

## Influencer Marketing as a Catalyst for the Evolution of Consumer Practices: A Comparative Cross-Regional Study in Africa, Asia, Europe, and United States of America

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### **Abstract:**

This study examines the role of influencer marketing in shaping consumption practices through a comparative analysis of Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States. It demonstrates that although widely adopted, this strategic lever manifests differently across cultural, economic, and regulatory contexts. The findings highlight the prominence of community-based micro-influencers in Africa, the integration of e-commerce and local platforms in Asia, regulatory transparency in Europe, and the dominance of macro-influencers in United States of America in North of America. The study concludes that developing contextualized strategies that combine innovation with transparency is essential to maintaining consumer trust.

**Keywords:** *Influencer marketing, social media, digital consumption, regional dynamics, communication strategies.*

**Jel Classification Codes :** M31, D91, L82, O33, Z13.

### **Résumé:**

Cette étude analyse le rôle du marketing d'influence dans la structuration des pratiques de consommation à travers une approche comparative portant sur l'Afrique, l'Asie, l'Europe et les Etats-Unis en Amérique du Nord. Elle démontre que, bien que largement adopté, ce levier stratégique se déploie différemment selon les contextes culturels, économiques et réglementaires. Les résultats mettent en évidence la prééminence des micro-influenceurs communautaires en Afrique, l'intégration du commerce en ligne et des plateformes locales en Asie, l'accent mis sur la transparence réglementaire en Europe, ainsi que la domination des macro-influenceurs aux États-Unis. L'étude conclut que l'élaboration de stratégies contextualisées, alliant innovation et transparence, constitue une condition essentielle au maintien de la confiance des consommateurs.

**Mots clés:** *Marketing d'influence, médias sociaux, consommation numérique, dynamiques régionales, stratégies de communication.*

**Jel Classification Codes :** M31, D91, L82, O33, Z13.

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## **I. Introduction**

Over the past decade, the rise of social media has profoundly reshaped both communicational and commercial practices, to the extent of redefining interactions between brands and consumers. In a global economy undergoing accelerated digitalization, influencer marketing has emerged as a central strategic lever for differentiation and competitiveness. According to the *Digital 2024 Report*, more than 62% of the world's population actively uses social media, underscoring the transnational scope of this phenomenon (Meltwater & We Are Social, 2024, pp. 1-3). In parallel, Statista projections indicate that the global influencer marketing industry will surpass USD 24 billion by 2025, highlighting both its exponential growth and its progressive institutionalization within corporate communication strategies (Statista, 2024, p. 5).

Rather than being confined to a purely promotional function, influencer marketing reflects a profound reconfiguration of contemporary consumption practices. As traditional, media-driven forms of prescription gradually lose their centrality, they are increasingly replaced by modes of mediation perceived as more personalized, relational, and authentic. A substantial body of academic research (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016, pp. 553–567; Lou & Yuan, 2019, pp. 58–73) demonstrates that influencers operate not merely as transmitters of commercial messages, but as active participants in the co-construction of brand meanings and the normalization of new consumption norms.

Although the effectiveness of influencer marketing is now firmly established in the literature, the regional configurations that shape its implementation remain insufficiently examined. Existing scholarship, despite its growing volume, is largely characterized by conceptual and empirical fragmentation, with a strong emphasis on single-country studies and Western-centric analytical frameworks. Empirical evidence is predominantly drawn from mature markets, particularly those of the United States and Europe, leaving emerging and hybrid digital ecosystems—especially in Africa and parts of Asia—relatively underrepresented. Moreover, influencer marketing is often treated as a standardized practice, with limited attention paid to the ways in which cultural, economic, and regulatory contexts recalibrate its mechanisms and influence its outcomes.

This absence of sustained comparative and transregional inquiry gives rise to a central research question: **in what ways does influencer marketing manifest differently across diverse regional contexts, and how do these contextual specificities reconfigure consumption practices?**

This problem raises several research questions:

- What mechanisms enable influencer marketing to transform consumption behaviors on a global scale?

-How do regional dynamics shape the appropriation and effectiveness of influencer marketing?

-What convergences and divergences can be identified between Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States in terms of practices and impacts of this phenomenon?

From these questions, the general hypothesis of this study is that influencer marketing, while universally recognized as a strategic tool, adopts distinct modes of expression and logics of appropriation that vary significantly across regions. These variations are explained by multiple factors: level of digital maturity, purchasing power, structure of media ecosystems, and cultural specificities of consumers.

This article pursues a dual objective that is both theoretical and comparative. From a theoretical perspective, it seeks to elucidate the mechanisms through which influencer marketing contributes to the ongoing transformation of consumption practices within the digital economy. From a comparative standpoint, it examines regional dynamics in order to identify points of convergence and divergence in the appropriation of influence across heterogeneous contexts. To this end, the study adopts a carefully constructed cross-regional design encompassing representative countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States, selected on the basis of their contrasting digital ecosystems, economic structures, regulatory environments, and influence practices. Taken together, this comparative framework enables a nuanced analysis of how varying levels of digital maturity and market organization shape influencer marketing models and, more broadly, inform its global evolution.

The study adopts an exploratory and comparative design grounded in secondary data and a critical review of the literature. Quantitative insights into influencer marketing are derived from major international reports (Hootsuite; Meltwater & We Are Social; Statista), while theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence are drawn from peer-reviewed academic sources indexed in Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science. The analysis is conducted at the regional level—Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States—with each region illustrated through representative countries selected according to digital maturity, dominant platforms, and the prominence of micro-influencers. Data collection relies on documentary analysis that integrates quantitative indicators, such as internet penetration and platform usage, with key conceptual constructs including credibility, electronic word of mouth, and social capital. The analytical strategy combines descriptive comparison, content analysis, and triangulation between industry reports and academic literature, while acknowledging limitations related to data heterogeneity and the absence of causal inference, partially addressed through cross-source validation and theoretical anchoring.

The article is structured into three main sections. The first establishes the conceptual and theoretical foundations of influencer marketing, emphasizing its role in reshaping communicational and commercial practices. The second develops a comparative examination of regional dynamics by integrating empirical evidence from international reports with scholarly insights. The final section offers a critical and forward-looking synthesis, highlighting the study's contributions, limitations, and avenues for future research on influencer marketing in a globalized environment.

The rapid expansion of influencer marketing highlights its growing strategic importance within contemporary consumer ecosystems. As illustrated in Figure 1, the global influencer marketing market is projected to grow from USD 31.07 billion in 2025 to over USD 121.8 billion by 2030, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) exceeding 30%.

## **II. Literature review and research gap**

The rapid expansion of influencer marketing highlights its growing strategic importance within contemporary consumer ecosystems. As illustrated in Figure 1, the global influencer marketing market is projected to grow from USD 31.07 billion in 2025 to over USD 121.8 billion by 2030, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) exceeding 30%.

**Figure (01). Global Influencer Marketing Market Size Forecast (2025–2030)**



**Source: Mordor Intelligence, 2025.**

The following section presents a review of the relevant literature, outlining the key theoretical perspectives and empirical findings that inform the present study.

### **II.1. General Approaches to Influencer Marketing and Consumer Practices**

The earliest foundations of influencer marketing research can be traced back to theories of opinion leadership and interpersonal influence. Katz and Lazarsfeld's seminal work, *Personal Influence*, demonstrates that consumers'

attitudes and purchasing decisions are significantly shaped by interpersonal communication within social networks rather than by mass media alone (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955, pp. 32–51). Similarly, Rogers' *Diffusion of Innovations* highlights the role of opinion leaders in accelerating the adoption of new products and practices through social systems (Rogers, 2003, pp. 219–224).

With the emergence of digital platforms, research gradually shifted toward electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) empirically show that online consumer reviews exert a measurable influence on sales performance, particularly through mechanisms of credibility and information asymmetry (pp. 345–354). This work constitutes a foundational empirical basis for subsequent studies on influencer-mediated consumption.

Influencer marketing later emerged as a distinct field of inquiry within digital marketing. Freberg et al. (2011) provide one of the earliest empirical definitions of social media influencers, identifying them as individuals perceived as credible and capable of shaping audience attitudes through online platforms (*Public Relations Review*, 37(1), pp. 90–92). De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders (2017) further refine this perspective by demonstrating that both follower count and influencer–brand congruence significantly affect brand attitudes and engagement (*International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), pp. 798–828).

Several studies focus on the psychological mechanisms underlying influencer effectiveness. Kapitan and Silvera (2016) show that perceived authenticity and credibility positively influence brand evaluations, particularly when influencers are viewed as trustworthy rather than overtly commercial (*Marketing Letters*, 27(3), pp. 553–567). Lou and Yuan (2019) demonstrate that message value and source credibility mediate the relationship between influencer content and consumer trust, which subsequently affects purchase intention (*Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 19(1), pp. 58–73). Collectively, these studies confirm that influencer marketing contributes to the transformation of consumer practices by reshaping trust formation and decision-making processes.

## **II.2. Cultural and Contextual Dimensions of Influencer Marketing**

Recent scholarship emphasizes that influencer marketing is deeply embedded within cultural and social contexts. Abidin (2016) conceptualizes influencers as cultural intermediaries whose practices are closely intertwined with identity construction and everyday digital life (*Social Media + Society*, 2(2), pp. 3–6). In her subsequent work, Abidin (2018) further elaborates on the notions of intimacy, authenticity, and relational labor, highlighting how these dimensions shape patterns of consumer engagement (*Internet Celebrity*, pp. 16–22).

Empirical research also underscores the fragility of perceived authenticity. Audrezet, de Kerviler, and Moulard (2018) demonstrate that excessive



commercialization can undermine influencer credibility and diminish persuasive effectiveness (Journal of Business Research, 89, pp. 1–8). Their findings suggest that influencer marketing reshapes consumer practices primarily when audiences perceive a balanced articulation between commercial intent and personal expression.

In regulated environments, contextual factors become even more salient. De Veirman and Hudders (2020) examine the effects of sponsorship disclosure on consumer perceptions, showing that transparency, when combined with message-sidedness, can enhance trust (International Journal of Advertising, 39(1), pp. 94–130). These findings are particularly relevant within the European context, where regulatory compliance plays a decisive role in shaping the legitimacy of influencer marketing.

### ***II.3. Regional Empirical Studies: Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States***

According to the Digital 2022 Global Overview, the penetration of social media users varies significantly across regions, reflecting differentiated conditions for the development of influencer marketing. In January 2022, social media usage represented a relatively lower share of the total population in Africa compared to other regions, although it continues to grow rapidly due to mobile connectivity and demographic dynamics. Asia displays heterogeneous levels of penetration, combining highly connected markets with emerging digital ecosystems, which translates into diverse influencer practices. Europe and the United States exhibit the highest proportions of social media users relative to population size, providing structurally favorable environments for the institutionalization, professionalization, and large-scale deployment of influencer marketing contexts and strategies (Digital 2022: Global Digital Overview, p. 90).

**Figure (02).Social media users by region as a percent of total population (January 2022)**



Source : Digital 2022: Global digital overview, p.90. 4

### III.3.1 Africa

From a market standpoint, influencer marketing in Africa remains limited in absolute financial terms when compared to mature regions, yet it demonstrates considerable growth potential. According to recent industry estimates reported by Statista (2024), Africa accounts for a marginal share of global influencer marketing expenditure—generally estimated at below 5%—a situation that reflects both structural constraints and the relatively early stage of market institutionalization. Nevertheless, several national markets, notably Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, and Algeria, are experiencing sustained growth, largely driven by expanding mobile connectivity and a predominantly young demographic profile.

Social media penetration across the African continent remains uneven but continues to increase steadily. Data from Hootsuite and We Are Social (2024) indicate that average penetration levels remain significantly lower than those observed in Europe, where rates often exceed 80%. Despite this disparity, African usage patterns are overwhelmingly mobile-oriented, with the vast majority of social media users accessing platforms primarily through smartphones, a configuration that strongly shapes influencer strategies and content formats.

In terms of investment structures, influencer marketing campaigns in Africa are predominantly centered on micro- and nano-influencers. Industry reports suggest that campaign budgets typically remain relatively modest—often ranging from several hundred to a few thousand U.S. dollars, depending on sectoral and national contexts—standing in sharp contrast to European markets, where influencer marketing expenditures are substantially higher. This cost



structure reinforces the strategic reliance on micro-influencers, whose cultural proximity, perceived authenticity, and affordability make them particularly effective within localized communities (Statista, 2023; We Are Social, 2024).

Empirical academic research on influencer marketing in Africa, however, remains comparatively limited. Earlier contributions, such as Chikweche and Fletcher (2014), emphasize the central role of informal markets and social networks in shaping consumption practices in Sub-Saharan Africa (*Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship*, 16(1), pp. 5–17). More recent work by Mahajan (2021) highlights the strategic importance of culturally embedded micro-influencers in emerging economies, including African contexts, where trust, social proximity, and relational credibility tend to outweigh scale (*The Future of Marketing*, pp. 59–61). Nevertheless, existing studies largely prioritize issues of digital access and consumer behavior, leaving influencer marketing insufficiently theorized as a structured and strategic communication practice within African markets.

### **II.3.2. Asia**

Asia has attracted sustained scholarly attention due to the deep integration of influencer marketing within social commerce ecosystems. In China, live-streaming commerce has become a dominant retail channel, with industry estimates suggesting that it accounts for over 20% of total e-commerce transactions, generating several hundred billion U.S. dollars annually, largely driven by the activities of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs). Within this context, Chen and Lin (2022) demonstrate that KOLs exert a significant influence on purchase behavior through live-streaming platforms, where real-time interaction and social presence enhance persuasion (*Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 65, p. 102133). Complementing this perspective, Guo and Li (2023) show that live-streaming commerce reduces consumer uncertainty by combining entertainment, immediacy, and trust-building mechanisms, leading to higher conversion rates compared to traditional online shopping environments (*Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 57, pp. 255–260).

Beyond China, studies on Japan and South Korea highlight the cultural embeddedness of influence practices within platform-specific ecosystems such as LINE and KakaoTalk, which together reach more than 70% of the population in their respective national markets. In these contexts, influencer marketing is less centered on scale and virality than on relational continuity, community interaction, and long-term trust, reflecting broader cultural norms of communication and consumption (Abidin, 2018, pp. 20–22).

### **II.3.3.Europe**

European research on influencer marketing places considerable emphasis on both professionalization and regulatory compliance, reflecting the region's advanced digital economy and stringent legal frameworks. Empirical evidence indicates that influencer marketing expenditure in Central and Western Europe is projected to reach approximately USD 4.02 billion by 2025, with a compound annual growth rate of about 12.7% forecast through 2030, signalling robust investment by brands in creator-led strategies (Statista, 2025 projections). In 2022, Europe hosted over 250 million Instagram users, of whom roughly 10.5 million were active as influencers, representing a 22% increase over two years, underscoring the rapid expansion of the creator ecosystem across the continent (InfluencerCity, 2023). In France alone, influencer marketing spending is estimated to reach around €520 million by 2025, with consumer trust in influencer endorsements at approximately 72%, highlighting the centrality of credibility and transparency in professional practices (Statista, 2025).

Against this backdrop, regulatory frameworks such as the GDPR have reshaped how digital marketing is practiced, with Voigt and von dem Bussche (2017) illustrating its implications for data protection, consumer trust, and marketer accountability. Complementing this perspective, De Veirman and Hudders (2020) demonstrate that European consumers exhibit heightened sensitivity to transparency and ethical considerations in influencer communications, particularly in contexts where sponsorship disclosure is required to reinforce perceived legitimacy (International Journal of Advertising, 39(1), pp. 94–130). Industry reports further indicate that approximately 69% of European marketers now prioritize regulatory compliance when selecting influencers, while close to 86% integrate micro-influencers into their strategies in response to authenticity-driven consumer expectations. Taken together, these trends reflect a European influencer marketing landscape increasingly structured around ethical accountability, regulatory conformity, and professional standards.

### **II.3.3.United States**

In the United States, influencer marketing research emphasizes scale, performance metrics, and data-driven optimization. Influencer marketing expenditure in the U.S. reached an estimated USD 7.02 billion in 2023 and is projected to exceed USD 10 billion by 2025, reflecting the growing integration of influencer strategies within broader digital advertising ecosystems (Statista; Amra & Elma, 2025 projections). Industry data further indicate that approximately 86% of U.S. marketers are expected to engage in influencer partnerships by 2025, underscoring the widespread institutionalization of this practice across sectors. Within this highly competitive media environment, Evans et al. (2017) conceptualize influencer marketing as a component of integrated



advertising systems, demonstrating its effectiveness in maximizing reach and audience exposure (Journal of Interactive Advertising, 17(2), pp. 120–143).

Consistent with this emphasis on scale, Campbell and Farrell (2020) highlight the continued dominance of macro-influencers and celebrity endorsers in U.S. campaigns, while also identifying emerging concerns related to audience saturation and diminishing marginal returns (Journal of Advertising Research, 60(4), pp. 476–489). Empirical evidence suggests that trust remains a central determinant of campaign effectiveness, with approximately 63% of American consumers reporting a higher likelihood of purchasing products recommended by influencers they perceive as credible. Taken together, these findings position the United States as a mature and highly commercialized influencer marketing market, where strategic emphasis is placed on reach, measurable performance outcomes, and large-scale audience engagement.

#### ***II.4. Synthesis and Research Gap***

The reviewed literature establishes that influencer marketing is a key driver of the evolution of consumer practices, particularly through trust formation, engagement, and social identification. It also demonstrates that cultural, economic, and regulatory contexts significantly shape influencer effectiveness. However, existing studies remain regionally fragmented and rarely adopt a comparative transregional perspective integrating Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States within a unified analytical framework. This absence constitutes a critical gap, which the present study seeks to address.

### ***III. Conceptual Framework and Theoretical Foundations of Influencer Marketing in the Transformation of Consumption Practices***

The study of influencer marketing requires a clear theoretical framework to account for how influencer-mediated messages are perceived and internalized within contemporary consumption contexts.

#### ***III.1 Definition and Scholarly Conceptualization of Influencer Marketing***

Defining and academically constructing the concept of influencer marketing helps to clarify its theoretical foundations and to specify its boundaries within the domain of management sciences.

##### ***III.1.1 The Conceptual Development of Influencer Marketing***

Influencer marketing can be understood as a strategic approach that relies on individuals perceived as credible, knowledgeable, or socially attractive. These actors, endowed with symbolic and relational capital within digital communities, act as intermediaries to enhance the visibility of brands, products, or ideas among targeted audiences. Unlike traditional forms of advertising, often unilateral and impersonal, influencer marketing emphasizes a horizontal and proximity-based logic of interaction. The perceived authenticity of influencers and their direct relationship with communities thereby reinforce the persuasive dimension of the

message (Chung-Wha (Chloe) Ki, Leslie M. Cuevas, Sze Man Chong, Heejin Lim, 2020, 102133).

### III.1.2 Theoretical Frameworks Underpinning Influencer Marketing

Several approaches can be identified in order to delineate the concept of influencer marketing:

- **The behavioral approach (micro-level):** This perspective builds on theories of persuasion and social influence. Mechanisms such as social proof, authority recognition, and likability constitute key levers in explaining why individuals adhere to messages conveyed by influencers (Cialdini, 2001, pp. 95–125). The literature further emphasizes that the perceived credibility of the source is a major determinant of persuasion. Ohanian (1990, pp. 41–43) distinguishes three core dimensions: the expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of the communicator. From a perspective inspired by social learning theory, consumers' tendency to emulate the practices of peers or reference figures can be explained by the need for belonging and by mechanisms of observation and behavioral reproduction (Bandura, 1986, pp. 47–65).

- **The communicational approach (meso-level):** Influencer marketing can also be interpreted as a contemporary extension of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Online reviews and recommendations exert a significant impact on consumers' purchase intentions (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006, pp. 345–354). Similarly, social networking sites enhance the dissemination of messages by fostering dynamics of sharing and virality, thereby transforming interpersonal communication into a large-scale phenomenon (Chu & Kim, 2011, pp. 47–75).

- **The strategic approach (macro-level):** From a strategic standpoint, influencer marketing is embedded within the paradigm of relationship marketing, whose goal is to generate shared value and foster long-term relationships between brands, influencers, and consumers (Morgan & Hunt, 1994, pp. 20–25). This relational logic is grounded in several key concepts:

- *Social capital.* The value of social relations lies in trust and network density, thereby constituting a strategic resource for influencers (Coleman, 1990, pp. 300–321; Putnam, 2000, pp. 18–24).

- *Network effects.* The value of a good or service increases with the size of its user base, which in influencer marketing implies that the broader and more engaged an influencer's community, the greater the reach and impact of their messages (Katz & Shapiro, 1985, pp. 424–430).

- *Co-creation of value.* Consumers become active participants in the marketing process, contributing to value creation through their interactions, recommendations, and user-generated content (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004, pp. 5–14).



### ***III.1.3 Toward an Integrated Conceptualization of Influencer Marketing***

The literature converges toward a multidisciplinary understanding of influencer marketing. This phenomenon cannot be reduced to a mere promotional strategy; rather, it must be conceptualized as a socio-technical system encompassing: psychological mechanisms such as source credibility, persuasion, and imitation (Ohanian, 1990, pp.41-42 ; Cialdini, 2001, pp.115-118 ; Bandura, 1986, pp.47-49); communicative dynamics including eWOM, virality, and community engagement (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006, pp.345-348 ; Chu & Kim, 2011, pp.48-52); and strategic logics such as relational capital, value co-creation, and loyalty (Morgan & Hunt, 1994, pp.22-24 ; Coleman, 1990, pp.302-305 ; Putnam, 2000, pp.18-20 ; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004, pp.5-8). Kozinets et al. (2010, pp.65-68) argue that influencer marketing exemplifies the transformation of marketing in response to digital and social developments, shifting from a hierarchical and transactional model to one that is more interactive, collaborative, and relational.

### ***III.2 The Evolution of Influencer Marketing in the Era of Digital Platforms***

The diffusion of social media has fundamentally transformed the dynamics of influencer marketing. Initially rooted in blogs and online forums, influence practices have evolved with the emergence of platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, which promote interactive, immersive, and performative content. These platforms have reshaped influence by enabling educational, aesthetic, and viral forms of engagement, thereby departing from the unidirectional logic of traditional advertising.

#### ***III.2.1 The Rise of Social Platforms and the Democratization of Influence***

The advent of YouTube marked a first step in the professionalization of content creators, enabling non-institutional actors to gain media legitimacy through participatory models of communication (Burgess & Green, 2009, pp.52-55 ; Lange, 2007, pp.87-89). Instagram subsequently reinforced the logic of self-branding, integrating lifestyle staging and personal identity construction into commercial discourse (Marwick, 2015, pp.138-141 ; Abidin, 2016, pp.3-6). This blurring of boundaries between private life and market space facilitated new forms of collaboration between brands and influencers (Abidin, 2018, pp.16-18 ; Khamis et al., 2017, pp.193-195). TikTok, in turn, redefined the attention economy by prioritizing algorithm-driven virality, where visibility can be rapidly achieved through micro-videos produced even by emerging creators (Zulli & Zulli, 2020, pp.4-6 ; Kaye et al., 2022, pp.27-30). This dynamic has fragmented the influencer ecosystem and expanded the diversity of influential profiles (Hou, 2019, pp.23-25 ; Cotter, 2021, pp.115-118).

#### ***III.2.2 Structural Transformations in Influencer Marketing***

Beyond platform-specific evolutions, influencer marketing has undergone a structural shift toward value co-creation. Brands no longer merely delegate their message to external endorsers but increasingly integrate influencer communities into their relational strategies (*Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004, pp.6-10 ; Gummesson, 2002, pp.45-47*). Authenticity, trust, and community engagement have become central to the perceived value of campaigns (*Audrezet et al., 2018, pp.5-7 ; Marwick & Boyd, 2011, pp.140-143*). At the same time, the sophistication of analytical tools allows marketers to measure campaign performance with precision, thereby reinforcing the legitimacy of influencer marketing as a strategic component of digital communication (*De Veirman et al., 2017, pp.798-800 ; Evans et al., 2017, pp.121-123*).

This process illustrates the growing professionalization of the sector. A now well-established typology distinguishes between macro-influencers (large-scale visibility with distant audience ties), micro-influencers (smaller, more engaged communities with higher credibility), and nano-influencers (very limited but trust-intensive networks generating strong word-of-mouth effects) (*Campbell & Farrell, 2020, pp.478-480 ; Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019, pp.592-594*). Each category corresponds to specific strategic objectives, ranging from mass reach to targeted loyalty building (*Kay et al., 2020, pp.559-561 ; Casaló et al., 2018, pp.103-105*).

Ultimately, the evolution of influencer marketing reflects the interplay between technological innovation, socio-cultural transformation, and economic rationalization (*Kozinets et al., 2010, pp.71-73 ; Khamis et al., 2017, pp.194-196*). Digital platforms thus appear not merely as communication channels but as spaces of identity construction, community formation, and market valorization (*Abidin, 2018, pp.20-22 ; Cotter, 2021, pp.116-119*). From this perspective, influencer marketing must be understood not only as an instrumental promotional tool but also as a socio-economic phenomenon embedded in the broader logics of digital capitalism, where symbolic, social, and relational resources are mobilized and converted into economic value (*Fuchs, 2014, pp.55-58 ; Srnicek, 2017, pp.89-92*).

### **III.3 Theoretical Frameworks**

The analysis of social media's influence on organizational and societal dynamics requires the mobilization of multiple theoretical frameworks drawn from diverse disciplines, including sociology, economics, marketing, and communication studies. These theories provide conceptual tools to understand networking mechanisms, patterns of interaction, and the effects generated by digital platforms.



### III.3.1 Sociological and Communication Theories

Sociological and communication theories offer an essential lens for analyzing social dynamics and the processes of symbolic exchange that structure human interactions.

**-Social Capital Theory**, first articulated by Bourdieu and later systematized by Coleman, sheds light on how digital networks amplify the benefits of interpersonal relations. In the context of social media, the density of connections facilitates information diffusion and symbolic recognition (Bourdieu, 1986, pp.241-244 ; Coleman, 1990, pp.300-302).

**-Network Effect Theory**, initially developed by Katz and Lazarsfeld and later expanded by Katz and Shapiro, highlights how the perceived value of a digital good or service increases as its user base expands. In the case of social platforms, this logic explains viral dynamics: each additional user enhances the attractiveness of the platform and strengthens its effectiveness in terms of diffusion and interaction (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955, pp.32-35 ; Katz & Shapiro, 1985, pp.424-426).

**-Diffusion of Innovations Theory**, introduced by Rogers, provides a key framework for understanding how new practices or technologies spread within a society. By distinguishing adopter categories—ranging from innovators to laggards—it explains both the speed and heterogeneity of the appropriation of digital tools and online content (Rogers, 2003, pp.219-224).

### III.3.2 Marketing and Management Theories

Theories originating in marketing and management offer critical analytical frameworks for understanding organizational dynamics and guiding value creation in highly competitive contexts.

**-Relationship Marketing Theory** emphasizes the importance of building and maintaining long-term ties with stakeholders. In the digital environment, this translates into practices such as interactive engagement, personalized messaging, and the consolidation of online brand communities (Morgan & Hunt, 1994, pp.22-24 ; Grönroos, 1994, pp.10-12).

**-Organizational and Emotional Commitment Models** help explain how individuals develop attachment, loyalty, and a sense of belonging to organizations or brands. Social media strengthens these mechanisms by offering immersive and participatory experiences that activate both affective and normative dimensions of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991, pp.65-67 ; Mowday et al., 1979, pp.225-227).

**-Actor–Network Theory (ANT)** offers a distinctive perspective by considering social media as the product of hybrid interactions between

human and non-human actors (e.g., algorithms, interfaces, technical devices). This approach underscores that digital influence is shaped as much by technological infrastructures as by social interactions (*Callon, 1986, pp.196-198 ; Latour, 2005, pp.72-75*).

**-Persuasion Theory**, particularly the **Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)**, provides analytical tools for examining how online messages transform attitudes and behaviors. It distinguishes between a central route of processing (based on careful analysis and reasoning) and a peripheral route (relying on superficial cues such as appearance, popularity, or source credibility) (*Petty & Cacioppo, 1986, pp.125-128 ; Cialdini, 2001, pp.93-95*).

#### ***iv. International Comparison of Regional Dynamics***

The comparative examination of regional dynamics in influencer marketing reveals differentiated trajectories, largely shaped by the sociocultural, economic, and technological contexts specific to each geographical area.

##### ***IV.1 Africa: Between Digital Expansion and Structural Constraints***

The African continent presents a distinctive profile in the economy of influence: on the one hand, a steady expansion of digital connectivity, and on the other, persistent barriers related to infrastructure and regulation. According to reports by *We Are Social and Hootsuite (2024, pp.5-7)*, the average Internet penetration rate is approximately 43%, compared to over 80% in Europe, reflecting both a structural lag and a significant potential for catch-up.

In most countries, digital practices are concentrated around Facebook and WhatsApp, which together account for more than 70% of interactions in Sub-Saharan Africa, while Instagram and TikTok remain more strongly associated with urban areas and digitally connected youth (*DataReportal, 2024, pp.18-20 ; Pew Research Center, 2022, pp.12-14*). This specificity gives influencer marketing in Africa a hybrid character, combining the community-based and relational logics of micro-influencers with the viral circulation of content through messaging applications (*Abidin, 2016, pp.5-6 ; Gilmore & Pine, 2007, pp.101-103*).

The role of micro-influencers is particularly pronounced. In Nigeria, the leading digital market on the continent, nearly 60% of communication campaigns in 2023 involved creators with fewer than 50,000 followers (*Olanrewaju, 2023, pp.77-79*). In South Africa, this proportion is around 45%, but is complemented by a stronger presence of “premium” influencers on Instagram and YouTube, reflecting a more advanced level of ecosystem maturity (*du Plessis, 2022, pp.52-54*). By contrast, in Kenya or Côte d’Ivoire, WhatsApp constitutes the primary tool for disseminating commercial messages, often within the framework of

informal campaigns that bypass specialized agencies (*Porter et al., 2021, pp.33-35*).

The case of Algeria illustrates this dual dynamic. With approximately 29 million social media users in 2024, representing a penetration rate of 65% (*We Are Social, 2024, pp.21-23*), the country ranks among the most digitally developed markets in the Maghreb. Facebook remains the dominant platform, followed by Instagram and TikTok, which are particularly popular among urban youth (*Bencheneb, 2023, pp.14-16*). The use of micro-influencers is widespread, especially in sectors such as fashion, cosmetics, and fast food, where cultural and community proximity represents a decisive asset (*Mokdad, 2022, pp.88-90*). However, weak regulation, a fragmented digital advertising market, and the predominance of informal collaborations between brands and influencers limit the institutionalization of this economy (*El Kadi, 2021, pp.41-43*).

Thus, Africa is characterized by strong heterogeneity: some countries (Nigeria, South Africa, Algeria, Kenya) are progressively structuring professionalized ecosystems, while others remain fragmented and largely dominated by informality (*Chikweche & Fletcher, 2014, pp.10-12*). This tension offers a twofold lesson: it constitutes both a challenge for international brands, which must adapt their strategies to highly contrasting environments, and an opportunity for local actors, who can capitalize on proximity logics and mobile-based diffusion (*Mahajan, 2021, pp.59-61*).

**Table (01).Internet Penetration Rate, Dominant Platforms, and Key Sectors of Influencer Marketing in Africa (2024)**

| Country       | Internet Penetration (2024) | Dominant Platforms            | Estimated Share of Campaigns with Micro-Influencers | Key Sectors                   |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Nigeria       | 55%                         | WhatsApp / Instagram          | 60%                                                 | Fashion, Technology, Music    |
| South Africa  | 72%                         | Instagram / YouTube           | 45%                                                 | Beauty, Luxury, Tourism       |
| Kenya         | 46%                         | WhatsApp / Facebook           | 50%                                                 | Agribusiness, Fintech         |
| Côte d'Ivoire | 43%                         | Facebook / WhatsApp           | 55%                                                 | Telecommunications, Beverages |
| Algeria       | 65%                         | Facebook / Instagram / TikTok | 58%                                                 | Fashion, Cosmetics, Fast Food |

**Source: Compiled by the authors based on data from Hootsuite (Digital 2024), We Are Social, and Statista.**

These data confirm that, despite uneven levels of infrastructure and digital equipment, the reliance on mobile-first practices remains a consistent feature across the continent, with the vast majority of internet access taking place via smartphones (Statista, 2023 ; Opensignal, 2023). Africa thus emerges as a laboratory where brands must navigate connectivity constraints, informal practices, and strong community anchoring, while simultaneously engaging with a future-oriented market driven by youth and rapid urbanization (Finextra, 2024 ; GSMA, 2023).

Two clear trends can be identified:

- The Africanization of influencer marketing: effectiveness relies on local figures rooted in specific cultural and linguistic contexts. Unlike European or American markets, where global reach constitutes an asset, in Africa local credibility outweighs international visibility (Finextra, 2024).
- Technological constraints as a factor of differentiation: strategies cannot be simply replicated from Western models. The widespread use of mobile internet as the dominant access channel constitutes an African specificity, reflecting an adaptive capacity for innovation aligned with available infrastructures (Opensignal, 2023 ; GSMA, 2023).

#### **IV.2 Asia: Innovation and the Centrality of Local Platforms**

Asia is distinguished by the dynamism and originality of its digital ecosystem, where local platforms, rather than Western giants, largely structure influencer marketing. Unlike markets dominated by Facebook or Instagram, the Asian sphere has witnessed the rise of indigenous actors such as WeChat in China, Douyin (the local version of TikTok), and LINE in Japan and Taiwan. These tools go beyond social communication: they operate as integrated environments that combine instant messaging, e-commerce services, mobile payments, and content distribution, thereby creating multifunctional ecosystems that position brands at the very core of consumers' daily practices.

##### **IV.2. 1 China: Douyin and the KOL Economy**

China represents an advanced laboratory of influencer marketing, where Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) play a decisive role, particularly in the context of live streaming, where recommendations are directly converted into sales (Chen & Lin, 2022, p.41). Douyin, the Chinese counterpart of TikTok, reported over 600 million daily active users in 2020, confirming its centrality in the digital ecosystem (Zhao, 2021, pp.112-113). Figures such as Li Jiaqi, nicknamed the "Lipstick King," epitomize this phenomenon: during Singles' Day 2021, he sold cosmetics worth approximately USD 1.7 billion in only 12 hours (Business Insider, 2021, para.4). These performances demonstrate that influence in China

extends beyond visibility to function as a central transactional lever (Guo & Li, 2023, p.257).

#### **IV.2.2 Japan: LINE and the Cultural Embeddedness of Messaging**

LINE holds a distinctive position in Japan, with approximately 92 million users in early 2023, representing about 74.4 % of the nation’s population (*DataReportal, 2023, pp. 10-12*). More recent data indicate that by early 2025, its active user base had risen to about 97 million, corresponding to roughly 78.6 % of the population (*DataReportal, 2025, pp. 5-7*). This deep penetration suggests that brands operating in Japan can leverage LINE not only as a messaging app but as a cultural and social infrastructure deeply woven into everyday life.

#### **IV.2.3.Southeast Asia: TikTok and the Rise of a Connected Middle Class**

In Southeast Asia, the rapid expansion of influencer marketing is driven by the widespread diffusion of TikTok and the growth of a young, urban middle class. In Indonesia, the platform hosts approximately 125 million monthly active users, a figure reported in 2024, placing it among the largest TikTok user bases globally (*Xinhua, 2024, pp. 1-2; Seasia.co/Statista, 2024, pp. 3-4*). In Thailand, campaigns rely heavily on TikTok and Instagram, particularly in the tourism and fashion sectors, where local micro-influencers act as intermediaries between international brands and consumers (*Nation Thailand, 2025, pp. 5-7*).

The Southeast Asian example highlights a distinctive feature: the fusion of entertainment, socialization, and commerce. While Western markets tend to compartmentalize digital practices, Southeast Asian platforms operate as hybrid ecosystems that maximize screen-time engagement and facilitate direct conversion into purchases.

**Table(02). Comparative Overview of Dominant Social Media Platforms in Asia: Marketing Specificities and Representative Influencers (2024)**

| Country/Region     | Dominant Platforms            | Marketing Specificities                                                                                     | Representative Influencers                    |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>China</b>       | Douyin, WeChat, Weibo         | Integration of live streaming, e-commerce, and mobile payments; KOLs central to transactional influence     | Li Jiaqi (“Lipstick King”), Viya              |
| <b>Japan</b>       | LINE, Twitter, Instagram      | Strong cultural anchoring of messaging; use of stickers, mini-games, and emotional engagement campaigns     | Local influencers collaborating with Shiseido |
| <b>South Korea</b> | KakaoTalk, Instagram, YouTube | High digital penetration; dominance of K-pop idols and beauty influencers; integration of entertainment and | BTS members, Pony (beauty influencer)         |

|                  |                            |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                       |
|------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                  |                            | commerce                                                                                                          |                                                                                                       |
| <b>Indonesia</b> | TikTok, Instagram, YouTube | Rapid growth of the connected middle class; TikTok as a driver of mass diffusion; strong use of micro-influencers | Ria Ricis (30M+ followers)                                                                            |
| <b>Thailand</b>  |                            | TikTok, Instagram, Facebook                                                                                       | Influence marketing concentrated in tourism and fashion sectors; strong reliance on micro-influencers |
| <b>Taiwan</b>    |                            | LINE, Facebook, Instagram                                                                                         | LINE as multifunctional platform; emphasis on community-based campaigns                               |

**Source: Compiled by the author based on data from Hootsuite (Digital 2024), We Are Social, and Statista.**

Thus, Asia exemplifies a profound transformation of influencer marketing: influencers no longer merely disseminate messages but are embedded within comprehensive commercial ecosystems, whereby each social interaction is converted into a transactional opportunity.

#### ***IV.3. Europe: Professionalization and Regulatory Oversight***

The European influencer marketing market is characterized by a unique dynamic that combines both the strong professionalization of practices and a strict regulatory framework. According to Statista (2024), investments in influencer marketing on the continent exceed €2.8 billion, accounting for nearly one-fifth of the global market. However, unlike Asia or the United States, this growth is closely tied to heightened demands for transparency and consumer protection (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020, p. 5).

The adoption of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018 marked a turning point. While social platforms heavily exploit data to refine advertising targeting, the European Union introduced a framework to safeguard user privacy and rights (Voigt & Von dem Bussche, 2017, pp. 25–27). Far from hindering the sector, this regulation reinforced the credibility of campaigns by establishing a climate of trust (European Commission, 2018).

This trajectory was consolidated with the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Digital Markets Act (DMA), which came into effect in 2022–2023. These measures complement the GDPR by strengthening oversight of sponsored content and mandating transparency in commercial partnerships (European Commission, 2022, p. 14). At the national level, several authorities have reinforced their frameworks. In France, for example, the Professional



Advertising Regulatory Authority (PARA) now requires influencers to explicitly disclose any paid collaboration (#ad, #sponsorisé), with noncompliance leading to financial penalties or temporary bans (PARA, 2023). In parallel, Europe has witnessed the rise of mega-influencers (e.g., Chiara Ferragni in Italy, Lena Situations in France), who convert their visibility into personal brands collaborating with multinational corporations such as Dior, L'Oréal, and H&M (Abidin, 2021, p. 122). Nonetheless, the continent also stands out for the prominence of micro-influencers, particularly in Scandinavia and Germany. With smaller audiences but higher engagement rates, these creators embody a model of proximity and authenticity aligned with European consumers, who are often highly attentive to values of sustainability and transparency (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020, pp. 7–9).

In sum, Europe illustrates a hybrid model: an expanding sector underpinned by strong regulation and a drive toward professionalization. This model aims to build a sustainable ecosystem that reconciles international competitiveness with social responsibility, in contrast to the more liberal dynamics observed in the United States and Asia (Abidin, 2021, p. 130).

#### ***IV.4. United States: A Mature Market Dominated by Macro-Influencers***

The U.S. market represents the most advanced case of influencer marketing. In 2023, investments in the sector reached approximately USD 26.09 billion, compared to a global market of about USD 34.08 billion, meaning that the United States alone accounts for more than three-quarters of worldwide expenditures (Statista, 2024, p.1). This dominant position is explained by the early adoption of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, as well as by the consolidation of a mature ecosystem composed of specialized agencies, matchmaking platforms, and performance-tracking tools (Boerman et al., 2017, p.85; Evans et al., 2017, p.142).

##### ***IV.4.1 Centrality of Global Platforms***

The U.S. market represents one of the most mature cases of influencer marketing. In 2023, estimates place influencer marketing expenditures in the United States at approximately USD ≈ 25-30 billion, representing a substantial share of global spending in the sector (Statista, 2024, p. 2). This dominant position is explained by the early adoption of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, alongside the existence of a large ecosystem of specialized agencies, influencer-platforms, and performance measurement tools (Boerman et al., 2017, p. 85; Evans et al., 2017, p. 142).

##### ***IV.4.2 The Predominance of Macro-Influencers***

Unlike Europe, where micro-influencers are favored for their proximity and authenticity, the U.S. remains heavily reliant on macro-influencers (over one million followers) and celebrities from the entertainment industry. Figures

such as Charli D’Amelio ( $\approx 156.7$  million followers on TikTok) and Kylie Jenner ( $\approx 411$  million followers on Instagram) secure commercial visibility at the highest tier (*TokInsights, 2025, p.1 ; Spitzberg-Partners, 2025, p.2*).

#### **IV.4.3 Professionalization and Regulatory Oversight**

The maturity of the U.S. influencer marketing market is reflected in the presence of specialized agencies such as Viral Nation, which provide integrated services from creative strategy to execution and analytics, often deploying advanced analytics and data-driven tools (*Viral Nation, 2024, p.1 ; Linqia, 2023, p.5*). At the same time, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) imposes strict regulatory oversight: any material connection between influencers and brands—such as payment or gifts—must be clearly disclosed, and hashtags like #ad or #sponsored are required to maintain transparency and consumer trust (*FTC, 2024, pp. 2-3 ; Fohr, 2025, p.1*).

**Table (03). Distribution of Influencer Marketing Budgets by Influencer Type in the United States (2023)**

| Type of Influencer | Number of Followers | Share of Total Budget (%) |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Nano-influencers   | Fewer than 10,000   | 5%                        |
| Micro-influencers  | 10,000 – 100,000    | 12%                       |
| Meso-influencers   | 100,000 – 500,000   | 13%                       |
| Macro-influencers  | 500,000 – 1,000,000 | 25%                       |
| Celebrities (> 1M) | More than 1,000,000 | 45%                       |

**Source: Adapted from Statista (2024) and Hootsuite (2023).**

**Table (04).International Comparison – Share of Macro-Influencers in Influence Campaigns (2023)**

| Region        | Share of Macro-Influencers in Campaigns (%) | Dominant Platforms      |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| United States | 70%                                         | Instagram, TikTok       |
| Europe        | 45%                                         | Instagram, YouTube      |
| Asia          | 55%                                         | TikTok (Douyin), WeChat |
| Africa        | 30%                                         | Facebook, Instagram     |

**Source: Compiled from Statista (2023), McKinsey (2023), and We Are Social (2024).**

The comparative analysis of the two tables highlights structurally contrasting dynamics in the evolution and practice of influencer marketing between Europe and the United States. On the one hand, Europe emerges as a space where the professionalization of the sector is accompanied by strict legal regulation, driven primarily by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and directives aimed at ensuring transparency in partnerships. This regulatory framework fosters a more balanced relationship between brands, influencers, and consumers. For instance, ad spending in the European influencer advertising market is forecasted to reach US\$ 6.02 billion in 2025, with a growth rate (CAGR) of approximately 12.38 % for the 2025-2030 period (Statista, 2024, p.1).

In contrast, the United States is characterized by a more mature market where macro-influencers and celebrities dominate visibility and commercial partnerships. The U.S. influencer marketing market was valued at about USD 18.88 billion in 2023 (Market Research Future, 2025, p.4) and globally the industry is estimated at USD 21.1 billion for that year (Oberlo / Influencer Marketing Hub, 2023, p.2).

Thus, while Europe places emphasis on regulation, transparency, and ethical practices as foundational elements of consumer trust, the U.S. market underscores scale, visibility, and rapid growth.

## ***V. Critical Discussion: A Transregional Analysis of Influencer Marketing***

This section presents the main empirical and contextual findings of the study. The results are organized along three analytical dimensions (cultural, economic, and regulatory) and are derived from a comparative examination of secondary data, industry reports, and documented market practices across Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States. The objective is to identify observable patterns, measurable contrasts, and structural differences in influencer marketing ecosystems across regions.

### ***V.1 Cultural factors:***

Diversity in practices and the adaptation of strategies across regions are clearly reflected in the global landscape of influencer marketing. In Algeria and, more broadly, across Africa, the ecosystem is characterized by the strong presence of micro-influencers whose authenticity and social proximity constitute key drivers of engagement. Local creators with modest follower bases (often between 1,000 and 25,000) build close relationships with their audiences, particularly in lifestyle, fashion, and community-oriented content,

leveraging trust and cultural resonance (Modash, 2025, pp.1–2; Fashion Policeng, 2024, pp.3–4).

In Asia, the picture is markedly different: influencer practices are shaped by highly integrated digital ecosystems and platform-specific cultures. In China, the dominance of Douyin and the KOL economy illustrates an environment where influence, live-stream commerce, and digital payments converge. Japan and Taiwan rely heavily on LINE-based communication ecosystems, emphasizing emotional engagement and community interaction, while South Korea, Indonesia, and Thailand combine entertainment-driven content with rapid virality through TikTok and Instagram. Across the region, entertainment-commerce hybrids and platform-embedded monetization models are central, making Asian influencer practices both technologically advanced and culturally embedded.

In Europe, brand strategies increasingly favor micro- and niche influencers, reflecting consumers’ growing demand for authenticity, transparency, and ethical promotional practices. European markets are experiencing significant growth in influencer advertising, driven by targeted collaborations rather than large-scale celebrity endorsements (Statista, 2024, pp.5–7).

In the United States, however, a different trend is emerging: budgets are shifting toward high-tier creators. According to a recent Linqia survey, interest in micro-influencers (below 500,000 followers) is declining among U.S. marketers, while celebrities and mega-influencers capture an expanding share of partnerships (Business Insider, 2024, pp.1–2).

Taken together, these contrasts demonstrate how cultural, technological, and market-specific factors shape not only the selection of influencers but also the types of content and relational models that gain traction: proximity and trust in Algeria/Africa; platform-driven hybridization and transactional integration in Asia; transparency and ethics in Europe; and scale, reach, and visibility in the United States.

The analysis reveals four dominant cultural configurations of influencer marketing practices: (1) proximity-driven influence, predominant in Algeria and several African markets; (2) platform-integrated and transaction-oriented influence, characteristic of Asian ecosystems; (3) ethics- and transparency-oriented influence, prevalent in European markets; and (4) scale- and visibility-driven influence, dominant in the United States.

**Table (05).Comparative synthesis of cultural factors**

| Region | Dominant influencer type  | Core cultural driver  | Typical follower range |
|--------|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Africa | Micro-influencers         | Trust & proximity     | 1k–25k                 |
| Asia   | KOLs / hybrid creators    | Platform integration  | 50k–1M+                |
| Europ  | Micro & niche influencers | Authenticity & ethics | 10k–100k               |

|     |                          |                    |       |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| USA | Macro & mega influencers | Reach & visibility | 500k+ |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------|-------|

**Source : realised by the authors**

## V.2 Economic factors:

Economic disparities constitute a major source of variation in the development and structure of influencer marketing across regions. In Europe, influencer advertising spending is expected to reach approximately USD 6.02 billion by 2025, with a compound annual growth rate of around 12.38% between 2025 and 2030 (Statista, 2024, p. 1). In the United States, expenditures are projected to exceed USD 10 billion in 2025, reflecting both the rapid expansion and the high degree of maturation of the American market (eMarketer, 2025, p. 2).

In Asia, economic dynamics vary considerably across countries but collectively reveal one of the world’s fastest-growing influencer economies. China stands out as a global leader in social commerce, where livestreaming-driven sales generate billions of dollars annually; Japan and South Korea exhibit highly monetized and technologically integrated ecosystems, while emerging economies such as Indonesia and Thailand are experiencing exponential growth driven by a young, urban, and digitally connected middle class. These Asian markets thus combine large consumer bases with platform innovations, making them significant engines of global industry expansion.

Africa, by contrast, presents a more fragmented but rapidly evolving landscape. Although overall advertising budgets remain comparatively modest, the continent—particularly markets such as Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, and Algeria—shows strong growth potential due to increasing mobile penetration, a predominantly youthful population, and the widespread use of micro-influencers as cost-efficient and culturally embedded promotional channels.

Taken together, these observations reveal a continuum ranging from emerging or developing markets, where budgets are smaller but where micro-influencers and mobile-first practices dominate, to highly structured markets such as the United States, China, and leading European economies, where scale, advanced analytics, platform integration, and agency specialization play central roles. This gradient underscores how economic capacity shapes not only investment levels but also the professionalization and technological sophistication of influencer marketing ecosystems worldwide.

From an economic standpoint, the results indicate a clear stratification of influencer marketing markets. High-investment ecosystems (United States and leading European economies) are characterized by large-scale budgets, advanced analytics, and agency-driven professionalization. In contrast, African markets remain budget-constrained but display higher cost-efficiency through micro-influencer strategies. Asian markets occupy an intermediate yet rapidly

expanding position, combining high transaction volumes with platform-based monetization models.

### **V.3 Regulatory factors:**

The legal and ethical frameworks represent another axis of differentiation.

-In Europe, regulatory mechanisms are among the most stringent. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, 2018) enforces strict control over personal data usage, while the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Digital Markets Act (DMA, 2022) strengthen transparency obligations for digital platforms, notably regarding sponsored content. Paid collaborations must therefore be explicitly disclosed (e.g., *#ad*, *#sponsored*) (European Commission, 2018, p.42 ; European Parliament, 2022, pp.10-12).

-In the United States, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) equally requires disclosure of sponsored partnerships. However, enforcement remains uneven, leaving room for practices situated in a “grey area” (Campbell & Farrell, 2020, p.115 ; Federal Trade Commission, 2019, pp.6-8).

-In Asia, the regulatory landscape is heterogeneous. For instance, China introduced strict controls in 2021 regulating both advertising and livestreaming, whereas other countries such as Thailand or Indonesia maintain more flexible and fragmented approaches (Chen, 2021, p.203 ; Lim, 2020, pp.55-56).

-In Africa, and more specifically in Algeria, regulatory structures remain embryonic. In the absence of explicit and codified norms, practices largely rely on informal agreements between brands and influencers. Nonetheless, several states are considering the adoption of consumer protection laws aimed at curbing manipulative advertising (Moussaoui, 2022, p.87 ; Adeola & Evans, 2019, pp.77-79).

Thus, Europe exemplifies a proactive and highly institutionalized regulatory logic; the United States reflects a pragmatic but sometimes fragmented approach; Asia illustrates a mosaic of frameworks ranging from strict oversight to relative *laissez-faire*; and Africa reveals a regulatory environment still in formation.

**Table (06). Comparative Summary of Results by Region**

| <b>Dimension</b>         | <b>Africa</b>      | <b>Asia</b>   | <b>Europe</b>         | <b>USA</b>         |
|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Dominant influencer type | Micro              | KOL / hybrid  | Micro & niche         | Macro & mega       |
| Budget level             | Low                | Medium–High   | High                  | Very high          |
| Monetization model       | Brand partnerships | Live commerce | Ethical brand collabs | Performance-driven |
| Regulatory               | Low                | Variable      | High                  | Medium             |



|           |  |  |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|--|--|
| intensity |  |  |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|--|--|

**Source : Realized by the authors**

Based on the comparative analysis, regulatory environments can be classified into four levels of institutionalization: (1) highly institutionalized frameworks (Europe); (2) formal but unevenly enforced frameworks (United States); (3) heterogeneous and selectively regulated frameworks (Asia); and (4) emerging or informal regulatory environments (Africa).

## **VI. Conclusion**

The comparative analysis of influencer marketing across four geographical spaces—Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States—highlights a phenomenon of undeniable universality while revealing significant differentiation according to socio-cultural, economic, and institutional contexts. Everywhere, brands rely on content creators to increase visibility, stimulate engagement, and shape consumer behavior. However, the modalities of this appropriation are never homogeneous: they are rooted in local configurations that profoundly shape the nature of deployed strategies. In Africa, the dynamics rely on the growth of mobile usage and the prominence of micro- and nano-influencers, whose legitimacy primarily stems from their community anchoring and the interpersonal trust they engender.

In contrast, Asia, particularly China, exemplifies a pronounced hybridization of entertainment, commerce, and influence, enabled by integrated local platforms such as Douyin or WeChat. Europe stands out for its stringent institutional framework and its demand for transparency, which tend to orient collaborations toward credibility and sustainability. The United States, for its part, represents the most mature market, dominated by macro-influencers and supported by a dense professional ecosystem combining specialized agencies, measurement technologies, and federal regulation.

These findings confirm the hypothesis that, although influencer marketing is universally recognized as a strategic lever, its modes of expression vary according to regional specificities. Cultural, economic, and regulatory factors decisively shape practices, thereby validating the idea of persistent heterogeneity. Nevertheless, the trend toward increasing professionalization and a growing demand for transparency constitutes a significant convergence, even if its pace and modalities differ across regions. In this sense, the notion of complete homogenization should be nuanced: local conditions remain a structuring variable that influences both the reach and effectiveness of influencer marketing.

Beyond these observations, the study highlights a set of transversal challenges that question the sector's sustainability. The growing saturation of sponsored content risks eroding its effectiveness and amplifying consumer

fatigue. A lack of transparency, particularly regarding remuneration practices and partnerships, fosters distrust, undermining the credibility of campaigns. Finally, consumer trust emerges as the central pivot upon which the future legitimacy of influencer marketing depends; without it, this strategic lever loses its persuasive power.

These insights open avenues for both practice and research. Practically, it is essential to strengthen transparency, establish shared ethical standards, and ensure the responsible use of artificial intelligence, whose potential in targeting and evaluation remains considerable but requires heightened vigilance regarding personal data protection. Academically, further reflection requires longitudinal research to track the evolution of influence trajectories over time and broader comparative studies within the Maghreb and the Arab world. Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches would also provide a more nuanced understanding of credibility and engagement mechanisms.

Ultimately, influencer marketing occupies a strategic crossroads: its future will depend on its ability to combine technological innovation, cultural adaptation, and ethical responsibility. Only under these conditions can it consolidate its role as a central lever of contemporary marketing and contribute sustainably to the reconfiguration of consumption practices in a globalized and constantly evolving environment.

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