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THE ONLINE INFLUENCERS STRATEGIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON CONSUMERS DECISION PROCESS

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Social media influencers have emerged on social networks over the past few decades. It is significant that they have increased and now play a crucial role in shaping the process of consumer decision-making. This research aims to understand and investigate how customers react and how influencers shape their approaches in order to achieve the demands and needs of their followers. The methodology adopted is both quantitative and qualitative. Key findings reveal that influencers have an impact through their recommendations in the followers' purchase intention process. Additionally, the research indicates that the trust driven by influencers is increasingly questioned by followers who feel "unauthenticity" and believe their influence can lead to our society's becoming "standardized". This research that includes two methods is useful as we have analyzed the relationship between followers and influencers. Even though the influencers phenomena are quite recent, this research is valuable for firms as it clearly demonstrates how and why influencers impact consumers' behavior. It can also inform society about this current trend and how it could influence the consumers' decision-making process.

Keywords: influencers, social media, social media influencers, consumer behavior, influencer marketing, lifestyle, society.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, consumers have been conscious about taking advice from people about the products or service that they purchase. On the one hand, the recommendations provided on online platforms, websites, by friends, colleagues, or even strangers are believed to be a trustful source of information for consumers and have a profound influence on their decision-making process [Duhan et al., 1997]. On the other hand, the recent digital transformation has laid the path to changing consumer behavior and

paved the way for a new trend in purchasing and consumption [Pine, Gilmore, 2013]. Due to increased globalization, there is standardization across globe on our behaviors, lifestyles and the way we consume. Many decades ago consumption was influenced by media and cinema [Mouren, 2002], and in the last few years, it is flourishing due to Internet and social media. Furthermore, social networks have given even more importance to social influencers and individualism in the society. Hence, the new wave of social networks has revolutionized and profoundly changed our society and the world we live in and allow us to connect, interact from anywhere, at any time [Zafarani, Abbasi, Liu, 2014]. Additionally, this has impacted the firms to transform from traditional to more engaged brand-consumer relationship and respond to their concerns, questions, discussions, etc. [Kietzmann et al., 2011].

In this context, some individuals have emerged on online platforms and have invaded the social networks by influencing on consumers. These individuals are called influencers who include, sports person, celebrities, politicians or even common people. The recommendations provided by these individuals through social media trend is making consumer to freely choose bonding and connecting with influencers. J. Melzer and B. Zech [Melzer, Zech, 2018] emphasized that, influencers are a value exchange for marketers and are usually seen as ambassadors for brands. Influencers increase the required knowledge on product they promote. However, even if influencers are powerful endorsers, brands must choose carefully the influencers to perfectly fit with brands values and identity. Although consumer's purchasing decision is evolving, and they are now interacting with brands through the prism of social media. But influencers are found to have shaped the consumer decision-making through confidence, reliability and reassurance [Todisco, 2017].

Scholars have focused on how and why people shop and what influences them. For instance, brand image influences the consumer's purchase decision [Kumaravel, Kandasamy, 2012] and the recommendation of a product given by tweets by influencers can increase value and help in consumption decision process [Bokunewicz, Shulman, 2017]. Therefore, marketers and brands are adapting to the latest trend of social media and are partnering with influencers for creating a value exchange. On the other hand, many studies emerged in literature to understand this intervention of technology using twitters, Facebook etc. on consumers purchasing decisions. Furthermore, to understand to what extent influencers drive consumer purchase engagement on social media platforms. For instance, Porter Novelli, a social marketing and public relations firm, studied consumers' attitudes on their purchase decisions through influencers. C. Lou and S. Yuan [Lou, Yuan, 2019] showed that influencers convey trust and lead to a positive brand awareness and a significant increase of purchase intentions. The study by the Influencer Marketing Hub (2017) found that marketers and brands are truly believing in the efficiency of influencer marketing because companies increased by 67% their influencer marketing budget. H. Conick [Conick, 2018] suggests that influencers have a competitive advantage and are nowadays essentials to all marketing business as they build brand equity, brand engagement and increase sales. M. Goodman, N. Booth, and

J. Matic [Goodman, Booth, Matic, 2011] highlight that influencers are driving engagement and targeting perfectly the “right” customers.

The recent emergence of social media may not provide a clear overview of people and influencers habits and opinions. Indeed, taking a step back, there is a need to analyze from a long-term vision on what are the factors that influence consumer’s purchase decision process. Hence, the aim of this paper is to understand this new phenomenon of influencers and to explore their impact on consumers’ purchase decision process. Our study is set in France and the results of this study provide a clear overview of how consumers react to influencers, and how influencers shape their strategies to meet their followers’ expectations.

This paper is structured as follows. First, we provide the literature review on influencer impact on economy and society, influencer statistics in France, theoretical context of influencers’ impact, emerging trends of influencers, individuals role as influencers, factors encouraging following influencers, including a conceptual framework for this study. Second, we show the methodology adopted to investigate the relationship between influencers and followers. Third, the results are presented and followed by analysis in consecutive chapters. Finally, in conclusion, we summarize our findings with limitations and outline directions for further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The conceptual origins of influencers. E. Katz and P. Lazarsfeld [Katz, Lazarsfeld, 1955] analyzed the influence of the media in the context of elections and discussed a two-stage communication theory. This theory first suggested that the media transmits certain information that is absorbed by opinion leaders and secondly, these leaders convey the ideas of the media to those around them. Thereby, the evolution of technologies over time has brought new means of communication. In consequence, young people aged 18 to 25 began to use and even overuse social networks which contributed to the growth and bloom of the digital influencers. Indeed, with the creation of social networks, profiles were created that advocate a certain lifestyle attracted followers who were trying to live a lifestyle similar to theirs. Arising from this popularity that some people have gained on social networks the concept that we know now of “influencer” was born.

Influencer impact on economy and society. According to [Fromm, Read, 2018], influencers can settle in a sustainable way in the future as Millennials and Generation Z. In recent years, teens spend up to nine hours a day on social platforms, they are the most dominant users of social media. The Millennials now represent 25% of the world’s population; also known as Generation Y they are people born between 1977–1994. This generation is the first digital natives and were raised in a digitally growing world. They use massively all social networks channels to search, share and connect with friends and people all around the world, there are no more boundaries for them. But today, there are also new potential customers for the brands: Generation Z, young people born

after 1994. Unlike Millennials, members of the Generation Z are not anymore using social media as a way to connect with people, they use it as a source of entertainment. It is important to notice that by 2020 the new generation should represent 40% of all consumers, representing a huge market share for companies [Perlstein, 2017]. As Generation Z members grew up in a digitalized world they have been used to daily companies' advertising and they are tired of being overwhelmed every time of the day. They want authentic and personalized content shared by real people they can identify them with, and which can reflect their own lives. This new social media consumption by the Generation Z can explain the growth of influencers. Additionally, to use it differently, this generation is also consuming much more social media than the Generation Y, they are mainly engaging on image-led and video sharing social media. Therefore, the most popular platforms for the Generation Z are Snapchat, Instagram and YouTube on which influencers are more and more flourishing.

Influencer statistics in France. An investigation driven by IPSOS (a French survey company and an international opinion marketing company) in 2017 disclosed that 33% of French users of social networks are following at least one influencer. 48% of French users following influencers are looking for good advices and recommendations to consume better and one in three people wants to find coupons. 89% of French users have already discovered a brand or a product thanks to an influencer and 75% of them have been influenced to the point of buying the promoted product. While 83% of social media users following an influencer declared to be exposed to sponsored contents and 72% have a positive judgment on these contents, it appears that influencers represent a strong potential for brands and marketers [Dusseaux, 2017].

Theoretical context of influencers' impact. The impact of influencers relies also on social explanations. According to Makgosa [Makgosa, 2010], in the paper *Social learning theory* of A. Bandura and R. Walters [Bandura, Walters, 1977]: the impact of influencers on consumption behaviors is a contextual foundation justifying why and how they can shape decision-making and attitudes of audiences. This social learning theory relies on the fact that people usually learn from other people through observation, imitation, and modelling. In this theory they highlighted the three different ways of assimilation, having their origin in the entourage of the individual. The first way is through "cognitive factors", also called "personal factors" which encompass knowledge, expectations and attitudes; the second way is related to "behavioral factors" which include skills, practice and self-efficiency; and the third way relies on "environmental factors" which concern the social norms, the access in community, and the ability to change our own environment. So, through these three complementary ways of assimilations, consumers see their purchase decision indirectly influenced. Indeed, expectations of "cognitive factors" place consumers in a "waiter" position for an innovative or tendency products. "behavioural factors" confirms the necessity for them to buy the product and make customers feeling reassured and confident concerning the product quality. Eventually, "environmental factors" entice consumers to change their habits, follow influencers' advices and to evolve along their environment.

Another theory called mere exposure effect by social psychologist [Zajonc, 1968] can be applied to influencers. For instance, with the emergence of stories on Instagram and Snapchat, influencers now have to take them into account in their strategies. Indeed, stories about their private life convey strong emotions and allow the influencer to strengthen his connection with his followers. B. Pine and J. Gilmore [Pine, Gilmore, 2013] point out the fact that we are living in an “experience economy” and that now, with social media and influencers, it is much easier to share experiences. They demonstrate that nowadays, when a consumer buys a product or a service, he is also buying the right to share his experience with it, which bring in even more value.

Emerging trends of influencers. Influencers are leading a new trends and tendencies by increasing product desirability. Indeed, they act now as central players in consumer decision making segment and the trend seems to be growing year by year [Lou, Yuan, 2019]. Recently, the Influencers Marketing Hub pointed out that, “in 2015, there were 3,6 million sponsored influencer posts; by the end of 2018, the number reached to 24,2 million influencer posts” [Influencer MarketinHub, 2018]. Being the voice of a brand, and as a strength and opportunity for marketers to create awareness, influencers increase the popularity and the desirability of a product. Influencers have a significant positive relationship with purchase purposes, because the more attractive and trustworthy they are, the stronger the purchase intention. Furthermore, according to the Influencers Marketing Hub, influencers are the fastest-growing online customer-acquisition method; from 2016 to 2017, “influencer marketing” as a search term on Google Trends increased by 325%. In recent days, the value of a product is given through tweets and recommendations made by influencers [Bokunewicz, Shulman, 2017].

Therefore, marketers and brands adjust themselves to this new tendency and see them as partners. Influencers are now shaping to redefine our way to consume, to “think consumption” and to position ourselves towards brands. Moreover, research on influencers seems to be only growing in recent years, as more and more companies started to see the value influencers bring in social media and raise awareness, rather than promoting products, influencers can also lead social movements, and have a strong impact on a social and cultural side. Indeed, some influencers act as spokesperson and embody claims for social improvements. Thus, followers seeking references and marks tend to identify themselves with influencers; our social identity in challenged and transformed. So, influencers are a mark of social and cultural changes within the current society. The recent emergence of social media does not provide a clear overview of people and influencers habits and opinions. Moreover, given that social networks are constantly changing in addition to the recent phenomenon of influencers, we needed to drive an exploratory research.

Individuals role as influencers. With a better understanding of who these influencers are, where they come from and why they are growing in the online and social media platforms, we can ask ourselves how, in this constantly changing environment, do influencers respond to keep their followers and get them growing. We try to understand what their strategies are and how they keep growing in the digital world. First, it is essential for influencers to keep in constant relationship with their followers, they need to

have a strong online presence in order to be more credible and to give the feeling they are an integral part of their followers' life. Influencers can be persuasive in different ways, they can win followers and their loyalty by being kind, funny, authoritarian or by showing reciprocity. Reciprocity is an effective influencing strategy; an example of reciprocity lies in influencers offering promotion code. Using this strategy, influencers show that they are concerned about their followers and that they want to share with them. Influencers have sometimes to be repetitive in the content they share in order to gain credibility and remain in the minds of their followers. In fact, people have a tendency to believe that a thing which is familiar is trustworthy.

Factors encouraging following influencers. Lou and Yuan [Lou, Yuan, 2019] showed that trust will lead to a positive brand awareness and a significant increase of purchase intentions. They suggest that trust and credibility of an endorser can be due to different reasons such as expertise, attractiveness, trustworthiness and similarities of influencers with followers. Therefore, influencers need to include all these criteria in order to develop a pertinent strategy. Trustworthiness and expertise depend on the degree of persuasion and the power the influencer exercises on the follower. According to [French, Raven, 1960] an influencer will gain power if he focuses on a particular subject. For instance, if an influencer is specialized in fitness, he will have more credibility and will be considered more expert than a regular influencer. Many followers, likes, retweets and shares will have an important impact on the credibility of an influencer. Indeed, for people, the fact that others follow an influencer testifies that a majority value his opinion and adhere to his judgments; it provides him a form of social proof. This is the reason why we can say that all these strategies to increase the number of their followers is kind of a virtuous circle for influencers if they succeed.

As previously explained, there are clearly four factors that build-up the credibility of the influencer — “trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and similarity” [Lai, 2017, p. 17]. So, the degree of influence of the influencer depends mainly on “his degree of perceived power”. This perceived power is often based on the expertise: the influencer will have more authority in the subject he claims himself as an expert. His followers will instinctively follow his advices and then buy the product. Attractiveness bias lies also on instincts: subconsciously, we feel someone is attractive or charismatic. All these positives associations are linked to our unconscious stereotypes. That attractiveness belongs to our individualistic cultures and our way of life and thinking.

When a person is often exposed to television, its own way of perceiving the world and society is changing. Indeed, the perception of reality is moved and changed. This paradigm works for influencers too: by seeing and being exposed to the luxurious and dream life of influencers followers could think that this “virtual” life is the norm. Followers might believe that “acting” life could be authentic/real and then change their perception of the outside world. There is a certain risk of showing sponsored photos of an unreal but dream and incredible life. Mostly young people could feel inferior and then depressed because they do not experience this kind of life on their own. So influencers do not only drive our purchase consumption, but they also transform our perception

of social reality. And even worst, they can bring trouble or depression to young persons who would believe in those illusions: it would then trigger unreal expectations that cannot be fulfilled and provoke feeling of inferiority.

The above literature review allowed us to get an overview of the emerging trends of influencers, detailing the conceptual origins of Influencers, providing influencer statistics in France and factors encouraging following influencers. It also provides information concerning the influencer impact on economy and society, a theoretical context of influencers' impact, etc. However, as influencers are quite a new phenomenon in the mainstream consumer behavior literature there are not a lot of literature existing on this topic. Indeed, during the literature review we noticed that they were no data on consumers to study their reaction facing influencers and there are also no studies on influencers strategies and how they grow. Hence to address these gaps, this research intends to answer the following questions: 1) are consumers' behaviors influenced by influencers; 2) what strategies do influencers adopt to meet their followers' expectations?

METHODOLOGY

A research paradigm is “the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed” [Kuhn, 1962, p. 45]. Under this pattern, we adopt pragmatism, which means that we believe reality is constantly debated, interpreted, and therefore different suitable methods and techniques can be adopted to solve the problem. By adopting the pragmatic design, we use both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The data was collected during April to June 2019 and intend to understand the impact of influencers on consumers and to identify their strategies.

Part 1: The qualitative method. The aim of qualitative research was to understand the influencers economy from the inside. Their emergence is quite new, and there are not many studies on them to understand their perspective and strategies to grow. By interviewing influencers, we wanted to learn about their motivations, their relationship with their followers and their strategies.

Procedure and Participants. Qualitative approach provides opportunity to explore and useful when researchers do not know the important variables to examine [Creswell, 1998; 2003]. According to N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, a qualitative approach is “concerned in capturing the individual's point of view” and in the need for “securing rich descriptions” [Denzin, Lincoln, 2000, p. 10]. For the qualitative study, data was collected in France distributed across various cities. We drew up a very eclectic and non-exhaustive list of over 50 *French influencers* (Appendix 1) with their contact to approach them for the interview. They were carefully selected based on their consent, request and interest to provide information to be used in our study. The participants have different communities, backgrounds, followers and areas of influence. This heterogeneity allows us to have the views of different influencers and their opinions. Finally, we interviewed five respondents who provided us the opportunity to interview them in depth (Table 1).

Table 1. Influencers community and area

Sample	Social media status	Industry/Area
Sebastien, AKA Sebydaddy	1 million followers on Instagram	He was made famous after participating to several reality shows, that is how he became an influencer mostly on Instagram and Snapchat. He is mainly promoting about lifestyle and travels
Mathilde Gaunoux	19,4 K followers on Instagram	Lifestyle, fashion, and healthy food
Marie AKA Revealyourbeautyblog	27 K followers on Instagram	Lifestyle and travel
Mybeautyfuelfood	6 K followers on Instagram	Holistic beauty and wellness
Larevuedekathleen	45 K followers on Instagram	Travel and fashion

The in-depth interviews that may lead to multi-faceted and spontaneous answers, allowing us to collect qualitative data from influencers such as their experiences, opinion, strategies, etc. (Appendix 2). All influencers are asked the same questions so that the answers could be compared. For qualitative research, we established a list of almost fifty influencers with different communities, backgrounds, interests, and level of influence. Based on the fact that most influencers we contacted have huge communities and did not really have the time or will to respond to our interview, this heterogeneity may have created a wider range of diverse responses to understand fully all types of influencers. In order to evaluate a qualitative research, we used the thematic coding analysis with a descriptive-exploratory approach. According to [Gibbs, 2007] this method is about data reduction and analysis by grouping answers into categories of thematic ideas in order to keep all the important concepts and information. Our interview samples are mentioned below.

Part 2: Quantitative method. The aim of quantitative method was to understand how consumers behave with influencers, their opinions about the impact influencers can have on their consumption and more generally on society. For the quantitative research, a survey questionnaire was designed to understand the consumers/followers influence through social media (Appendix 3). We specifically investigated the different factors and reasons that make them become a follower. In addition, the qualitative approach was undertaken through a semi-structured interview dedicated to influencers, which intends to understand their opinions on the how they grow so fast, and the reasons that make people following them. Four distinct influencers who have distinct interests, different com-

munities and not the same level of influence were interviewed. This research strategy is based on the combination of methodologies in order to study the same phenomenon. It is defined as a convergent methodology [Campbell, Fiske, 1959] and can be called “triangulation” [Webb et al., 1966]. This notion is demonstrating that quantitative and qualitative methods should be seen as complementary. In this study, these two methods enable to understand the ecosystem of both influencers and consumers and then to better analyze their intentions and perceptions.

Data are based on precise measurements starting with general questions and then going toward more specific details. A simple random sampling was used. However, younger groups of people between 20 and 35 years old were targeted as they are more aware of influencers marketing. In order to determine outcomes and for these to be relevant, 150 responses were collected. The survey questionnaire was submitted on social networks such as Facebook and LinkedIn, in order to reach prospects accustomed with social media. After collecting the data, we started to code the qualitative data turning into a meaningful insight. For the quantitative analysis we choose to use descriptive and inferential techniques to convert raw data of the survey into interpretive and inferential insight. The descriptive technique is aimed to summarize the data in order to describe what occurred in the survey. By contrast, the inferential technique helps determine the relationships between various variables to generalize results and make predictions.

RESULTS

In the following section we show the interpretation of both qualitative and quantitative data, followed by relevant conclusions.

Qualitative analysis. In this section, we performed thematic examination of the method previously explained the answers of the four influencers interviewed. We analyzed the content to understand how people become influencers (Appendix 4), what kind of relationship do they have with their followers, if influencers can be influence, and how are they promoting products and services. The fact that the interviewees have different communities, origins and areas was important as it allows us to have a broader vision of influencers, more specificities and points of view. As a reminder, the Table 2 below recap the name, number of followers and field of the influencers interviewed.

Table 2. Instagrammers specialties and beginning

Name	Main social network	Number of followers	Influenced area	Origin of their influence
1	2	3	4	5
Revealyourbeautyblog	Instagram	27 K	Lifestyle and travel	Beginning with a blog

End of the Table 2

1	2	3	4	5
Mybeautyfuelfood	Instagram	6 K	Holistic beauty and wellness	Eager to convey food advices
Larevuedekathleen	Instagram	45 K	Travel and fashion	Beginning for her family and friends
Sebastien, AKA Sebydaddy	Instagram and Snapchat	1 M	Lifestyle and travels	Became famous after participating to several reality shows
Mathilde Gaunoux	Instagram	19,4 K	Lifestyle, fashion, and healthy food	Created her own style, made photos in color theme

Motivation to become an influencer. Most of the influencers become influencers by accident. At the beginning they were only trying to convey their beliefs, passion, everyday life pictures, etc. We could say that most of them became influencers “by chance”. Sometimes, it can begin through a mimetic behavior but for some of them it is the opposite they want to make a difference by sharing different content. For example, *Larevuedekathleen* began because she wanted to write a blog different from others. According her, in 2016, blogs were mostly redundant, and she wanted to give another vision more personal. She began with her first travel to Canada, then she carried on and became more and more followed. Mathilde Gaunoux also became an influencer as she went, she had more and more followers, and then she managed to have partnerships with brands. She also created her own style, she makes color-themed photos and that’s when we started to define her as an influencer.

Revealyourbeautyblog started on Instagram five years ago, at first, she posted “regular” pictures and one day she decided to share better content and to create her blog. Her community grew from 1 K to 10 K followers in only one year, which allowed her to collaborate with brands; she now has 26,9 K followers. However, some influencers become so following a gain of popularity, this is the case of Sebastien, AKA *Sebydaddy*. Sebastien participated to a reality show and then became very popular, this popularity lead to him becoming an influencer as many people following him on social networks. *Mybeauty-fuelfood* also benefit for her popularity as she was an actress not very well-known but enough to have a certain community. However, it is only when she started her blog that she became a real influencer. To understand their motivations and purpose to become an influencer (Table 3).

Table 3. Influencers purpose

Influencers	Motivation (Why?)	Mission (Purpose)	Industry (Segment)
Mybeautyfuelfood	To communicate	To educate people	Beauty and health
Revealyourbeautyblog	To gain popularity	To give food advices and convey good vibes	Lifestyle and beauty
Larevuedekathleen	To relay her travels	“Keep dreaming”	Travel and fashion
Mathilde Gaunoux	To share her lifestyle	To convey good vibes	Lifestyle, fashion and healthy food
Sebydaddy	Share with his community	Share good advices, show his “dreamed life”	Travel and lifestyle

The relationship influencers/followers and influencers’ strategies. Most of them are claiming that their main strategy is authenticity: partnerships, tips and discoveries. They all believe in products they promote and are engaging themselves into the reliability. According to *Mybeautyfuelfood* (6 K followers) and *Revealyourbeautyblog* (27 K followers), they do not have a special strategy in order to be attractive, only being themselves. *Larevuedekathleen* (45 K followers) claims that she aimed to create a trustful relation with her followers and always respond to their messages. With this strategy, she benefits from an image of an accessible and simple person which is, in general, really appreciate by followers.

Mathilde Gaunoux’s strategy is to be ubiquitous on social networks which give her more visibility. She follows and loves a maximum of posts among influencers who have the same universe as her: lifestyle and fashion. Most of the interviewees explained us that it was essential on social networks to use good hashtags and to try to have an animated community. To keep and increase their followers they often organize contests collaborating with brands, post quality photos on Instagram feed and challenge their communities by posting photos often. Influencers want to be attractive that is why they want to create content. *Larevuedekathleen* says that she does not have a precise strategy to be attractive, but as Instagram is a visual platform, she always pays attention on the quality of photos, videos, content, etc. She diversifies her video and photo content on all her social networks (Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, YouTube, TikTok, Twitter) in order to gain visibility. To understand the profile of followers and their motivations (Table 4).

Table 4. Consumers preferences

Consumers, years old	Motivation (Why)	Industry (Segment)
Less than 15	“Fashion”, “athletes”	Entertainment, lifestyle and fashion
20–35	“Inspiration”, “news”, “curiosity”, “style”, and “entertainment”	Travel and lifestyle
35–50	“Entertainment”, “cultural information”, “news”, “athletes”	Sport, lifestyle, fashion and food
40 and older	“Fashion”, “political and cultural information”	News and fashion

Can influencers be influenced? Influencers of all background and community admit that they could be — consciously or not — influenced by other influencers. For instance, *Revealyourbeautyblog* is mostly influenced by other travel and cosmetic influencers, however, she knows this sector very well and revealed that most of the posts are sponsored and “sometimes not sincere”. *Sebydaddy* has also revealed that he is influenced by everyone and that it does not depend on the number of followers. According to him, being an influencer does not mean having the best advice, he is often influenced by his friends or acquaintances.

Larevuedekathleen thinks that of course influencers unite society, because people tend to copy one from each other. She claims that this is a circle: there are pioneers, creative persons and there are followers. According to her it is important to be innovate and to be different. Sharing the same opinion on the conformism of influencers, Mathilde Gaunoux explained that sometimes, influencers can be influenced to try product but also to not promote them as they have been over-promoted on social networks. Indeed, to overcome this problem brands and influencers must constantly stand out and find partnerships that value them.

Influencers promoting products and services. All our samples refute the promotional side of their position and say that they only give tips and advices about products they have tested before. Moreover, they promote but also convey “attitudes” and “feelings” and admit that the content of their feed may change with time and their own moods. For example, *Mybeautyfuelfood* shares a “state of mind”, “wellness” and “mindful” in the daily life of her followers. She wants to have a positive impact and influence on their daily routine. According to *Larevuedekathleen*, she spreads a philosophy: “keep dreaming”. She wants her community to fulfil their dreams and keep moving in their life by spreading a positive state of mind and happiness. Moreover, she feels responsible regarding her community (mostly 13 to 18 years old girls) because she also helps teen-

age girls to lighten up. She does an “educational work” and explains them that they do not have to be in the “beauty norms” but just love themselves. She does some sponsored partnership but only with brands that convey her values. She tests products for several weeks before promoting them to be sure about their quality.

Mathilde Gaunoux chooses the brands she works with; she is usually in partnership always with the same brands that she likes very much. She also claims to test all her products because she feels she has a responsibility towards her followers. However, she explained that does not accept every partnership because she does not want her account to become an advertising page. She also reveals that when an Instagram user has 10 K followers, it is even automatic for brands to send emails to propose partnerships.

Sebydaddy taught us a lot about partnerships. First of all, he claims that his promoted products and services are the ones he uses and in general are qualitative. He also reveals that a new “trend” of partnerships has emerged over the past year. According to him some small influencers make believe that they have partnerships, even if they don't, in order to gain credibility. From his experience, nowadays it has become a trend to make product placements. Concerning the standardization of the products promoted on the social networks he explains us that some agencies are using packaging of influencers. This means that brands may pay not only for one influencer to promote their products but for many of them in order to reach even more consumers.

From the qualitative analysis, this research investigated about the influencer's strategies. Indeed, during the literature review we noticed that they were no studies on influencers strategies and how they grow. Interviews conducted on influencers taught us more about all these unknown aspects. The first thing that every influencer taught us is that one is not born an influencer, one becomes one. As we have explained in the literature review, authenticity is a key factor in the strategy of influencers. Most of the influencers interviewed confirmed that their main strategy is always to be authentic to win followers trust. This, once again, highlight the fact that authenticity is one of the main issues for influencers. These interviews also confirmed that influencers tend to uniformize the society. Indeed, they also admitted that they could be — consciously or not — influenced by other influencers, which explain the mimetic behavior of influencers. The uniformization and similarities of influencers beginning to be an issue and to discredit influencers. However, some of them want to thwart this issue by making a difference by sharing different content.

Quantitative analysis. This part deals with the analysis of the relationship between followers and influencers and the judgement they have on it. From the 150 responses from people with different backgrounds, age, way of life and wealth.

Demographics data. In this part, we will analyze and discuss the demographics criteria of the sample. The purpose of the demographics data analysis is to understand how followers perceive influencers given their age and their gender. We will focus on educational qualification, and general information regarding the habits and opinions of consumers on influencers and their impact in the society. Women seem to have dominated the (73%) and are more pronounced for influencers and social media participants

versus men (27%). Furthermore, the major part (73,2%) of our sample is young: they belong to the age group of 20 years old to 25 years old. It can be determined by our scholarly environment but also because young persons are more interested in social media influencers.

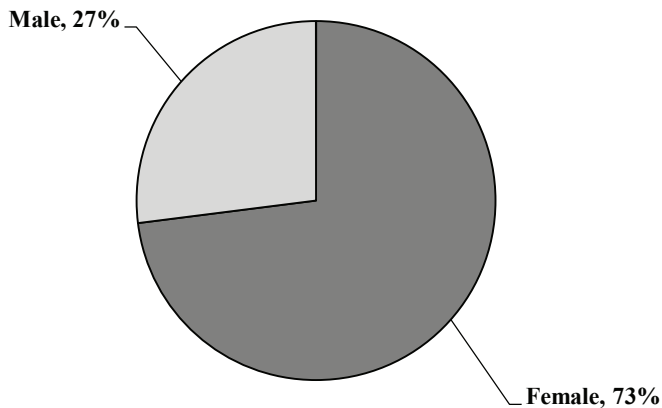


Figure 1. Gender distribution

Preferred social media platform by consumers. It was found that most of our sample respondents prefer Instagram (91,5%) and Facebook (92,9%) as social media platforms. In fact, Instagram and Facebook are making consumers decision-making processes more effective as described in a study driven by Facebook IQ [Facebook IQ, 2019]. They found that consumers view brands on Instagram as more popular (78%), relevant (74%), creative (77%), entertaining (76%) and committed to building community (72%). Instagram plays a key role in every step of the buying process. People use the platform to discover the latest trends, through the explore page, hashtags, or influencer profiles and search for products before buying [Facebook IQ, 2019]. C. Hildebrand and T. Schlager [Hildebrand, Schlager, 2018] demonstrate that Facebook influences consumers that is even more subtle and powerful than we might think. Their study reveals that Facebook has a significant indirect impact on consumers and their decision-making process. Our literature confirms this evidence as the emergence of stories on Instagram and Facebook enable consumers to experience the product. Indeed, stories about their private lives convey strong emotions and allow the influencer to strengthen his connection with followers. B. Pine and J. Gilmore [Pine, Gilmore, 2013] point out that the fact that we are living in an “experience economy” and that now, with social media and influencers it is much easier to share experiences. Most of respondents (92,9%) use Facebook. Instagram is still more used than Snapchat because Instagram is perceived as conveying more “qualitative” content. The respondents are using Snapchat (80,9%) and Twitter (42,6%). Thus, most of followers are using Instagram and Facebook (Figure 2) in order to be informed and follow their favorite influencers.

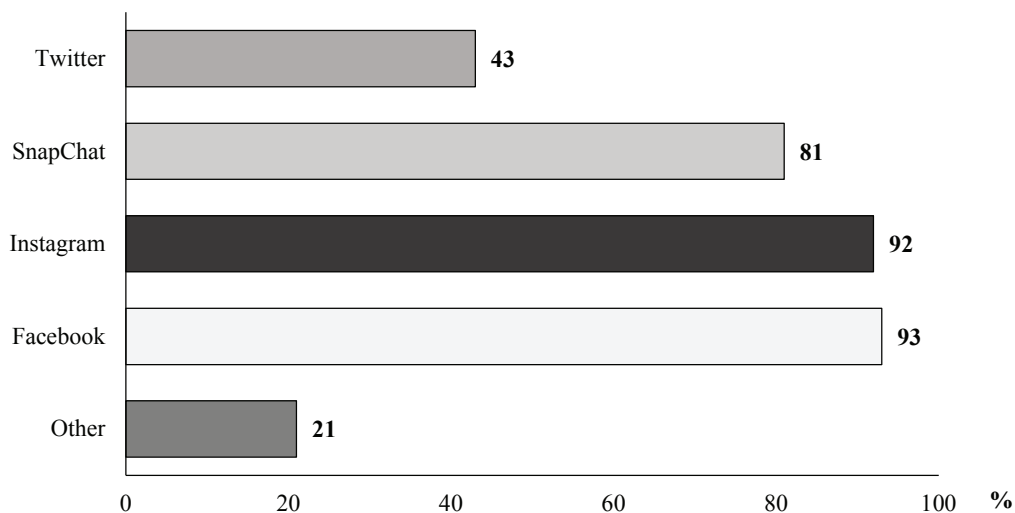


Figure 2. Social media preferences (answer to the question: Which social media do you use the most?)

We also found that the highest proportion (34,6%) of our sample is following between 5 and 20 influencers followed by 26,5% of the sample who is following between 20 and 50 influencers.

What is expected from an influencer? The questionnaire used helped us to understand the criteria of selection of an influencer. Most of the sample (64,3%) expect entertainment from influencers. This is followed by lifestyle (58%), fashion advices (42%), and cultural information (41,1%). Most of the respondents have particular expectations from influencers. Many participants in our sample also mentioned these expectations: “inspiration”, “news”, “curiosity” and “style”.

Frequency and influencer’s perception. 30,4% of respondents are looking at the influencer’s profile once a day. It shows that as we saw it before, followers are mostly driven by “curiosity”. However, 9,8% of respondents are looking their profile once a month and 15% of respondents are saying that they never look at the influencer’s profile. Most of respondents (88%) do not believe in what influencers are selling. The respondents were asked about the question of influencer’s authenticity. Notably 54% consider them as sincere and 38% don’t. However, 45% of the respondents think that the products influencers promote are not trustworthy product enough. Moreover, 90% of the respondents think that the influencer’s content is repetitive.

Influencer’s drive follower’s purchase decision. The respondents were asked if they have already purchased a product recommended by an influencer; 43,8% of them confess that they have already bought one and 56,3% of respondents haven’t (Figure 3). So, followers tend to believe the advices of influencers and tend to test the products they recommend. A. Martensen, S. Brockenhuus-Schack, and A. Zahid [Martensen, Brock-

enhuus-Schack, Zahid, 2018] confirm this tendency as they highlight in their study that some influencers are highly persuasive and that followers tend to follow their advices and consume the products promoted. Moreover, N. Neustadt [Neustadt, 2015] in his study *The New Age of Influencer Marketing* shows that the more attractive the influencer, the stronger the purchase intention. As a matter of facts, the purchase intention model of customers is strongly influenced according to the popularity of influencers.

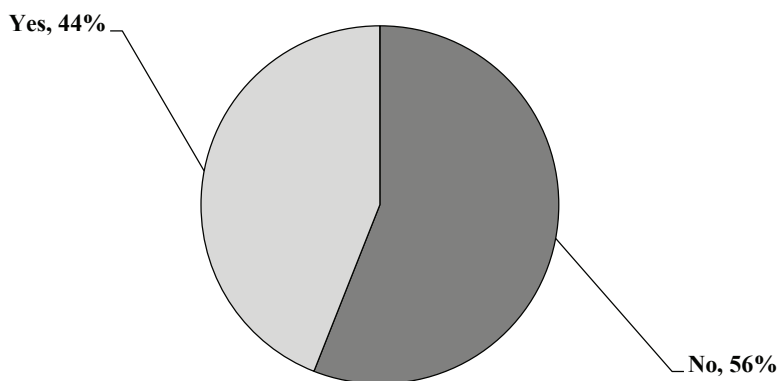


Figure 3. Influencer's driving on follower's purchase decision (answer to the question: Have you ever made any purchase after the influencer's endorsed any product?)

Perception of consumers on influencer's influence on society. Many respondents (50,4%) think that influencers contribute to the standardization of our society. However, some respondents think that it depends of the importance given to the advices of the influencer. The majority of respondents think that the impact of influencers in society depends on the type of content they publish. Many say that they have to be careful because they "impose beauty and behavior diktats" as others say that "until you keep control on the information they can act as a friend giving advice" but most of them say that "it really depends on the influencers: some are negative because they do it for money and other are willing to give trustworthy advices and are positive for society". Although for a few respondents, they have neither a good nor negative impact on society but simply represent "a new way of communication and marketing".

Furthermore, respondents were asked to qualify the impact of influencers on their way of life. Most of them think that they encourage the compulsive purchase and over-consumption because followers identify themselves to their influencers. According to these respondents this identification is mostly due to the tone influencer's use that creates a faithful relationship. A majority think also that they influence the way and life and opinions on society. Others denounce the fact that they give unreal expectations and create physical complexes or inferiority feelings. However, a minority think that they are inspirational and help them discover new tendencies, trends and good deals.

From the quantitative analysis, this research identified the gender preferences, frequency, habits and influencer's influence on purchase consumption. First, the female gender predominance for using social media networks is quite dominating. Then, Instagram and Facebook are the preferred social media for buying and browsing and we notice a positive correlation between influencer's authenticity and follower's purchase intention. Indeed, we demonstrated that influencers mainly drive follower's purchase consumption through their advices and recommendations on Instagram. As 90% of interviewees admit to follow it really proves that influencers have taken an important part on social networks and in people's daily life. Even though the majority of interviewees follow influencers, motivated mainly driven by the desire to be entertained, they admit to not trust them completely. Although half of the interviewees think that influencers have a negative effect on society and that 80% of them find that their promoted products are not trustworthy, still 45% of them have already made a purchase following an influencer publication. These data disclose that despite a collective conscience on the drifts of the influencers, they still have an important power and impact on the consumption decision process.

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Results show the existence of a relationship between influencers and consumers in consumption decision processes. Our research is based on qualitative and quantitative research that helped us understand through which what criteria consumer's decision were affected. The data collected through the qualitative research helped us defined influencer's promotion strategies to convince their followers and strengthen their relationships with them. Additionally, we studied the effect of influencers on society: the perception of millennials on reality versus social networks and the construction of themselves in the "real life" with these influencers. Analyzing both influencers and consumers allowed us to have a global overview on this actual trend. The results obtained in this research can draw on the implications of influencers' strategy and commitment shaping consumers' behavior in his consumption but also in his daily lifestyle. In terms of these results, we can state that influencers are tremendously valuable for brands as marketing tools in order to strategically position their products.

The literature review provides a theoretical approach and provided the definition of all key notions. During the qualitative phase, we were able to transform these theoretical notions into personal opinions and drive a theory on influencer's strategies. We could understand the influencer's perspective regarding their promotions and sponsored partnerships while measuring their effects on society. In fact, we interviewed five influencers and asked them to what extent they acknowledge their influence on followers. We specially choose to question several influencers with different backgrounds, specialized in several domains (beauty, lifestyle, TV shows, etc.) to have a larger panel of responses. Combining their responses to our theoretical approach we were able to achieve a general understanding of their influence, reach and power. Then, we completed this qualitative research with a quantitative one. We asked 150 individuals about their daily habits, the

frequency with which they are visiting influencers' profile, what attract them the most, and their analysis of influencers effect on society. We established through this survey that followers mostly think that influencers are not authentic but play a part in a "standardization" of our society.

Our main findings from the survey and the interviews demonstrate that influencers have a real impact on the consumption decision process. Indeed, even if there is a real tendency from consumers to not trust influencers and to find their promoted products not trustworthy, consumers still follow them and buy promoted products. The interviews confirmed us the importance of authenticity of influencers, it is a key factor in the strategy of influencers in order to win trust. It really proves that there is a problem of trust towards the influencers, as shown by the questionnaire and the interviews of the influencers. The quantitative and qualitative research also demonstrate that influencers tend to uniformize the society as most of them have mimetic behaviors, promote the same products and lifestyles. Ultimately, our research would be useful for small companies who want to promote themselves with new marketing tools and establish a more precise target. This study enables also bigger companies to measure the influencer's effect on their promoted product. Then, this study also provides a general understanding of the real revolution that are influencers and how, in addition to impacting consumer behavior, they are changing and shaping our current and future society.

LIMITATIONS

Our study answered most of our questions, but we encountered some unforeseen situations and shortcomings. One of the most important limits of our work was to reach influential influencers and make them respond without a financial compensation. We asked over fifty influencers and only 5 of them answered us. Then, during these qualitative interviews, influencers tend to say that they are "truly authentic", they "believe" in their product and are "confident" about their positive impact. Of course, they may be biased, and it was difficult for us to collect objectives opinions from them. For instance, when we asked influencers about partnerships, they all declare that they test and promote products that are trustworthy. However, we can wonder if their testimonies are reliable. Furthermore, there was a limitation regarding methods used for collection and analysis of empirical information: these data did not achieve to reach such a large-scale goal. Another limitation is linked to the respondent's professional status of the quantitative research. Almost 74% of our sample was students and belong to the age group of 20 to 25 years old. We expected this data as the survey was shared on social networks and that main users remain young people. They were the main target of our survey because they are more familiar with social networks and the concept of influencers which was valuable. However, we tried to expand this sample in order to have a general overview. Indeed, people over 25 years old do not have the same habits neither the same purchase behaviour and it would have really interesting to collect more data from older generations in order to understand their perspective regarding this societal phenomenon.

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APPENDIX 1

LIST OF INFLUENCERS CONTACTED FOR THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Name	Number of followers	Contact
1	2	3
Julia Morgante	564 K	Juliamorgante@we-events.fr
agatheauproux	691 K	hello@agatyou.com
alix_dmx	829 K	prodevents69@gmail.com
anaiscss7officiel	1,9 M	anais@we-events.fr
Bastos	445 K	bastiengrimal.pro@gmail.com

1	2	3
benoit.assadi	419 K	pro.benoit.a@sublimetalents.com
cam_lacourt_off	136 K	Vip.partenariat@gmail.com
capucineanavoff	1,3 M	Capucine@we-events.fr
Carla Moreau	2,1 M	Pro.carla@shaunaevents.com
carla_ginola	153 K	carla@foll-ow.com
charlottepirroni	424 K	charlotte@agencejb.fr
chlosetoyou	83,5 K	chlosetoyou@gmail.com
cindycournoyer	120 K	cindy.c@dulcedo.com
cloecooper_off	304 K	cloe@we-events.fr
darkocttg	623 K	Darkocontactpro@gmail.com
Dylan Thiry	454 K	pro.dylan@shaunaevents.com
eddy_papeoo	268 K	eddyhammi10@gmail.com
emmacakecup	1,6 M	pro.emma@sublimetalents.com
emy_ltr	912 K	emyltr@studio71fr.com
floracoquerel	374 K	floracoquerelinfo@gmail.com
gioboyparis	576 K	giovanni@bonamy.pro
hilonagos_off	137 K	pro.hilona@shaunaevents.com
Hugo Décrypte	125 K	hugo.decrypte@hotmail.com
hugophilip	539 K	contact.hugophilip@gmail.com
illancto	653 K	Pro.illan@shaunaevents.com
jazztvshow	1,8 M	Pro.jazz@shaunaevents.com
jeremstar	1,9 M	Jeremstar@yahoo.com

1	2	3
jesta_hillmann	842 K	pro.jesta@sublimetalents.com
jodielapetitefrenchie	248 K	jodielapetitefrenchie.agent@gmail.com
Julie Ricci	644 K	Contact@juliericci.fr
Julien Geloën	364 K	contact@juliengeloen.com
kellyvedovelli	497 K	Contactkellyofficiel@gmail.com
laxtitia	154 K	Laxtitia@gmail.com
Léna Situations	603 K	hello@lenasituations.com
Lola Dubini	633 K	Instagram message
lucindarossat	102 K	contact@blogdelucinda.com
ludivine	157 K	leblogdeludivine@gmail.com
maddyburciaga	1,6 M	Maddypro75@gmail.com
mathilde_gaunoux	19,4 K	Instagram message
morgane.adt	67,5 K	morgane@just-go-agency.com
mybeautyfuelfood	5 K	Instagram message
romy	957 K	stonemromane@gmail.com
sebydaddy	1 M	pro.seb@shaunaevents.com
stefan_tisseyre	90,2 K	olivier4stefan@gmail.com
stephaniedurant	2,3 M	Stephanie@we-events.fr
Tibz	8 K	Instagram message
uncle_bens_	74,6 K	Benmahitheblog@gmail.com
valentinlucas9	225 K	lucas.valentin9@gmail.com
Zoë Pastelle	200 K	contact@zoepastelle.com

INTERVIEW INFLUENCERS

1. How did you become an influencer?
2. What was your strategy to increase your number of followers?
3. Is there a message in particular that you try to convey to your followers every day? If yes which?
4. As an influencer do you think you have a responsibility towards your followers?
5. Do you happen to be influenced by other influencers yourself?
6. Do you choose the brands you promote? If so, which criterion (s) do you choose?
7. Before promoting the products, do you test them?
8. How much do you think you influence your followers?
9. Do you think that you or influencers in general are promoting a “lifestyle” that is becoming more and more standardized?
10. Are you always sincere when sharing with your followers?

INTERVIEW “HOW DO INFLUENCERS CHANGE OUR SOCIETY?”

See: <https://forms.gle/cXYRhZ19vAiRUR8z7>

* — required

1. Last name and first name.
2. Are you:*

 - ◆ a man
 - ◆ a woman
 - ◆ other

3. Are you:*

 - ◆ college / high school student
 - ◆ student
 - ◆ employee
 - ◆ liberal profession
 - ◆ farmer
 - ◆ boss of industry and commerce
 - ◆ senior
 - ◆ middle management
 - ◆ worker
 - ◆ no occupation
 - ◆ other

4. How old are you?*

 - ◆ 15 years

- ◆ between 15 and 19 years
- ◆ between 20 and 25 years
- ◆ between 26 and 35 years
- ◆ between 36 and 40 years
- ◆ + 40 years

5. Which accounts on social networks do you have?*

- ◆ Instagram
- ◆ Facebook
- ◆ Twitter
- ◆ Snapchat
- ◆ other
- ◆ no social network

6. How many influencers do you follow on Instagram? (celebrities, sportsmen, actors, singers, reality TV, etc.):*

- ◆ no
- ◆ less than 5
- ◆ between 5 and 20
- ◆ between 20 and 50
- ◆ between 50 and 100
- ◆ + 100

7. What type of influence do you follow the most?

8. What do you expect from an influencer?*

- ◆ political information
- ◆ cultural information
- ◆ environmental information
- ◆ entertainment
- ◆ fashion tips
- ◆ beauty tips
- ◆ lifestyle
- ◆ sports motivation
- ◆ professional motivation
- ◆ other

9. How often do you consult an influencer's profile?*

- ◆ once a day
- ◆ several times a day
- ◆ once a week
- ◆ 2–3 times a week
- ◆ once a month
- ◆ never

10. What motivates you most to view the profile of an influencer?

11. What is your perception of Instagram influencers?*

Answer versions	Completely agree	Okay	I do not know	I do not think so
I only listen to their opinion, and I believe				
They are sincere				
I feel the influence they exert on me				
The products they recommend are trustworthy				
Posted content is often repetitive				

12. What type of advertising do you prefer?*

- ◆ TV ad
- ◆ Street display influencers
- ◆ Pop-ups, banner and pre-roll on websites
- ◆ Advertisements on social networks and website
- ◆ Other

13. Have you already made a purchase after reading content published by an influencer?*

- ◆ Yes
- ◆ No

14. Do you think they help to “standardize” our society?*

- ◆ Yes
- ◆ No
- ◆ Other

15. Do you think influencers have a positive effect on our society?*

- ◆ Yes
- ◆ No
- ◆ Other

16. What do you think of the impact of influencers on your consumption/lifestyle?

17. Do you know other types of media influences?

INFLUENCERS INTERVIEW

1. *How did you become an influencer?*

It came on my own as I went, the more followers I gained, the more influence I had, and the more I had partnerships with brands.

I noticed that it was when I went to Paris that I started to be invited to much more events, I started doing fashion and fashion photography. I created my own style: I made colour-themed photos and that's when I started to define myself as an influencer.

2. *What was your strategy to increase your number of followers?*

My strategy is to be ubiquitous on social networks. That is to say, to follow and love a maximum of posts among influencers who have the same universe as me: lifestyle / fashion. It gave me more visibility with the people who follow them, I was lucky also that my profile is shared by other influencers or well-known brands, for example, Clinic, Clarins, SEASON, etc. And these accounts have so much community that it helped me a lot. As a result of some posts I could take several hundred followers a day so it was huge.

It's a virtuous circle because the more followers you have, the more you earn because you're even more visible. After we also depend a lot of algorithms so it can be quite random, for example, there was a big dip after Christmas.

The great method to take a lot of influencers is the sharing, I do quite regularly on Sunday, each time for different influencers because we target a community that did not follow us before and we made them discover our account.

3. *Is there a message in particular that you try to convey to your followers every day? If yes which?*

I have no real message to convey in the sense that I am not an influencer talking only food for example as those who are in the diet or healthy dishes. I only show my daily life, at first I showed very little my face, I give my opinion a minimum, especially not on everything that is political, religious, etc. I really do not want to talk about these kinds of things, debates, and so on. I think that Instagram must remain a social network of photos, photo sharing, commonalities, passions, etc. But it's not Twitter that is destined to speak; for me, the goal of Instagram is to make pretty pictures.

4. *As an influencer do you think you have a responsibility towards your followers?*

It is clear that we always have a responsibility towards our followers. When I see anorexic girls who advocate leanness or anorexia it is obvious that we must pay attention to what we say and what we show. Nothing is trivial, we do not know what people think, we do not know how they react, the best is to have a positive attitude and to share only good vibes. I think if people go on Instagram today it is to disconnect from reality, so for me, Instagram is only to talk about positive things.

I also have another responsibility, I do not take them for "cash cows" that is to say, all the influencers who share very regularly coupons. In particular, promotion codes on which influencers earn commissions on each promoted product sale. Personally I have

always refused because once again our followers are not “cash cows” so I assume that we should not make money on the backs of people who follow us because they trust. When you advertise a product it must really be something you really like.

5. Do you happen to be influenced by other influencers yourself?

Yes I happen to be influenced by other influencers but it will be especially for food, I use a lot of Instagram for coffee shop places, addresses that I do not know. In fashion, I do not like to have the same clothes as others so I avoid the current collections. I am going to be influenced also for shooting places.

Especially for cosmetics, I do not buy cosmetics because I receive so many of that, I have not run at Sephora for about 3 years.

6. Do you choose the brands you promote? If so, which criterion (s) do you choose?

Yes, I choose the brands that I work with. I'm on platforms like Octoly or Hiency which are marketing influence platforms. We have a free store with a large selection of products or you choose the products you would like to test and the brands send them to you. On these free stores I always work with the same brands, which are brands that I really like, it's Payot, with whom I'm sponsored, Estée Lauder, Clinique, Clarins and sometimes Bobby Brown.

By using these platforms, I have established a relationship with these brands. I receive about ten products per week and I have to post about five products per feed of color so it's very little. I do not want my account to become an advertising page. I am not specialized in beauty at the base, I really have my scrunchies in cosmetics but I do not want my feed to look like an advertising page that cosmetics or sponsored parts.

From the moment you have 10 K followers, even before I received many proposals but from the moment you pass a certain stage it is even automatic for brands, they send you emails. It represents a huge demand because sometimes I can have 6 partnership requests every day so if you start saying yes to everything you cannot honor the contracts and test everything. We cannot tell people we love everything, we cannot lie to them and tell them that we love all products, it's not possible. I happened to have products, it was juice, which made me sick, so it was out of the question for me to make a post for these juices. I spoke to the brand and canceled the partnership. It's out of the question that I'm talking about a product that does not suit me, I'm not saying that it's bad because it can suit other people, but it was not for me, so it was out of the question for me to advertise these products.

In addition, there are partnerships for which we are not paid, we receive a gift which is already a huge opportunity but do not abuse by taking everything and anything. I have friends who accept everything, chewing gum or shampoos found in the supermarket but the problem is that I think it discredits you compared to your followers. After that depends also on the target that you target but personally in relation to my target I pay attention to the brands with which I work. I want it to be brands that I knew before but also high-end brands.

On the other hand, that does not prevent that if one proposes to me partnerships which may be luxurious that are rewarding I can say no if it is not ethical. I'm not a particularly ethical person, but for example Clarins had a scandal because he had made lipstick all day long but apparently it was tested on animals. It is obvious that even if initially I wanted to test the product it was then out of the question for me to advertise products tested on animals. Today we are really in a green and responsible mood so I could not endorse this kind of product and advertise it. So the fact that it is ethical, clean and luxury is more for me.

7. Before promoting the products, do you test them?

Yes, I test every time the products because as you know, I do my feed by color so I really have to anticipate so that I have a maximum of photos to make a consistent feed in declination of colors. The advantage is that suddenly I use this time to test the products. It is out of the question for me to advertise a product that I have not tested, for example the juices that made me sick. I make the pictures before testing the products because they are new, but I stock the photos and if I feel after trying it that the product suits me I publish the photo.

8. How much do you think you influence your followers?

I do not pretend to say that I influence people. It's a bit of a status that I did not necessarily assume because nowadays everyone can call themselves influencers. There are people who have 100 followers and who say they are influencers, so it wants a little everything and nothing to say. It can be bloggers, artists, people in the street; if we meet someone and we like his dress you are influenced.

I realized it after doing a promotion when I had to report to the brand. They showed me the numbers and there I realized that I had influenced people. For me it's a pleasure, it's not a job, I do it because I like it but it's not my job.

9. Do you think that you or influencers in general are promoting a "lifestyle" that is becoming more and more standardized?

It is obvious that it is true that the lifestyle "Parisienne"/"Frenchy" has become very popular, everyone does it as the "Healthy Food" it has become a cliché. We must eat well, be well dressed all the time, have great cosmetics, a bright apartment, etc.

Influencers Sport and Healthy Food will all make the same pictures of Granola or bowls, future moms always on a very sweet universe, etc. It is very hard today to differentiate because everyone has the same tastes. Brands also target the same people for partnerships, so we often find the same brands in everyone.

For example, the product for white teeth has been seen on thousands of influencers.

10. Are you always sincere when sharing with your followers?

Yes, I always think to be honest. I was in the first to test Mathilde Lacombe's French Glow pills because I really wanted to test them. I was very motivated to try but these particular acne pills were a disaster, I had pimples. I contacted Mathilde Lacombe who told me that it was normal because it was a phase of detox so she recommended me other

pills in her range but the same that I dry skin, etc. So I told him that it did not suit me. But as I was in the first to test and it was really asked a lot of people asked me for my return, so I had to make one. So I made a very polite return saying that it was my skin, it was me, it was hormonal and that it is not a generalized case and that it is perhaps me who made a bad reaction. Except she asked me to remove my post because it was bad pub. But I know that's what my followers want. Even when I have contracts, they stipulate that I have to talk about the brand but do not specify for good or bad. I do not work in advertising or communication, I am not a blogger so I want to stay neutral.

СТРАТЕГИИ ОНЛАЙН-ИНФЛЮЕНСЕРОВ И ИХ ВЛИЯНИЕ НА ПРИНЯТИЕ РЕШЕНИЙ ПОТРЕБИТЕЛЯМИ

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В последнее десятилетие в социальных сетях появилась категория пользователей, которую можно отнести к инфлюенсерам — лидерам мнений. Их количество возросло, и сейчас они играют исключительно важную роль в процессе принятия решений потребителями. Настоящее исследование направлено на изучение данного феномена и объяснение того, как инфлюенсеры формируют свои подходы для удовлетворения запросов и потребностей подписчиков. Основные результаты, полученные в результате качественных и количественных методов анализа, свидетельствуют о том, что мнения инфлюенсеров оказывают влияние на подписчиков при принятии ими решений о покупке. В то же время подписчики все чаще ставят под сомнение достоверность методов, используемых инфлюенсерами. Они не чувствуют аутентичности последних и полагают, что их мнение может привести к стандартизации общества. Несмотря на то что феномен инфлюенсеров возник относительно недавно, проведенное исследование полезно для фирм, поскольку оно четко демонстрирует, как и почему инфлюенсеры воздействуют на поведение потребителей, и также может информировать общество о текущей тенденции и о способах влияния на процесс принятия решений потребителями.

Ключевые слова: инфлюенсер, социальные медиа, инфлюенсер социальных медиа, поведение потребителя, продвижение товаров и услуг через инфлюенсеров, образ жизни, общество.

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