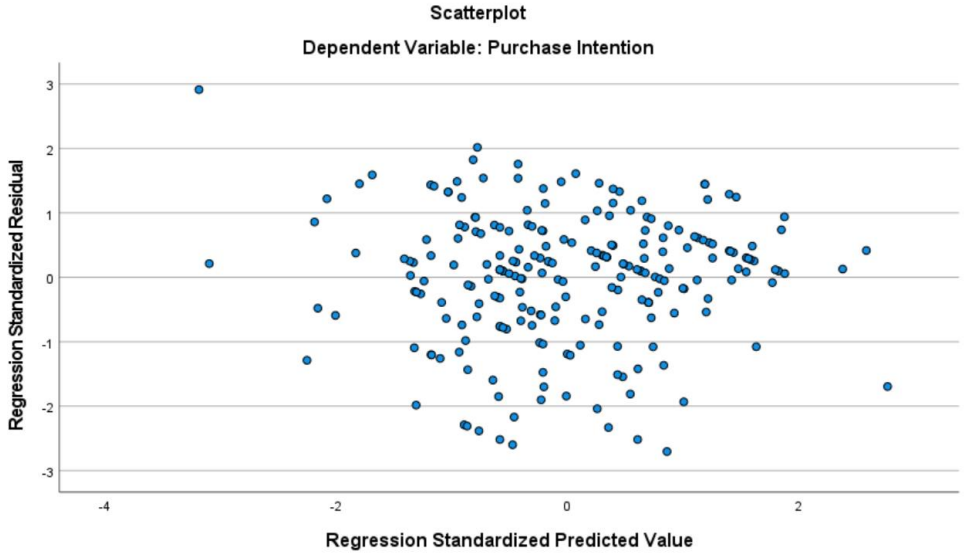
Residuals Statistics[a]

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	1,6824	6,6796	4,3531	,83931	228
Residual	-3,07862	3,31761	,00000	1,13110	228
Std. Predicted Value	-3,182	2,772	,000	1,000	228
Std. Residual	-2,704	2,914	,000	,993	228

a. Dependent Variable: PI_PT


Histogram
Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention
Mean = 6,42E-16
Std. Dev. = 0,993
N = 228
Frequency
50
40
30
20
10
0
-3
-2
-1
0
1
2
3
Regression Standardized Residual


Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual
Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention
Expected Cum Prob
1,0
0,8
0,6
0,4
0,2
0,0
0,0
0,2
0,4
0,6
0,8
1,0
Observed Cum Prob



Correlations

Correlations

		PET_PT	TSMS_PT	PU_PT	RES_1
PET_PT	Pearson Correlation	1	,464**	,453**	,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	1,000
	N	228	228	228	228
TSMS_PT	Pearson Correlation	,464**	1	,446**	,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	1,000
	N	228	228	228	228
PU_PT	Pearson Correlation	,453**	,446**	1	,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		1,000
	N	228	228	228	228
RES_1	Pearson Correlation	,000	,000	,000	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1,000	1,000	1,000	
	N	228	228	228	228

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix D – Linear Regression Assumptions USA (SPSS Output)

Intention to Use as dependent variable:

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	PU_USA, PET_USA, TSMS_USA[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: IU_USA

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,881[a]	,776	,773	,62756	2,001

a. Predictors: (Constant), PU_USA, PET_USA, TSMS_USA

b. Dependent Variable: IU_USA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	300,888	3	100,296	254,668	<,001[b]
	Residual	86,643	220	,394		
	Total	387,531	223			

a. Dependent Variable: IU_USA

b. Predictors: (Constant), PU_USA, PET_USA, TSMS_USA

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-,859	,236		-3,635	<,001		
	PET_USA	,206	,060	,163	3,429	<,001	,450	2,221
	TSMS_USA	,359	,070	,302	5,161	<,001	,297	3,365
	PU_USA	,587	,067	,490	8,760	<,001	,325	3,076

a. Dependent Variable: IU_USA

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

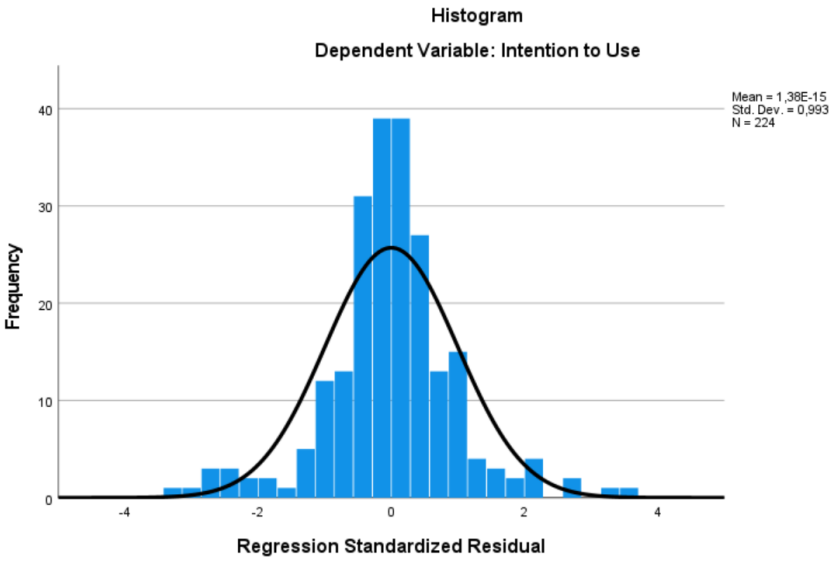
Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions			
				(Constant)	PET_USA	TSMS_USA	PU_USA
1	1	3,955	1,000	,00	,00	,00	,00
	2	,025	12,612	,91	,01	,08	,06
	3	,012	18,069	,07	,95	,06	,21
	4	,008	22,699	,01	,04	,87	,73

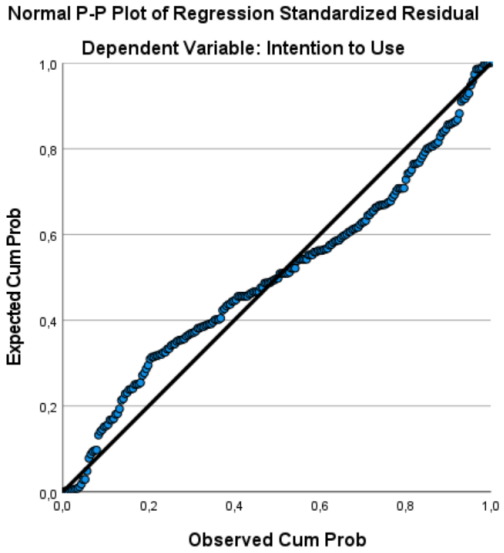
a. Dependent Variable: IU_USA

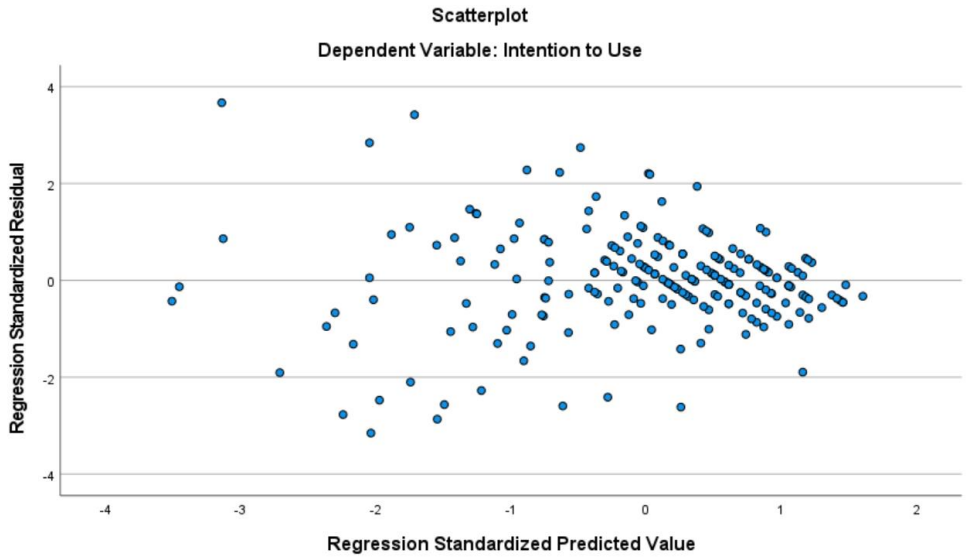
Residuals Statistics[a]

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	1,2692	7,2052	5,3437	1,16158	224
Residual	-1,97880	2,30287	,00000	,62332	224
Std. Predicted Value	-3,508	1,603	,000	1,000	224
Std. Residual	-3,153	3,670	,000	,993	224

a. Dependent Variable: IU_USA


Histogram
Dependent Variable: Intention to Use
Mean = 1,38E-15
Std. Dev. = 0,993
N = 224
Frequency
40
30
20
10
0
-4
-2
0
2
4
Regression Standardized Residual


Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual
Dependent Variable: Intention to Use
Expected Cum Prob
1,0
0,8
0,6
0,4
0,2
0,0
0,0
0,2
0,4
0,6
0,8
1,0
Observed Cum Prob



Correlations

Correlations

		PET_USA	TSMS_USA	PU_USA	RES_1
PET_USA	Pearson Correlation	1	,719**	,687**	,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	1,000
	N	224	224	224	224
TSMS_USA	Pearson Correlation	,719**	1	,807**	,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	1,000
	N	224	224	224	224
PU_USA	Pearson Correlation	,687**	,807**	1	,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		1,000
	N	224	224	224	224
RES_1	Pearson Correlation	,000	,000	,000	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1,000	1,000	1,000	
	N	224	224	224	224

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Purchase Intention as dependent variable:

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	PU_USA, PET_USA, TSMS_USA[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: PI_USA

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,886[a]	,785	,782	,58132	1,837

a. Predictors: (Constant), PU_USA, PET_USA, TSMS_USA

b. Dependent Variable: PI_USA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	271,209	3	90,403	267,518	<,001[b]
	Residual	74,345	220	,338		
	Total	345,554	223			

a. Dependent Variable: PI_USA

b. Predictors: (Constant), PU_USA, PET_USA, TSMS_USA

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-,545	,219		-2,488	,014		
	PET_USA	,244	,056	,205	4,402	<,001	,450	2,221
	TSMS_USA	,343	,065	,305	5,319	<,001	,297	3,365
	PU_USA	,515	,062	,455	8,298	<,001	,325	3,076

a. Dependent Variable: PI_USA

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

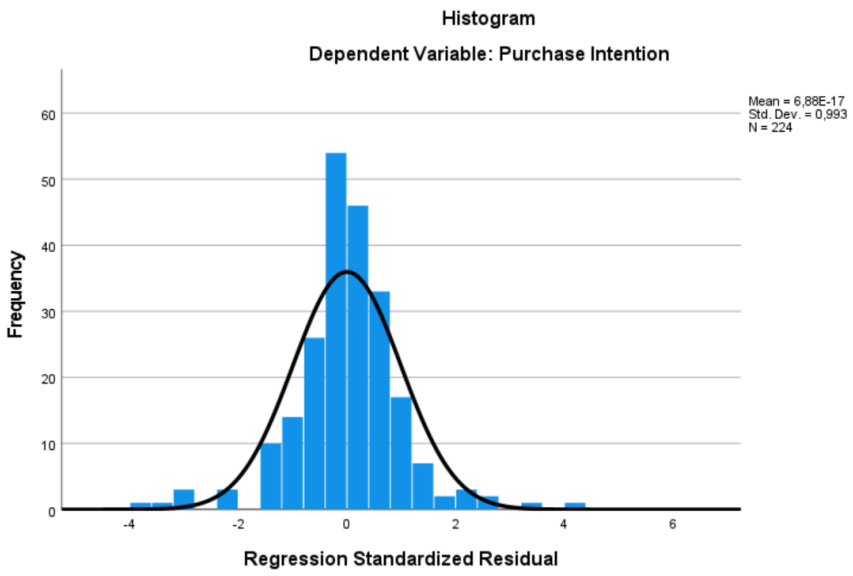
Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions			
				(Constant)	PET_USA	TSMS_USA	PU_USA
1	1	3,955	1,000	,00	,00	,00	,00
	2	,025	12,612	,91	,01	,08	,06
	3	,012	18,069	,07	,95	,06	,21
	4	,008	22,699	,01	,04	,87	,73

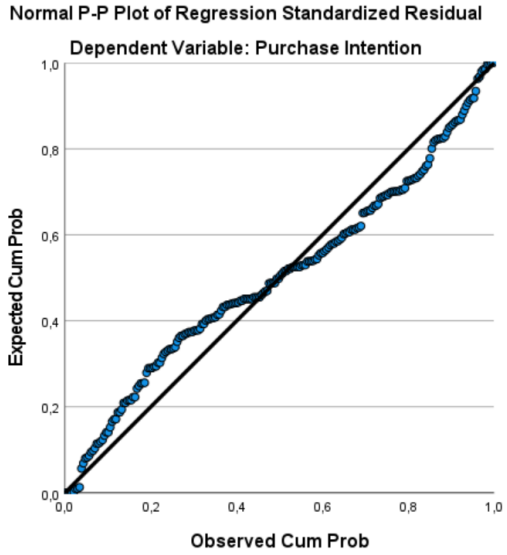
a. Dependent Variable: PI_USA

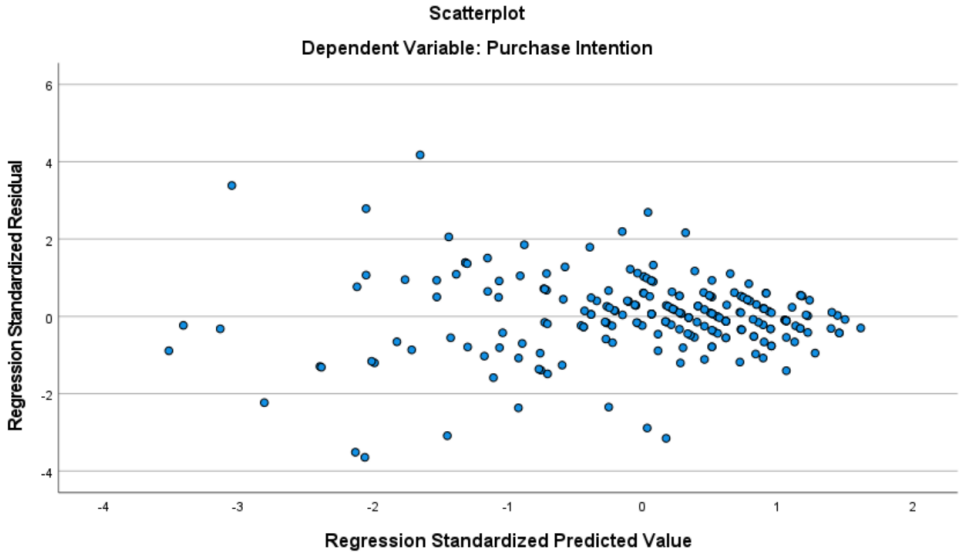
Residuals Statistics[a]

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	1,5163	7,1745	5,3929	1,10281	224
Residual	-2,11876	2,42887	,00000	,57740	224
Std. Predicted Value	-3,515	1,616	,000	1,000	224
Std. Residual	-3,645	4,178	,000	,993	224

a. Dependent Variable: PI_USA


Histogram
Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention
Mean = 6,88E-17
Std. Dev. = 0,993
N = 224
Frequency
Regression Standardized Residual


Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual
Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention
Expected Cum Prob
Observed Cum Prob


Scatterplot
Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention
Regression Standardized Residual
Regression Standardized Predicted Value

Correlations

Correlations

		PET_USA	TSMS_USA	PU_USA	RES_1
PET_USA	Pearson Correlation	1	,719**	,687**	,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	1,000
	N	224	224	224	224
TSMS_USA	Pearson Correlation	,719**	1	,807**	,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	1,000
	N	224	224	224	224
PU_USA	Pearson Correlation	,687**	,807**	1	,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		1,000
	N	224	224	224	224
RES_1	Pearson Correlation	,000	,000	,000	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1,000	1,000	1,000	
	N	224	224	224	224

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).