



Social Media Influencers: Transitioning from Product Promotion to Entrepreneurship

Omar Bendjeddah^{1,*}, Elkhamsa Ramdane²

¹ Mohamed Khider Biskra (Algeria), omar.bendjeddah@univ-biskra.dz

² Mohamed Khider Biskra (Algeria), elkhamsa.ramdane@univ-biskra.dz

Public Relations and Social Change Laboratory in Algeria

Received: 31 / 01 / 2024

Accepted: 27 / 04 / 2024

Published: 30 / 04 / 2024

Abstract:

This research aims to study the phenomenon of diffusion of influential entrepreneurship through social media, and explore the environment and factors that led content creators to switch from the promotional function (cooperating with companies) towards establishing a company (products) to attain professional independence.

This research monitored the partial escape of the new generation of influencers and creators from the influence of companies and their marketing actions, taking advantage of their experiences to launch businesses that express their values and enhance their reputation. This evolving digital influence landscape has enhanced economic activities, with influencer entrepreneurship now participating in development and industry in its various forms. Many factors also contributed to this transformation: changing consumption behavior; raise awareness of freelancing; easy fame; use influence tricks; availability content production tools.

Keywords: brand; entrepreneurship; influence; influential marketing; influencers; social media.

*Corresponding Author: OMAR BENDJEDDAH

I. INTRODUCTION

The arena of online content creation has significantly captured the interest of various academic disciplines in recent years, with a particular emphasis on media and marketing studies. The rise of social media influencers marks a shift from them being mere users of digital platforms to becoming prominent public figures with substantial followings. This phenomenon is influenced by a confluence of factors, including the proliferation and accessibility of social media and the reduced costs associated with digital content production. Additionally, changes in consumer behavior and marketing strategies have heightened the demand for influencer-driven services.

This development has broadened the scope of influencers, extending from promoting products and services to offering advice, and even voicing political opinions. As such, digital influence has become a research hotspot, investigating its potential contributions and challenges to entrepreneurship. The evolution from traditional social media activities—centered around basic photo sharing and posting for engagement—to more strategic approaches, underscores a significant shift.

Initially, these practices were typical during the nascent phase of digital influencing. However, influencers are now exploring opportunities beyond these early methods, particularly in the evolving and lucrative field of influencer marketing. This sector has rapidly expanded into a multi-billion-dollar industry, with brands leveraging influencers to reach wider audiences effectively. The success of influencer marketing lies in its ability to foster trust and authenticity, rendering it more impactful than conventional advertising.

Recent scholarship highlights a paradigm shift in the practice of content creation. The perception of influencers has transitioned from being merely promotional figures for corporations to playing pivotal entrepreneurial roles. This shift has catalyzed a vision for integrating influencers within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, aiming for a lasting economic impact. The focus is increasingly on their engagement in start-ups, where they can articulate their values and contribute to a more aware and professionally independent society. This shift coincides with a growing awareness of social media's role as an effective business tool, especially in building brand-centric audiences.

To explore these developments, this study examines the historical evolution of influencers and the debate surrounding associated terminologies. It also identifies the primary drivers of the shift from a marketing-centric influencer model to independent entrepreneurial engagement. Finally, the paper presents a case study of a successful entrepreneurial trajectory, originating from online blogging to establishing a global market presence. Therefore, this research aims to address the question: How has the digital influence industry evolved to significantly impact the entrepreneurship landscape?

1. Core Concepts

In the sphere of communication science, the study of social media influencers, particularly in Arab environments, represents a relatively novel phenomenon, one that has received greater scrutiny in Western academic discourse. Scholars recognize that this subject intersects numerous disciplines within humanities and social sciences, reflecting its complex epistemological roots. This intersectionality, spanning economics, communication, sociology, and psychology, challenges researchers to accurately define influencers, their nature, and distinct characteristics. Furthermore, there is an evident issue in the academic use of the term "Influencers". Researchers often employ it without a comprehensive understanding of its developmental context, blurring it with similar yet distinct terms like fame, media, and content creation. Thus, a critical examination of the term 'influencer' is essential. Differentiating it from related concepts is imperative to articulate a definition that serves the purpose of this research.

1.1. Deciphering Influencers

Since the early 2000s, a multitude of research efforts have sought to unravel the phenomenon of social media influencers, a concept introduced by internet platforms. The genesis of influencers can be traced to early platforms such as MySpace, Tumblr, and Vine. This era saw the emergence of terms derived from these platforms, such as "Vine star," "Tumblr famous," and "bloglebrity," attempting to encapsulate the essence of these new public figures.

The term "creator," specifically coined by Next New Networks in 2007 and later

integrated into YouTube's lexicon, initially referred to YouTube celebrities. This designation, however, was not extended to influencers on other social networks, primarily due to its strong association with YouTube. During this time, both formal and popular lexicons lacked a comprehensive term that accurately captured the breadth of influencers' roles and reach.

The initial terms fell out of favor for two principal reasons. Firstly, the surge of capital and investment into digital markets from 2010 onward, seeking to leverage influencers' growing significance to brands. Secondly, the concurrent rise of various social and economic movements over the last decade, such as the sharing economy, alternative economies, and the "Do It Yourself" culture (Catalina Goanta, 2020, p. 1). These movements amplified the influencers' popularity by fostering a culture of professional and personal autonomy, paving the way for the digital influence industry and the eventual coining of the term "influencer".

The term "influencers" began gaining traction between 2015 and 2016, highlighted in an online article titled "Meet the Influencers." This piece characterized influencers as online personalities with significant followings in niches like fashion, fitness, and lifestyle, known for setting trends and shaping public agendas, especially among teenagers (Saul, 2016). Some trace the term's genesis back to 2013, noting a significant uptick in use by 2017 and a peak in 2018, with countries like Singapore, Germany, Switzerland, the United States (notably in New York, California, Utah), and the United Kingdom showing the greatest interest (McCorquodale, 2020, p. 12).

The initial study phase of influencers was marked by a lack of clarity, predominantly focusing on the bloggers as social media stars based on their popularity metrics. This was largely due to their initial association with YouTube, a platform gauged by viewer interactions and subscriptions. However, the proliferation of social media platforms revealed that influencers were diversifying their presence across various networks like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. This expansion broadened the influencer category to encompass a wider array of groups (**refer to Table 1**). The expansion owes much to media studies and marketing efforts, though these were not the only contributors to the industry's growth.

As Silicon Valley companies entered this emerging market in 2020, the earlier terms diminished in usage, with "creator" becoming the more widely adopted term (Lorenz, 2022). Thus, it can be concluded that market dynamics and capital flows have been instrumental in shaping the influencer phenomenon, influencing not only the terminology and regulatory frameworks within the digital influence industry but also the standards and characteristics of the digital content produced by these groups.

Table (1): Types of influencers

Reality TV stars
Beauty bloggers
writers
Instagrammers
actors
Sports figures
Ordinary people
Influential families
Food and health bloggers
Fashion bloggers
Niche internet micro celebrities

The source: Researcher

1.2. Defining Influencers

There remains an ongoing debate among scholars regarding a definitive understanding of 'influencers.' Current usage of the term often reflects a lack of precision, blurring distinctions with related concepts. This has implications for establishing a clear definition.

Influencers, in the digital milieu, are not just prominent in fame and business; their

significance is increasingly noted in their ability to undertake promotional roles. This requires an economic perspective that appreciates their newly evolved functions. Sara McCorquodale's approach in her book "Influence" offers a pertinent perspective for this discussion. She posits influencers at the juncture of 'fame and media,' as depicted in **Figure (1)**. According to McCorquodale:

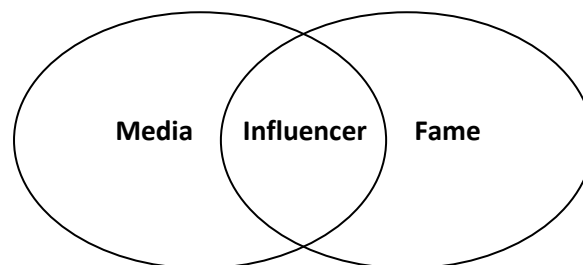
- a. Influencers overlap with media professionals in their role of disseminating information, sharing ideas, and experiences with their audience. However, they differentiate themselves by presenting information from a personal angle, fostering a more intimate follower engagement.
- b. Influencers and celebrities share the ability to sway followers' lifestyle choices. While celebrities primarily utilize traditional media for their influence, influencers harness the power of social media.

McCorquodale thus defines influencers as "independent media brands focused on deeply covering their personal lives" (McCorquodale, 2020, pp. 14-15). This conceptualization extends beyond mere celebrity status, highlighting influencers as autonomous content creators who effectively sway their audience. Their work encompasses commercial promotion and personal branding, linking their individual attributes to enhance follower engagement.

Crystal Abidin expands on this, linking influencers, especially younger ones, to their personal characteristics and skills such as charisma, aesthetics, and technical proficiency in visual presentation. She emphasizes the centrality of 'selfies' in their performance, often in collaboration with companies for product promotions. These influencers significantly impact marketing, living celebrity-like lives with a primary goal of expanding their follower base (Abidin, 2016).

Yet, this appealing portrayal by influencers conceals aspects of their commercial affiliations with companies. They aim to project an image of authenticity and spontaneity on social media. Influencers also innovate in marketing themselves to their audience, using recurring catchy phrases and keywords across various mediums, from content to clothing. These phrases often evolve into key elements of the influencers' digital identity and can morph into lucrative business projects.

Figure (1): Influencer Center



The source: (McCorquodale, 2020, p. 15)

1.3. Disruption in Traditional Media and Advertising

The digital media landscape has witnessed a notable decline in recent years, driven by a combination of influential factors. Primarily, these include: (1) Influencers gaining substantial traction in the internet's attention economy. (2) The rise in ad-blocking technology usage, diminishing the impact of digital advertising on consumers (McCorquodale, 2020, p. 13). (3) The financial turmoil inflicted on the media sector post-COVID-19 pandemic, compelling leading media companies to downsize and reduce expenditures. This financial strain extended to numerous digital news organizations once considered the future of media.

Concurrently, social media platforms have continued to expand. In the last year alone, these platforms welcomed an additional 215 million users (DataReportal, 2023). However, this growth has not translated into increased efficacy for direct advertising on these platforms, largely due to algorithmic adjustments made by the platforms themselves. For instance, in 2018, Facebook reconfigured its algorithm to give precedence to user interactions rather than brand posts. Instagram also revamped its recommendation engine to prioritize news feeds based on user engagement levels (McCorquodale, 2020, p. 14). Consequently, the feasibility of reaching vast numbers of users via traditional media ads on these platforms has significantly decreased.

To circumvent this challenge, companies are increasingly relying on influencers, who have cultivated a trust-based relationship with their audience.

2. Influencer Marketing in the Social Media Era:

2.1. The Dynamics of Influence in Digital Spaces

Despite existing ambiguities in marketing due to varied interpretations of 'influence,' it fundamentally implies the alteration of people's attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors based on others' information and actions. This notion of influence forms the bedrock of influencer marketing, serving as a natural mechanism through which both individuals and corporations shape public perception (Grau, 2022, p. 3).

A common confusion arises between 'influence' and 'fame,' often leading to the erroneous belief that any social media user with a sizeable following automatically qualifies as an influencer. Jonah Berger, an author and expert in the field of influence, delineates these concepts: popularity is the measure of how many people appreciate something, whereas influence pertains to the capacity of one entity to affect another. For instance, a viral video might be popular due to high viewership but not necessarily influential. True influence often manifests when an individual's recommendation, regardless of their follower count, prompts action, highlighting the importance of trust and expertise in this dynamic (Russell, 2020, pp. 16-17).

Not with standing this conceptual confusion, a new industry has emerged, funded by business enterprises vying for the services of content creators on digital platforms.

2.2. Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing, a phenomenon that took root in the early 21st century, coincided with the emergence of 'reality stars' as a new category of celebrities. This trend, initially bolstered by traditional media channels such as MTV, marked a significant shift in celebrity culture. This era was epitomized by the launch of "Keeping Up with the Kardashians," a show that catapulted the Kardashian sisters to fame and subsequently transformed them into some of the most influential figures in the social media era.

This marketing approach, initially conceptualized as paid social marketing, has evolved from a nascent idea to a comprehensive marketing strategy. Businesses increasingly harness the power of influencers to convey their marketing narratives to a targeted audience, thus carving out a niche in social platforms akin to paid advertising (Grau, 2022, pp. 8-9).

Pioneering this trend, IZEA set a precedent in 2006 by compensating reality star Kim Kardashian for a promotional tweet, a strategy that was revolutionary at the time (IZEA, 2020). The growth trajectory of influencer marketing has been closely tied to the expansion of social media usage, with platforms like Instagram becoming a predominant force. Today, 79% of brands leverage Instagram for their advertising campaigns, reflecting its evolution from a simple photo-sharing app to a potent online visual communication medium (Samet, 2023).

In essence, influencer marketing is about leveraging the influential power of key individuals to forge genuine brand-consumer relationships. Considering the prevalent misconceptions about influencer marketing, it is crucial to demarcate it from traditional marketing methods. Amanda Russell and Jesse Itzler encapsulate this distinction in three fundamental aspects:

- a. Influencer marketing is not advertising.
- b. Influencer marketing is not solely reliant on social media.
- c. Influencer marketing does not happen exclusively online (Russell, 2020, pp. 20-21).

2.3. Contemporary Trends in Influencer Marketing

The application of influence studies in business and marketing has been a focal point for entrepreneurs and marketers for an extended period. Initially, the emphasis was on persuasion mechanisms, exemplified by Vance Packard's 1957 exploration of public relations' impact on advertising reception and consent engineering (Packard, 1957, p. 10). However, a significant evolution in this field occurred in the 1990s, highlighted by Robert Cialdini's introduction of six principles of influence in his book "Influence". These principles encompassed reciprocity, commitment, social proof, liking, authority, and scarcity (Cialdini, 2021, p. 75).

The rise of social media has elevated the role of influencers in shaping consumer purchase decisions. Current research focuses on the interplay between influencers and consumers within digital marketing, especially the variables influencing the efficacy of

influencer marketing tactics .

Studies indicate that influencers' imitation can sway product purchasing intentions, influenced by factors like fear of missing out (FOMO) and social/material comparisons. These elements are key in deciphering consumer intentions (Thi Cam Tu Dinh, 2022, p. 346). Meanwhile, other studies focus on endorsement, identified as a highly effective marketing strategy (Ganga S. Dhanesh, 2019, p. 1). This approach bolsters consumer motivation and brand loyalty, contingent upon conditions like source engagement, credibility, attractiveness, and communication effectiveness .

Despite evidence of shifting consumer patterns, many marketers and corporations continue to employ traditional approaches. Changes in consumer behavior, propelled by advancements like smartphones, user reviews, expert opinions, and price comparison apps (e.g., ShopSavvy, GoodGuide), have empowered consumers to make more independent purchasing decisions (Itamar Simonson, 2014, pp. 23-24). In this evolving landscape, brands may need to rethink their marketing strategies to align with new consumer behaviors and expectations .

"Consumer attention" has gained traction in modern marketing, recognized as a key currency in digital markets. However, Russell and Itzler argue that attention, devoid of trust, lacks substance. Thus, they advocate for marketers to cultivate trust with consumers through quality content and positive experiences (Russell, 2020, p. 18). Success in today's competitive market hinges on a forward-thinking approach that prioritizes customer engagement and interaction .

Furthermore, brands are now expected to adopt a more humanized communication style with consumers. In an internet-dominated era, consumers seek engagement with brands that converse with them, offering entertainment and value, not just selling products. This shift compels brands to adopt a more human-like persona .

In response to these changes, marketers have innovated various tactics to humanize brands, including sharing customer stories, engaging in social causes, and organizing events. This strategy aims to embed the brand's voice into the cultural narrative in unique ways, enabling brands to interact as social equals with individuals on social media (Hund, 2023, p. 49).

Echoing consumer preferences, Stacy Grau emphasizes the inclination towards engaging with real, emotionally resonant individuals. Influencers, with their personal experiences and emotions, are primed to share these aspects with their followers, fostering a sense of connection (Grau, 2022, p. 19). This preference underscores why many opt to learn from trusted individuals over faceless entities. Influencers excel at tailoring content to consumer cultures, effectively drawing them into their market spheres.

Thus, authentic influence is an outcome, not a mere function. Companies cannot merely purchase influence; they need to build it by nurturing genuine relationships with consumers, mediated by influencers.

3. Influencers: Pioneers of Modern Entrepreneurship:

In the contemporary digital landscape, there's a growing ambition to be part of the social media influence paradigm. Influence now shapes trends, content creation, and has a profound impact on shared preferences, tastes, and potentially even collective thought processes. This trend validates Bill Gates' adage, "Content is king".

The emergence of TikTokers has added a new dimension to the social media economy, joining the ranks of YouTubers, Instagramers, Twitch Streamers, and Bloggers. These individuals are transforming the digital domain by pioneering new career paths and venturing into modern entrepreneurship. This prompts a crucial inquiry: How has the industry of influence attained such substantial value?

3.1. The Influencer Industry

The shift towards freelance work has been instrumental in the expansion of the influencer industry. Following the 2008 global financial crisis, a significant number of professionals and creatives faced job losses. This led them to explore the internet for alternative income streams. Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook, widely popular then, offered a stage to showcase skills and expertise, enabling individuals to find freelance opportunities and carve out successful careers beyond conventional employment paradigms. This period of economic turbulence signified a key transition in the job market, elevating personal branding from a mere option to a critical necessity for thriving in the new economic landscape.

The financial downturn also accelerated changes in the media industry. The journalism sector saw a reduction in job opportunities and a stagnation in salaries, while traditional sales models became obsolete. In this evolving landscape, advertisers sought more effective channels than the conventional media outlets. They discovered that blogs and social media influencers offered an optimal platform for rejuvenating their marketing strategies (Hund, 2023, pp. 35-36).

Today, the influencer industry is highly lucrative and has evolved into a global phenomenon, beneficial to all involved parties. As of 2023, its market value is estimated at approximately 21.1 billion dollars, with projections indicating continued growth (Statista, 2023). The influencer sphere constitutes a complex ecosystem involving influencers, content creators, marketers, tech experts, brands, sponsors, social media firms, talent scouts, and trend analysts. These stakeholders collectively negotiate the meaning and value of digital influence in this social media-centric era. They have established frameworks for creating, assessing, and marketing influential content, resulting in industry adaptations to meet marketer demands and shifts in communication tools, social norms, and driving values (Hund, 2023, p. 7).

3.2. The Emergence of Influencer-Driven Entrepreneurship

The recent shift in the mindset of influencers and content creators, both in the Arab world and the West, underscores a burgeoning trend: young individuals increasingly aspire to join the ranks of digital influencers, recognizing it as a highly coveted career path. This change in the job market, favoring professions that allow personal expression, is supported by findings from Remitly's report, which places Influencers and YouTubers at the fifth and sixth positions in the global ranking of most desired jobs (Remitly, 2022). In 40 countries, including several Arab nations, 'Influencer' and related searches are topping the online query charts (Hart, 2023).

Many social media influencers are pivoting towards establishing their entrepreneurial ventures, moving away from conventional collaborations with established firms. This trend is fueled by a combination of key drivers:

- a. **Impact Measurement:** The evolution of influence measurement and monetization has significantly propelled the industry's growth. Influencers are now equipped with the perception of their expansive reach and behavioral influence over broad audiences. Tools such as Google Analytics and individual social platform analytics have become instrumental in this regard. Marketing firms have developed specialized platforms for influence assessment, considering factors like audience size, engagement rate, and interaction level (Hund, 2023, pp. 49-51). The inception of KLOUT in 2008, which aimed at tracking and ranking online influence, pioneered the notion of quantifiable digital influence and underscored the potential for anyone to cultivate social media fame for commercial gains (Aston, 2018).
- b. **Creative Autonomy:** The traditional model often requires influencers to align with the marketing strategies of their collaborating companies. For instance, a fashion influencer may be compelled to promote a clothing line that diverges from their personal style. Launching personal brands allows influencers broader scope for creative expression and the opportunity to develop products that truly resonate with their personal values and beliefs.
- c. **Relationship Building:** Influencers are uniquely positioned to cultivate strong connections and a sense of community with their audience. This relationship can evolve into collaborative ventures or 'co-creation,' where both parties engage in mutually beneficial projects (Schwarz, 2021).

3.3. Influencer brands

The evolving landscape of influence and the transition from corporate dependency to the cultivation of private ventures is largely attributable to influencer's ability to engage large audiences and foster intimate connections. This phenomenon has its roots in the flexible industries of beauty and fashion, where over a decade ago, influencers and bloggers began leveraging their appeal to impact consumers. This trend has since proliferated into diverse domains, including culinary content, home lifestyle, and luxury jewelry.

The surge in influencer brands, coupled with their notable success, is underpinned by several market advantages:

- a. **Reduced Customer Acquisition Costs:** Influencers leverage their personal content to market to their extensive, loyal follower base via social media platforms. This approach

streamlines customer conversion, offering a cost-effective alternative to traditional brand marketing strategies.

- b. **Fostering Loyal Communities:** Content creators command significant loyalty among their audience, who often serve as organic brand ambassadors, further amplifying product reach through personal networks.
- c. **Boundless Marketing Reach:** Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok provide unhindered access to global audiences, free from the regulatory constraints typical in traditional business models (Steven Cunix, 2023).

Recent trends indicate a notable market share acquisition by influencer-driven companies (**Table.2**). A report highlighting top content creator brands reveals that the majority emerged in the last five years, reaching a zenith in 2020, with the beauty sector leading in profitability (Author, 2022).

Table (2): Influencers brands

Influencer brands			
Name	Category	Brand	Net Worth
Huda Kattan	Content creator	Huda Beauty	400 Million dollar
MrBeast	YouTuber	MrBeast Burger	100 Million dollar
Logan Paul	Actor, YouTuber	energy drink PRIME	75 Million dollar
KSI	YouTuber, singer	energy drink PRIME	35 Million dollar
Emma Chamberlain	YouTuber, blogger	Chamberlain Coffee	1Million dollar
Zoe Sugg	author	Zoella Beauty	4million dollar

The source: Researcher

Forbes magazine's recent report exemplifies this trend by featuring Huda Kattan, an Arab influencer, as one of the most influential figures on social networks. Kattan, the sole Arab in the top ten, and 69th among self-made American women, accrued around 13 million dollars in 2021. Her entrepreneurial rating of "3" signifies the highest echelon on the entrepreneurship scale. Surpassing the earnings of Senegalese TikTok sensation Khaby Lame, Kattan's net worth is estimated at nearly 400 million dollars.

Huda Kattan, an Iraqi-American entrepreneur, has made a significant impact in the global beauty industry. Launching her career with a beauty blog in 2010, she co-founded "Huda Beauty" three years later. Today, her company boasts a diverse portfolio of over 100 beauty products and commands an annual revenue nearing 200 million dollars. Kattan's substantial social media presence, with over 53 million Instagram followers, underscores her influence (Forbes, 2023). Her ambition is to elevate her brand to a billion-dollar valuation.

II. Conclusion:

The digital influence paradigm is poised to drive substantial shifts in the influencer industry, marketing strategies, and operational methodologies. As consumer internet utilization persists and businesses continue to seek digital engagement avenues, the significance of social media influencers remains paramount. Summarizing key research insights reveals several pivotal developments:

- The influencer phenomenon has matured into a semi-organized, economically significant industry.
- True influence requires time to cultivate and should not be conflated with fame, mere popularity or viral fame.
- Influencers, distinct from content creators, are primarily driven by financial incentives, forming a part of an emergent economic ecosystem that includes marketers, talent scouts, trend predictors, tech giants, brands, sponsors, clients, and followers.
- The industry's lexicon has evolved, reflecting its economic essence – 'followers' are now 'clients', 'content creators' are seen as 'new-age internet entrepreneurs', and 'branding' has shifted towards 'personal brand identity'.

The evolution of the 'influencer' concept over the past fifteen years marks a significant shift in digital media and marketing dynamics. Initially emerging in the late 1990s with the

advent of blogging, the term 'blogger' became prevalent. This was subsequently followed by the rise of 'creators' with the inception of YouTube. A pivotal change occurred around 2010 when the term 'influencer' gained prominence, coinciding with commercial entities recognizing and valuing their services. By 2020, a re-emergence of the term 'creator' was noted, particularly as Silicon Valley giants, synonymous with innovation and entrepreneurship, began integrating into this burgeoning sector.

The endurance and adaptability of the content creation industry suggest a trajectory towards heightened aspirations among influencers and creators. This progression is expected to manifest in the expansion and diversification of business ventures and investments. Such transformations are a direct response to evolving consumer preferences on social platforms, potentially influencing future societal norms and behaviors. To effectively navigate these shifts, a recalibration of strategies and diversification of methodologies are imperative. These adjustments must be attuned to the nuanced demands of the contemporary communication landscape and its broader implications.

In addressing the initial query, it is evident that influencers' impact extends beyond the creation of a digital entertainment milieu. Their role is increasingly pivotal in sculpting the contours of entrepreneurship and broader economic development. This influence underscores the necessity for ongoing innovation and adaptability within the digital influence sphere, ensuring its relevance and efficacy in an ever-evolving market landscape.

– **Referrals and references:**

1. Abidin, C. (2016). “Aren’t These Just Young, Rich Women Doing Vain Things Online?”: Influencer Selfies as Subversive Frivolity. *Social Media + Society*, 1-17.
2. Aston, B. (2018). *What Happened To Klout.com?* Retrieved Octobre 18, 2013, from The Product Manager: <https://theproductmanager.com/general/what-happened-klout/>
3. Author, G. (2022). *Top 100 Creator Brands Report*. Retrieved Octobre 20, 2023, from Influencer MarketingHub: <https://influencermarketinghub.com/top-creator-brands/#toc-6>
4. Catalina Goanta, S. R. (2020). *The regulation of social media influencers: an introduction*. Netherlands: Edward Elgar.
5. Cialdini, R. B. (2021). *Influence, New and Expanded The Psychology of Persuasion*. New York: Harper Business.
6. DataReportal. (2023). *GLOBAL SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICS*. Retrieved Octobre 20, 2023, from DataReportal: <https://datareportal.com/social-media-users>
7. Forbes. (2023). *Huda Kattan*. Retrieved Octobre 6, 2023, from Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/profile/huda-kattan/?sh=1a207f823cec>
8. Ganga S. Dhanesh, G. D. (2019). Relationship management through social media influencers: Effects of followers’ awareness of paid endorsement. *Public Relations Review*, 45(3), 1-13.
9. Grau, S. L. (2022). *Celebrity 2.0: The Role of Social Media Influencer Marketing in Building Brands*. New York: Business Expert Press.
10. Hart, J. (2023). *Map shows each country's DREAM job based on Google search data - and reveals most people wish they were pilots*. Retrieved Octobre 2 2023, from INSIDER: <https://www.businessinsider.com/dream-jobs-world-revealed-based-google-searches-2023-1>
11. Hund, E. (2023). *The influencer industry: the quest for authenticity on social media*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
12. Itamar Simonson, E. R. (2014). *Absolute Value: What Really Influences Customers in the Age of*. New York: HarperBusiness.
13. IZEA. (2020). *Influencer and Content Marketing vs. Traditional Forms of Advertising*. Retrieved Octobre 2, 2023, from IZEA: <https://izea.com/resources/influencer-content-marketing-vs-traditional-forms-of-advertising-2020/>
14. Lorenz, T. (2022, August 24). *Niche internet micro celebrities are taking over the internet*. Retrieved from The Washington Post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/08/24/nimcel-influencers-tiktok-youtube/>
15. McCorquodale, S. (2020). *Influence: How Social Media Influencers Are Shaping Our Digital Future*. London: Bloomsbury.
16. Packard, V. (1957). *The Hidden Persuaders*. Canada: Pocket Bppls.
17. Remitly. (2022). *The World’s Dream Job: The Careers People are Searching for the Most*. Retrieved Octobre 2, 2023, from Remitly: <https://www.remitly.com/gb/en/landing/dream-jobs-around-the-world>
18. Russell, A. (2020). *The Influencer Code: How to Unlock the Power of Influencer Marketing*. United States: Hatherleigh Press.
19. Samet, A. (2023). *Instagram is still crucial for influencer marketing, even as TikTok is on the rise*. Retrieved Octobre 3, 2023, from Insider Intelligence: <https://www.insiderintelligence.com/content/instagram-still-crucial-influencer-marketing-even-tiktok-on-rise>

20. Saul, H. (2016, March 27). *Instafamous: Meet the social media influencers redefining celebrity*. Retrieved from Independent: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/instagram-model-natasha-oakley-iskra-lawrence-kayla-itsines-kendall-jenner-jordyn-woods-a6907551.html>
21. Schwarz, R. (2021). *Why And How Influencers Are Launching Their Own Brands*. Retrieved Octobre 5, 2023, from Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2021/11/02/why-and-how-influencers-are-launching-their-own-brands/?sh=2bcd9e552a40>
22. Statista. (2023). *Influencer marketing market size worldwide from 2016 to 2023*. Retrieved Octobre 15, 2023, from Statista: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1092819/global-influencer-market-size/>
23. Steven Cunix, W. B. (2023). *From promoters to the competition: the rise of influencer brands*. Retrieved Octobre 18, 2023, from Kearney: <https://www.kearney.com/industry/consumer-retail/article/-/insights/from-promoters-to-the-competition-the-rise-of-influencer-brands>
24. Thi Cam Tu Dinh, Y. L. (2022). “I want to be as trendy as influencers” – how “fear of missing out” leads to buying intention for products endorsed by social media influencers. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 346-364.