# Is an Influencer's Follower Count Just a Number?
# The Effect of Influencer's Number of Followers on Moroccan Consumer Behavior in Electronic Trade and Distribution Science: Dyadic Approach

## Imane MARGOM[1], Mohammed Ben AMAR[2]

## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study aims to explore the effect of an influencer's follower count on the attitudes and purchase intentions of Moroccan consumers on the Instagram platform, which has become one of the most utilized platforms in electronic trade and distribution science. **Research Design and Methodology:** To achieve this objective, we adopted a qualitative methodology that allows for a deeper understanding of our research problem through the perceptions and experiences of key stakeholders in this context. We conducted a comparative analysis of the views held by influencers and consumers through semi-structured interviews. **Results:** Our findings reveal significant divergences in the perceived effect of follower count on attitudes and purchase intentions. While some participants affirm a positive effect, viewing the influencer's follower count as a reflection of their popularity and credibility, others reference the theory of cultural conformism typical of collectivist societies like Morocco, suggesting that follower count influences behavior due to social pressures. Additionally, several respondents emphasize the importance of engagement rates, particularly highlighting the profiles of micro-influencers and the quality of the content published. **Conclusions :** This study contributes to a deeper understanding of influencer marketing within a Moroccan context, offering valuable insights into how follower count and engagement interact to shape consumer perceptions and behaviors.

**Keywords :** Distribution Science, Electronic Trade, Engagement Rate, Influencers, Instagram, Number of Followers.

**JEL Classification Code :** M31, M37, L81, D12, D91

## 1. Introduction

In today's electronic trade landscape and within the field of distribution science, brands have recognized the potential of forming alliances with social media influencers to enhance their visibility and brand awareness. Influencers, as defined by De Veirman et al. (2017), are individuals who have successfully built "a significant social network of people who follow them." As a result, brands are gradually abandoning traditional marketing techniques, recognizing that partnerships with influencers are more effective. These

1 First Author and Corresponding Author. Doctor in economics and management, Research and studies laboratory in management, entrepreneurship and finance, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University of fez (USMBA), National School of Business and Management (ENCG), Fez, Morocco.
Email: imane.margom@usmba.ac.ma
2 Second Author. University professor, Research and studies laboratory in management, entrepreneurship and finance, National School of Business and Management (ENCG), Fez, Morocco. Email: mohammed-benamar@usmba.ac.ma

collaborations appear more authentic and credible in the eyes of consumers, thereby reducing resistance to marketing messages (de Vries et al., 2012). Influencers also trigger cascades of influence through their followers, amplifying their impact (Gladwell, 2000).

One of the key factors consumers consider when evaluating an influencer is their number of followers, which reflects the influencer's popularity (Tong et al., 2008; Utz, 2010). This number can serve as a signal of social proof, influencing consumer behavior (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Chaiken and Maheswaran, 1994).

Through our research work, we explore the effect of the number of followers of Instagram influencers on the attitudes and purchasing intentions of consumers in Morocco. This study adopts a qualitative approach, starting with the presentation of the theoretical foundations, followed by the methodology, and culminating in a detailed analysis of the results. Finally, we discuss the findings in relation to existing theory, providing insights into the Moroccan consumer context.

## 2. Literature Review

Word-of-mouth marketing has been a powerful tool for centuries, yet its means of dissemination have evolved significantly, particularly with the advent of the Internet and social media over the past decade. This evolution has transformed traditional private word-of-mouth into a public phenomenon, leading to the rise of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) marketing and the emergence of influencers.

Influencers are commonly defined as "a type of micro-celebrity who has accumulated a large number of followers on social media and frequently uses this social capital to access financial resources" (Cotter, 2019), or "individuals who possess expert status in a specific field and have cultivated a sizable number of captive followers—who hold marketing value for brands—by consistently producing valuable content" (Lou & Yuan, 2018).

Researchers have predominantly characterized influencers based on their follower counts. For instance, Enke and Borchers (2019) define social network influencers as "third-party actors who have established a significant number of relevant relationships." Similarly, Ángeles Oviedo-García et al. (2014) highlight that influencers have achieved "high visibility among their followers." Lou and Yuan (2018) further stipulate that these individuals have cultivated a considerable number of captive followers, while De Veirman et al. (2017) regard influencers as those who are followed by a large number of users on social networks. According to Kotler et al. (2017), influencers possess "a large group of engaged supporters and audience," while Chaffey et al. (2019) define them as "any individual who

publishes online and has a substantial audience." Lastly, Evans et al. (2017) affirm these definitions by noting that influencers typically have "a large number of followers."

While the sheer number of followers is often emphasized, it reflects a broader aspect of today's influencers. For instance, Jin and Phua (2014) demonstrated that a high follower count is positively correlated with purchase intentions toward products. Zhang and Dong (2008) concluded that a large number of followers serves as an initial criterion in the influencer identification process. Cha et al. (2010) proposed various forms of interpersonal influence, identifying the audience size as a primary factor in opinion leadership; larger audiences facilitate rapid idea dissemination, reinforcing interpersonal influence. De Veirman et al. (2017) established that an increased follower count positively affects attitudes toward the influencer, leading to higher perceptions of popularity and greater likability. Furthermore, Charry et al. (2021) indicated that the number of followers significantly influences consumer attitudes and purchase intentions regarding health-related products.

Recent studies further emphasize the importance of influencer authenticity and its impact on consumer behavior. For instance, Freberg et al. (2021) discuss the concept of personal branding among social media influencers, highlighting how authenticity plays a crucial role in building trust with followers. Hwang and Zhang (2021) explore the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intentions, demonstrating that consumers are more likely to engage with influencers they perceive as genuine. Additionally, Hassan et al. (2022) conducted a meta-analysis that underscores the influence of social media on consumers' purchase intentions, reinforcing the idea that the dynamics of eWOM are pivotal in shaping consumer behavior.

In conclusion, while the follower count has traditionally been a key metric in defining influencers, the evolving landscape of social media underscores the necessity of understanding the intricate relationship between authenticity, engagement, and consumer perceptions. This literature review highlights the duality of follower count and engagement in the context of influencer marketing, setting the stage for further exploration of these themes in the context of Moroccan consumers

## 3. Research Methodology

In this study, we aim to explore the effect of the number of followers that influencers have on consumer behavior in the Moroccan context, considering two perspectives: that of Moroccan influencers and consumers. This choice led us to adopt a qualitative approach, tailored to the specific cultural environment in which our interviewees operate. This

methodology was selected to capture their individual perceptions and experiences, thereby gaining a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study through the exploration of subjective viewpoints.

## 3.1. Interpretivism

The study is grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, which seeks to understand human behavior (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988) through the subjective and lived experiences of individuals in specific contexts (Neuman, 2007). In line with this paradigm, we aim to understand how the number of followers affects Moroccan consumer behavior by examining the subjective perceptions of the key actors involved—namely influencers and consumers. This paradigm is well-suited for our study because it prioritizes understanding social phenomena through the lenses of those who experience them.

## 3.2. Abductive Mode of Reasoning

Our research follows an abductive mode of reasoning, which combines field actors' perceptions with theoretical perspectives related to our research. This approach enables us to draw inferences by bridging the insights from our data with established theories, making it a fitting approach for this study, where we seek to explore and interpret a new phenomenon in a specific cultural context.

## 3.3. Dyadic Qualitative Approach

We employed a dyadic qualitative methodology, which focuses on understanding the phenomenon from two angles: those of influencers and consumers. This approach is particularly useful as it allows us to study the dynamic interaction between these two groups, gaining a more holistic understanding of how follower counts influence consumer behavior. Our approach is exploratory in nature, seeking to answer the research question by comparing the perspectives of both the sender (influencer) and the receiver (consumer). This comparative view enables us to draw constructive conclusions by highlighting convergences and divergences in perceptions.

## 3.4. Research Protocols

Based on these methodological foundations, the research protocol is as follows:

- **Field approach:**
We employed a multiple case study approach involving two distinct samples: one composed of 10 Moroccan consumers and the other of 10 Moroccan influencers. This dual-unit of analysis adheres to the principle of triangulation, thus enhancing the credibility of the results.

- **Sample selection:**

**Influencer sample:** The influencer sample was selected through netnographic analysis, examining a panel of 465 Moroccan influencer accounts on Instagram. The selection criteria included:
   o Their partnerships with well-known brands,
   o The quality of the content on their Instagram accounts,
   o The regularity and relevance of their publications,
   o The feedback and interactions from consumers, including comments, views, and likes, ensuring a genuine interaction between influencers and their communities.

**Consumer sample:** Consumers were selected via direct interviews, based on:
   o Their regular use of Instagram as the primary social network,
   o A following of at least 10 influencers,
   o A history of purchasing products or brands based on influencer recommendations,
   o An age range of 20 to 65 years, ensuring significant generational and social diversity.

- **Fields of investigation:** Instagram was chosen as the field of investigation due to its prevalence as the dominant platform for influencer-consumer interactions in Morocco.
- **Data collection Tools:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both influencers and consumers. This format allowed for in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences and perceptions, providing rich, qualitative data.
- **Data processing:** The collected data were transcribed sociologically, followed by lemmatization and coding of the interviews. This meticulous processing ensures that the data are well-prepared for further analysis.

- **Data analysis:**
   o A lexical analysis was conducted using Iramuteq software version 0.7 alpha 2 to uncover recurring themes in the data.
   o Additionally, manual content analysis was employed to gain a more nuanced understanding of the participants' narratives and to identify key patterns and themes.

- **Discussion of results:** The results were discussed using Theoretical triangulation, which allows for

deeper understanding of qualitative findings by examining them from multiple theoretical perspectives. This approach enhances the rigor and credibility of the study by allowing for a more comprehensive and nuanced exploration of the phenomenon under investigation.

# 4. Results

The aim of this section is to highlight the various findings of our qualitative study. First, we present the results of the lexical analysis, carried out using Iramuteq software. The purpose of this analysis is to provide readers with an initial insight into the perspectives of two groups of study participants regarding the effect of follower numbers on consumer behavior.

Next, we present the content analysis, which strives to bring interpretive depth to the discourses collected from the interviewees. We will then proceed to a more detailed and in-depth exploration of all the responses provided by the participants, with the aim of drawing meaningful and constructive conclusions.

## 4.1. Lexical Analysis

In order to deepen our understanding and explore the data further, we opted to present this lexical analysis in the form of a confrontation between the consumer and influencer datasets. We chose to visualize the information using word clouds, and to explore the potential links between all the concepts generated, based on semantic proximities around key terms, using similarity trees, with the aim of deciphering the perceptions of the players in each group and comparing them with each other, with a view to identifying shared notions as well as those specific to them, and the ramifications between the different concepts perceived by the interiewees.

### 4.1.1. Word Cloud: Influencers VS Consumers

The visual representation of the word cloud derived from the consumers' responses underscores the significant role that the "number of followers" plays in their perceptions of influencers. The terms "influencer" and "number of followers" prominently feature in this illustration, accompanied by specific phrases highlighting the importance of follower counts among our interviewees, such as "million followers" and "lot of followers." Additionally, the term "credibility" appears, suggesting a potential causal relationship between an influencer's follower count and their perceived trustworthiness.
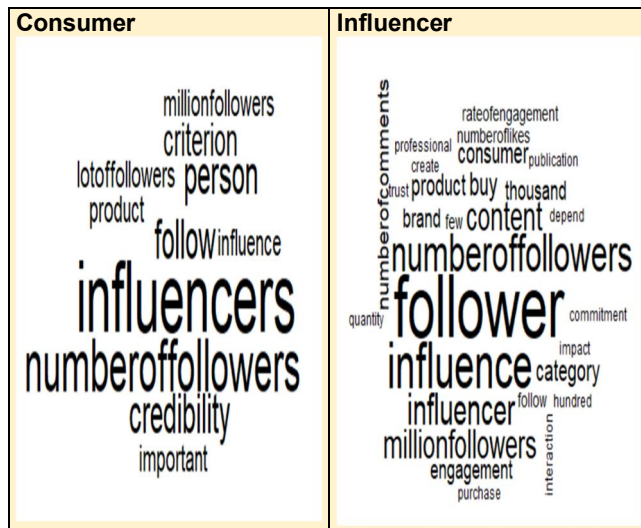


**Source:** Iramuteq output

**Figure 1:** Consumer word cloud VS Influencer word cloud

Two distinct categories of words emerge in the influencer word cloud: "number of followers" and "engagement." The term "follower" predominates the influencer word cloud, alongside "influence," "number of followers," and "million followers". However, other relevant terms such as "rate of engagement," "engagement," "commitment," "content," "publication," "interaction," "number of comments," and "number of likes" are also present.

In the context of influencer marketing, the concepts associated with the "number of followers" and "engagement" are often viewed as contradictory: an increase in the "number of followers" typically correlates with a decrease in the "engagement" rate, and vice versa. The emergence of these terms indicates a divergence in the views expressed by the influencers interviewed regarding the impact of "number of followers" on the behavior of Moroccan consumers.

### 4.1.2 Similarity Trees

The two similarity analyses conducted on the transcriptions from both the consumer and influencer corpora position the most frequently occurring terms as nodes, enabling a tree representation that illustrates the various interconnections between the terms related to the content. Furthermore, these interconnections elucidate the significant relationships among the various concepts discussed during the interviews. The thickness of the lines connecting these terms further indicates the frequency of their occurrence in proximity within the transcribed texts.

❖ **Similarity Tree: Influencers**
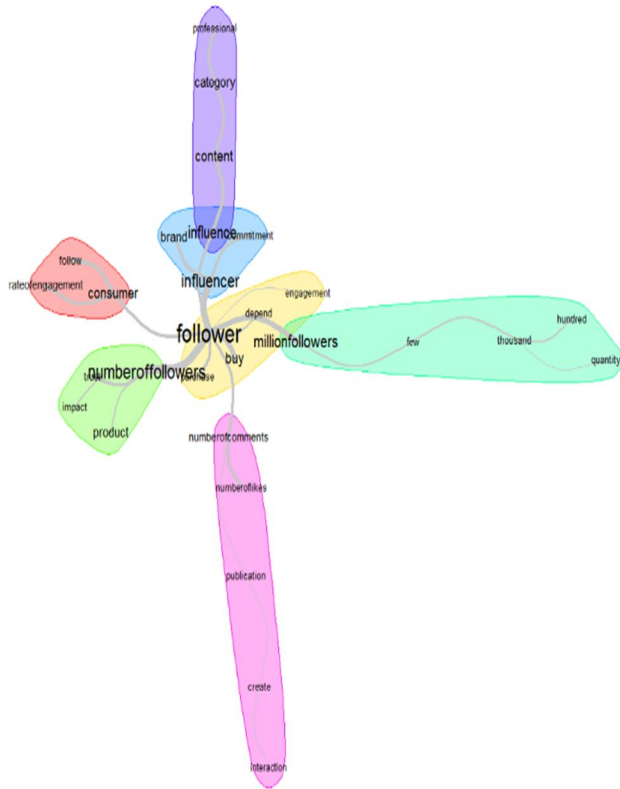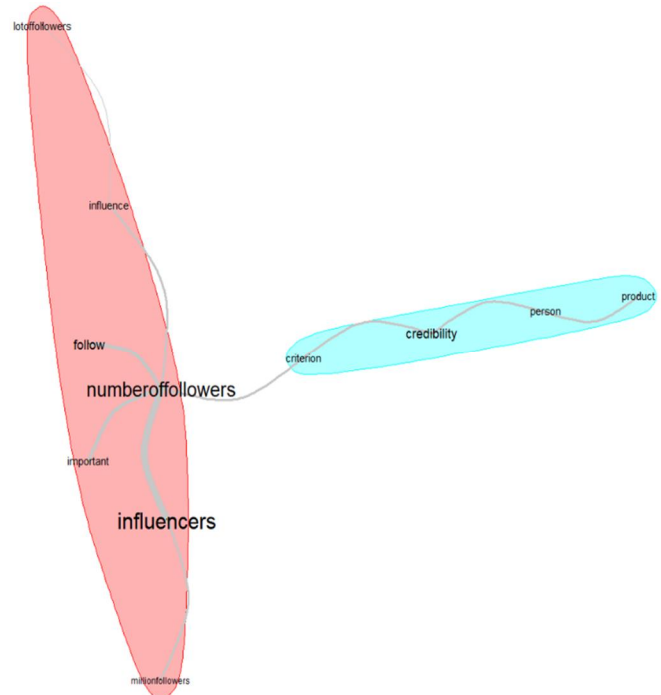


Source*: Iramuteq output

**Figure 2**: Similarity Tree of Influencer Testimonials

We immediately observe that the term « follower » is positioned as the central node in the presented graph. It is closely associated with reference nodes such as « numberofcomments », « millionfollowers », « numberoffollowers », « influencer », and « consumer ».

Similar to the influencer content word cloud, this illustration also reveals a divergence in the represented concepts. The term « numberofcomments » serves as a reference core for several concepts that are not related to the number of followers but rather to « numberoflikes », « publication », and « interaction ». Additionally, the « consumer » node is connected to « rateofengagement », whereas the « millionfollowers » node is linked to quantitative concepts such as « hundred », « thousand », and « quantity ».

The concepts « rate of engagement » and « number of followers » carry contradictory meanings in the context of influencer marketing, as previously mentioned. This observation reinforces the potential divergence in the perspectives expressed by the influencers regarding the influence of the number of followers on the behavior of Moroccan consumers.

❖ **Similarity Tree: Consumers**



Source*: Iramuteq output

**Figure 3:** Similarity Tree of Cusumer Testimonials

At first glance, we observe that the term « numberoffollowers » occupies a central position in this tree representation, connecting to two distinct word communities.

In the first word community, the terms « influencers », « follow », « important », « influence », « millionfollowers », and « lotoffollowers » emphasize the significance of the number of followers. In contrast, the second word community includes the terms « criterion », « credibility », « person », and « product », which pertain to the influencer and the products they market, regardless of their follower count.

This divergence in the language used by the interviewed consumers highlights the complexity of their perceptions, which we will explore in greater depth through content analysis.

## 4.2. Content Analysis

### 4.2.1. Influencer Content Analysis

We will conduct separate content analyses for each of the two sample groups. The feedback and insights gathered from each group of participants will provide comparative perspectives, ultimately leading to the extraction of clear

and constructive conclusions. To facilitate the reading of the content analysis for both sample groups, we will employ a naming code. For instance, in the influencer sample, "I-1" refers to influencer number one, and this nomenclature is consistent throughout. This naming convention is detailed in Appendix 1, which summarizes all relevant information pertaining to the interviewed influencers. A similar convention applies to the consumer sample, where "C-1" corresponds to consumer number one, as elaborated in Appendix 2.

The criterion of follower count elicited significant discussion among our interviewees. The majority expressed skepticism regarding the effectiveness of this metric, asserting its minimal impact on consumer behavior, despite the fact that they individually accumulate hundreds of thousands of followers. We will analyze their testimonials in detail.

I-1 challenges the relevance of this criterion, citing examples of celebrities, such as singers with millions of subscribers, who fail to sell products effectively. He remarks, "There are artists who have a million or two million or more who don't sell products at all, whereas an influencer sells a lot more products simply because it's his or her job. Generally speaking, it's not the number that determines success with brands."

I-2 addresses the issue of influencers purchasing followers, emphasizing that brands should prioritize engagement metrics over follower counts. She articulates a crucial point about the authenticity of followers: "Today, you have many people who buy followers, so they don't have a real following. I would focus more on likes and comments, as well as the interaction created around a product. It's not the number of followers that matters but rather the commitment of the person; that's where you can truly gauge the authenticity of the subscribers."

I-3 concurs with I-2, adding that content quality and follower engagement are paramount, which is quantified through engagement rates based on likes, comments, and views. He states, "You can buy followers, but the number no longer holds weight for me. I pay more attention to the influencer's content and the engagement of their subscribers, which reflects the extent of their community's interaction with that content."

I-4 echoes this sentiment, asserting that follower engagement supersedes follower count, except in cases of media scandals that generate significant public interest. She concludes, "I don't think it's the follower count that matters; it's the engagement and the nature of that engagement whether it's positive and constructive."

Conversely, I-5 underscores the significance of follower count, suggesting that consumers attribute value to influencers with a larger following. He observes, "Unfortunately, quantity is a factor; people make that

connection. For instance, on Twitter, I've experienced instances where my follower count lends credibility to my opinions, despite criticism."

I-6 expresses ambivalence, indicating that follower count holds importance for brands but not necessarily for consumers: "I can't say if it's important for brands or consumers; I have no idea."

I-7 links follower count to notoriety, asserting that a high number of followers enhances the influencer's perceived popularity. He states, "When you reach a certain number, we perceive you as someone who's been around for a while, which gives you an image of notoriety."

I-8, however, is resolute in her belief that follower count is inconsequential, emphasizing the importance of subscriber commitment to the influencer. She states, "The number of followers is just that—a number. With the rise of giveaways and follower-buying, a person with three hundred thousand followers may not have a more committed community than someone with thirty thousand. Brands need to prioritize engagement over sheer follower numbers."

I-9 considers the socio-professional class of followers, suggesting that an influencer's purchasing power influences consumer behavior: "Yes, there is a socio-professional category that might think, 'I need this product because this celebrity in Morocco has tried it.' However, someone with fewer followers can have a strong impact too. It really depends on the purchasing power of their followers."

I-10 believes that follower count significantly affects consumer trust in an influencer, stating, "The number of followers does play a role. A low follower count can diminish trust. It can support or hinder buying behavior, as the follower count serves as an initial indicator of credibility."

Notably, the respective follower counts of the interviewed influencers are as follows: 547,000; 620,000; 313,000; 496,000; 402,000; 32,400; 189,000; 223,000; 113,000; and 74,900. While these influencers collectively boast hundreds of thousands of followers, the majority dismiss follower count as a critical metric, citing the prevalence of follower buying and the giveaway phenomenon. Instead, they highlight the importance of engagement metrics—likes, comments, and views—emphasizing the quality of content and the authenticity of their communities. They encourage brands to prioritize engagement over follower count, recognizing that even influencers with substantial followings may lack a truly engaged audience. However, a minority maintain that follower count contributes to an influencer's reputation and credibility.

### 4.2.2. Consumer Content Analysis

The criterion of follower count prompted a range of responses from our consumer interviewees. C-1 posits that follower count does not define an influencer's credibility;

she personally finds influencers with smaller followings to be more trustworthy. She states, "Not necessarily, there are influencers with a small following who are more credible to me than those with millions."

C-2 associates follower count with an influencer's credibility but notes that it does not personally affect him. He explains, "The number of followers encourages me to examine the product test presented by the influencer, but it won't influence my purchasing decision. My decision is based on benchmarks from multiple influencers regarding the product."

C-3 asserts that follower count is a primary criterion for assessing influencers, arguing that consumers tend to favor those with larger followings: "As soon as you enter an influencer's profile, the first thing you see is their follower count, which influences whether you choose to follow them. We rank influencers based on their follower numbers."

C-4 states that she does not rely on follower count, emphasizing that she follows recommendations based on her familiarity with the influencer over time.

C-5 expresses that follower count reflects credibility, arguing that trusting an influencer with a smaller following poses greater risk: "I link it directly to credibility. If someone has more subscribers, it suggests that their content resonates with a larger audience."

C-6 and C-8 contend that follower count is not a valid criterion for influence, focusing instead on the quality of content. C-6 remarks, "Influencers with smaller followings can be more sincere and authentic, often without excessive collaborations. The quality of content matters more than the follower count."

C-9 expresses mixed feelings, acknowledging that while follower count influences him, the phenomenon of buying followers undermines its significance: "I can be swayed by follower numbers, but I'm aware that some influencers purchase their followers, which diminishes its importance."

C-10 continues this line of thought, affirming that the number of followers can indeed shape consumer trust and the perception of credibility, although he urges caution in interpreting these numbers: "Ah yes, I base myself at the very beginning on the number of subscribers, that proves whether he or she is popular or not, so if he or she has a lot of followers, it's not for nothing, yes, yes, it's hyper-important."

Some consumers express skepticism about the effectiveness of follower counts as a criterion for influence, arguing that it does not significantly impact consumer behavior. They reference the practice of certain influencers purchasing followers, which undermines the credibility of follower metrics. These consumers often find micro-influencers to be more appealing and trustworthy compared to their macro counterparts. Conversely, other consumers assert that follower count remains a critical measure of an influencer's value, as it is indicative of their credibility, popularity, and the trust they command among their audience.

## 5. Discussion of results

This study employed a theoretical triangulation approach, as detailed in the methodology section, which incorporated multiple disciplinary perspectives to provide a richer and more comprehensive interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation. By juxtaposing our findings with various theoretical frameworks, we can discern similarities, differences, nuances, and contradictions among the perspectives uncovered in our research.

The comparative analysis between the two interviewed groups—consumers and influencers—revealed divergent opinions regarding the perceived value of influencers. However, it is noteworthy that both groups exhibit commonalities in their views on the significance or insignificance of follower counts, ultimately converging on the concept of engagement. Specifically, influencers and consumers who regard follower count as an essential criterion of influence tend to adhere to the logic outlined in Solomon Asch's theory of conformity (1951). This theory posits that individuals often adjust their opinions in alignment with the majority, even in cases of personal disagreement. Several interviewees expressed that a high follower count encourages them to follow an influencer, illustrating the phenomenon of social conformity.

Given the cultural context of our research, which focuses on Morocco, it is essential to analyze conformity within a cultural framework. Bond and Smith (1996) highlight the cultural influence on conformity, referencing Hofstede's (1984), Schwartz's (1994), and Trompenaars's (1998) theories of individualism and collectivism. These scholars assert that conformity is typically more pronounced in collectivist cultures than in individualistic ones. Numerous studies have established that Moroccan culture exhibits a significant level of collectivism (Balambo, 2014; Chibi, 2021). This observation corroborates the statements made by our interviewees regarding the importance of follower counts in shaping the behaviors of Moroccan consumers.

Conversely, some influencers and consumers contend that follower count is not a valid criterion of influence, emphasizing its perceived ineffectiveness while still recognizing the importance of engagement. These views align with the findings of Wiener et al. (1987), who assert that engagement is a byproduct of social influence on individual attitudes. Contemporary authors have also emphasized the affective dimension of commitment, suggesting it reflects an emotional attraction to a person, activity, or social object (Antonovsky, 1987; Kobasa, 1982).

The foundational concept of engagement theory originates from Kiesler's (1971) definition, which characterizes engagement as "the link that exists between the individual and his actions and, more precisely, his behavioral actions."

In the context of our study, consumer engagement with influencers is manifested through interactions with shared content, such as likes, comments, and views (Mercanti-Guérin, M., 2023). Thus, the perceived value of influencers is fundamentally linked to their ability to elicit consumer responses to their posts, a notion that is consistent with the insights provided by our interviewees (Arora et al., 2019; Freberg et al., 2011).

## 6. Conclusion

The present study revealed that the number of followers of influencers has a positive effect on the attitudes and purchase intentions of Moroccan consumers, drawing on the logic of Solomon Asch's conformity theory (1951), which posits that individuals tend to adopt the behavior of the majority. Our results indicate that Moroccan consumers are inclined to follow influencers with a large number of followers, as a majority do so, thus proving their credibility and popularity. This phenomenon is also reinforced by a cultural effect, where conformity manifests more intensely in collectivist cultures like that of Morocco. This raises questions about the degree of conformity within the Moroccan context, which is characterized by a high level of collectivism, thus confirming the statements made by the interviewees.

However, some voices contest this positive effect, emphasizing the insignificance of the follower count in favor of engagement. According to Wiener et al.'s (1987) engagement theory, the effectiveness of influencers is closely linked to their ability to elicit reactions from consumers, regardless of their number of followers. In this regard, the number of likes, comments, and views is more indicative than the follower count, as it illustrates the degree of interaction between the consumer and the influencer, positively influencing the behavior of Moroccan consumers.

The aim of this study was to gather the subjective perceptions and opinions of key stakeholders in the field. However, it is important to note that social desirability biases may lead individuals to project a positive image of themselves, which could influence the quality of their responses. These biases can therefore distort the intimate convictions of the interviewees, thereby limiting the scope of their testimonies and reducing the validity of the conclusions drawn.

This research will provide a significant contribution to the community of researchers and marketing professionals interested in the impact of influencer marketing on consumer behavior, particularly in culturally similar contexts like Morocco. For the future, it would be wise to explore other avenues of research to enrich this study, delving deeper into the relationship between the number of followers of influencers and the cultural trends of internet users, as well as closely examining the influence of micro-influencers compared to macro-influencers in the realm of electronic trade.

## References

Ángeles Oviedo-García, M., Muñoz-Expósito, M., Castellanos-Verdugo, M., & Sancho-Mejías, M. (2014). Metric proposal for customer engagement in Facebook. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, 8*(4), 327-344.

Antonovsky, A. (1987). Unraveling the mystery of healh: How people manage stress and stay well. *Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.*

Arora, A., Bansal, S., Kandpal, C., Aswani, R., & Dwivedi, Y. (2019). Measuring social media influencer index-insights from Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 49, 86-101.

Asch, S. (1951). Effects of Group Pressure on the Modification and Distortion of Judgments. In H. Quetzkow (Ed.), *Groups, Leadership and Men*, Carnegie Press.

Aubin-Auger, I., Mercier, A., Baumann, L., Lehr-Drylewicz, A. M., Imbert, P., & Letrilliart, L. (2008). Introduction to qualitative research. *Exercer*, 84(19), 142-5.

Balambo, M. A. (2014). Hofstede's model revisited: an application for measuring the Moroccan national culture. *International Journal of Business Quantitative Economics and Applied Management Research, 1*(3), 7-20.

Bond, R., & Smith, P. B. (1996). Culture and conformity: A meta-analysis of studies using Asch's (1952b, 1956) line judgment task. *Psychological Bulletin, 119*(1), 111-137.

Cha, M., Haddadi, H., Benevenuto, F., & Gummadi, K. (2010). Measuring user influence on Twitter: The million follower fallacy. *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*, *4*(1), 10-17.

Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2019). Digital Marketing: Strategy, Implementation, and Practice. *Pearson UK.*

Chaiken, S., & Maheswaran, D. (1994). Heuristic processing can bias systematic processing: Effects of source credibility, argument ambiguity, and task importance on attitude judgment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 66*(3), 460.

Charry, K., & Tessitore, T. (2021). I Tweet, They Follow, You Eat: Number of Followers as a Nudge on Social Media for Healthier Eating. *Social Science & Medicine*, 269, 113595.

Cheung, C. M., & Thadani, D. R. (2012). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth communication: A literature analysis and integrative model. *Decision Support Systems, 54*(1), 461-470.

Cotter, K. (2019). Playing the visibility game: How digital influencers and algorithms negotiate influence on Instagram. *New Media & Society, 21*(4), 895-913.

Chibi, M. (2021). Collectivism and individualism as cultural aspects in Arabic/English argumentative writing by Moroccan students. *International Journal of English Literature and*

*Social Sciences, 6*(4), 60-69.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (4th ed.). *SAGE Publications*.

De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). Marketing through Instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising, 36*(5), 798-828. DOI: 10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035.

De Vries, L., Gensler, S., & Leeflang, P. S. H. (2012). Popularity of brand posts on brand fan pages: An investigation of the effects of social media marketing. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 26*(2), 83-91. doi: 10.1016/j.intmar.2012.01.003.

Enke, N., & Borchers, N. (2019). Social Media Influencers in Strategic Communication: A Conceptual Framework for Strategic Social Media Influencer Communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication, 13*(4), 261-277.

Evans, N. J., Phua, J., Lim, J., & Jun, H. (2017). Disclosing Instagram influencer advertising: The effects of disclosure language on advertising recognition, attitudes, and behavioral intent. *Journal of Interactive Advertising, 17*(2), 138-149.

Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K., & Freberg, L. (2021). Who are the social media influencers? A study of personal branding. *Journal of Marketing Management, 37*(1-2), 93-118.

Gladwell, M. (2000). The tipping point: How little things can make a big difference. *New York, NY: Little Brown*.

Hassan, L. M., Shiu, E. M., & Parry, S. (2022). The influence of social media on consumers' purchase intentions: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 144, 223-233.

Hofstede, G. (1984). Culture's Consequences: *International Differences in Work-Related Values (Vol. 5)*. Sage.

Hudson, L. A., & Ozanne, J. L. (1988). Alternative ways of seeking knowledge in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research, 14*(4), 508-521.

Jin, S. A. A., & Phua, J. (2014). Following celebrities' tweets about brands: The impact of Twitter-based electronic word-of-mouth on consumers' source credibility perception, buying intention, and social identification with celebrities. *Journal of Advertising, 43*(2), 181-195.

Kobasa, S.-C. (1982). Commitment and coping in stress resistance among lawyers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 42*(4), 707-717.

Kotler, P., Setiawan, I., Kartajaya, H., & Vandercammen, M. (2017). Marketing 4.0: Le Passage au Digital. *De Boeck Supérieur.*

Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2018). Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. *Journal of Interactive Advertising, 19*(1), 58-73.

Mangold, W. G., & Faulds, D. J. (2009). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons, 52*(4), 357-365.

Mercanti-Guérin, M. (2023). Chapter 3. The Digital Crack. In *Social Issues* (pp. 140-177).

Neuman, L. W. (2007). Social Research Methods (6th ed.). *Pearson Education India.*

Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). Communication and Persuasion: Central and Peripheral Routes to Attitude Change. *Springer-Verlag.*

Rogers, E. M. (1962). Diffusion of Innovations. *Free Press of Glencoe.*

Schwartz, S. H. (1994). Beyond individualism/collectivism: New cultural dimensions of values. *Sage.*

Shiau, W. L., & Luo, M. M. (2012). Factors affecting online group buying intention and satisfaction: A social exchange theory perspective. *Computers in Human Behavior, 28*(6), 2431-2444.

Sudha, M., & Sheena, K. (2017). Impact of influencers in consumer decision process: the fashion industry. *SCMS Journal of Indian Management, 14*(3), 14-30.

Tong, S. T., Van Der Heide, B., Langwell, L., & Walther, J. B. (2008). Too much of a good thing? The relationship between number of friends and interpersonal impressions on Facebook. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13*(3), 531-549.

Trompenaars, A., & Hampden-Turner, C. (1998). Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Global Business (2nd ed.). *McGraw Hill.*

Utz, S. (2010). Show me your friends and I will tell you what type of person you are: How one's profile, number of friends, and type of friends influence impression formation on social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 15*(2), 314-335.

Watts, D. J., & Dodds, P. S. (2007). Influentials, networks, and public opinion formation. *Journal of Consumer Research, 34*(4), 441-458.

Yang, S., & Lim, J. S. (2009). The effects of blog-mediated public relations (BMPR) on relational trust. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 21*(3), 341-359.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Influencer Sample

| Influencer | Age | Gender | Marital status | Level of education | Thematic on Instagram | Most used social network | Number of followers | Number of collaborations with brands |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I-1 | 30 | female | married | Bac+5 | Sport and healthy nutrition | Instagram | 547 000 | several |
| I-2 | 36 | female | married | Bac+5 | Life style | Instagram and tik tok | 620 000 | several |
| I-3 | 39 | female | married | Bac+2 | Fashion and clothing | Instagram | 313 000 | several |
| I-4 | 37 | female | Divorced | Bac+3 | Life style | Instagram | 496 000 | several |
| I-5 | Non précisé | male | married | Bac+5 | Sport and Entrepreneurship | Instagram et twitter | 402 000 | several |
| I-6 | 34 | female | married | Bac+3 | Healthy diet | Instagram | 32 400 | several |
| I-7 | Non précisé | female | married | Bac+5 | Fashion | Instagram | 189 000 | several |
| I-8 | 31 | female | married | Bac+3 | Life style | Instagram | 223 000 | several |
| I-9 | Non précisé | Couple (one man and one woman) | married | Bac +5 | Storytellers and tavels | Instagram | 113 000 | several |
| I-10 | 30 | female | married | Bac+5 | Fashion and music in festival | Instagram | 74 900 | several |

## Appendix 2: Consumer Sample

| Consumer | Gender | Age | Marital status | Level of education | Profession | Number of influencers followed on Instagram | Number of purchases recommended by influencers on Instagram |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C-1 | female | 34 | married | Bac+5 | Manager of an international sports franchise | 50 | 20 |
| C-2 | male | 39 | married | Bac+5 | Executive in computer science | 20 | 5 |
| C-3 | female | 35 | married | Bac+5 | Customer Service Manager | 20 | 3 |
| C-4 | female | 32 | married | Bac+5 | Responsible for monitoring strategic projects in the banking sector | 12 | 1/mouth |
| C-5 | female | 26 | single | Bac+5 | Quality Engineer | 18 | 10 |
| C-6 | female | 36 | married | Bac+5 | Director of project management | 100 | 3 |
| C-7 | male | 64 | married | Bac+4 | retired | 23 | 5 |
| C-8 | female | 27 | single | Bac+2 | salesperson | 300 | 5 |
| C-9 | female | 24 | single | Bac+2 | salesperson | 500 | 3 |
| C-10 | female | 61 | married | Bac+3 | retired | 20 | 3 |