


# Chapter 8


## The Relationship Between Influencer Exposure and Conspicuous Consumption: The Mediating Role of Social Comparison and FoMo

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the mediating roles of social comparison and FoMO in the effect of exposure to influencers on conspicuous consumption. The findings reveal a strong, positive, and significant relationship between the level of exposure to social media influencers and FoMO, and a moderate, positive, and significant relationship with conspicuous consumption. Additionally, the relationship between FoMO and conspicuous consumption is found to be strong, positive, and significant. However, no statistically significant relationships were identified between social comparison and the other variables. Moreover, FoMO was found to mediate the relationship between exposure to influencers and conspicuous consumption. The results suggest that, in the context of influencer exposure, FoMO functions as a significant external motivational factor influencing conspicuous consumption behavior.*

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## INTRODUCTION

With the spread of digitalization and social media, brands have started to turn to influencer marketing to reach their target audiences. Influencers can have an impact on factors such as brand awareness, trust, purchase intention and conspicuous consumption by establishing strong relationships with their followers thanks to their characteristics such as expertise, sincerity and reliability. In this context, the role of influencers in marketing strategies is becoming increasingly important.

Social media influencers (SMIs) are online personalities who reach large followings on social networking sites and are positioned as an integral part of social media today (Rüther et al., 2023, p. 1). With the increasing popularity of SMIs, influencer marketing has become an important and indispensable element in the marketing strategies of brands (Vrontis et al., 2021, p. 617). Influencers are perceived by consumers as celebrities who have achieved their fame through social media and are called social media stars (Hudders et al., 2021, p. 333). According to Freberg et al. (2011, p. 90), influencers are independent third-party endorsers who shape the attitudes of audiences through social media. According to Delbaere et al. (2021, p. 111), influencers are micro-celebrities who have a large following on social media platforms. Influencers develop customer-brand relationships in different product categories by interacting with their followers. There is a previously established trust relationship between influencers and their followers. For this reason, followers refer to the content produced by influencers in order to access reliable information and advice. Influencers are labelled as nano, micro, macro and mega influencers according to their number of followers. Nano influencers have 1,000-10,000 followers, micro influencers have 10,000-100,000 followers, macro influencers have 100,000-1,000,000 followers, and mega influencers have 1,000,000 followers or more (Campbell & Farrell, 2020, p. 47). In addition, influencers have areas of expertise such as gaming, sports, photography, travel, beauty, fashion, parenting (Santora, 2021).

Influencers are social media users who gain online fame by reaching a significant number of followers through remarkable and engaging social media profiles. Influencers initially created a strong identity by sharing their interests on their personal blogs, and with the emergence of social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok, they turned to social media. Influencers have a strong influence on the decision-making processes of their followers. For this reason, advertisers collaborate with influencers to promote products, brands, organisations or ideas through social media. This marketing strategy is called influencer marketing (Hudders et al., 2021, pp. 327-328). According to Lou and Yuan (2019, p. 59), influencer marketing is a marketing strategy that aims to direct consumers' brand awareness and purchasing decisions by using the influence of opinion leaders.

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