

Empirical study on the impact of digital beauty influencers on Instagram regarding consumer purchasing decisions and their role in digital marketing strategy

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Abstract:

Social media has rapidly become a vital tool for communication and information sharing for millions worldwide. Within social networks, some members share information while others evaluate and repost it, enabling quick and cost-effective dissemination. The initial sources of information are known as "influencers." Identifying influencers is crucial across various fields; for instance, in marketing, it reduces advertising costs by allowing brands to pay a few individuals to promote products positively. . In this context, we focus on influencers in social media marketing, specifically examining how the gender of followers influences their responses to commercial recommendations on Instagram. To explore this, we conducted a detailed literature review and a quantitative study to better understand the behaviors of Instagram followers.

Keywords: Influencers, Consumers, Social Networks, Digital Transformation.

Jel Classification Codes : XN1 XN2.

Résumé:

Les médias sociaux sont devenus un outil clé de communication et de partage d'informations pour des millions de personnes à travers le monde. Au sein de ces réseaux, certains membres partagent des informations, tandis que d'autres les évaluent et les relaient, ce qui favorise une diffusion rapide et économique. Les sources d'information initiales sont appelées « influenceurs ». Identifier ces influenceurs est essentiel dans divers domaines, notamment le marketing, car cela permet aux marques de réduire leurs coûts publicitaires en payant quelques personnes pour promouvoir leurs produits. Dans ce contexte, nous analysons l'impact du sexe des abonnés sur leurs réactions aux recommandations commerciales sur Instagram. Pour ce faire, nous avons réalisé une revue de la littérature et une étude quantitative afin de mieux comprendre les comportements des abonnés sur cette plateforme.

Mots clés : Influenceurs, Consommateurs, Réseaux Sociaux, Transformation **Digitale**.

Jel Classification Codes : XN1 XN2.

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1. Introduction

For several years now, corporate strategies for promoting goods and services have taken a new turn. Referred to as "influencer marketing," this strategy involves brands collaborating with influencers. An influencer is a content creator who addresses diverse topics shared with their community, most often on social media. The entertainment space initially offered by influencers can, in some cases, transform into an advertising platform, creating confusion among internet users.

Unlike traditional opinion leaders who communicated directly with their audience face-to-face or indirectly through word-of-mouth, digital influencers initially leveraged social media platforms such as blogs, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Influencers represent a new type of "independent endorser" who shape public attitudes through blogs and other social media.

Relationship-building remains critical in partnerships with influencers, requiring durability and trust. Brands must empathize with influencers, listen to their needs, and propose authentic content and communication campaigns that enable them to create valuable, high-quality material. The best content is that which is shared and amplified through strong relationships and trust.

For brands to fully benefit from influencer marketing, it is essential to understand how such strategies can be successfully deployed. This article examines the criteria for selecting influencers to determine which traits offer greater potential for marketing success.

Collaboration between brands and influencers is a relatively new phenomenon in marketing practice and remains understudied in academic literature, particularly in Algeria. This study aims to provide insights into influencer marketing by analyzing existing literature and investigating the effect of Instagram influencers' credibility on Algerian consumers' purchase intentions.

Research Question :

What role do beauty influencers on Instagram play in consumer purchasing decisions?*

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework :

Virtual community members such as Instagrammers, YouTubers, and Snapchatters have become key players in digital-era influencer marketing (Haji & Bouziane, 2021). A digital influencer or opinion leader is defined as an individual who uses blogs or other platforms to disseminate opinions and subsequently sway audiences to adopt their viewpoints (Enke & Borchers, 2019). Thus, digital influencers are content creators who share public posts focused on niche themes (e.g., lifestyle, beauty, fashion, travel, sports). They cannot be defined solely by their follower count, as selecting influencers based solely on audience size does not guarantee brand success (De Veirman et al., 2017).

The concept of opinion leadership originates from the *Diffusion of Innovations* theory (Rogers, 1962), which posits that opinion leaders indirectly influence individual attitudes and behaviors through social influence (Lin et al., 2018; Doyle, 2020). Additionally, the *Two-Step Flow of Communication* theory (Lazarsfeld & Katz, 1955) highlights the mediating role of influencers in disseminating mass media information to their communities (Haji & Bouziane, 2021).

Opinion leaders exert dual forces on their audience:

1. **Natural Attraction** (psychological qualities, physical appeal, relational intelligence).

2. **Persuasive Power** (credibility derived from perceived expertise and neutrality in judgment) (Vernette, 2006).

1. Definition of Influencer Marketing

Brown and Hayes (2008) describe it as “an approach to identify and target market influencers.” Tapinfluence, an influencer marketing agency, defines it as “a marketing type that leverages opinion leaders to amplify a brand’s message to a broad audience” (Tapinfluence, 2017). This aligns with current practices, where influencers collaborate with brands in exchange for monetary compensation or free products/services. Such partnerships benefit from the “halo effect” generated by the influencer’s content. Influencer marketing intersects with social media marketing and content marketing. Influencers share branded messages on personal social accounts, often within niche interests, enabling precise audience targeting.

2. Definition of an Influencer

An influencer is an individual with persuasive power over others. Historically linked to terms like “prescriber” or “opinion leader,” the rise of social media has redefined influencer criteria.

Consumers perceive influencers through four lenses:

- Someone with $\geq 10,000$ followers.
- A collaborator promoting brands/products.
- A sharer of product experiences.
- A domain-specific expert.

3. Types of Influencers

3.1 By Platform :

Influencers are categorized by their primary platform (e.g., Instagrammers, YouTubers, bloggers) (Bengati, 2019).

3.2 By Niche :

Lifestyle, beauty, fashion, food, travel, sports, etc. In Algeria, lifestyle influencers dominate, followed by fashion/beauty and music/sports (Benamar & Margom, 2020).

3.3 By Audience Size :

- Celebrities : >1M followers; high visibility, lower engagement.
- Macro-Influencers : Growing audience; moderate engagement/ROI.
- Micro-Influencers : Niche focus; smaller audience, high engagement/conversion.
- Nano-Influencers : Small community; passionate, authentic content.

4. The Preventive Role of Influencers

Influencers share daily life, tips, and discoveries while adhering to personal and ethical values. Their role intersects marketing, psychology, and communication studies (Poell et al., 2016; François & Zerbib, 2015).

5. Trust

Trust, a key dimension of source credibility, reflects perceptions of honesty and sincerity (Kelman & Hovland, 1953). Brands prioritize trustworthy influencers to counter consumer skepticism (Erdogan, 1999; Pornpitakpan, 2003).

6. Criteria for Selecting Influencers

Brands must align with influencer values and objectives. Metrics like Klout scores or Fejlaoui & Vernet's (2009) six-point scale (expertise, argumentation, relational behavior, writing skills, information quantity, community attachment) guide selection. Additional criteria include:

- Uniqueness : Distinctive behaviors driving adoption.
- Content Quality : Writing, photography, etc.
- Authenticity : Originality attracting followers.
- Trust : High trust correlates with purchase intent (Sahli, 2020).

Hypotheses

- H1 : Trust between influencers and followers depends on credibility.
- H2 : Reviews/comments directly impact user choices.
- H3 : Promo codes effectively influence follower decisions.
- H4 : Engagement and trust determine social media influence.

Empirical Study

1. Introduction

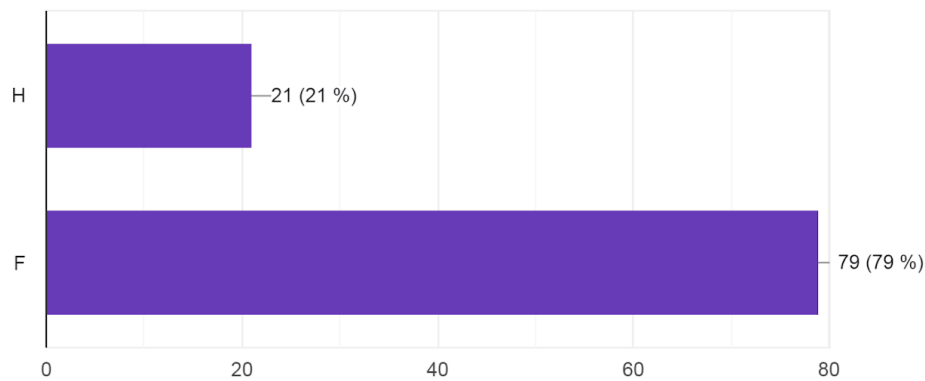
This research explores social media motivations, the role of Instagram influencers in purchase decisions, and perceptions of influencer credibility. A quantitative survey (100 respondents) was administered online to diverse demographics.

2. Data Collection & Analysis

A questionnaire-based quantitative approach enabled statistical analysis of large samples. Questions focused on user behavior, influencer trust, and promotional efficacy.

Quantitative analysis

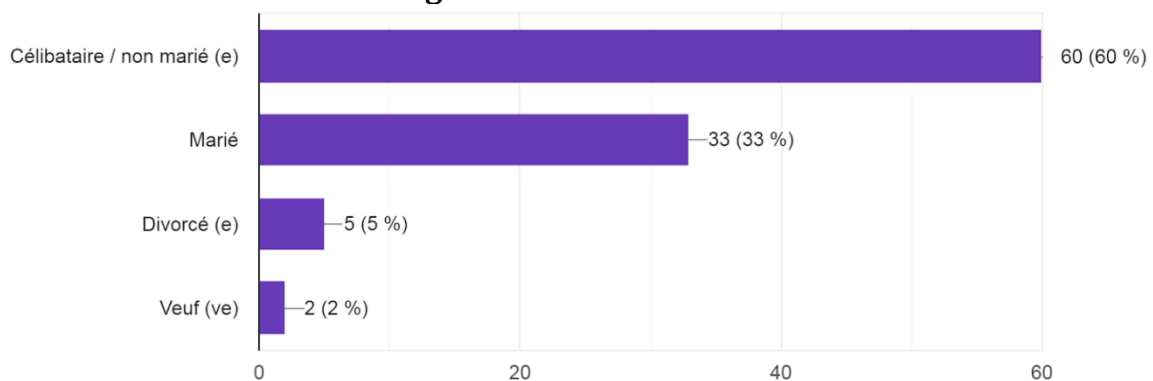
Figure No.01 Gender



Source : by authors

It is noted that the majority of respondents are women, 79%, while only 21% are men.

Figure No.02 : marital status

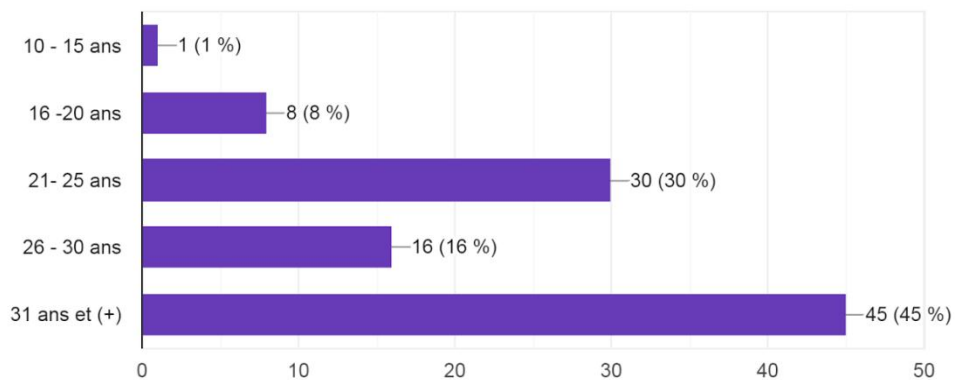


Source : by authors

It is also noted that the majority of those surveyed are single, 60%, while 33% of them are married, the rest with 5% and only 2% are divorced or widowed.

2.2: Reasons why people follow influencers:

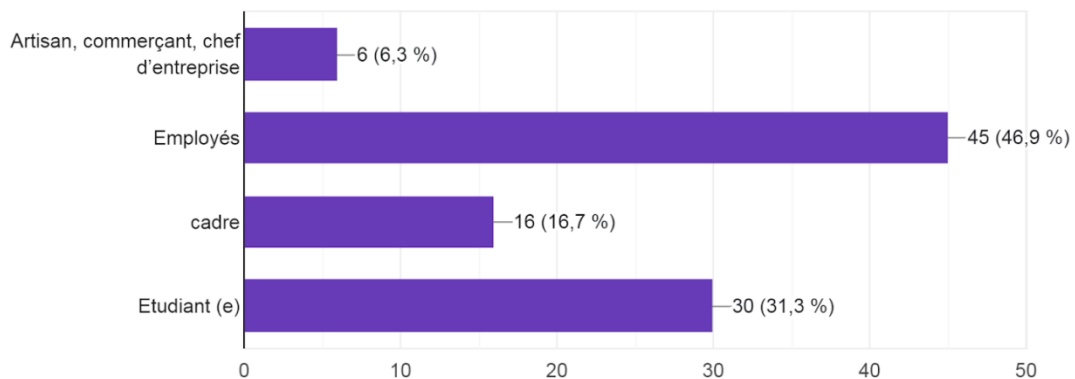
Figure No.03 : The Age



Source : by authors

It is noted that the people interviewed are rather young, i.e. 45% over 31 years old, 30% are between 21-25 years old and 16% between 26-30 years old while 9% are between 10-20 years old. The majority of the people interviewed live in Algiers.

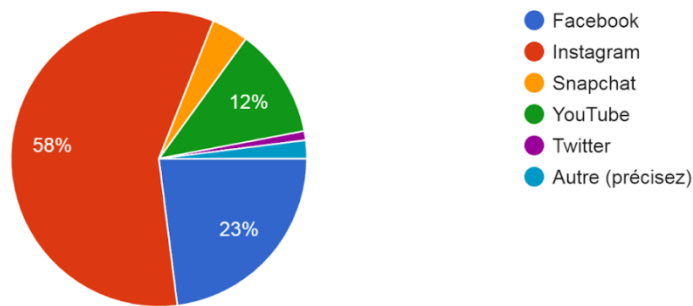
Figure No.04 : the profession



Source : by authors

According to this analysis, it is noted that 46.9% of the respondents are employees, 31.3 are students while 16.7% are executives and 6.3% are other than these categories.

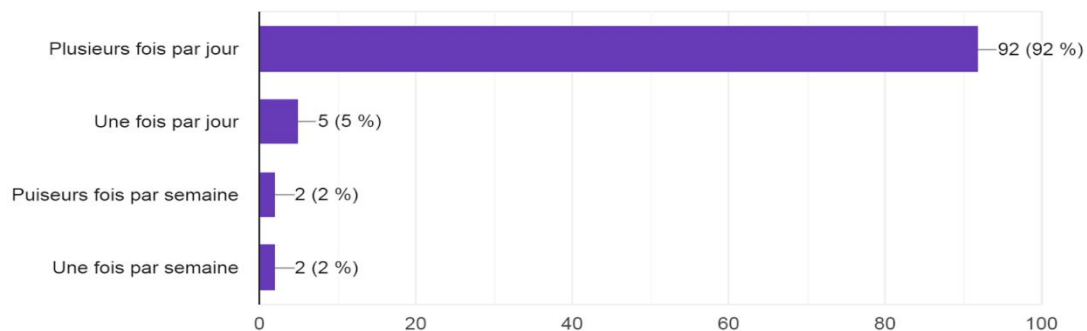
Figure No.04 : Social media used



Source : by authors

According to this analysis, we were able to see that the majority of users prefer to use the social network Instagram, 58% of the population surveyed, 23% of them use Facebook and only 12% use YouTube.

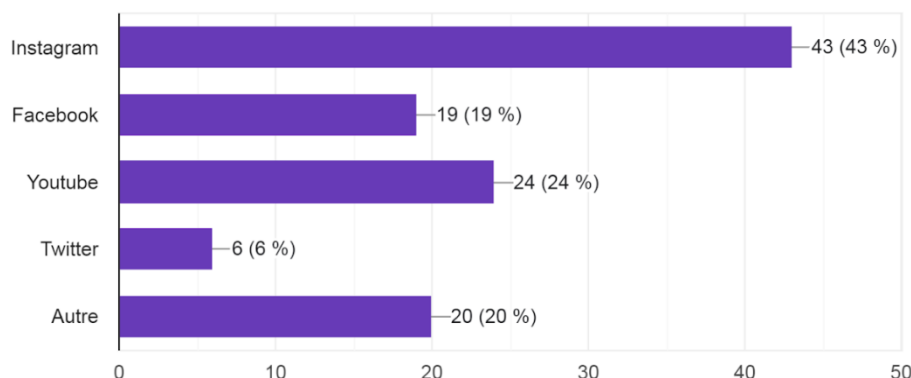
Figure No.05 : Social media usage times



Source : by authors

Almost all, 92% of respondents, use social networks several times a day, only 5% say they use them once a day, 2% use them several times a week and 2% use them once a week.

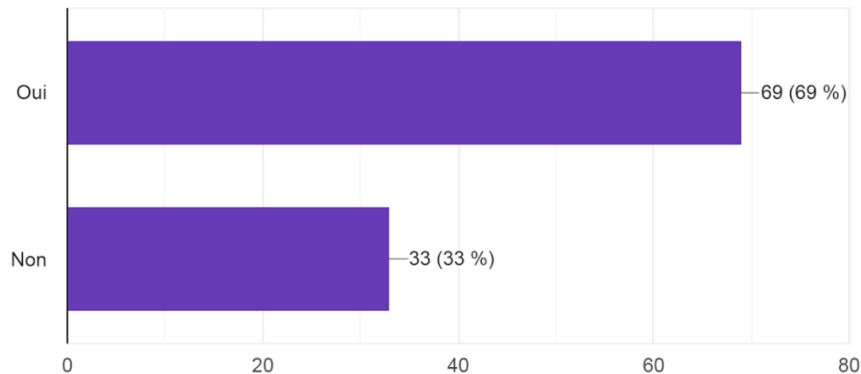
Figure No.05 : Which social media do you trust?



Source : by authors

According to this analysis, we see that almost half or 43% of the people surveyed trust the social network Instagram more, while 24% trust YouTube, 20% trust others, 19% trust Facebook and only 6% trust Twitter.

Figure No.05 : Do you know Algerian influencers in the field of beauty?



Source : by authors

It is noted that more than half of the respondents, i.e. 69%, know Algerian influencers in the field of beauty, while 33% do not know Algerian influencers in the field of beauty.

10- Name three influencers who come to mind:

Figure No.06 : Mention three Algerian influencers in field of beauty

Romy thedollbeauty rymabeautyaddict

Amira riaa Inèsbeauty ryma

Esmey beauty _ the doll beauty _ nahla tv

Houda beauty .khobaib.sidou darba

Romy _thedollbeauty_noorm

Aucune

Rifka Stanley Ines beauty

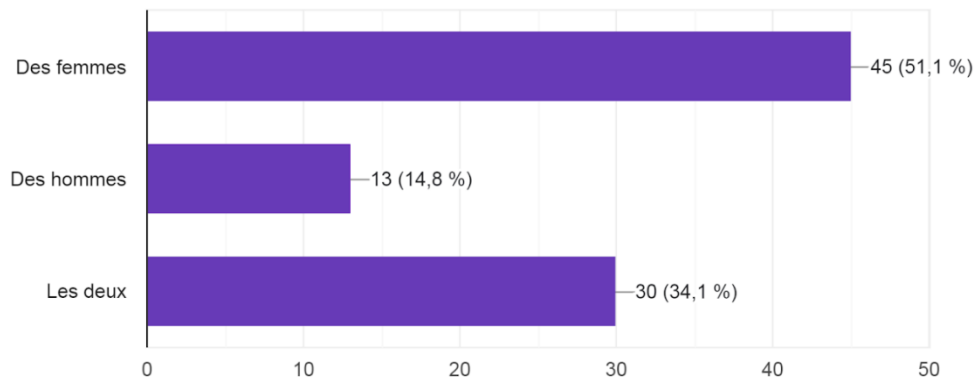
Léna situation rifka nasdas

Ryma beauté Amira ria

Source : by authors

It is noted that the majority of respondents know influencers in the beauty field such as romi-allata, amira-ria, ines-beauty, ryma-beauty,... and others.

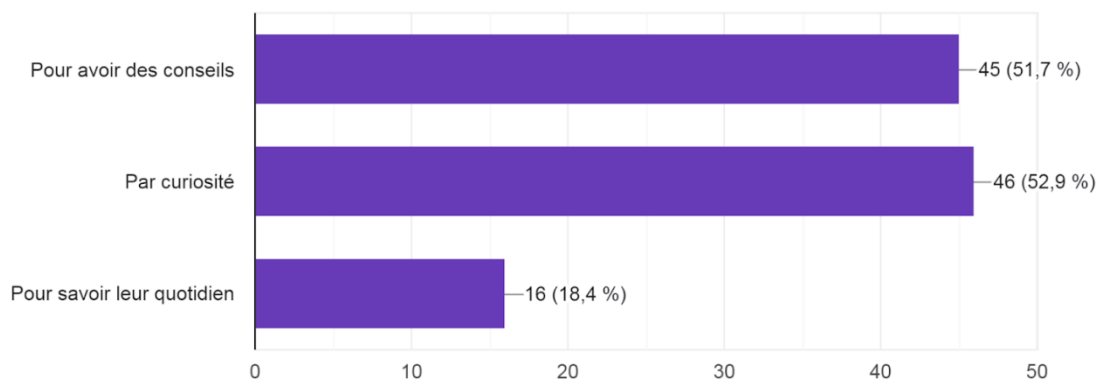
Figure No.06 : Do the influencers you mentioned focus only on men, women, or both?



Source : by authors

This study analysis allowed us to note that more than half, or 51.1%, of those surveyed know female influencers in the beauty field, while 34.1% know male and female influencers and 14.8% know men.

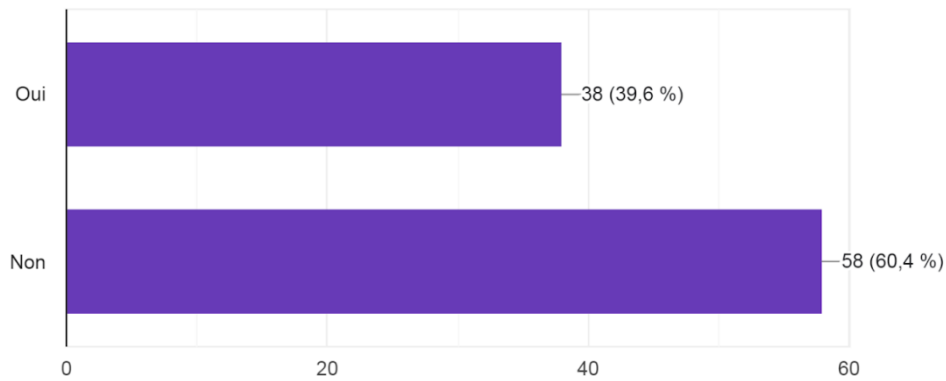
12- What are the motivations for following beauty influencers?



Source : by authors

According to this analysis, we see that 52.9% of respondents follow beauty influencers out of curiosity, while 51.7% of people follow them for advice, while 18.4% follow them to know their daily life.

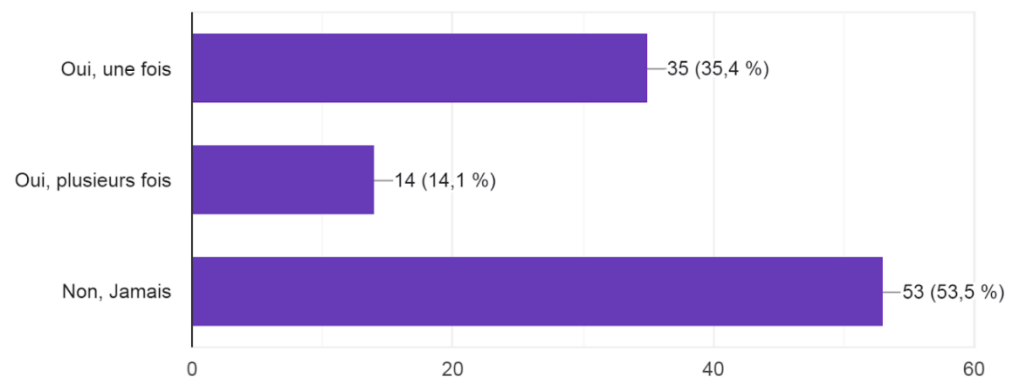
13- Do you trust these influencers?



Source : by authors

According to this analysis, we see that more than half, or 60.4%, of the respondents do not trust influencers, while 39.6% do.

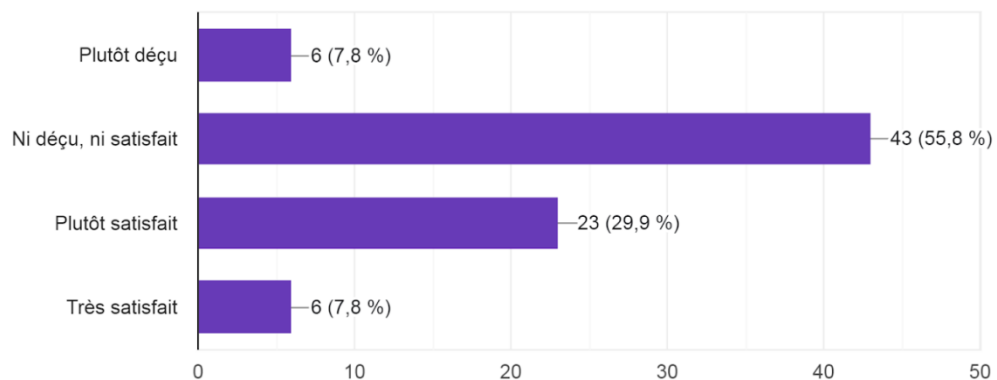
14- Have you purchased a beauty product after it was featured by an influencer?



Source : by authors

It is noted that 53.5% of respondents have not purchased a beauty product after being exposed to content from influencers, while 35.4% have already purchased once and 14.1% have purchased several times.

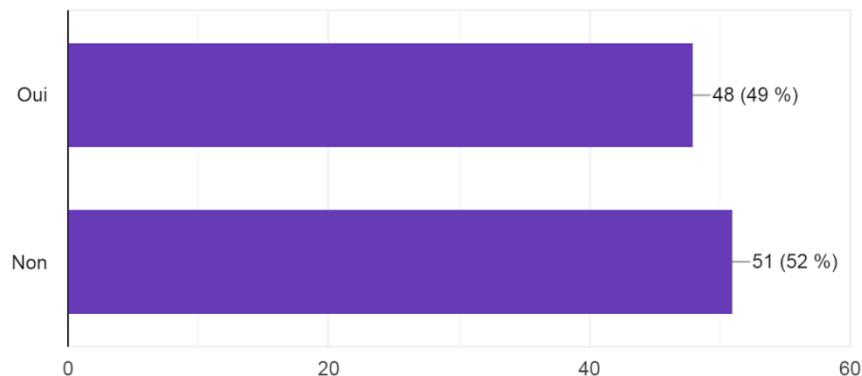
15- Are you satisfied with your purchase?



Source : by authors

According to this analysis, it is noted that more than half, i.e. 55.8%, are neither disappointed nor satisfied after purchasing this product, while 29.9% are rather satisfied, 7.8% are rather disappointed and 7.8% are very satisfied.

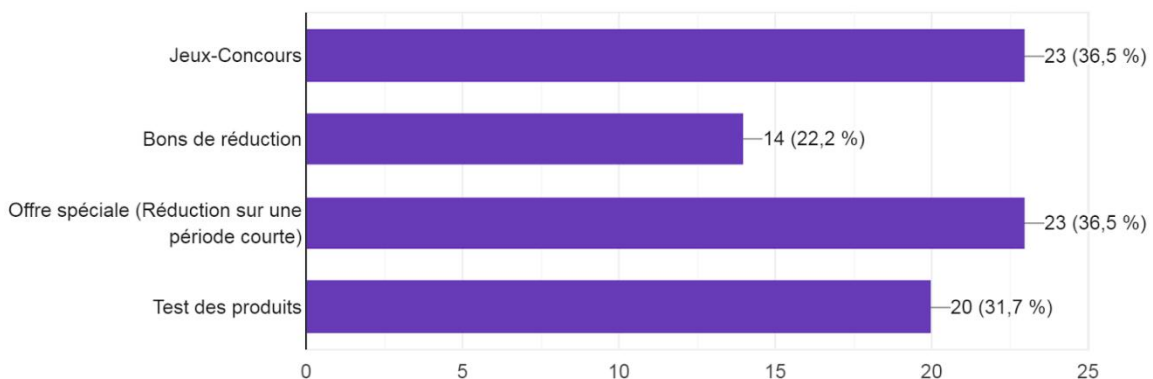
16- Are you used to following the promotions provided by influencers?



Source : by authors

It was found that 52% of respondents are not in the habit of following promotional actions relayed by influencers, while 49% are in the habit of following them.

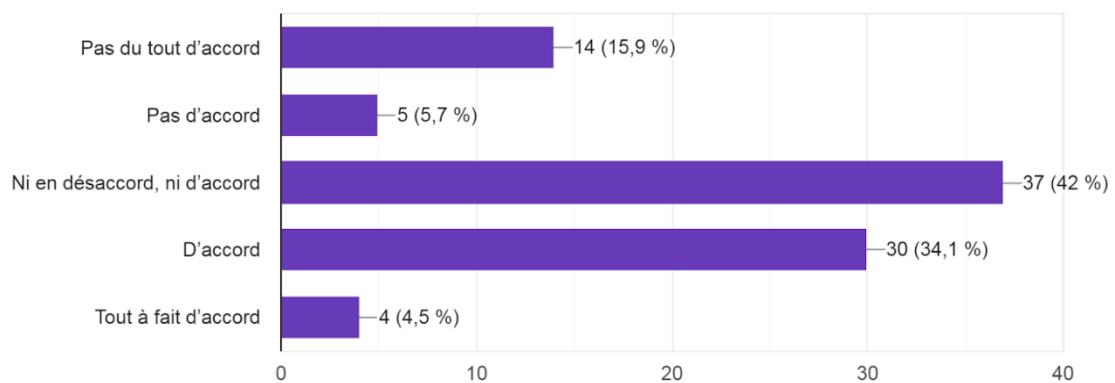
17- What are the types of promotions used by influencers?



Source : by authors

According to this analysis, it is noted that 36.5% of influencers use contests, while 36.5% of them use special offers or discounts for a short period, while 31.7% use product tests and 22.2% use discount coupons.

18- Influencer promotions are important to you.



Source : by authors

According to this analysis, 42% of respondents neither disagree nor agree with the promotional actions relayed by influencers, while 34.1% agree, while 15.9% do not completely agree, 5.7% do not agree and 4.5% completely agree.

Results

In our study, the majority of respondents were young adults aged 21–31, employed or students, predominantly women, given their greater interest in the studied domain (beauty).

After distributing the questionnaire online, we observed that respondents follow beauty influencers primarily on Instagram. Most trust Instagram more than other platforms like Facebook.

The rise of digital platforms has significantly and positively impacted brands' marketing strategies, particularly with the growth of influencer marketing. Most respondents stated that influencers are necessary for obtaining advice or staying updated on trends.

Regarding social media usage, Instagram is the most trusted and followed platform. In the beauty sector, opinions on trust in digital influencers diverge: while a majority remain skeptical, a notable segment trusts influencers.

Some participants purchased beauty products after exposure to influencer content, with mixed satisfaction levels (neither satisfied nor disappointed). Others reported satisfaction. Promotional tactics like contests and limited-time discounts emerged as effective tools for engaging users.

Reactions to promotions varied: some respondents were neutral, while others acknowledged their potential to spark consumer interest. A well-executed influencer campaign can attract buyers effectively, whereas poorly crafted content fails to meet expectations. Overall, leveraging influencers in beauty marketing enhances brand visibility and promotion.

Discussion

This quantitative study explores social media users' perceptions of influencers' role in purchase decisions. A sample of 100 participants completed an online questionnaire (Google Forms) distributed via WhatsApp, Gmail, and Viber.

Key findings:

- Primary Motivation : Respondents follow influencers for ideas and advice, yet still consult friends/family before purchasing.
- Demographic Trends : Young, educated professionals and students are more likely to follow influencers and shop online.
- Influencer Impact : High-quality, luxury brands benefit most from influencer partnerships, as credible content enhances perceived product value.
- Trust Dynamics : While Instagram is trusted, skepticism toward influencers persists. However, many trust influencers who test products before endorsement.

For mid-range products, functional criteria (price, utility) dominate consumer decisions, reducing influencer impact. Conversely, influencers amplify luxury brands through expertise, persuasive communication, and relational engagement.

Conclusion

Building on the literature review, this study highlights influencers' role in shaping consumer trust and purchase decisions. Key insights:

1. Age Factor : Younger consumers are more likely to purchase products endorsed by influencers via positive reviews or Instagram posts.
2. Trust Relationship : Trust between influencers and followers directly impacts purchase decisions.
3. Promotional Tactics : Contests and discounts drive engagement.
4. Expertise : Influencers' niche authority fosters loyal communities, a critical consideration for future research.

While findings are not unanimous, actionable recommendations emerge:

- Brands should prioritize influencer authenticity and expertise for luxury campaigns.
- Mid-range products require a balance of functional appeal and targeted influencer partnerships.

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