ENDORSEMENT ON INSTAGRAM AND HOFSTEDE'S CULTURE DIMENSIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF DIGITAL INFLUENCERS

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1 INTRODUCTION

The use of the Internet has expanded the possibilities of interaction, access to information and consumption, bringing opportunities and challenges of a digital revolution for organizations and their marketing teams (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2012; Garzella et al., 2021). To adapt to the changes generated by this revolution, companies have established marketing strategies to act in new digital channels and media, striving to strengthen communication with their target audience (Yang et al., 2021).

For this, alternatives to traditional advertisements are emerging. According to Leeflang et al. (2014), the use of social media generates empowered customers who are more led by other customers than advertising; consumers, therefore, seek interaction among users of certain products and brands, collecting information from new sources such as blogs, product reviews, discussion groups, etc. With this in mind, companies have sought to partner with individuals who have some influence on social media, so that these people advertise the organization's brand and products in a more natural, authentic and credible way (Silva et al., 2020). These people are called digital influencers, actors considered opinion leaders who have a considerable number of followers on social media and who develops electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) messages with high power of reach and persuasion (Araujo, Neijens & Vliegenhart, 2016; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Shen, 2021).

Digital Influencers are recognized "as sources of valuable and believable information" for their followers, able to persuade their audience in favor of the brand, improving its image and value (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019, p. 366). Prior marketing literature has mainly analyzed the endorsement carried out by them, addressing issues of engagement, influence, expected value, and consumer purchase intent from endorsements (Cotter, 2018; Djafarova & Matson, 2021; Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019; Silva et al., 2020; Silva & Costa, 2020; Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014). Cultural issues, however, remain without due attention from studies of digital influencers. As Singh, Zhao and Hu (2003) state, the internet is not a culturally neutral medium, quite the opposite; it is full of markers and cultural norms that often appear on social media profiles (Sheldon et al., 2017). In this way, the endorsements made by influencers are permeated with cultural aspects that organizations must consider.

Even though they work in communication channels that go beyond geographic boundaries, digital influencers build their narratives and develop their posts based on the cultures to which they belong. These "cultures can be analyzed and compared at the national level along cultural dimensions" (Mele, Kerhof & Cantoni, 2021, p. 327). Therefore, in this paper we aim to analyze possible cultural aspects exposed in the posting pattern of digital influencers; through a cross-cultural research. For this, some cultural dimensions defined by Hofstede (1980, 2011) are used; they are: collectivism vs. individualism and femininity vs. masculinity.

Such dimensions have an impact on online communication, requiring the need to account for differences among cultures in personalized social media strategies (Tsai & Men, 2017). For example, in collectivist cultures, users of social media especially seek social interaction, while in individualist cultures there is a search for information, self-promotion and recording of experiences (Hsu's et al., 2015; Sheldon et al., 2017). The masculine dimension of culture is also reflected in posts that seek self-promotion and symbolize wealth; on the other hand, feminine societies emphasize quality of life, the perspective of caring for the other and for the environment (Bedard & Tolmie, 2018; Corson, 2018).

Among the social media that digital influencers make endorsements, Instagram stands out; its popularity has grown in recent years (Kuchler, 2017). Instagram focuses on the photos visual appeal, with the possibility of posts with text and hashtags, in addition to a series of filters that users can apply for post-editing their images (Sheldon et al., 2017). In order to analyze the cultural aspects of the endorsement posts made by digital influencers on Instagram, we chose two countries whose use of Instagram is higher and that have opposite cultural dimensions according to Hofstede's classification (1980, 2011). So, USA and Brazil were the selected countries, so that the first has more individualistic and masculine characteristics and the second has a more collectivist and slightly feminine culture (Hofstede, 1980, 2011).

In summary, in this article, we seek to answer the following question: do the endorsements made by digital influencers from the USA and Brazil reflect the cultural dimensions of their respective countries? With that in mind, we also questioned: Does this process follow a structured path? What are the characteristics of the posts? Are such patterns and characteristics repeated among influencers from different countries? We begin our inquiry with a look at prior research on cultural dimensions in social media and, from there, we develop research propositions.

2 CULTURAL DIMENSIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Culture is a construct used to understand behavior, defined by Hofstede and Mccrae (2004, p. 58) as "a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others". It is based on values that guide general predispositions and establish preferences for certain ways of life in a certain location (Mele, Kerhof & Cantoni, 2021).

Cultural characteristics can be evidenced through cultural dimensions that seek to explain patterns of behavior existing in a country. Such dimensions were established by Hofstede (1980, 2011), they are: a) power distance (based on authority orientation), b) uncertainty avoidance (anxiety and uncertainty), c) Individualism versus Collectivism (self-orientation); d) Masculinity versus Femininity (achievement and assertiveness), e) long term or short term orientation (pragmatic or normative orientation) and, f) indulgence versus restraint (gratification of needs) (Nair & Ramakrishnan, 2016).

Two of the dimensions proposed by Hofstede (1980, 2011) can be specially analyzed in the virtual environment. The first one is the individualism/collectivism spectrum. There are differences in social media use between individualistic and collectivist cultures (Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011; Lee & Wohn, 2012). Individualism is characterized by people who care about themselves first and who prefer to act alone rather than in groups (Taras, 2017). Therefore, on social media such people get more pleasure in expressing emotions that favor self-stimulation and self-satisfaction (Lee & Wohn, 2012), in addition to seeking information more frequently (Kim et al., 2011). Collectivists, on the other hand, invest in social networks as a means of interaction, of socialization (Kim et al., 2011). Complementarily, Riskos et al. (2017) found that posts from companies from collectivist countries had high emotional content, while posts from organizations in individualistic cultures were more informative. Posts with information were even more popular in individualist than collectivist countries (Riskos et al., 2017).

Briefly, posts in individualistic cultures is more 'me'-focused (selfies posts), enhancing information and the individual's experience and opinion to self-promote while in collectivist cultures, content shared on networks is more "we"-focused, emotionally social, aiming for interaction (Sheldon et al., 2017). Thus, we develop the following propositions:

- PROPOSITION 1 – Endorsement posts from digital influencers from individualistic cultures reflect self-promotion and self-satisfaction.
- PROPOSITION 2 - Endorsement posts from digital influencers from collectivist cultures seek interaction and socialization.
- PROPOSITION 3 - Endorsement posts from digital influencers from individualistic cultures bring more informative messages than those from influencers from collectivist countries.
- PROPOSITION 4 - Endorsement posts from digital influencers from collectivist cultures bring more emotional messages than those from influencers from individualistic countries.

On Instagram, in particular, the hashtags used in posts denote some association with groups (Smith & Smith, 2012; Yang et al., 2012). In this way, it is possible that people in collectivist cultures can use this mechanism more frequently. So:

- PROPOSITION 5 - Digital influencers from collectivist cultures use more hashtags than influencers from individualistic countries.

According to Gorodnichenko & Roland (2012) and Jung et al. (2017), in a collectivist culture, individual achievements are seen as the result of effort rather than skill. Thus, posts by digital influencers from collectivist countries tend to bring messages and symbols that demonstrate dedication and sacrifice in daily life; while in influencers from individualistic countries one can expect texts and images that enhance capacity e self-sufficiency (Mele, Kerhof & Cantoni, 2021). From this, two propositions are developed:

- PROPOSITION 6 - Posts by digital influencers from collectivist countries bring symbolism linked to dedication and sacrifice in daily life.
- PROPOSITION 7 - Posts by digital influencers from individualistic countries bring symbolism linked to capacity e self-sufficiency.

The second dimension listed by Hofstede (1980, 2011) that will be observed in this research is masculinity versus femininity. Masculinity can be defined as a dimension where values are essentially based on assertiveness, obtaining money and goods. On the other hand, a society with female tendencies is characterized by values such as: friendly atmosphere, cooperation, solidarity and quality of life (Taras, 2017).

Based on these concepts, we can assume that, in masculine cultures, the exposure of a lifestyle surrounded by products that symbolize wealth, independence, competitiveness and prosperity will be more present in the influencers' posts from the exposure of specific categories of brands that communicate such elements (Hoehle, Zhang & Venkatesh, 2015). In contrast, posts in collectivist cultures will emphasize interpersonal relationships and tend to be compassionate and expressive (Hoehle, Zhang & Venkatesh, 2015). In particular, collectivists are more concerned with environmental issues, encouraging a green lifestyle and consumption (Corson, 2018). Based on the masculinity versus femininity dimension, we developed the latest research propositions:

- PROPOSITION 8 - Endorsement posts from digital influencers from feminine cultures are expressive and reinforce interpersonal relationships.

- PROPOSITION 9 - Endorsement posts from digital influencers from masculine cultures reinforce wealth, independence, competitiveness and prosperity.
- PROPOSITION 10 - Endorsement posts from digital influencers from feminine cultures bring some mention of environmental responsibility.

Based on the developed propositions, we carry out the research steps, as described in the following section.

3 METHOD

For the cross-cultural research to be carried out, it was necessary to determine which digital influencers from two countries - USA and Brazil - would be analyzed. We assume that such influencers should represent the same lifestyle and, consequently, endorse goods and services linked to a particular market. Furthermore, this article has as its research field the fitness market. This market encourages people "to evaluate and work on their bodies in the context of consumer fitness culture - in commercial health clubs and the fitness media, and through personal fitness services" (Maguire, 2008: 3).

In it, the USA is a revenue leader, and Brazil ranks second in the world ranking of number of gyms (IHRSA, 2018), demonstrating the rise and demand for this sector's products and services in these countries. The role of digital influencers in this scenario is to show muscular, good shape, and agile bodies, capable of performing seemingly impossible physical exercises; their bodies are avatars of brand value to communicate products and services (Powers & Greenwell, 2016) creating an ideal body image by just posting videos and pictures in social media (Belinska, 2018).

So, a specific profile of digital influencer was selected on Instagram, adhering following criteria: a) has a fitness lifestyle, b) has more than 1 million of followers on Instagram, and c) advertises goods and services on his/her profile. In addition to these criteria, it was sought to analyze influencers who had the same gender, in order to observe possible similarities and particularities in the endorsed products, in the forms of communication and in the public that follows them. Thus, three Brazilian female digital influencers and three USA female digital influencers considered fitness models or muses were selected for this qualitative research, they are: Juliana Salimeni (🇧🇷), Ana Cherí (🇺🇸), Gabriela Publiesi (🇧🇷), Cassey Ho (🇺🇸), Alice Matos (🇧🇷), and Paige Hathaway (🇺🇸) (Figure 1).

Name	Profile name	Nationality	Number of followers
Juliana Salimeni	jujusalimeni	Brazilian	13,5M
Ana Cherí	anacheri	American	12,4M
Gabriela Publiesi	gabrielapugliesi	Brazilian	3,9 M
Paige Hathaway	paigehathaway	American	4,1M
Alice Matos	alice	Brazilian	1,8M
Cassey Ho	blogilates	American	1,9M

Figure 1 - Profile characteristics of digital influencers
Source: Photos and number of followers – Instagram of these influencers (2018/2019).

These influencers have considerable differences in terms of number of followers. Such a difference can be important in the development of the communication strategies that the influencers adopt and in the attractiveness of them to the companies, being able to endorse national or global brands. This diversity contributes to an in-depth analysis of the forms of postings and the online interaction generated by profiles with more than a million followers.

The posts made by these influencers during a month (Brazilian: October 1st to November 1st, 2018; American: October 1st to November 1st, 2019) that involved the announcement of brands and products, a total of 112, were analyzed. For that, we used the Semiotic image analysis that aims to identify the system of signs involved in the image and its description in order to find out how they produce meaning (Penn, 2000). Following the guidelines described by Penn (2000), a dissection of the image followed by its articulation or reconstruction was performed. The steps were: i) identification and cataloguing of material elements (denotative inventory), which involved, first, the selection of the image and its textual component (texts, emojis, and hashtags), followed by the denotative description of them; ii) analysis of higher significance levels, starting with a connotative understanding of what was described in the previous phase (i.e., this stage involves a work of interpretation or understanding of the image connotation); and iii) elaboration of a report for the analysis of each post in tables using Excel. Figure 2 shows how the denotative and connotative descriptions were made. In the end, a mental map was developed according to each nationality, summarizing the main findings of the survey, the patterns of posts identified.

Post05 of Gabriela Publiesi	Date: 08/10/2018
Image	Text: The silence and the contact with nature increasingly refine our attunement to the universe. We perceive our insignificance in the face of the greatness of life! Good morning (emoji of the hands together- prayer) (emoji of the plant in the earth) @bodyforsure

Denotative aspect of image: Young, lean female figure in a yoga position, looks concentrated. Right hand is resting on the floor covered by a small rug, holding the body upright, raised hips, left leg slightly bent to the floor, and right leg extended, with right foot touching the floor with the rug. The left arm is lifted upward and the woman's face follows the direction of that arm (as if looking up at the sky). Hair caught, tattoos left arm the show. Tight top and workout pants in light gray, dark, black and orange coloring the slender body of the woman. The setting is apparently a wooden bridge, with "railing" in blue metal arabesques and in the background a greyish forest.

Denotative aspect of text: Greeting followers through the good morning, use emojis and quote the brand of clothing she is using in this photo.

Connotative aspect: Body in motion, attunement, yoga - Connection with nature, universe and with all living beings. Motivational phrase linked to the meaning of life - connection between beings, peace expressed by silence and concentration. **Body as an extension of the connection with nature. Hand on the ground - approach with nature. Idea of Mother Earth - Indian culture - PachaMama**. Essence of being is nature, the earth, which implies sustenance, fertility. **Clothing appropriate to the occasion, it is an extension of the purpose of the activity**. Clothing as second skin and tattoos as an **expression of bodily freedom**.

Figure 2 - Example of denotative and connotative inventory for each post
Source: Photo - Gabriela Publiesi Instagram (2018).

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this section are the findings of the research, divided into: Characteristics of endorsed brands and products, Characteristics of images in posts, Text characteristics, and Checking of propositions.

4.1 Characteristics of Endorsed Brands and Products

During the period of one month, the analyzed influencers posted images and texts that endorsed brands and products from different segments, reflecting the diversity of existing fitness-style industries (Wellness Creative Co, 2019). Brazilian digital influencers made 63 posts endorsing a total of 52 brands. In turn, the endorsement by USA digital influencers was lower in number of posts and brand citations, a total of 49 ads and 28 brands announced.

Thus, in general, we noticed a greater use of digital influencers as brand endorsers in Brazil, reflecting the more intense application of this marketing strategy by companies that sell products in this country. At the same time, we realized that Brazilian women, in general, have a more regular contact with their large audience through more frequent posts compared to USA ones, bringing these muses closer to their followers. This result is consistent with proposition 2, which assumes the use of Instagram in collectivist cultures, especially with the aim of interaction (Kim et al., 2011; Riskos et al., 2017; Sheldon et al., 2017).

Clothing was the category most endorsed by these influencers (🇧🇷: 39%; 🇺🇸: 31,6%), being formed by products that dress and ornament the body, involving clothes suitable for the practice of exercises (clothes fit), casual clothes, costumes, footwear, underwear and beachwear, and accessories such as earrings and glasses. The second most advertised category by Brazilian influencers was food (26,9%), represented by supplements and healthy, natural and/or organic foods, without sugar, gluten, fat, oil and lactose. This category ranked fourth among USA digital influencers (16,5%), shortly after the entertainment category (30,4%); represented by endorsements of internet games, comics, photo services, online fitness guidance and stationery platforms (diaries, for example); and of aesthetics and cosmetics category (20,3%). Aesthetics and cosmetics groups bodybuilding activities (personal trainers services) and body care from the use of goods and services aimed at the beauty market, such as hair products, beauty clinics, beauty salons, costume designer, makeup artist and manicurist. It represented 13,4% of the posts made by Brazilian influencers, percentage equal to communication category that is comprised of activities for the dissemination of fitness and beauty fairs and events, media such as magazines and TV channels, and communication services such as marketing agencies. Finally, travel category identified in Brazilian influencers posts encompasses facilities and transportation services such as hotel accommodations, airfare and luxury car rentals (7,3%), and Donations category (endorsement of non-governmental organization - NGO) announced by US influencers represent only 1,2% of their posts.

4.2 Characteristics of images in posts

We identified the primary role of the body in the attractiveness of the post through the profiles of all Brazilian influencers. The photographs posted by these influencers that obtained high levels of interaction were those in which their bodies were shown in bikinis, lingerie, and tight clothing. These women have millions of followers in their profiles on Instagram precisely because the bodies have been seen as a source of inspiration for many in their audience (Belinska, 2018; Powers & Greenwell, 2016). The posts that highlight the corporeal are therefore the most liked and commented by people who encounter them virtually (Figure 3); generating greater interaction from

the visual communication that reinforces the care taken with the body by such influencers, from the endeavor to transform it, from the sacrifice to achieve the ideal body.
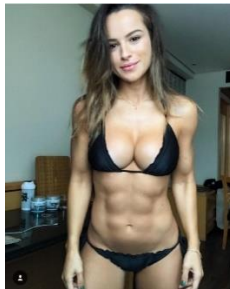
Gabriela Publiesi (🇧🇷)	Alice Matos (🇧🇷)	Juliana Salimeni (🇧🇷)	Gabriela Publiesi (🇧🇷)
Post 09 – bikini advertisement	Post 08 – coach advertisement	Post 14 – Fitness Fair advertisement	Post 14 – Fitness center advertisement
127.536 likes	146.616likes	97.879 likes	15. 695 likes
834 comments	2.503 comments	527 comments	30 comments
Gabriela Publiesi Instagram	Alice Matos Instagram	Juliana Salimeni Instagram	Gabriela Publiesi Instagram

Figure 3 – Collectivist and feminine patterns in posts
Source: Photos and metrics- Instagram of these influencers (2018/2019).

The exposed body communicates efforts, emphasizing the collectivist aspect of Brazilian culture in the post (Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2012; Jung et al., 2017; Mele, Kerhof & Cantoni, 2021). In addition, all Brazilian influencers presented group photos in the endorsement posts (Figure 3), something not seen in USA influencers, highlighting that the content shared on networks in collectivist cultures is more "us" – focused (Sheldon et al., 2017), emphasizing interpersonal relationships; characteristic of feminine countries too (Hoehle, Zhang & Venkatesh, 2015).

In the case of USA influencers, some of the most liked and commented posts involved body exposure, but mostly entertainment and food aspects related to fitness. In this category, the posts by Cassey Ho stands out, which bring, in a humorous way, a personal blog through comic books (Figure 4). This strategy reveals the willingness to offer information about the influencer's life, generating self-promotion through experiences, tips and opinions; these characteristics are common in posts from people in individualistic cultures (Kim et al., 2011; Lee & Wohn, 2012; Riskos et al., 2017). In a complementary way, the American influencers presented posts with more selfies in their photographs (Figure 4), an element also addressed in the literature as descriptive of individualistic cultures (Sheldon et al., 2017).

Cassey Ho (🇺🇸)	Cassey Ho (🇺🇸)	Ana Cherí (🇺🇸)	Ana Cherí (🇺🇸)
Post 03 – comic advertisement	Post 06 – comic advertisement	Post 09 – make-up advertisement	Post 26 – make-up advertisement
101.620 likes	47.984 likes	118.701 likes	123.360 likes

| 1.933 comments | 1.000 comments | 1.062 comments | 1.001 comments |
| Cassey Ho Instagram | Cassey Ho Instagram | | |

Figure 4 – Individualistic patterns in posts
Source: Photos and metrics- Instagram of these influencers (2019).

All digital influencers posted some photographs that communicated wealth, independence and prosperity through the endorsed products, characteristic elements of a masculine culture (Hoehle, Zhang & Venkatesh, 2015) (Figure 5). This result demonstrates that even if a culture tends to femininity, like the Brazilian one, characteristic symbolisms of masculine traits can be found in the endorsement posts.

Juliana Salimeni (🇧🇷)	Alice Matos (🇧🇷)	Cassey Ho (🇺🇸)	Ana Cherí (🇺🇸)
Post 04 – Rental Car advertisement	Post 13 – travel company advertisement	Post 09 – personal blog advertisement	Post 02 – fashion advertisement
110.558 likes	33.416 likes	43.894 likes	95.041 likes
633 comments	266 comments	260 comments	686 comments
Juliana Salimeni Instagram	Alice Matos Instagram	Cassey Ho Instagram	Ana Cherí Instagram

Figure 5 – masculine patterns in posts
Source: Photos and metrics- Instagram of these influencers (2018, 2019).

Even so, it was still possible to identify a feminine trait in the post of one of the Brazilian influencers through photographs that demonstrated her connection with the environment. These posts encourage a green lifestyle and consumption (Corson, 2018) (Figure 5).
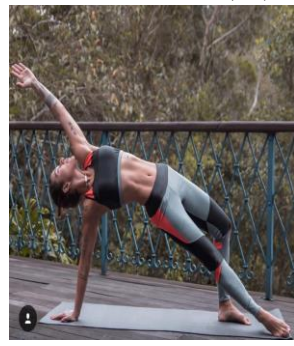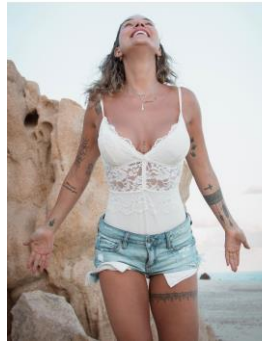
Gabriela Publiesi (🇧🇷)	Gabriela Publiesi (🇧🇷)	Gabriela Publiesi (🇧🇷)	Gabriela Publiesi (🇧🇷)
Post 02 – clothing advertisement	Post 05 – clothing advertisement	Post 11 – clothing advertisement	Post 13 – Lingerie advertisement
49.656 likes	28.495 likes	57.929 likes	88.416 likes
419 comments	98 comments	236 comments	368 comments
Gabriela Publiesi Instagram	Gabriela Publiesi Instagram	Gabriela Publiesi Instagram	Gabriela Publiesi Instagram

Figure 6 – feminine patterns in posts
Source: Photos and metrics- Instagram of this influencer (2018).

Finally, when we look at the endorsement strategies, we realize that:

- The main strategy used by the digital influencers of both countries to endorse brands in their online profiles was to post photographs showing them using the advertised good or service, bringing to the endorsement a characteristic of naturalness and credibility through the actual use of the advertised product (Silva et al., 2020);
- The second strategy most used by digital influencers was posting photographs of them just exposing the products. We evidenced that this type of photography does not generate a better interaction with followers in terms of likes and comments compared to the strategy of posting images that portray the use of advertised goods and services;
- It was still possible to view posts which photographs only brought the products, without the image of the endorser. This strategy was rarely used by three of the six women analyzed. This way of exposing the good received the fewest likes and comments from followers among the used strategies by these fitness muses and;
- It was possible to identify another endorsement strategy carried out solely by USA influencers. While Brazilian influencers always post photographs in which the endorsed product is present, Americans posted one-time disassociated photos of the advertised product, without showing it in the photograph, citing only the brand in the post text. This type of endorsement does not seem to strengthen the brand image, because the main element of attractiveness of the post – the photo - does not communicate the product, does not transfer meanings between good/service and endorser, visually distancing endorsement and endorser, making it difficult for followers to perceive the relationship between product and influencer. Thus, the likes and comments in these photos are probably linked to the influencer's image, disregarding the brand mentioned. Such a strategy reinforces the cultural dimension of individualism that prioritizes self-promotion (Kim et al., 2011; Lee & Wohn, 2012; Riskos et al., 2017; Sheldon et al., 2017).

4.3 Text characteristics

While photographs represented the main attractiveness source of the post, the texts served as the primary element of communication. Initially, we identified that many texts brought some emotional element about the announced good or service. Four emotional categories were identified in the postings of Brazilian influencers, they are: love, desire, dependency/irresistibility, and Happiness/Proud. Some texts depicting this category are illustrated in Figure 7.

Emotion	Text
Love	Post15 - Gabriela Publiesi (fit food advertisement): "Love Bowl! I love to mix everything that is healthy and nourish my energy body and soul […]"
	Post03 – Alice Matos (resort advertisement): "[...]I'm in love with this place. @solarmirados #relax #praiadorosa #rosabeach"
Desire	Post01 – Alice Matos (fit sweet advertisement): "When you hit that sweet eating desire (chocolate in my case) it has to be one that's really worth it [...]"
Dependency/ irresistibility	Post12 – Juliana Salimeni: (peanut paste advertisement) "[…] That I do not live without, it is love affair ♡ #mandubim #proveaddiction"
	Post20 – Gabriela Publiesi (fit sweet advertisement): "Seriously now: Take the @docemaisfit of coconut kiss and leave it in the freezer for a few minutes! OMG 😍😍😍😍😍😍😍😍"

	Post14 – Juliana Salimeni (fitness fair advertisement): "We are very proud to be ambassadors of this fair that has already become a reference in the fitness world !![…]"
Happiness/Proud	Post 10 – Gabriela Pugliesi (health sweet popcorn advertisement): "Do you Want to make me happy? Give me some sweet popcorn! I've been crazy since I was little! Anyone who has tasted @senhorapipoca (this one is with whey cacao I don't have words!) knows what I'm talking about!"

Figure 7 - Emotions described in posts made by Brazilian influencers
Source: Text- Instagram of these influencers (2018).

The emotions described by these digital influencers were all positive and communicate to the followers that they don't endorse the product only, but also uses it in their daily live, acquiring appreciation for it, leading to feelings of affection, love, desire, happiness, pride and even dependence. USA influencers, in turn, showed less frequently the emotional components felt towards the advertised brands, especially Cassey Ho. Still, they usually used more emojis and hashtags in their texts than the Brazilian ones, expressing some feelings through these images. Hence, it was possible to identify three feelings shown in the textual component of the post which are grouped and exemplified in Figure 8.

Emotion	Text
Love	Post26 – Ana Cherí (makeup advertisement): "😭😭💫I loved this natural bright look from yesterday's shoot! I've tagged and listed the products I used. Pretty much all the fun products I got from @fentybeauty last week 💅 […] 💫💅 #FentyBeauty#beauty #makeup #Natural #tartecosmetics #tarte #benefit #benifitcosmetics #glow#glam #fall #fallmakeup #halloween #queen #dark"
Preference/ identification	Post08 – Paige Hathaway (energy drink advertisement) "[…] 🌀 The Berry Genius happens to be my fave […] They are a MUST. I've even got all my friends drinking them! 😍😋😛"
	Post23 – Ana Cherí (supplement advertisement): "[…] 🤚🐪 @1stphormMegawatt is my FAVORITE jump start to my session. #Iam1stphorm"
Happiness/Proud	Post01 – Cassey Ho (fit planner advertisement): "[…] Eeeeeeeeeee!!!!! So proud of our Lead Graphic Designer @brittneybrandtt who poured her entire soul into this. You're gonna feel the Blogifam love the moment you open your box!! 🤍🤍🤍"
	Post25 – Ana Cherí (fitness outfit advertisement): "had SO MUCH FUN with my @cheri_fit #CheriGangtoday!! 💅💫 […] #CheriGang #CheriGangStrong #galaxy #star #stars#milkyway #activewear #gym #fitness #fitgirl #strong#booty #workout #leggings #october"

Figure 8 - Emotions described in posts made by USA influencers
Source: Text- Instagram of these influencers (2019).

Based on the results, it is possible to affirm that in digital endorsements in collectivist cultures there is a focus on passing on, through the text, emotional components that bring the experience of the influencer closer to the follower; this was proposed from the literature accessed (Riskos et al., 2017; Sheldon et al., 2017 However, differently from what is proposed from the studies of Smith and Smith (2012) and Yang et al. (2012), hashtags are mostly used by digital influencers from individualistic cultures. Its use, in this way, may not be intended to denote any association with groups, but rather serve as meta-comments, offering an opinion (Daer, Hoffman & Goodman, 2014).

Furthermore, regarding the content of the posts messages, we identified 7 categories: motivational phrases, questions, prize draw, promotional codes, instructions, everyday descriptions, and invitations (Figure 9). We realized that Brazilian influencers post more frequently texts with motivational messages and instructions about the endorsed product or brand. Among USA influencers, the most frequently posted types of textual content were everyday descriptions.

Influencer	Two most commonly used message typologies
Juliana Salimeni (🇧🇷)	Questions
	Instructions
Gabriela Publiesi (🇧🇷)	Instructions
	Motivational phrases
Alice Matos (🇧🇷)	Instructions
	Motivational phrases
Ana Cherí (🇺🇸)	Instructions
	Questions
Cassey Ho (🇺🇸)	Everyday descriptions
	Motivational phrases
Paige Hathaway (🇺🇸)	Everyday descriptions
	Prize draw
Examples of messages	
Motivational phrases	Post17 – Juliana Salimeni (dress advertisement): "The beautiful is to see you fight, believe, nothing shakes a brave heart. The beautiful thing is to see you resist. See you against logic. No dark scares a soul full of hope♡"
Questions	Post02 – Ana Cherí (dress advertisement): "💇🛍🍫 This fall look is @fashionnova AD. Do you like my velvet dress??"
Prize draw	Post01 – Paige Hathaway (suntan lotion advertisement): "[…] THERES MORE! 😎 3 LUCKY WINNERS will receive a bottle of Rossa and a FREE Tshirt! TO ENTER: 1. FOLLOW @rossaselftanning; 2. LIKE this post; 3. TAG a friend in the comments below - the more people you tag the higher your chances of winning!"
Promotional codes	Post03 – Gabriela Publiesi (manicure advertisement): "[...] And look what a marvel: For the first users who use the coupon "PUGLI12" the service of manicure will have a discount of 5 reais!"
Instructions	Post14 – Alice Matos (fit pasta advertisement): "[...]And it is made of Glucomannan, the natural fiber of the Konjac root, which increases the sensation of satiety, expanding in the stomach after ingestion [...]"
Everyday descriptions	Post11 – Cassey Ho (blog advertisement): "What I ate yesterday! I'm starting to add more healthy carbs and protein into my diet as I slowly come out of eating strictly keto. Though keto helped jumpstart my 90 day journey and resulted in some pretty quick fat loss and weight loss, I found that it was difficult to continue as I always got headaches, had dry mouth and constant thirst no matter how much water I drank, cramping muscles, and the only way to battle it was to literally eat extra salt and take supplements […]"
Invitations	Post13 – Juliana Salimenti (Fitness Fair advertisement): I'll be there at the booth of @chocolatedoceoficial using the most beautiful looks we prepared for you! I'll wait for you there, huh ??

Figure 9 - Message types in posts
Source: Examples of texts- Instagram of these influencers (2018/2019).

Motivational texts demonstrate a concern for the well-being of others, reflecting a characteristic element of collectivist cultures (Taras, 2017). The instructions can also be understood as a demonstration of concern by Brazilian digital influencers that their followers will use the goods and services, so that such people can make the best use of the functionality of the endorsed product.

The instructions given in the posts provide information to the followers. In the case of American digital influencers, there is also information exposure, however, the type of message is conveyed through descriptions of the influencers' daily lives. We can then infer that the availability of information is present in the posting patterns of influencers from both countries; however, the way such information is passed on reflects the cultural dimensions linked to individualism (USA) and collectivism (Brazil).

4.4 Checking of propositions

From the results described above, it was possible to reflect on the propositions established in this paper. For this, Figure 10 was developed. It summarizes the main findings of the research.

Propositions	Check	Reflection
1) Endorsement posts from digital influencers from individualistic cultures reflect self-promotion and self-satisfaction.	✅	Photographs of USA influencers generate self-promotion through experiences, tips and opinions. In a complementary way, these digital influencers present more selfies in their posts. In addition, these women post one-time disassociated photos of the advertised product, without showing it in the photograph, citing only the brand in the post text.
2) Endorsement posts from digital influencers from collectivist cultures seek interaction and socialization.	✅	Brazilian influencers, in general, have a more regular contact with their large audience through more frequent posts compared to USA ones.
3) Endorsement posts from digital influencers from individualistic cultures bring more informative messages than those from influencers from collectivist countries.	❌	The availability of information is present in the posting patterns of influencers from both countries; however, the way such information is passed on reflects the cultural dimensions linked to individualism. The purpose of the information in the post of USA influencers is self-promotion, whereas the purpose of the Brazilian ones is to help followers.
4) Endorsement posts from digital influencers from collectivist cultures bring more emotional messages than those from influencers from individualistic countries	✅	The texts of posts from Brazilian influencers bring more emotional messages than those from USA influencers. The emotions permeated are love, desire, dependence/irresistibility and Happiness/Pride.
5) Digital influencers from collectivist cultures use more hashtags than influencers from individualistic countries.	❌	Hashtags are mostly used by digital influencers from individualistic cultures. Its use, in this way, may not be intended to denote any association with groups, but rather serve as meta-comments, offering an opinion.
6) Posts by digital influencers from collectivist countries bring symbolism linked to dedication and sacrifice in daily life.	✅	The body exposed in the images is the central element of posts by Brazilian influencers. It represents, from the messages of encouragement, the result of effort and sacrifice.
7) Posts by digital influencers from individualistic countries bring symbolism linked to capacity e self-sufficiency.	It was not possible to observe such a proposition through this research.	
8) Endorsement posts from digital influencers from feminine cultures are	✅	All Brazilian influencers presented group photos in the endorsement posts, highlighting that the content shared on networks in

expressive and reinforce interpersonal relationships.		collectivist cultures is more "us" – focused, emphasizing interpersonal relationships.
9) Endorsement posts from digital influencers from masculine cultures reinforce wealth, independence, competitiveness and prosperity.	❌	All digital influencers posted some photographs that communicated wealth, independence and prosperity through the endorsed products, characteristic elements of a masculine culture.
10) Endorsement posts from digital influencers from feminine cultures bring some mention of environmental responsibility.	☑	It was still possible to identify a feminine trait in the post of one of the Brazilian influencers through photographs that demonstrated her connection with the environment. These posts encourage a green lifestyle and consumption.

Figure 10 - Checking of propositions

5 CONCLUSIONS

This research aimed to identify whether the endorsements made by digital influencers from the USA and Brazil reflect the cultural dimensions of their respective countries. For this, propositions were developed considering the cultural dimensions of individualism versus collectivism and femininity versus masculinity proposed by Hofstede (1980, 2011). The research results reinforced the premise that social media are culturally rich virtual environments, with norms and markers that reflect values, lifestyles and preferences.

The main contribution of the article was the understanding that the endorsements made by influencers bring distinctions based on the nationality of these opinion leaders. Individualistic traits were identified in the posts of fitness influencers from the USA, such as the search for self-promotion in the greater use of selfies, in the use of photographs without the presence of the endorsed product and in informative texts with everyday descriptions. In turn, collectivist traits were identified in the posts of Brazilian fitness influencers, such as the search for interaction based on the higher frequency of posts, texts that seek socialization with followers and that bring sentimental and encouraging elements.

The cultural dimension femininity versus masculinity, however, was not so evident in the posts among the influencers of the two countries analyzed. The elements of femininity were identified in posts by Brazilian influencers who exposed interpersonal relationships through photographs, as well as demonstrating a concern for the environment and responsible consumption. At the same time, cultural traits of masculinity were observed in posts by Brazilian influencers, as well as in posts by digital influencers in the United States. Such elements can be justified from Hofstede's (2010) understanding that the masculinity/femininity dimension in Brazil presents very similar percentages, which could characterize this country as possessing a central position among such spectrum.

The article theoretically contributes to marketing by analyzing the endorsement made by new social actors online, bringing discussions about cultural aspects hitherto disregarded in the field's literature (Cotter, 2018; Djafarova & Matson, 2021; Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019; Silva et al., 2020; Silva & Costa, 2020; Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014). In practical terms, the results presented can guide organizations in choosing the virtual endorser, knowing that such individuals bring elements of their culture in their posts. Thus, the format and meaning of the visual and textual message disseminated permeate the cultural norms and markers of these opinion makers, being transferred to the products and brands endorsed. Such association can improve organizational image and brand value (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019).

Finally, we understand the need for future studies that analyze followers' comments in the posts of digital influencers. Such texts can contribute to a holistic view of the interaction and engagement, bringing clarification about the role of followers in the product advertising process in profiles on Instagram. Furthermore, future studies can overcome the limitation of this research, analyzing the other cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede et al. (1980, 2011), also expanding the observed countries.

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