# The Strategic Impact of Macro and Micro Fashion Influencers on Instagram

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## ABSTRACT

In the realm of fashion marketing, the practice of influencer marketing on social media, particularly Instagram, has emerged as a pivotal communication tool, affording multifaceted advantages to companies operating within the industry. The strategic use of influencers serves diverse objectives, including enhancing brand perception, improving brand evaluation, and encouraging consumer purchases influenced by these individuals. This study endeavors to delve into the nuanced disparities between macro and micro influencers through a series of comprehensive interviews conducted with both influencers and seasoned professionals within the fashion domain. Furthermore, the research seeks to elucidate the circumstances under which fashion brands opt for either macro or micro influencers, contingent upon the specific goals of their communication campaigns within the Instagram social network.

## KEYWORDS

Influence Marketing, Micro Influencer, Macro Influencer, Fashion, Instagram

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social networks have emerged as prominent information sources during consumers' purchasing processes (IAB Spain & Elogia, 2021). The key advantage lies in their ability to provide free and instantaneous access to information, along with facilitating two-way communications and diverse interactions (involving brands, consumers, or experts). Consequently, fashion consumers increasingly prefer social networks over traditional media. Fashion, being an identity and cultural element, undergoes continuous evolution (Ramírez, 2019), necessitating immediate and interactive communication, which, in turn, requires the adoption of new technologies (Morales & Morales-Rodríguez, 2017), especially social networks.

In the context of the fashion sector, the social network Instagram exhibits ongoing growth due to its audio-visual characteristics, transforming it into a democratized platform with social shopping options.

In 2021, four out of the five most mentioned brands on Instagram were fashion brands: Zara, Shein, H&M & Nike (Geyser, 2022). These fashion brands employ influencer marketing, which involves a collaborative strategy between a fashion company/brand and influencers or relevant individuals (IAB Spain & Nielsen, 2022) who cater to specific segments of the brand's target market, benefiting both parties through their actions. Influencers are akin to the modern version of opinion leaders, possessing credibility, presence, and influence, which enable them to endorse products and brands (Gómez, 2018). However, the internet environment and social networks have exponentially increased the efficacy of this communication strategy, offering enhanced possibilities for micro-segmentation, direct communication, and personalized actions.

The evolution of influencer marketing has led to the categorization of influencers as either macro or micro, based on their number of followers and the level of influence and prescription they wield. Deciding when, how, and why to utilize either category becomes a crucial determination in enhancing the effectiveness of fashion brand communications, forming a pivotal aspect of the planning process for various marketing and communication actions of fashion companies.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design that integrated qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques to assess the strategic impact of macro and micro fashion influencers on Instagram. The research was developed in three main phases:

- Qualitative Phase – Semi-Structured Interviews: In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with four professionals working in fashion marketing: two heads of marketing departments in fashion companies and two directors of marketing and communication agencies. The interview guide was structured around predefined themes (e.g., influencer selection criteria, engagement metrics, campaign effectiveness), while allowing for open-ended responses to explore emerging insights. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded manually using thematic analysis to identify recurrent patterns and categories. Verbatim quotes were selected based on their representativeness of common views or particularly illustrative insight. Inclusion criteria for quotes included clarity, relevance to the theme, and illustrative power; non-repetitive or vague responses were excluded from the final analysis.
- Qualitative Phase – Influencer Interviews: Similarly, interviews were conducted with four fashion influencers (three micro and one macro), all actively using Instagram for fashion content. Influencers were selected through purposive sampling based on follower count, engagement rate, and public collaboration history with fashion brands. Their answers were analyzed using the same thematic coding strategy as above. The analysis focused on perceived authenticity, interaction strategies, and self-perceived roles in influencing fashion consumption.
- Quantitative Phase – Survey and Content Analysis: A structured survey was administered to 113 respondents, mostly fashion students or graduates aged 18–30, identified as frequent users of Instagram and followers of fashion influencers. The questionnaire was distributed online and included 27 closed-ended questions across five thematic sections. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. In addition, content analysis was conducted on the Instagram accounts of four influencers (two macro, two micro), selected based on follower ratio and recent activity. A total of 2.5 months of posts were coded, focusing on content format, brand visibility strategies (tagging, mentions, hashtags), and audience engagement (likes, comments). Content was categorized inductively, and representativeness was ensured by triangulating patterns across the four influencer profiles.

All participants gave informed consent and were anonymized to preserve confidentiality. The data sources thus included: (1) primary interviews; (2) consumer survey data; and (3) public Instagram

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