The influencer : A key player in influencer marketing : History, definitions, typologies, and social capital

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Abstract: This article explores the concept of the influencer in influencer marketing, based on an in-depth literature review. It traces the historical evolution of influencers through various theoretical models, while situating them in the context of digital marketing and communication sciences. Influencers play a central role in brand strategies, particularly in an information-saturated environment, where their ability to capture attention and shape consumer behavior is essential.

This study is based on a documentary analysis of academic and scientific publications, enabling us to identify a variety of definitions, multiple typologies, and specific dimensions for measuring their effectiveness. It answers the following question: how is the concept of the influencer defined and typologized in the literature, and what are the implications for consumer behavior in a constantly evolving marketing landscape? The results reveal that influencers are a complex, multidimensional concept. They are powerful intermediaries, capable of influencing purchasing decisions and strengthening consumer commitment. Finally, the study opens up new perspectives for brands, highlighting communication strategies adapted to the characteristics of influencers and the profiles of the audiences they influence.

Keywords: Influenced audiences; Consumer behavior; Influencer; Influence marketing; Communication strategies; Typologies.

1. Introduction

With the exponential growth of online social networks, the influencer phenomenon is attracting a great deal of attention as the new marketing channel, or "the most important new approach to marketing in a decade for professionals at the forefront of purchase decision-making" (Brown and Hayes, 2008). Indeed, in today's marketing world, the majority of brands favor influencer marketing campaigns to influence consumers, using digital influencers. Connecting with individuals who wield influence over internet users allows brands to spread their message on a large scale and attract potential customers within online communities. Indeed, key decision-makers in major markets have understood this and operate within communities of influencers, since major decisions are too complex and risky to be taken

in isolation (Brown and Hayes, 2008). Even luxury brands such as Chanel and Louis Vuitton call on influencers for their advertising campaigns. In short, "as the impact of the media diminishes, the role of influencers increases" (Brown and Hayes, 2008). We have to admit that the influencer is the main player in this wave of influence in the marketing world.

In this article, we present an in-depth literature review on the concept of the influencer. We begin with a historical analysis that compares the linear model of communication with more complex models, illustrating the evolution of the concept. Next, we explore a multitude of definitions and typologies of influencers, highlighting the diversity of perceptions within the literature. We'll discuss the three essential dimensions of engagement - reach, relevance and affinity - which are crucial in assessing the impact of influencers on their audiences. Finally, we will examine the profile of influencers, enabling us to better understand the dynamics of influence, from sender to receiver, in the context of digital marketing.

The central issue of this research is : how is the concept of the influencer defined and typologized in the literature, and what are the implications for consumer behavior in a constantly evolving marketing environment ?

To answer this question, a research methodology based on a literature review has been adopted, as this article relies on a purely theoretical understanding of the influencer concept and its impact on its audience. This approach allows us to synthesize different perspectives and draw significant conclusions about the role of influencers in today's marketing landscape from the literature.

In short, we collected and reviewed relevant academic publications and articles, adopting a qualitative approach to synthesize the different perspectives on the influencer concept. The thematic analysis enabled us to identify the definitions, typologies and engagement dimensions that characterize influencers in today's marketing landscape.

2. History and definitions of the influencer

Influencer marketing uses the recommendation potential of influencers, specifically social network influencers, with the aim of promoting products and services to target consumers (Lou and Yuan, 2019). According to Allsop et al (2007), the most important thing is to understand how the social networks around the product in question operate, and the individuals best suited to creating and spreading messages are the most active on these social networks: "what is important is to understand how the specific social network in your category operates, and in particular, which individuals within that social network are most active in creating and spreading messages about your product category to others". However, authors Smith et al (2007) are skeptical of the idea that there is a specific category of people who can spread information, citing that according to their research : "most people are moderately connected and are as willing as the highly connected to share marketing messages with others".

After an exhaustive analysis of the literature review concerning the concept of the influencer, several authors have attempted to define it each in their own way, but we have noticed that almost all the research on this subject makes the link with the concept of the opinion leader.

The authors Vernette et al (2012) state that "online networks or social media have one thing in common with traditional (off-line) networks : they are based on interactions between members (discussions or exposure) and/or sharing (information, videos, links, images, etc.) between participants". They conclude that "whatever the type of network, some individuals interact more than others and/or have a different status (celebrity, expertise, personal knowledge, etc.) that enables them to exercise a potential power of influence over those around them." (Vernette et al., 2012).

Author Gladwell (2012) proclaims that there is no difference between a traditional opinion leader and an online opinion leader, since he states that the opinion leader is seen as a relay or connector who disseminates information about a product or service in a social network that may be traditional or online. In the same perspective, authors Keller and Berry (2003) validate this idea and consider that opinion leaders play a crucial role as influencers.

Vernette et al (2004) state that online and offline opinion leaders are the same, only the way in which information is transmitted differs, either by "verbal voice" (traditional) or "visual voice" (online). Hence most research proclaims that the concept of the opinion leader is identical to that of the influencer (Vernette, et al., 2012). Similarly, Bakshy et al. (2011) use the terminology of "influencers" to name influential people in a community.

Based on the work of authors Wu et al. (2011), they note that the "two-step flow" model applies perfectly to social networks, and that information issued by the media is filtered by highly connected opinion leaders. In the same vein, authors Uzunoglu et al (2014) point out that digital influencers and offline opinion leaders are two similar concepts, since they both apply the "two-step flow" theory.

Before proceeding with the definitions of the influencer concept, we will examine its history by confronting three communication models that have marked its evolution.

2.1. History of the influencer

2.1.1. Shannon and Weaver's linear communication model (1949)

Shannon and Weaver's linear model is considered one of the earliest models of communication. It describes the communication process as a series of information transmissions from a sender to a receiver, with a potential source of noise that can alter the message. This simplified model illustrates the basics of information transmission, but does not take into account the dynamic interaction between sender and receiver, which limits its effectiveness in explaining influence processes.

Figure 1: Shannon and Weaver's linear communication model (1949)
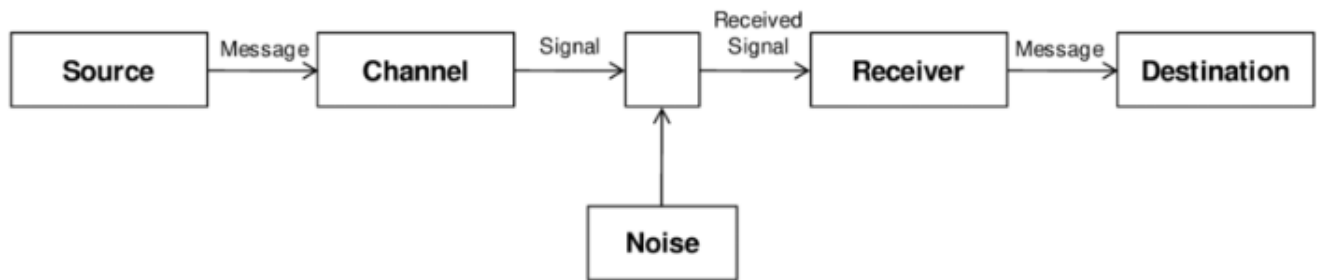
Source : *Shannon and Weaver (1949)*

2.1.2. Two-Step Flow model by Lazarsfeld et al (1955)

In response to the limitations of Shannon and Weaver's model, Lazarsfeld and his colleagues developed the Two-Step Flow model, which introduces the idea that information does not flow directly from the media to the consumer. Instead, opinion leaders play a key role in mediating information between the media and the public. This model highlights the importance of influencers (or opinion leaders) in the dissemination of messages, suggesting that the recommendations of these influential figures have a stronger impact on consumer behavior than

the media messages themselves. This marks a turning point in our understanding of the role of influencers in marketing.

Figure 2: Two-stage communication model
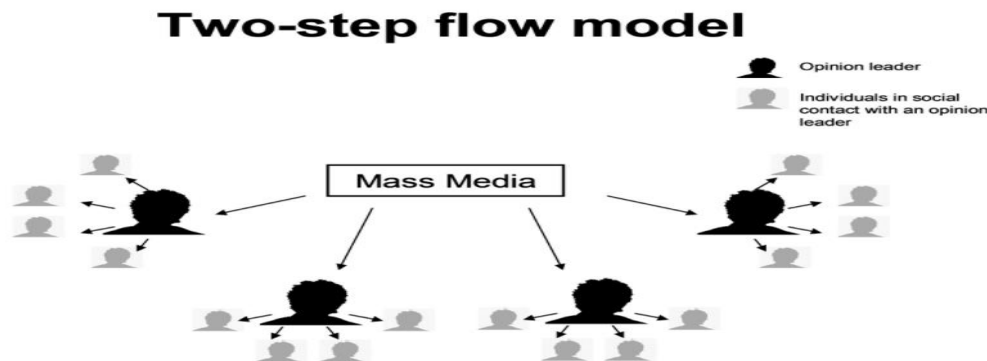
Source : *Lazarsfeld et al. (1955)*

Indeed, the influencer phenomenon is an update of the Two Step Flow communication theory. In the age of digital and social networking, this theory applies perfectly to the concept of influence, and extends to online opinion leaders known as influencers. Influencers act as intermediaries between brands and consumers, interpreting brand information about a product or service by testing it out, creating their own opinion and then disseminating it to their community.

2.1.3. Multidimensional model by Uzunoglu et al (2014)

The model proposed by Uzunoglu and colleagues in 2014 both critiques and enriches the Two-Step Flow model by introducing a multidimensional approach. This model recognizes that influence is a complex process involving not only influencers (opinion leaders) but also interactions between various actors, including the public and social media. Uzunoglu et al (2014) highlight the importance of contextual factors and consumer engagement in the influence process, broadening understanding of the role of influencers in an ever-changingdigital landscape. As a result, authors Uzunoglu et al (2014) explain the mutation of the two-stage model into a multidimensional model (figure no. 3) in the context of influencer marketing.

Figure 3: Mutation of the two-stage model into a multidimensional model in the context of influence marketing according to Uzunoglu, et al. (2014)
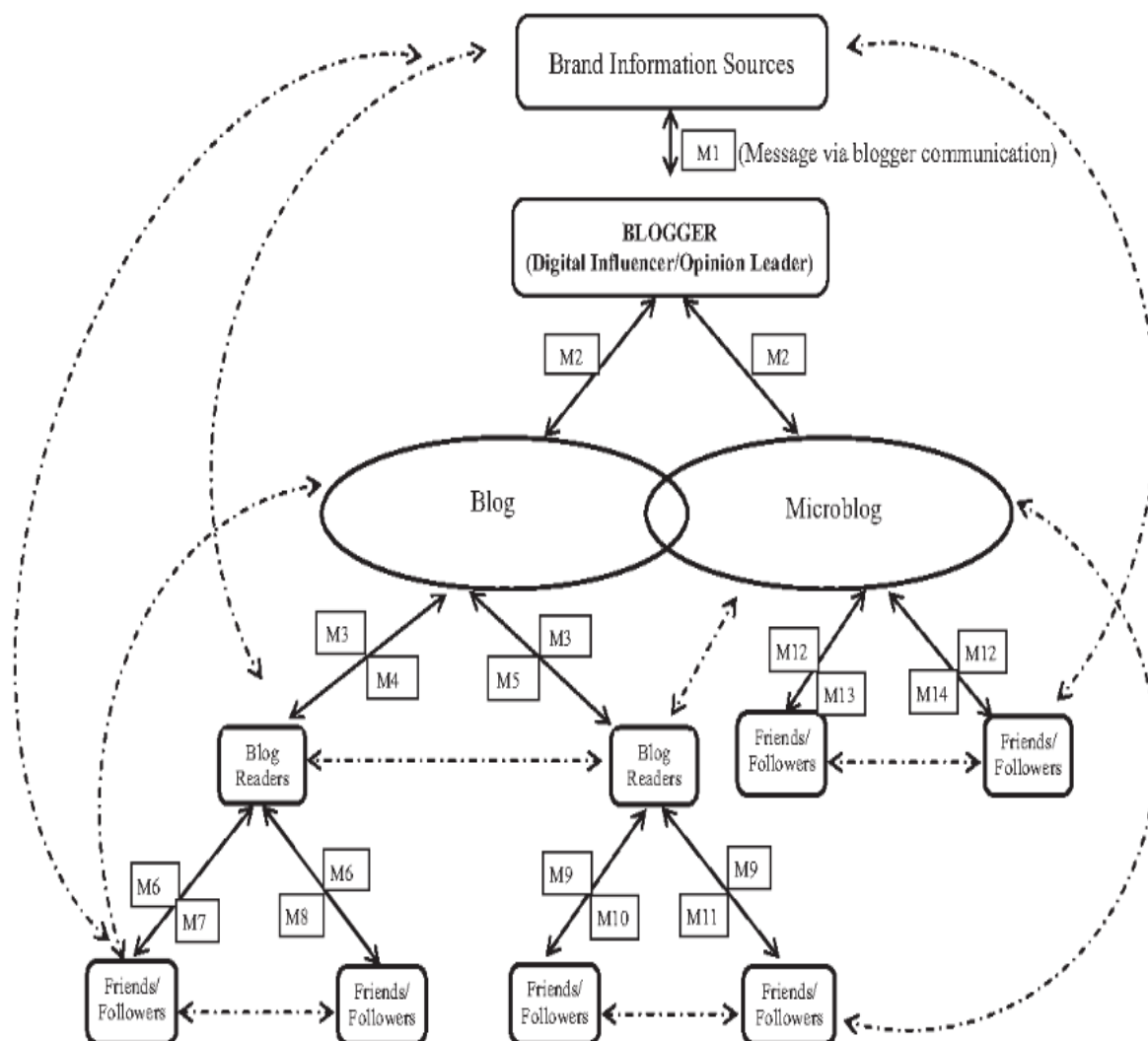
Source : *Uzunoglu, E., & Kip, S.M. (2014)*

These three models offer a historical and theoretical perspective on the evolution of the influencer concept. They show how communication and influence have been conceptualized over time, from simple linear models to more complex, integrated approaches that recognize the central role of influencers in modern marketing. By establishing this theoretical foundation,

we can better understand the growing importance of influencers in today's communication strategies and their impact on consumer behavior.

2.2. Definitions of the influencer

The authors Hosseini et al. (2019) propose a multitude of appellations, specifying that it is a single concept with several appellations "opinion leader, opinion leader, influential users, influencer, influential node, dominant node, power of influence". With the advent of Web 2.0 and the emergence of social networks, the term "influencer" has taken over from the other terms.

Here is a table summarizing the definitions of the concept of the influencer, based on an exhaustive analysis of the literature on the subject.

Table n°1 : Different definitions of the concept of the influencer according to different authors

Definition of the influencer	Authors
Influencers are anyone with expertise in a particular field who actively participates in the creation of value-added content on social networks.	**Heiderich and Maroun (2014)**
« An influencer is someone who has a significant and regular presence on a large number of social networks. He or she regularly distributes content to a community that, over time, grows in size and loyalty. »	**Hossler et al. (2014)**
« a new type of independent third-party endorser shaping public attitudes through blogs, tweets and the use of other social media. »	**Freberg et al. (2011)**
« A social media influencer is first and foremost a content generator: someone who has expert status in a specific field, who has cultivated a sizable number of captive followers - who have marketing value for brands - by regularly producing valuable content. »	**Lou & Yuan (2019)**
« Social network influencers are third-party actors who have established a significant number of relevant relationships and exert influence on their	**Enke et Borchers (2019)**

community through content production, content distribution, interaction and their appearance on the Web. »	
Influencers are perceived as credible and trustworthy, with a strong ability to interact with their communities and instantly trigger electronic word-of-mouth, by creating varied content and generating brand engagement.	**Lin et al (2018)**
The individuals in a consumer's social graph who have a direct impact on that consumer's behavior"	**Ge & Gretzel (2018)**
Are people followed by a large number of users in online social networks.	**De Veirman et al. (2017).**
Influencers are people who have the power to connect brands with existing and potential customers.	**De Vries et al. (2012)**
An influencer is a person who publishes on social media in exchange for remuneration..	**Campbell et al. (2020)**
"people who are respected in their communities, who have a large group of committed supporters and audiences".	**Kotler et al. (2017)**
Influencers are "powerful human brands that have a positive impact on the performance of the companies associated with them".	**Bruning et al. (2018)**
"any type of person who publishes online and has a significant audience"	**Chaffey et al. (2019)**
"An influencer is an opinion leader, popular with a more or less large group of regular recipients, who, through his or her credible actions - increasingly carried out on the Internet - inspires trust, engages and convinces the recipients of his or her communication to make specific choices, such as those related to purchasing, nutrition or worldview."	**Biegun et al. (2019)**
"influencers are a type of micro-celebrity who have accumulated a large number of followers on social media and frequently use this social capital to gain access to financial resources."	**Cotter (2019)**

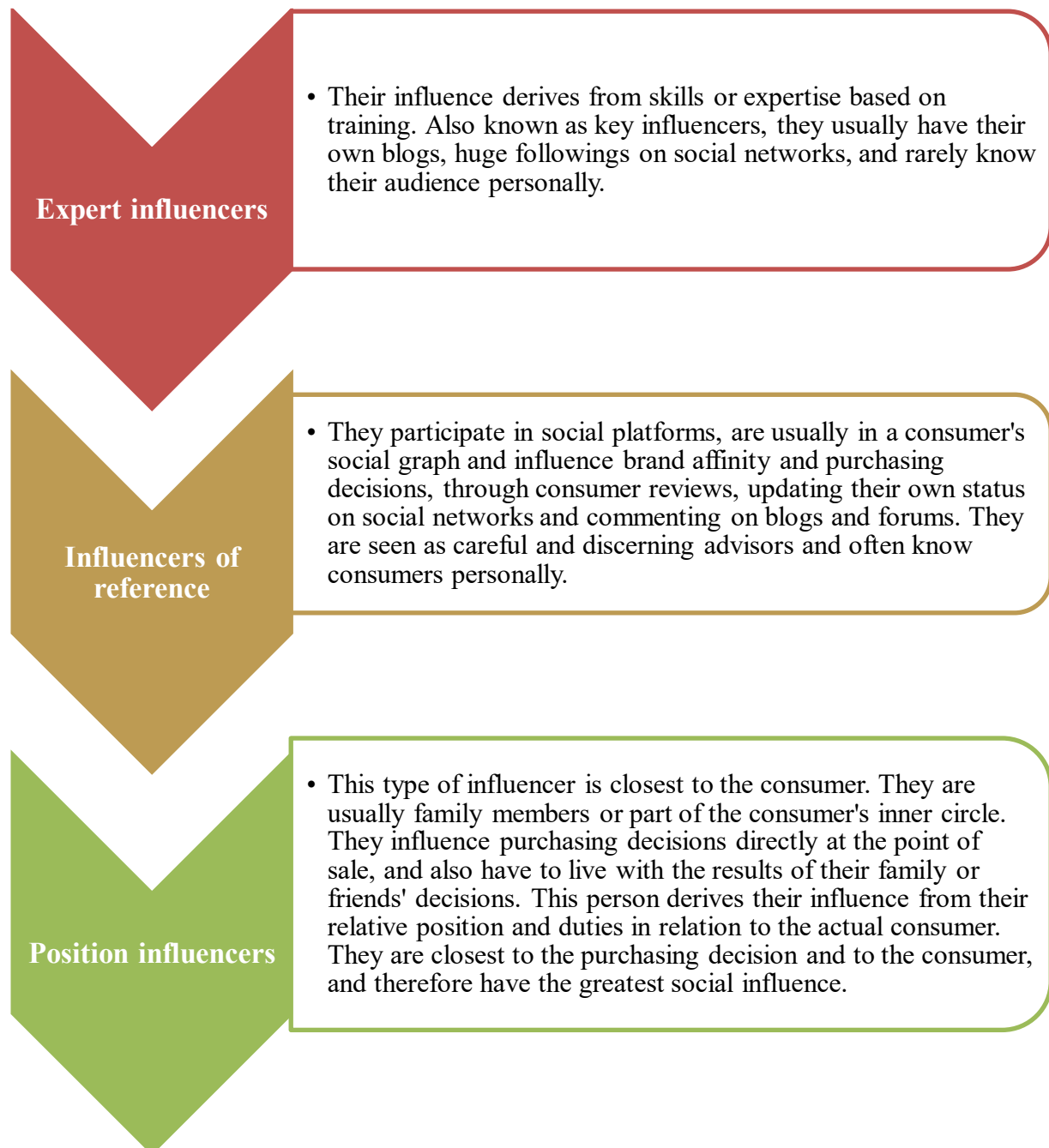|	
Influencers are "self-taught micro-celebrities, often gaining a large number of followers, by posting inspiring photos using hashtags and engaging with them on the site."	**Evans et al. (2015)**
"any well-known figure who is the focus of communication and marketing efforts".	**Khamis et al. (2017)**

Source *: Personal elaboration*

Thus, we retain the definition of authors Enke and Borchers (2019), who propose a fairly comprehensive definition of the concept of influencers: "social network influencers are third-party actors who have established a significant number of relevant relationships and exert influence on their community through content production, content distribution, interaction and their appearance on the Web." Indeed, influencers are creators of valuable content, and have high reputations in specific fields (Kim et al. (2017). Thanks to them, a brand can reach new consumers and expand its customer portfolio, since they have "persuasive power over other individuals and are seen as role models" (Gallic & Marrone, 2018). Indeed, their power of recommendation carries considerable weight vis-à-vis the partner brand, in other words: "a godsend for brands that know how to collaborate with them responsibly and transparently" (Gallic & Marrone ,2018).

As a result, the choice of influencers is essential for a successful branding campaign, as the different types of influencer - nano, micro, macro or celebrity - reach different audiences and vary in their reach.

3. Influencer typologies

Influencers dominate today's social relationships, and have become a key advertising tool for brands, combining broad reach with proximity to their communities (Dahlen and Colliander, 2011). In the book "Social media marketing for dummies" by Singh and Diamond (2012). Three types of influencer are listed :

Figure 4: Three types of influencer according to Singh and Diamond (2012)

Expert influencers

- Their influence derives from skills or expertise based on training. Also known as key influencers, they usually have their own blogs, huge followings on social networks, and rarely know their audience personally.

Influencers of reference

- They participate in social platforms, are usually in a consumer's social graph and influence brand affinity and purchasing decisions, through consumer reviews, updating their own status on social networks and commenting on blogs and forums. They are seen as careful and discerning advisors and often know consumers personally.

Position influencers

- This type of influencer is closest to the consumer. They are usually family members or part of the consumer's inner circle. They influence purchasing decisions directly at the point of sale, and also have to live with the results of their family or friends' decisions. This person derives their influence from their relative position and duties in relation to the actual consumer. They are closest to the purchasing decision and to the consumer, and therefore have the greatest social influence.

Source *: Adapted from Singh & Diamond (2012)*

In the work of authors Clark and Goldsmisth (2005), we also find three types of influencer: mavens, innovators and opinion leaders.

Figure 5: Three types of influencer according to Clark and Goldsmisth (2005)

The Mavens

- They are highly involved in the market and represent a fundamental source of information for other consumers on a wide range of product areas.

The innovators

- They are usually the first to discover new products, as soon as they are launched, and before anyone else.

The opinion leaders

- They are experts in specific fields, and influence consumer behavior when it comes to specific products.

Source : Adapted from Clark & Goldsmith (2005)

Authors Campbell and Farrell (2020) list 5 types of influencers: celebrity influencers, mega-influencers, macro-influencers, micro-influencers and nano-influencers (figure no. 6), focusing primarily on their follower numbers.

Since we'll be using the term "number of followers" more often, it's worth noting that it refers to "the number of people who follow another individual's profile in order to stay abreast of their news and respond to their publications" (Gong and Li, 2017).

Figure n°6: Five types of influencer according to Campbell and Farrell (2020)

Celebrity influencers are individuals with public recognition beyond social media and are frequently sought after by brands due to their large follower base, typically exceeding one million. They often collaborate with brands aligned with their prior work, such as in music, film, or sports. Their established cultural capital not only allows them to command substantial remuneration but also reflects a high level of expertise and authority in their respective fields.

Mega-influencers are essentially celebrity influencers, having achieved significant social media growth and amassed over one million followers, thereby attaining celebrity status through their online presence and established expertise. Unlike traditional celebrities, however, mega-influencers were not widely known prior to their rise on social media and gained their prominence primarily through digital platforms.

Macro-influencers are highly successful influencers with follower counts ranging from 100,000 to 1 million, although they have not yet reached celebrity status. They typically achieve high engagement rates and provide consistent brand exposure due to their large audience. Compared to nano- and micro-influencers, macro-influencers offer brands an attractive cost-to-reach ratio. Often experts in their fields—such as food, travel, or music—they inspire their followers through carefully curated content

Micro-influencers are influencers operating on a smaller scale than macro-influencers, with audiences ranging from 10,000 to 100,000 followers, often concentrated within a specific geographic area. They typically focus on sharing content such as Instagram Stories, which enhances their image of accessibility and authenticity. Consequently, consumers tend to place greater trust in the recommendations of micro-influencers, perceiving them as more genuine than endorsements from celebrities.

Nano-influencers are at the early stage of their influencer careers, building their personal brand and a follower base typically under 10,000. Their audiences often consist of friends, acquaintances, and close connections, and they tend to achieve the highest engagement rates among influencer types, due to their perceived authenticity and approachability. Nano-influencers often proactively contact brands to propose collaborations rather than waiting to be approached. This can benefit brands, as these influencers frequently accept free product samples instead of monetary compensation in exchange for increased visibility on social media.

Source : Adapted from Campbell and Farrell (2020)

Authors Campbell and Farrell (2020) believe that the most dynamic element of influencer marketing is the wide range of influencer characteristics, as they differ considerably across a range of competencies. Given these differences, the authors combine influencer typologies based primarily on follower numbers with four other competency criteria, which are: level of expertise, cultural capital, accessibility and authenticity (Figure no. 7).

Figure 7 : Degree of competence criteria according to influencer types and follower numbers, after Campbell and Farrell (2020).
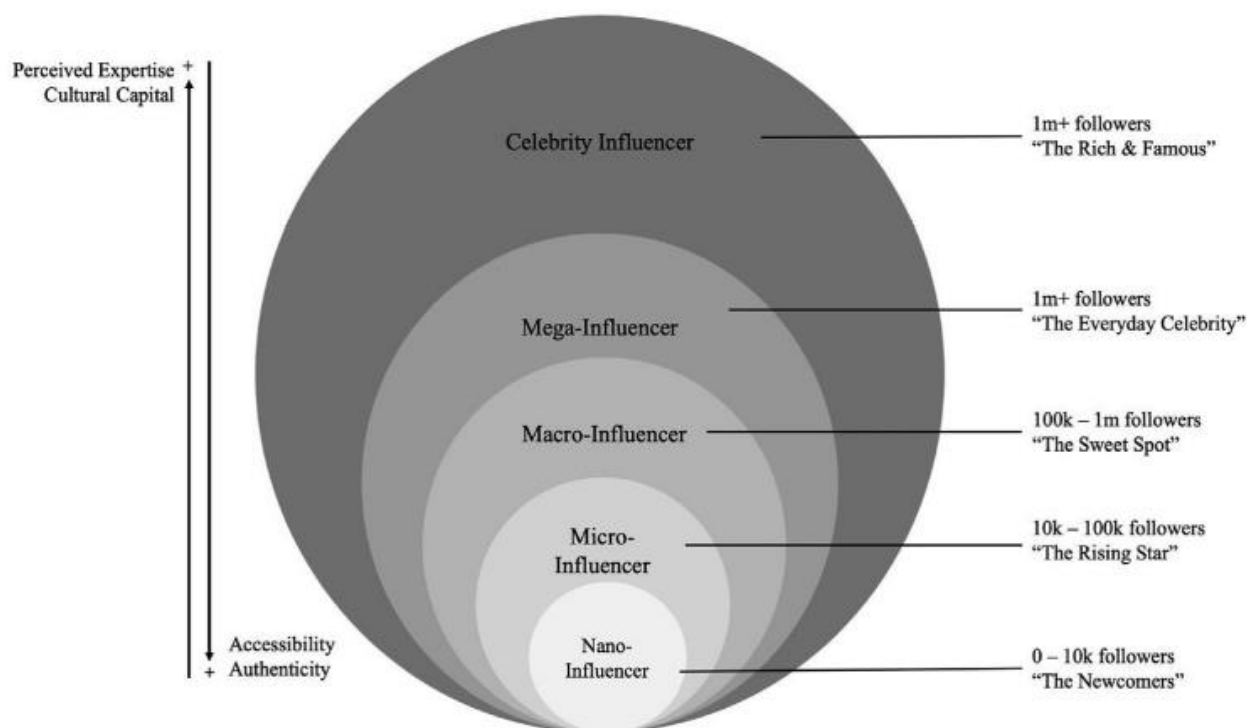
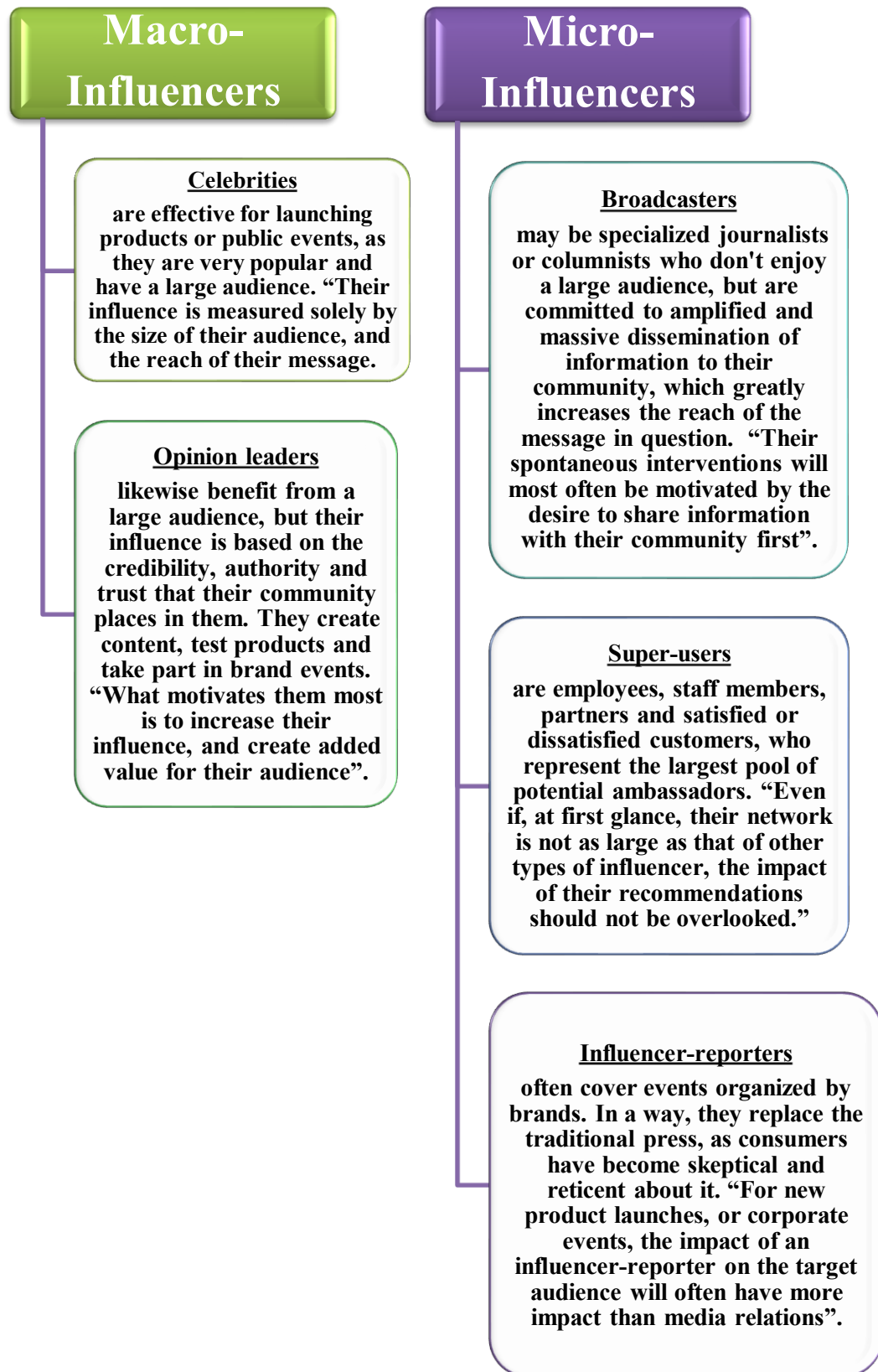***Source*** *: Campbell and Farrell (2020).*

Figure 7 shows that the more followers an influencer generates, the more he or she is perceived as an expert with established cultural capital - already well-known in the world of music or cinema, for example - while the image of an authentic, accessible influencer is reflected in a restricted, limited audience.

As a result, identifying the right influencer on a brand's behalf is an essential step for a successful influencer marketing campaign (Hossler et al., 2014), but remains a delicate task nonetheless, identifying the influencer who will have a consequent impact on the brand's target audience still constitutes one of its greatest challenges (De Veirman et al., 2017).

Generally, the number of followers is commonly used as a starting point in the search for the right influencer (Kay et al., 2020), since it reflects the influencer's popularity and the size of his or her network (Romero et al., 2011). Furthermore, on the social network Instagram, the size of the influencer's community is one way of differentiating them (Nandagiri et al., 2018).

Indeed, the majority of authors classify influencers into two categories, macro-influencers and micro-influencers (Wojdynski et al., 2015; De Veirman et al., 2017; Kusumasondjaja et al., 2019; Kay et al., 2020). The term "macro" reflects influencers with a high number of followers, and "micro" are those with far fewer. Taking the example of author Morin (2015), in his book "Génération Connectée", he lists five types of influencer to identify on social networks and divides them into these two categories: micro-influencers and macro-influencers (figure no. 8).

Figure 8 : Five types of influencer, divided into Micro and Macro categories, according to Morin (2015).

Macro-Influencers

Celebrities

are effective for launching products or public events, as they are very popular and have a large audience. "Their influence is measured solely by the size of their audience, and the reach of their message.

Opinion leaders

likewise benefit from a large audience, but their influence is based on the credibility, authority and trust that their community places in them. They create content, test products and take part in brand events. "What motivates them most is to increase their influence, and create added value for their audience".

Micro-Influencers

Broadcasters

may be specialized journalists or columnists who don't enjoy a large audience, but are committed to amplified and massive dissemination of information to their community, which greatly increases the reach of the message in question. "Their spontaneous interventions will most often be motivated by the desire to share information with their community first".

Super-users

are employees, staff members, partners and satisfied or dissatisfied customers, who represent the largest pool of potential ambassadors. "Even if, at first glance, their network is not as large as that of other types of influencer, the impact of their recommendations should not be overlooked."

Influencer-reporters

often cover events organized by brands. In a way, they replace the traditional press, as consumers have become skeptical and reticent about it. "For new product launches, or corporate events, the impact of an influencer-reporter on the target audience will often have more impact than media relations".

Source : *Adapted from Morin (2015)*

Author Morin (2015) divides the five types of social network influencers into two broad categories : macro-influencers with a large audience and therefore a wide reach, and then micro-influencers with a limited community but a more targeted message. Indeed, authors Ahmed et al (2019) carried out a study based on the divergences between macro-influencers and micro-influencers, and demonstrated that each category has its strengths and weaknesses. They pointed out four points of divergence between micro and macro influencers, the number of followers, reach, engagement, costs and responsiveness of their respective communities.

They conclude that micro-influencers may not have a large reach, but they have impeccable engagement, low costs and active followers. Macro-influencers have many more followers, a large reach but low engagement, high costs and passive subscribers.

In short, micro-influencers are perceived as credible, trustworthy individuals with a unique relationship with their community (Dhanesh and Duthler, 2019). Macro-influencers, on the other hand, enjoy a much wider and more extensive reach, and are therefore able to reach a large and diverse audience. So it all depends on the brand's needs: collaborating with a macro-influencer generates greater visibility and awareness, while micro-influencers will guarantee unfailing credibility. In the same vein, Solis et al (2012) state that an influencer's follower count and credibility are undeniable criteria of influence, forming an integral part of his or her social capital. In fact, an influencer's social capital is made up of three pillars: "reach", "relevance" and "resonance", in line with Solis' (2012) 3Rs, which we will detail below.

4. Three R's of the influencer

According to Solis et al (2012), online influence is measured as social capital, which is essential if an influencer is to influence the behavior of his or her community. Accordingly, an influencer's social capital is made up of three pillars: reach, relevance and resonance (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Three pillars of the influencer according to Solis (2012)

Source : Solis, B. (2012)

❖ **« Reach »** is "a measure of popularity affinity and potential impact" (Solis, 2012). This first pillar refers to an influencer's reach and audience, the ability to deliver content to a target audience, the connection an influencer is able to establish with other users, investing goodwill towards their community, enabling appreciation and potentially collaborations with brands. Two pieces of data are taken into account for this piler: the first is quantitative, linked to the influencer's subscriber numbers, and the second is qualitative, focusing on the profile of his or her followers.

❖ The second pillar, just as important as the first, is **« relevance »** and affinity. Solis et al (2012) believe that a relevant influencer must have three factors: authority, trust and affinity.

- Authority: is the personal investment and energy provided to gain control over a specific topic, which will command the respect of its community,
- Trust: is "a firm belief in someone's ability or strength to be reliable and truthful" (Solis et al., 2012). It is very crucial to an influencer's potential, since the audience perceives them as credible, follows their recommendations and advice, and sees them as a reliable source.
- Affinity: according to the author, is "a natural bond or sympathy for someone or something", a certain relationship, admittedly virtual but full of sympathy and conformity that is created between the influencer and his or her community.

❖ « **Resonance** » is the third pillar, representing the ultimate goal of the previous two: the ability to influence. The author describes it as "the measurement of the rate of duration and level of interactivity around a content, topic or conversation". As such, resonance is the ability to elicit favorable public reactions to the influencer's message.

In summary, an influencer must meet several key criteria to effectively influence their community and attract the attention of brands that may be interested in their profile for potential collaborations.

Equally important is focusing on connected consumers, often referred to as "the influenced," who embrace the phenomenon of influencer marketing. These individuals play a pivotal role in the influence process, as without them, influencer marketing could not establish itself as an essential tool for marketers and influencers alike.

As Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, aptly put it: « Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room. ». This statement aptly underscores the crucial role of the audience's perception, which constitutes the very foundation of influencer marketing's effectiveness.

5. Influencers : Key players in influencer marketing

In influencer marketing, we often talk about influencers, but what about influencers ? Without them, this influence will never materialize. Indeed, the audience is an intrinsic element of influence in influencer marketing.

On the face of it, an influencer is an individual with a larger-than-normal following, and brands seek them out to reach their followers. Without an audience, an influencer's usefulness is non-existent, so they are in a sense the origin of their existence.

While individuals follow influencers who align with their values and lifestyle, and who convey positive vibes in their eyes, the influencers themselves feed off their followers in order to gain validation from them, translating into a never-ending quest for more likes, comments and subscribers (Bouttier, 2015).

5.1. Profiles and behaviors of the influenced

According to a 2021 study by Médiamétrie, entitled "Le public des influenceurs sur Internet : une communauté active et créative", one in four Internet users follows an influencer, and around 40% of them are aged between 15 and 24, while 24.6% are aged between 25 and 34. Almost two-thirds of followers belong to generations Y and Z, who are particularly receptive to this form of interactive communication. At that time, 98.6% of Internet users who followed influencers were active on at least one social network, compared with 84.1% of all Internet users (Médiamétrie, 2021).

What's more, almost 70% of Internet users said they were influenced by influencer recommendations, and 80% would activate their notifications, mainly on YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat. Interactive formats such as stories and lives were also gaining in popularity : 41.8% of Internet users followed this type of content (versus 18.4% for all Internet users), and 29.2% (versus 9.7%) used influencer videos to learn about brands. Finally, 85.5% (versus 68%) consulted the online opinions of other consumers before finalizing their purchasing decisions (Médiamétrie, 2021).

In 2024, this dynamic has been reinforced, as shown by recent data from the Influencer Marketing Benchmark Report 2024. The influencer marketing market is estimated at \$24 billion, reflecting substantial growth from the \$10.29 billion recorded in 2021 (Statista, 2024). Today, TikTok is establishing itself as a major channel for product discovery, with trends such as #BookTok significantly influencing sales (Le Monde, 2024). A study reveals that 49% of consumers rely on influencer recommendations, and generations Y and Z remain the most sensitive to this type of content, with 42% declaring themselves ready to buy a product recommended by an influencer they follow (Traackr, 2024). Internet user behavior has also evolved. On social networks, influencers cover a variety of themes, depending on the platform : cooking, beauty and sport on Facebook ; fashion, travel and personal development on Instagram; educational fields, high-tech and video games on YouTube; and humor and gags on TikTok.

In conclusion, the Internet users influenced in 2024 continue to play an active role in the digital sphere. They participate in influencer marketing by sharing content and giving their opinions online. According to Médiamétrie (2021), 24% of them regularly publish personal photos and videos, and this figure remains high in 2024, showing users' growing involvement in this interactive digital ecosystem.

6. Conclusion

The hegemony of traditional marketing has crumbled with the advent of social networks, and brands have understood this and decided to align themselves with the changing habits of today's consumers. Adopting new digital systems is the key to surviving, staying competitive and meeting the needs of new consumers. Social media have enabled brands to connect directly with consumers in a way that traditional methods of communication could not. More precisely, with this new concept of influencers, brands can capture consumers' attention with attractive, authentic and relevant content. In short, influencers have an ability to convince their communities that no other traditional means of communication can do. Certainly, they have been able to create a relationship of trust with the people who follow them, and this is the key to the success of an advertising campaign based on this practice, which is becoming the only way out in a market in full mutation towards a future 100% oriented towards social influence.

Furthermore, the results of this literature review show that the concept of influencer is complex and multifaceted, encompassing a variety of definitions and typologies that reflect the evolution of social interactions across digital platforms. The "3 Rs" of engagement prove crucial to understanding the effectiveness of influencers in modern marketing, while analysis of the profiles of the influenced offers fresh insights into the influence process and its implications for brand communication strategies.

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