The impact of influencer marketing over brand awareness

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Dissertation written under the supervision of
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Abstract (português version)

Este trabalho de pesquisa visa o estudo do “influencer marketing”. Este concentrar-se-á particularmente no Instagram e no impacto que pode ter ao nível do conhecimento de marca por parte do consumidor. Para realizar este estudo, realizamos uma primeira revisão da literatura que dividimos em quatro partes. Primeiramente, analisamos as redes sociais e, o Instagram, considerado a rede social preferida para “Influencer marketing”. Em segundo lugar, estudamos o próprio, analisando mais profundamente as características do influencer. Além disso, interessa-nos o conceito de notoriedade da marca e os seus principais atributos de acordo com os modelos teóricos existentes. Por fim, estudamos os recursos do Instagram usados pelos influencers que tiveram, neste caso, impacto na notoriedade da marca. Portanto, perguntamo-nos o seguinte: “Até que ponto o marketing de influencers impacta o reconhecimento da marca?”

Na segunda parte desta pesquisa, formulamos três hipóteses para responder à nossa questão colocada anteriormente. A seguir, abordamos o número de seguidores, a coerência e os posicionamentos de produtos e estabelece uma ligação que avalia o impacto de cada variável sobre o reconhecimento da marca. Os estudos estatísticos realizados permitiram validar todas as hipóteses. Portanto, os resultados obtidos trouxeram recomendações. Em primeiro lugar, o número de seguidores é uma métrica importante a ser considerada quando o objetivo é gerar consciencialização. Em seguida, recomendamos que as marcas valorizem cada vez mais a consistência entre o influencer escolhido e sua imagem. Por fim, uma vez escolhidas, as marcas devem impor o tipo de colocação do produto e apresentá-lo de forma autêntica.

Palavras-chave: redes sociais - Instagram - marketing de influencers - reconhecimento da marca - número de seguidores - coerência - colocação de produtos

Title: The impact of influencer of marketing over brand awareness

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Abstract (English version)

This research work is oriented towards the study of “influencer marketing”. It will focus particularly on Instagram as a social media and the impact it has over brand awareness. To carry out this study, we conducted a literature review which we divided into four parts. First, we looked at social media and Instagram, that considered as the favored social network for influencer marketing. Secondly, we studied influence marketing, by looking deeper into influencer’s key characteristics. Besides, we are interested by the brand awareness concept and its key attributes according to the existing theoretical models. Finally, we studied the different features used by influencers that had an impact over brand awareness. Therefore, we asked ourselves: **“To what extent does influencer marketing impact brand awareness?”**

In the second part of this research, we formulate three research hypotheses to address our research question. The following tackles the number of followers, the coherence, and the product placements, and establishes a link evaluating the impact of each variable over brand awareness. The conducted studies allowed us to validate three out of three hypotheses. Therefore, the results obtained brought interesting recommendations. Firstly, the number of followers is an important metric to consider when the objective is to generate awareness. Next, we recommend that brands increasingly value the consistency between the chosen influencer and their image by rating high the commonly shared attributes. Finally, once chosen, brands should impose the type of product placement and present it in a subtle and authentic way.

Keywords: social media - Instagram - influencer marketing – brand awareness – number of followers – coherence – product placement

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I/ General overview:

Through this first section, we provided a general overview by defining on a firsthand, what was a social media network, and study on a secondhand Instagram as a platform among other social medias.

1. Social Media framing

Social media are defined as « a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content » (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The Web 2.0 includes, in this sense, the appearance of innovative interfaces and tools by which users are able generate content and form relationships (Huang et al., 2010). Users may be from different natures, varying from individuals to businesses (Larsson, 2017). Thus, social media constitute web platforms on which users can create profiles, friendships, and interact with each other using features like liking and commenting on content such as a photo, message, or video (Yang & Lee, 2018). Nowadays, the most used social media platforms where people interact and connect are by order Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram and TikTok (Statista, 2022). However, the use of these platforms is very diverse: platforms such as Facebook or Google+ are strongly focused on interactions between friends and family (Larsson, 2017), while other social networks like LinkedIn or Twitter are more focused on businesses and quick communication (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Additionally, other social networks focus on the community, highlighting and displaying user-generated content such as TikTok and Instagram (E. Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015). In this regard, social media platforms have become indeed a valuable tool and opportunity for businesses as they provide a cost-effective way for companies to interact and engage with many potential customers (Abashidze, 2022). Their usage advantages are today numerous and range from promoting a product, providing customer service, creating a brand loyalty, building a brand recognition etc. (Abashidze, 2022).
To have a more tangible overview, we rely on a market research conducted by Statista, revealing the most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2022 (Statista, 2022). We notice that the market leader is Facebook which was the first social network to exceed one billion registered accounts and now has almost 3 billion monthly active users, followed by YouTube and WhatsApp respectively (Statista, 2022). Instagram ranks right after the top three with 1.4 billion monthly active accounts (see figure 1).

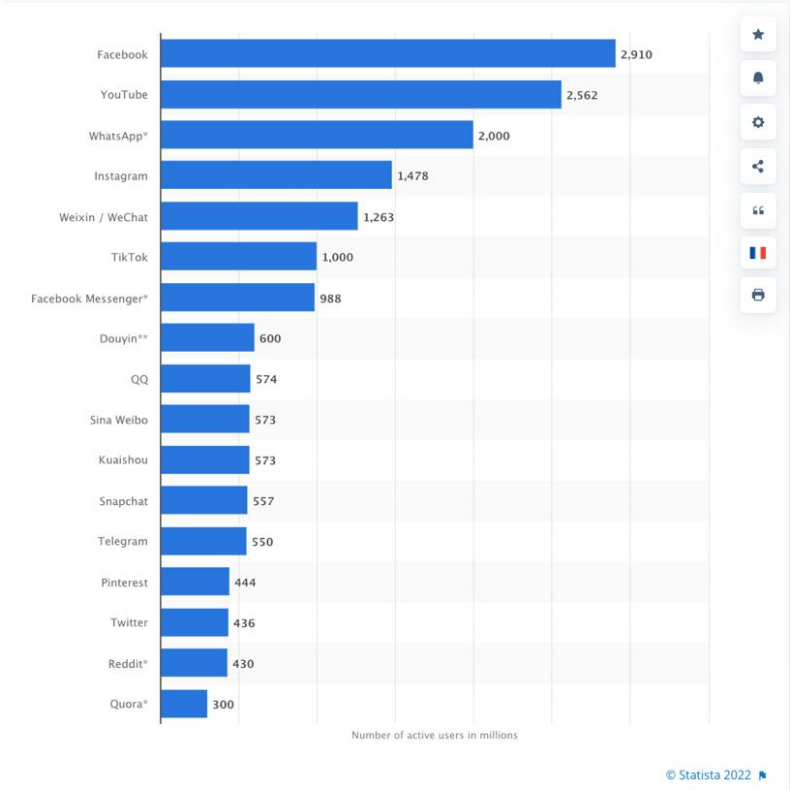

Figure 1: Most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2022, ranked by number of active user (in millions), Statista 2022

2. Instagram platform

This research work is mainly focused on Instagram as social media platform, so we were interested in this platform emersion and tried to comprehend why and how it represents a real opportunity for brands as well as for businesses.

2.1. History

Instagram was created in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, two American computer scientists. They sold their company to Facebook in 2012. Instagram is today an app that is available for free on the App Store and on the Google Play store (Linaschke, 2011). The platform fits perfectly in the continuity of the growing interest for social web apps (Linaschke, 2011). Indeed, it places its users at the center of the device it deploys, allowing them to express themselves through photos, videos, and exploring common interests about businesses, creators,

and communities in a context of an "*expressive use of the web*" (Thomas et al., 2020). Originally, what was designed to be a simple application allowing photo sharing between friends, has now become a very large community, including the presence of both consumers (individuals) and brands (companies). This social network is nowadays undeniably one of the most important communication and marketing tools for presenting products and services with visual descriptions (Carroll, 2017).

Additionally, Facebook's acquisition of Instagram in 2012 conditionally made the app more attractive to millions of users (Leaver et al., 2020). Indeed, the platform Instagram claims to have presently more than a billion active users worldwide (Constine, 2018). It is considered as one of the most popular and powerful apps of its generation across the world, with most of its users using it on their smartphone devices (Murray, 2021). The platform is particularly popular with millennials and Gen Z, especially in comparison to Facebook (Murray, 2021). Indeed, three quarters of Instagram users are under thirty-four: « *40% are between 13 and 24 years old and 31% between 24 and 34 years old* » (Statista, 2022). This goes in line with previous research stating that young generation motivations for social media usage continues to grow as the tools and technology embedded in social networking continue to evolve (Thomas et al., 2020).

2.2. Business opportunities

Nevertheless, Instagram presents an infinity of opportunities for the businesses that are present on the platform (Linaschke, 2011). Indeed, a company can leverage on the platform to promote its products or services. By connecting the physical and the digital, Instagram improves recognition as well as brand identity, and enables more effective interaction, not only for personal reasons, but also for business purposes (Sammis et al., 2015). In this sense, Instagram represents a real advantage for the marketing sector. The particularity that makes this platform different from other social media networks is the fact it applies a visual-based strategy (Wilkerson, 2021). Indeed, its marketing strategy based on visual effects has proven to be very effective, relying on the fact that a "*picture is worth a thousand words*" (Fred R. Barnard, 1921).

Businesses that create and share content on Instagram steadily increase their engagement rate with their followers/consumers. Consequently, many organizations using offline marketing

have gradually integrated social media into their marketing strategies to reach and communicate more effectively with their current and potential consumers (Wilkerson, 2021). In this regard, companies are increasing their presence on the platform. Indeed, it is estimated that 71% of American businesses use Instagram for Business (René, 2020). Their communication strategy on this channel is evolving and Instagram's annual advertising revenue has reached $26.46 billion in 2021 (Statista, 2021). Additionally, with a growth forecast as well as the presence of influencers on the platform to consolidate the branding strategies of companies, the platform, thus, seals its unique competitive advantage regarding the business opportunities it has to offer (Girard, 2018).

2.3. Shopping platform

More than half of businesses on Instagram state that Instagram will be the next most impactful social network for e-commerce (Pookulangara, 2017). This section will therefore attempt to analyze the impact of Instagram on e-commerce. Indeed, Instagram, initially created to share photos, has today become a professional tool to create advertisements and market a brand's products more easily (Pookulangara, 2017). This social network is now well known to be a perfect match for e-commerce. In fact, if used correctly, the platform's highly targeted visual advertising channels for products and brands and can, thus, lead to an important revenue stream for e-commerce businesses (Nedra et al., 2019). Aware of that, Instagram incrementally developed in this sense. The platform has added features through time to market itself as an online shopping platform offering, thus, virtual stores where signed in business can expose their products directly on the app. In 2016, the platform introduced the "Call-To-Action buttons" with the aim of triggering more e-commerce transactions (Pookulangara, 2017). These new features enable brands to transition their users from "discovery" to "action" mode. Indeed, the platform today presents a new "Instagram Shopping" feature (see figure 2), that allows users to click directly on the specific product and thus, obtain all the required information, including the selling price, the product description, and a link leading to the brand's direct website (Thomas, 2021). This intuitive way of proceeding proved to be a successful strategy since Instagram data states that « 130 million users are displaying product tags in shopping posts in a month » (Robert Romanowski et al., 2019). It is noteworthy to state that "Instagram (14%) ranks best among all social media sites with regard to the use of the "Shop" button when compared against Pinterest (13%), Twitter (13%), and Facebook (9%)" (Business Insider report 2015, as cited in

Miotk 2016, p. 50), (Robert Romanowski et al., 2019). Therefore, many companies use the platform to advertise their products or services to increase their sales and brand awareness.

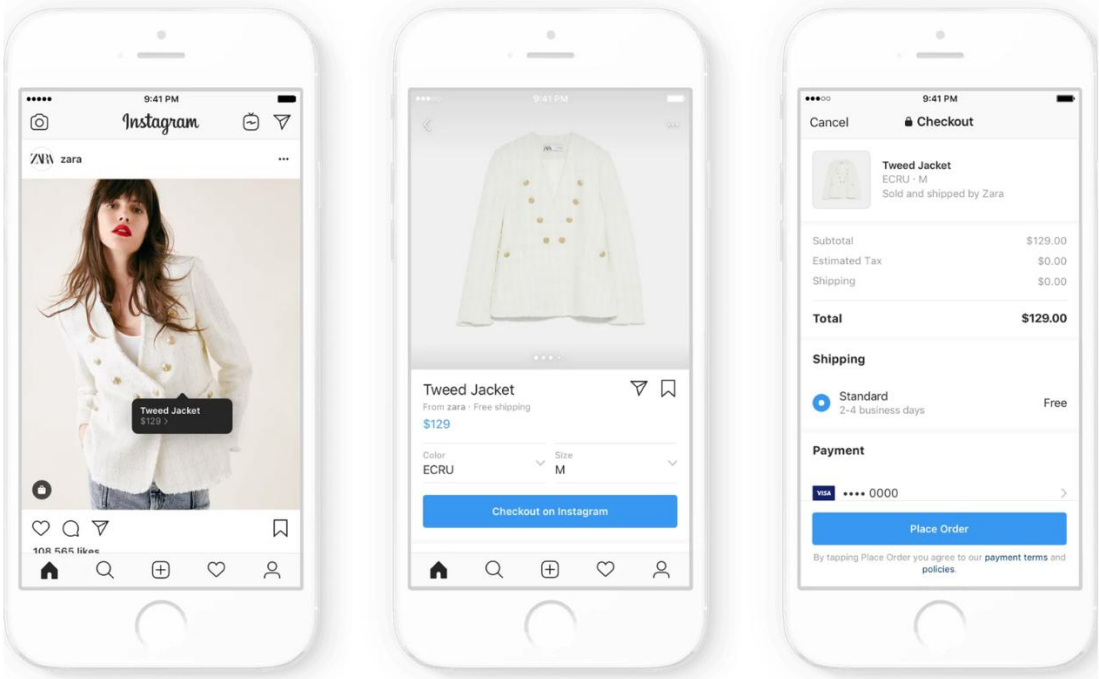

Figure 2: Example of Instagram shopping feature including checkout (Newton, 2019)

II/ Influencer Marketing

1. Framing & definition

An important type of marketing particularly present on Instagram is influencer marketing. Influencer marketing consists of finding opinion leaders, with an expertise in a field, to spread a message to a larger audience (Knetsch, 2022). It refers to engaging people who are influential to share messages online with their audience, in the form of sponsored content. Advertisers have always used celebrities to increase brand awareness. The reason is that people usually trust celebrities whom they admire or aspire to be like. The concept of influencer marketing is similar, but instead of celebrities from television or film, the chosen celebrities come from the world of social networks -also called- social media influencers (Sammis, Lincoln and

Pomponi,2015). However different from traditional celebrities, they are genuine and passionate about their field of expertise and are thus, seen as people that can be trusted when it comes to recommendations in their domains. Indeed, they use social networks to build credibility. This allows them to reach a large audience and even convince them (Gundová & Cvoligová, 2019). According to Knetsch, 2022, the advantage of social media networks is that there are very few restrictions in time, place, and cost. Influencer Sarah Trabelsy (2022) does not consider herself an "influencer" but rather a "content creator" given that her job is to share content and influence is only one consequence. As an outcome is born the concept of influencer marketing, defined as the "*strategy of promoting brands, products, or services with selected individuals who are judged most likely to exercise a significant influence on purchase decisions within a particular target market*" (Chandler & Munday, 2016).

2. Why should brand use influencer Marketing?

In the previous section, we defined what it implied to be an influencer. Let us now understand why brands are increasingly relying on this promotional technique.

2.1. Valuable expertise:

The influencer's inherent characteristics play a vital role in getting brands and marketers to follow them very closely (Lou & Yuan, 2019). First, most individuals that are considered influencers, are already established in a very particular field of choice (beauty, sport, travel, clothing, etc.). Indeed, as Hudders & Lou, 2022 state, influencers « tend to build expertise in a specific niche » in order to create an « authentic profile and distinguish themselves from peers » (Hudders & Lou, 2022). Therefore, consumers are more likely to accept the trust of influencers when they collaborate with brands that correspond to their area of expertise (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Aaker and Myers (1987) add that influencers who are seen as experts seem to be more persuasive and able to push consumers into a purchasing decision.

2.2. Superior Return on Investment (ROI):

A second advantage for brands is related to cost. Indeed, opting for a contract with an influencer, is more affordable compared to the excessive salary demanded by a celebrity for signing or

renewing an advertising contract (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Indeed, “80% of marketers consider influencer marketing-related actions to be effective, and 89% point out that ROI is comparable with, or even better than, other marketing actions” (Martínez-López et al., 2020) ; (Mediakix, 2019). The industry is growing and according to Haenlein et al., 2020, « Influencer marketing represents a $10 billion industry in 2020 and is becoming of increasing relevance for many firms ». The strategy of reaching consumers through content creators experts proves to be effective, especially on Instagram as the platform currently stands as the most popular tool for influencer marketing ranking first before Facebook, Tiktok or Youtube (Santora, 2022) (see figure 3). This leads to an increase in the use of the term “Instafamous”, a type of celebrity known particularly for their work on Instagram (Evans, Phua, Lim & Jun, 2017). Influencers on Instagram are followed by a lot of people when they post inspiring photos, use hashtags and are engaging with their followers (Evans, Phua, Lim & Jun, 2017). In conclusion, this marketing technique, consisting of using an influencer on Instagram to promote your brand, is increasingly used given the growing success of influencers with the general public on this platform (Jaakonmäki, Müller & Vom Brocke, 2017) and companies currently depend on this strategy to convey their marketing messages as well as to secure and « increase the marketing ROI » (Al-Shehri, 2021).

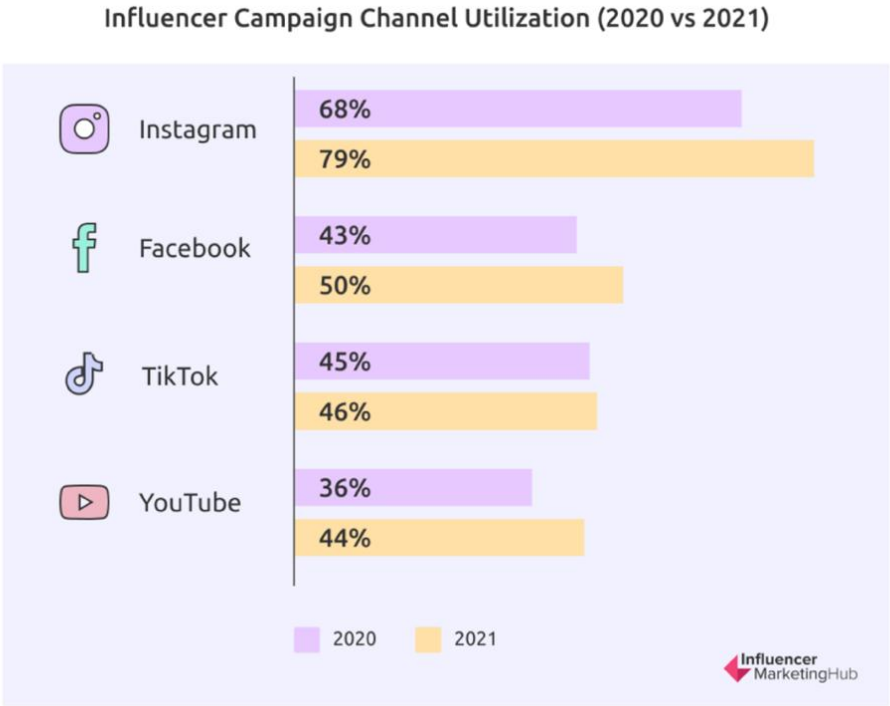

Figure 3: Benchmark report showing that Instagram is the preferred influencer marketing platform (Santora, 2022)

2.3.Impact on the brand:

According to Al-Shehri, 2021, the impact of influencer marketing strategy on the concerned brand is clear and established. Indeed, « *when a customer's friend on social media networks shares or recommends products or services on their social media accounts it affects their opinion about the brand and their decision-making* » (Al-Shehri, 2021). Influencers' affect this way the brand and focus on targeting consumers' wants and needs. Nowadays « *Social media networks have become platforms that companies consider for their images, brands, and sales revenue* » (Al-Shehri, 2021). As the impact of these tools proves to be more effective as digitalization is increasing, companies are increasingly offering influencer marketing services as you can see in the benchmark report conducted by Geyser, 2022 (Figure 4). Brands and companies can benefit in this sense from the influencer marketing strategies that are put in place as it allows the building of direct relationships with key consumers and encourages brand loyalty (Jun & Yi, 2020). As a matter of fact, by leveraging on the audience and the influence of the selected ambassador, the brand ensures to reach and seduce a wide carefully selected audience. This process improves, thus, the company's brand image as well as its popularity among a larger public. Besides, building an attractive brand image, influencer marketing allows brands to reach extremely large audiences, and therefore to develop their visibility and notoriety with a targeted audience (Ye et al., 2021b).

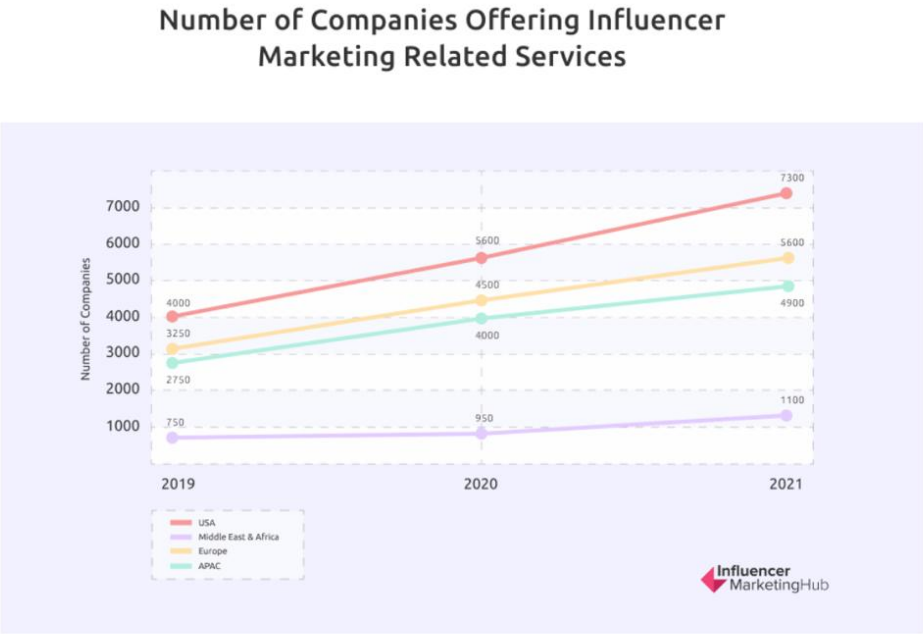

Figure 4: Benchmark report showing the number of companies offering influencer Marketing related services in the USA, Middle East & Africa, Europe and APAC (Geyser, 2022).

III/ Brand Awareness

1. Framing and definition

Brand awareness is described by Macdonald, 2003 « *as being essential for the communications process to occur as it precedes all other steps in the process*. ». Indeed, the fact that a brand is known and recognized by consumers helps in building an image, and furthermore a branding strategy. The awareness is the first and foremost step in the marketing sales funnel as you can see on figure 5 described by Saipan, 2019. Indeed, without brand awareness occurring, brand attitude and brand image cannot be formed, and the consumer won't consider the brand in the purchasing decision process (Macdonald,2003). There are, however, some cases where an individual makes a purchase without having any knowledge of the brand. This is for example the case of impulse purchases or when the purchase concerns low involvement product categories such as certain necessities (Hoyer & Brown, 1990). Nevertheless, building a solid brand presence allows a lower dependence on chance for a brand to be chosen. In this sense, the most effective way to increase brand awareness is to build an effective marketing plan that aligns with the branding strategy (Arthur Rooney, 1995). This type of strategy should focus on two elements: acquisition (short term) and brand building (long term). It is the balance between these two areas that will ensure the development of the brands' notoriety effectively (Doyle, 1990).

AIDA model

Awareness	Marketing must first attract the customers attention to the product. Customers become aware of a product and know it is available
Interest	Marketing should create an interest in the product. Customers will develop an interest in the product
Desire	Marketing must develop a desire to own or have the product so that customers actively want the product
Action	Marketing must prompt action to purchase, so that customers take steps to buy the product

Figure 5:Traditional marketing funnel following the AIDA model (awareness, interest, desire and action) (Sapian, 2019)

2. Brand Awareness from A. Aaker's perspective:

We will focus on the analysis of brand awareness according to the model proposed by David A. Aaker. Indeed, for this author, brand awareness represents "*the ability for a customer to recognize or remember that a brand exists and belongs to a certain category of products*" (Aaker, D., 1994). A definition supported by Keller, for whom it namely acts for the ability of an individual to remember the brand and the ease with which he thinks of this brand (Keller, 1993). In this regard, awareness is considered as an important strategic tool for a brand because it is the first necessary step to allow the shaping of the brand image in the minds of consumers (Keller, K., 1993). As a matter of fact, the pyramid model proposed by David A. Aaker makes it possible to establish the importance for a brand to have a higher awareness and thus, reach the *"top of mind"* as illustrated in the figure below from this author's book (figure 6).

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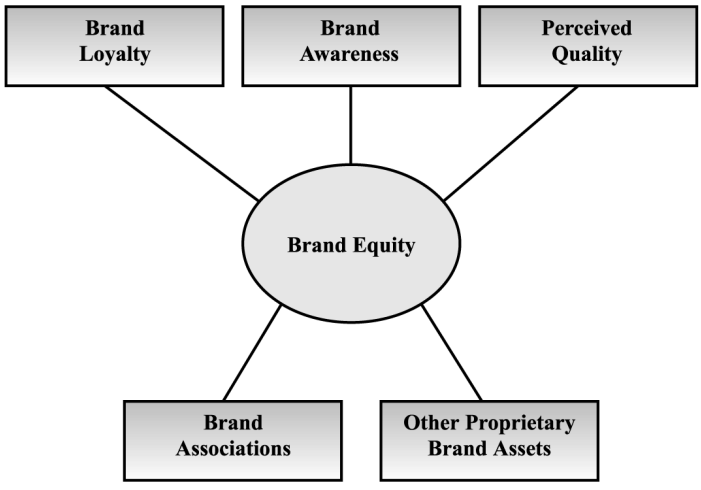
Figure 6:Brand awareness pyramid model proposed by David A. Aker (Aaker, 1991)

Indeed, following this model, the objective of any brand is to reach the top of the pyramid, i.e. the "*top of mind*", meaning that the brand is cited and mentioned first in its category. The second rank represents spontaneous awareness. The spontaneous awareness rate is the percentage of people who spontaneously mention a brand. In this case, consumers or non-consumers are able to name the brand when they are told the category of products in which it is found. The brands that are mentioned are considered as performing well in terms of branding since they are the

ones that are popping up in the minds of consumers when they think of this category of products (Keller, K., 1993). Moving on the pyramid, the third category expresses the assisted awareness on the third level. In this case, the aided awareness rate is the percentage of people who say they know a brand that is presented on a list or mentioned by an interviewer. In fact, this awareness rate shows a weak link between the brand and consumers. Indeed, at this level, consumers and non-consumers only remember if they have already been exposed to the brand, heard of it, or already seen it (Keller, K., 1993). Finally, the last rank is a notoriety failure in the sense that the brand is completely unknown to the consumer.

3. Influencer marketing in the brand awareness model:

According to Aaker (1991), the brand equity model is the result of five key dimensions which are: brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality brand associations and other proprietary brand assets as you can observe in figure 7. Throughout this study a particular attention has been given to the awareness component. In this regard, this section established its link to the brand equity model, which generates added value to companies and consumers through its impact on products and services (Aaker, 1994).



Source: Aaker (1991)

Figure 7:The five dimensions of the brand equity model proposed by David A. Aaker 1991

Indeed, one of the assets for generating effective brand awareness is ensuring a clear and strong brand personality (Molinillo et al., 2017b). This represents a real challenge for managers because it is difficult to install as a brand is intangible and immaterial. However, these

personality traits are important in generating consumer affection (Geuens et al., 2009). In this sense, one of the means to bring a personification to the brand is to rely on influencer marketing. The so-called influencers, through a transfer, can bring their personality traits to the commercial brand. According to (Carrillat et al., 2010), brand endorsement is successful when the properties of the individual are associated with the product in the minds of consumers. In fact, Aaker (1992) details the dimensions of a brand from a perspective that will help us align it with the concerned influencer strengths.

In this sense, the first important aspect on which this study focuses is salience, namely the fact that the brand is mentioned often and automatically. Salience revolves around depth (i.e., the likelihood and ease with which a brand element comes to mind) and breadth (the variety of purchase and use in which the brand element comes to mind for the consumer) as you can observe in the figure 8, representing Keller's brand equity pyramid model and illustrating the mentioned concepts. (1992).

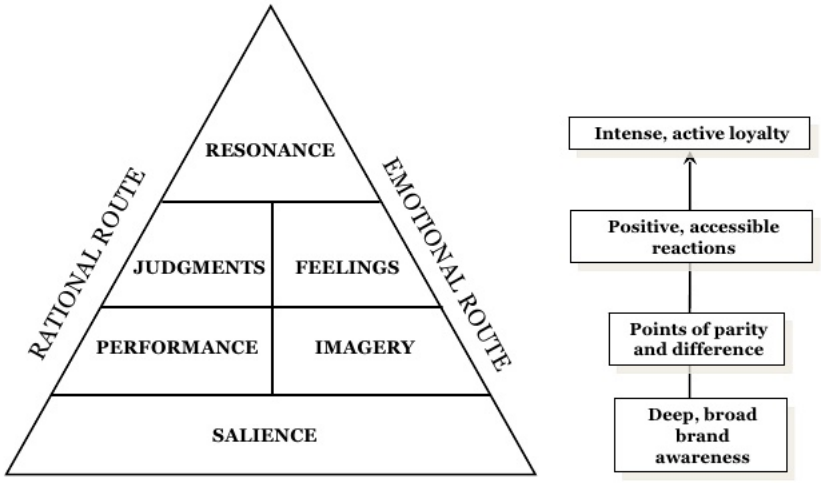


Figure 8=Keller's brand equity model (Keller & Aaker, 1992)

Subsequently, influencer marketing makes it possible to reach a high level of salience and convert to sales as the ultimate objective of an effective brand awareness is expressed on the customers' purchase decision and purchasing behavior later on the pyramid (Lou and Yuan, 2019). Similarly, performance reflects the ability of the product or service to meet the functional needs of consumers. The third aspect is the image. It depends on intrinsic and extrinsic properties (Keller & Aaker, 1992). Particular associations linked to the image of the brand refer to the type of people who use this brand, the chosen influencers who use the products as part of

the partnership thus, influence the image. The fourth criterion for assessing the strength of a brand is judgements. It refers to the personal opinions and evaluations of the brand by consumers based on associations relating to its performance and image. This judgment depends on quality, consideration (relevance that consumers attribute to the brand), superiority (ability of the brand to offer advantages superior to the competition), and credibility (perceived expertise, trust, and attractiveness of the brand) (Keller & Aaker, 1992). On this last point, influencers have a strong ascendancy as they easily share their opinion and evaluation of the brand leveraging on their community and expertise. Another aspect to analyze to better understand the brand is related to the feelings it arouses. There are five main types of feelings that can contribute to building a brand: warmth, fun, stimulation, security, and self-esteem. In this sense, a humorous influencer could be chosen if the desired feeling to provoke is fun while another content creator specialized in motivation and mental health could be more appropriate to achieve a self-esteem feeling. Finally, resonance describes the nature of the relationship between the consumer and the brand. This last criterion makes it possible to understand how the consumer feels in tune with the brand. The resonance will be characterized by its intensity and by the level of activity resulting from fidelity. Thus, it translates into four aspects: behavioral loyalty, attitudinal attachment, sense of community and active commitment (Keller & Aaker, 1992).

Therefore, it seems interesting to further explore the links between these different elements of brand equity and influencer marketing.

IV/ Instagram key features affecting Brand awareness

This research aims to analyze the different Instagram features used in a context of influencer marketing and evaluate their impact on brand awareness. From the product placement to the influencer's number of followers and coherence, we study the main particularities of Influencer marketing on Instagram and their impact on the brand awareness appraisal relying on the existing literature.

1. Number of followers

In this section, we establish the link and the potential impact the size of an influencer's community may have on brand awareness. Indeed, the size of an influencer's audience, namely defined by its number of followers remains one of the most important key metrics to be considered. In this regard, De Veirman states that « *a high number of followers and likes are likely to result in a wide reach of the (commercial) message* » (de Veirman et al., 2019). Thus, leveraging on an influencer's notoriety allow the brand to improve its brand image and achieve an effective awareness strategy. Indeed, reaching a wider audience and increasing the reach of the marketing message translates in a higher brand awareness (de Veirman et al., 2019). In addition to that, influencers can be divided into two main categories according to their audience metric: The macro-influencers, who namely possess between 500,000 and several million subscribers on all their social media; and the micro-influencer, that generally have less than 500,000 subscribers and have less visibility than the macro-influencer as you can observe on figure 9 (Kay et al.,2020; Sanders, 2022). Macro influencers reach a very large and wider audience due to their notoriety and large community. Nevertheless, according to studies, micro influencers show a higher engagement rate compared to the macro-ones since micro-influencers are perceived to be more authentic and reliable (Hendriana et al., 2022). Finally, one important component that should also be considered for this metric is the practice of unethical behaviors such as influencers purchasing fake followers and likes, to artificially inflate their apparent influencer status (Anand et al., 2018). This may result in disappointing outcomes for brands and companies as their marketing strategies fail to meet their goals.

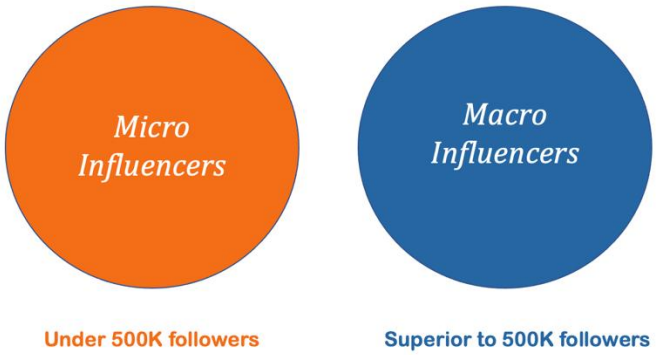


Figure 9:Type of influencers according to the number of followers (Sanders, 2022)

2. Coherence characteristics

We always find in the literature this constant need for common values, between the ambassador and the products promoted, to orchestrate an effective communication campaign. According to Smith et al., 2018, the influencers are considered as the new brand ambassadors of social media. In this sense, previous research points out that the effectiveness of advertising that promotes an influencer depends on the congruence or "*match-up*" between the ambassador and the advertised product, between the brand ambassador and the target audience and between the ambassador and the message (Kamins, 1990) (Lee, Thorson, 2008). On the consumer side, this need for similarity between two associated entities is explained by the fact that human beings tend to maintain coherence between their feelings (Heider's cognitive coherence theory, 1958). The "*match-up hypothesis*" supports the fact that an influencer is more effective in terms of purchase intention when there is consistency between him and the product he is promoting (Till & Busler, 2000). This hypothesis was first explored by Kamins (1990). He suggested that a person's attitude towards a brand had a significant connection with the consistency between the attributes of the influencer promoting the brand and the attributes of that brand. However, Törn, F. (2012), suggests that this only true for new brands. For the established ones, choosing someone that is not linked: a brand-incongruent endorser improves communication effects.

3. Product placement (Moderate or Explicit)

From simple users to influencers, Instagram content is mostly visual in nature. According to Huang & Su (2018), visual communication seems to have become the most preferred means of communication for young people. Therefore, "*Instagram is currently the most popular social network among young people around the world*" (Huang & Su, 2018). Sharing pictures rather than words has made it more ideal, convenient, and fascinating to connect with larger groups (Bakhshi et al., 2013). According to Sharma et al (2012), "*75% of all information processed in human brain is from visual communication*". This proves the effectiveness of Instagram to reach its users and can thus, affect whoever receives the information affectively (emotionally) or cognitively (rationally) or both simultaneously (Kujur & Singh, 2020). Moreover, the effect of visual communication is mainly related to the personal preferences of individuals, which further influences consumer behavior, attitude, and recall (Kujur & Singh, 2020). Additionally, a lot of information is available on social networks that can be time-consuming for users. Visual content

represents an alternative to textual information (Kujur & Singh, 2020). We can therefore, by mobilizing consumers with visual content, raise their awareness.

In this regard, one may raise the question *"How should an influencer present a product on Instagram in order to guarantee the most efficient brand awareness?*". That is, knowing which type of product placement is most appropriate: explicit product placement (product presented alone) as you can see on the figure 9 or moderate product placement (influencer carrying the product) as you can see on the figure 10 (Venus Jin & Muqaddam, 2019). The way products are presented on social networks can have effects on the awareness as well as the attitude of consumers towards a brand. According to Venus Jin & Muqaddam (2019), to ensure a successful product placement, the product shall be presented in a natural and spontaneous way, guaranteeing authenticity, and thus, relaying on the "Influencer Storytelling" technique. This proves to be more efficient since content creators do not convey the impression that the promotions are being directed and manipulated by the brand (Jin & Muqaddam, 2019). Therefore, the content will seem more authentic and sincere. Images should tell a story to help potential buyers imagine themselves using or wearing the product (Phule, 2019). According to Jin & Muqaddam (2019) posts where influencers only feature the product (explicit product placement) on Instagram can be seen as signals of inauthentic content and can negatively affect brand credibility. Nevertheless, relying on an explicit product placement on the official brand account reveals to be the most effective technique to adopt. Indeed, when visiting the brand account, users instinctively expect the brand to promote its products on that space and are thus, receptive to the promoted content (Jin & Muqaddam, 2019).

Figure 10: Example of an explicit product placement from the Instagram account of Noémie Balsen (Instagram, @noemiemakeuptouch)

Figure 11: Example of a moderate product placement from the Instagram Account of Ryan Reynolds (Instagram, @vancityreynolds)

V/ Hypothesis articulation:

Research objective

Throughout this research, we seek to understand the impact that influencer marketing plays on brand awareness among consumers and formulate in the regard the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1:

In respect to the literature, the number of followers an influencer possess has a positive influence over the brand awareness. As a matter of fact, a higher number of followers leads to a higher reach of the conveyed message (de Veirman et al., 2019). In addition to that, several authors have claimed that the macro-influencers, compared to micro-ones, relish of a greater visibility and are the most effective for achieving awareness (Hendriana et al., 2022; Kay et al., 2020). We decided to test these claims empirically, and formulated in this sense the following hypothesis:

H1: A macro influencer will generate higher brand awareness than a micro-influencer.

Hypothesis 2:

In view of the literature that was conducted, we realize that the "match-up hypothesis" suggests that an influencer is more effective when there is consistency between him and the product he is promoting (Lee, Thorson, 2008). Indeed, Kamins (1990), highlights that when shared values and attributes are put into light, the need for similarity (supported by Heider's cognitive coherence theory, 1958), will lead to a far greater reach of message. We thus, wonder if brand awareness depends on this consistency. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: An influencer that is perceived to be coherent with the brand, will generate higher brand awareness compared to an influencer that is not.

Hypothesis 3:

The literature review emphasizes the importance of visual content (Kujur & Singh, 2020) and claims that the manner a product is presented during a promotion: moderate or explicit affects both brand awareness and attitude (Venus Jin & Muqaddam, 2019). In this sense, Phule (2019) emphasizes that a subtle product placement will convey authenticity while Jin & Muqaddam (2019) condemn posts only featuring the product explicitly on Instagram as they are perceived to be signals of inauthentic content. We, thus, study how product placement affects brand awareness by testing these claims through the following hypothesis:

H3: A moderate product placement will generate higher brand awareness than explicit product placement.

VI/ Methodology:

Data gathering:

To collect primary data in order to challenge the formulated hypotheses, a survey has been carried out. As a matter of fact, this is the most common method for properly collecting data (Mooi, Sarsted, & Mooi-Reci, 2018). The purpose of this research is mainly to assess brand awareness according to the hypothesis criteria's that were defined, in a context of influencer

marketing. The aim is to understand the impact of Instagram's conducted influencer marketing over brand awareness.

Type of survey:

For the objective of this research, an online survey (see appendix) was conducted where respondents were reached through non-probabilistic purposive sampling method composed of Instagram users mainly in the United Kingdom (Mooi et al., 2018). This type of questionnaire has certain advantages. Indeed, according to Lefever (2007) "online surveys can access large and geographically distributed populations and achieve quick returns" (Lefever et al., 2007). Additionally, it offers, the possibility of having very quick responses respecting the anonymity.

Survey design:

For this survey, we mainly used five-point Likert scales and differential semantic scales as it is *« one of the most fundamental and frequently used psychometric tools in educational research »* (Joshi et al., 2015). The questionnaire measures awareness and perception, regardless of whether the respondent masters the subject or not. It was therefore not necessary to add the option "I don't know" (Mooi et al., 2018). In the introductory section of the questionnaire, we only presented the context in which this survey was carried out as well as my name. After that, an importance on the anonymity and confidentiality of the survey is placed. According to Mooi (2018), it is necessary to keep this page very short, especially for mobile surveys (Mooi et al., 2018). The sample consisted of total 68 respondents. However, the questionnaire listed 3 eliminatory questions at the very beginning that wouldn't allow respondents to further participate in the survey if they didn't meet the following criteria: have an Instagram account, actively use Instagram, and follow Instagram influencers.

In an effort to facilitate the progress of the respondent through the survey, the method used for the order of the questions is the funnel method (Mooi et al., 2018). The questionnaire begins with exploratory questions regarding demographics (age and gender). Then, the questionnaire presents ASOS, the studied brand in the following context as well as each of the variables into play. Indeed, on the first place, respondents were presented with a brief description of the brand and had to conduct a general brand awareness assessment towards ASOS. Next section

introduced, an Instagram post of two influencers used by the brand: a macro influencer, in this case -Millie Court- and a micro influencer, in this case -Georgia Bayliss-. The respondents were presented with a short description about both influencers with a sponsored post by ASOS where we can see the models wearing ASOS brand clothes, as well as indications about their number of followers. After rating their notoriety, next section, introduced in this sense, an assessment of the perceived coherence between these two same influencers and the studied brand. Indeed, the same models, who have different professional backgrounds, were drawn to assess the consistency of their link with the brand. Finally, we tested the differences in terms of product placement, taking in this example an ASOS post with moderate placement, i.e., an influencer wearing the products of the brands subtly, and another post where we only could see the brand's products presented and highlighted. At last, following this series of questions, we conclude with a final notoriety test to see if exposure to influencer marketing had an impact on the respondent's awareness and perception.

Launch of the survey

The survey was set online through the Qualtrics platform and was launched on April 20, 2022, on WhatsApp group of ESCP UK students as well as on via my personal contacts. Each person who answered the questionnaire was invited to share it with UK based participants to obtain a maximum of respondents. It was then closed on April 26. In the end, 68 people responded to the survey. Of these, 18 did not meet the conditions to participate. They do not have an Instagram account, actively use it, or follow influencers. This gives a total of 50 valid answers.

VII/ Result analysis

Descriptive analysis of the sample:

In the questionnaire, two questions were of a socio-demographic nature. The first is the gender of the respondent. As a reminder, 50 people gave valid answers. The table 1 represents a histogram of the respondent's age distribution. Among these people, 70% were women against only 30% of men, which represents 15 respondents of the sample. Then, each respondent had to indicate their age, in nominal form. As shown in the histogram of table 2, the age varies from

19 as a minimum and 27 as a maximum. 23 out of the 50 respondents are aged between 23 and 24 years-old, which represents 46% of the sample. This distribution could cause a bias in our empirical research. It can be explained by the mode of distribution of the survey, namely on a group of students at ESCP, but also by one of the conditions of participation. One of these two conditions was to have an Instagram account. As previously stated in the literary review, Instagram is "*the most popular social network among young people around the world*" (Huang & Su, 2018).

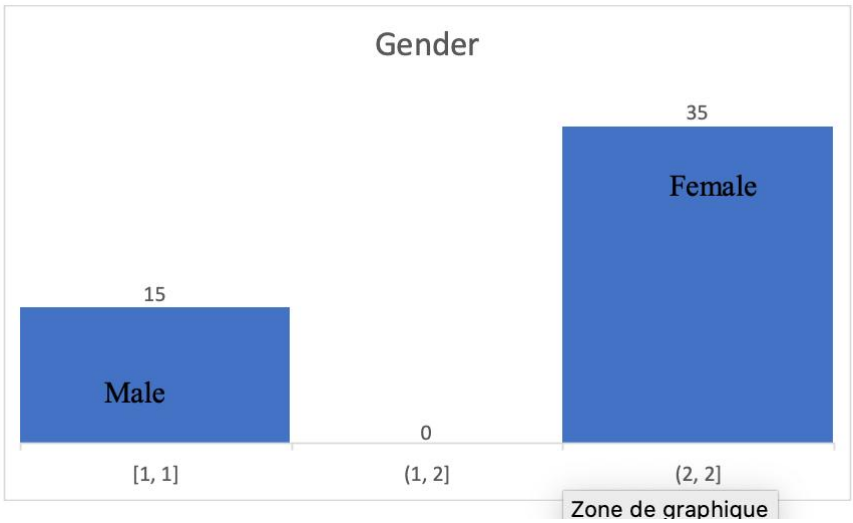


Table 1: Frequency table presenting the respondent's gender

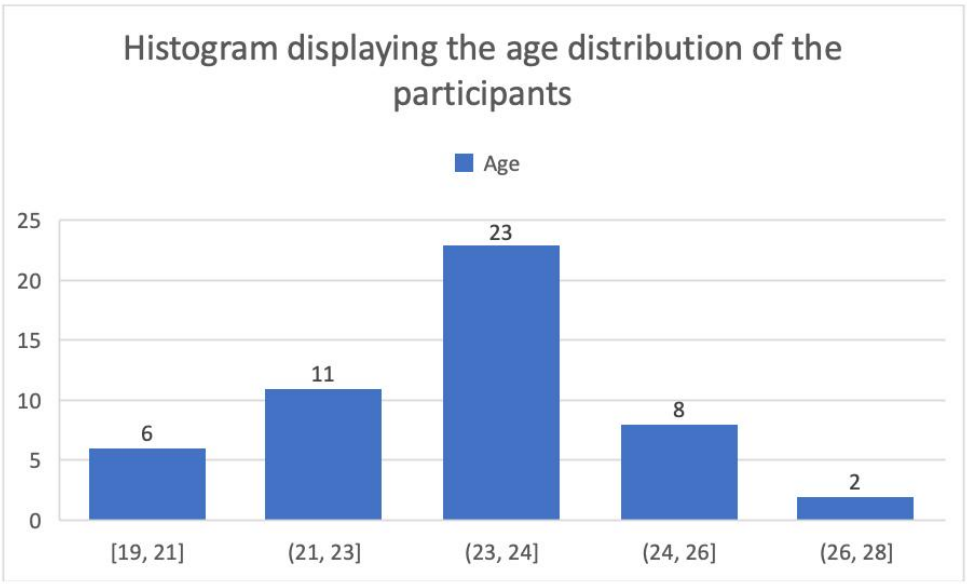


Table 2: Histogram presenting the respondent's age distribution

Validity test:

After going through the date, we want to proceed to a validity test, by testing for the equality of variances to determine whether the variances or standard deviations of two or more groups differ. Bartlett's and Levene's tests to compare variances are the commonly used tests (Malhotra et al., 2017). For convenience purposes we rely in this case on Bartlett's test of sphericity, that should be significant (at 5% level, $\alpha < 0.05$). The hypotheses are therefore the following, and Bartlett's test is used to test the null hypothesis:

H0: the variances of the sample drawn are identical, against the alternative hypothesis,
H1: at least two of them are different

Bartlett's K-square	df = 13	p-value < 2.2e-16

Table 3: Table presenting Bartlett's K-square score

The result is displayed on table 3. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, the requirement is met because the significance level is smaller than 0.05. The items' variances do differ from one another. We can thus, exclude the homogeneity of variances and conclude on the validity test.

Reliability test:

In this reliability analysis, we try to prove that the measurements have no random error. The aim is therefore to verify that the scales consistently measure what they are supposed to. Thus, we rely on Cronbach's alpha index with a minimum of 0.7 to prove this internal homogeneity. The results are presented on table 3, considering the studied variables for the questionnaire.
Reliability test:

Cronbach Alpha	Lower confidence interval	Upper confidence interval
0.9203831	0.9113603	0.9288619

Table 4: Statistical Reliability test presenting the Cronbach's alpha index of our sample

We can, thus, observe on the table that the index value for the Cronbach Alpha is above the required minimum of 0.7 ($0.92 > 0.7$). This statistical result indicates acceptable internal consistency, meaning the items of the carried study measure the same characteristic coherently.

Normality test:

In a process of exploring our statistical data into more details, we decide to look for normality. Indeed, normality tests make it possible to check whether the data follows a normal distribution law or not. This will allow us to choose the right parameters and conduct the appropriate tests effectively in future analysis. On the first hand, we graphically look at our dependent variable, which is in this case the brand awareness, and look over its distribution through a histogram bar chart.

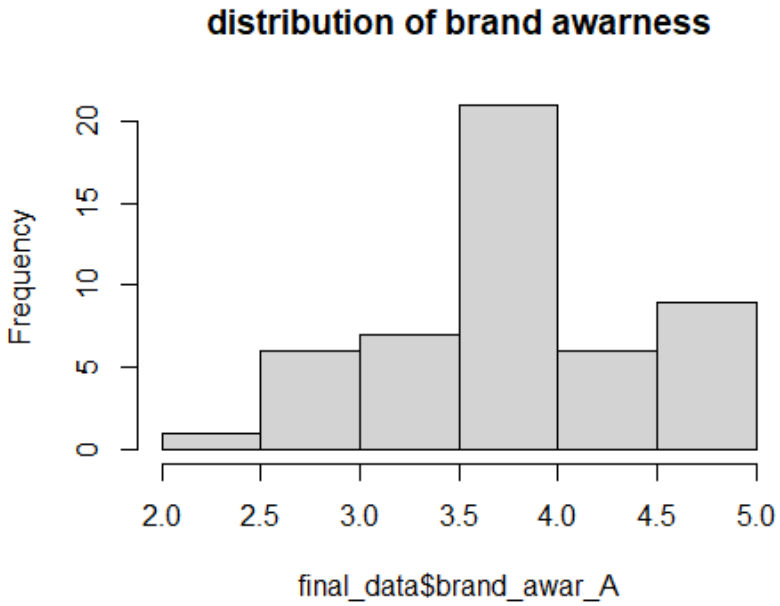


Figure 1.1: Histogram presenting brand awareness distribution frequency

At first glance, we can see that our data does not seem to follow a normal distribution that is identified with a bell-shaped curve. In this sense, to accompany this visual representation we decide to rely on a normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk normality test. Normality tests involve the null hypothesis, which states that the variable that generated the sample follows a normal distribution. Thus, a low p-value indicates a low risk of being wrong in concluding that the data is non-normal. For testing purposes, we define the following:

- H0: the sample follows a normal law
- H1: the sample is not following a normal distribution law

Shapiro-Wilk normality test

W	P value
0.95226	0.04229

Table 5 : Table showing the Shapiro-wilk normality test score

If the p-value is less than or equal to the significance level, you can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that your data does not follow a normal distribution. In our case,we can observe in table 5 that the calculated P-value is equal to 0.042 which is less than alpha (0.05). We, thus, reject the H0 hypothesis and accept the H1, stating that our data is not normally distributed.

VII/ Hypothesis analysis

Hypothesis 1:

As a reminder, in the wake of our research, we want to test the following hypothesis:
H1: A macro influencer will generate higher brand awareness than a micro-influencer.

In this scenario we want to know if by their notoriety, macro influencers will have higher impact on brand awareness compared to micro influencers. To start with, we explore the two subjects: micro influencer and macro influencer through descriptive statistics:

Type	Count	Mean	Standard Deviation
Macro	50	3.44	1.13
Micro	50	2.14	1.07

Table 6 : Table displaying the descriptive statistics for Hypothesis 1

We observe on table 1.1 a difference in means between the two groups with a higher perceived notoriety value for the influencer having the highest number of followers. We continue illustrating this difference by graphing a boxplot presenting the observed means according to the types of influencer's perceived notoriety.

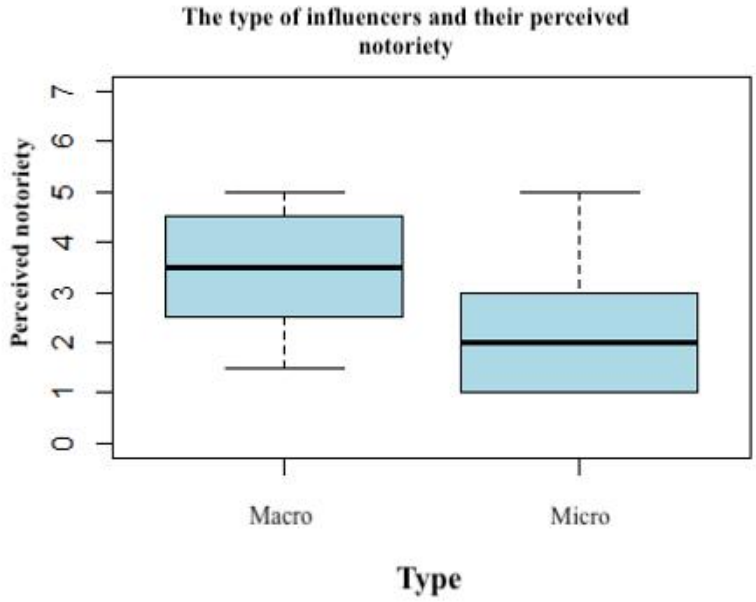


Figure 12:Boxplot presenting the perceived notoriety means according to the type of influencer

The boxplot confirms the superior score observed for the macro influencer (3.44 over 5) that is seen to have a higher notoriety and fame compared to the micro influencer whose mean is of 2.14 over 5 and encounters less notoriety in this case. Subsequently, to statistically assess the observed difference between the two groups according to the boxplot and eventually conclude on which group generates a higher brand awareness in comparison to the other, a paired sample T-test is performed. In this case, the same respondents evaluate the notoriety of the two influencers and a measurement is taken on a subject before and after intervention. That is why the paired t-test is appropriate, as we test two dependent groups to see if they are significantly different. It will thus, allow us to compare the means of these two groups (micro and macro) to infer, on a second hand, a relationship between the influencer type and brand awareness.

These are the two sub-hypothesis we set:

H0: $\mu 1=\mu 2$ (the means of the two influencers' groups is equal)
H1: $\mu 1$ is different from $\mu 2$ (the means of the two influencers' groups is unequal)

T	Df	P value	Conf. Interval	Mean of the differences
7.8032	49	3.825e-10	0.965- 1.634	1.3

Table 7 : Table displaying the T-test of the hypothesis 1

We recall that the significance level of the P value is set at 0.05.

- If the p-value is greater than 0.05, we should accept the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant difference between the two groups.
- If the p-value is lower than 0.05, we should reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant difference between the two groups.

In our case, we observe that our P-value is equal to 3.825e-10 which is inferior to 0.05. We can thus conclude that the difference between the two groups is therefore significant (t test = 7.8032, Df = 49, p = 3.825e-10). It can therefore be said that influencer's types have an impact over brand awareness.

Lastly, we conduct a correlation analysis throughout the Kendall's correlation coefficient. Indeed, correlation is a bi-variate analysis that measures the strength of association between two variables and the direction of their relationship. In this case, Kendall's coefficient, also called tau, assesses the association between two measured variables on an ordinal scale such that each observation of these variables can be ranked. "*Pearson's, Spearman's and Kendall's correlation coefficients are the most commonly used measures of monotone association, with the latter two usually suggested for non-normally distributed data*" (Chok, N. S., 2010). As our data is not normally distributed, we were left with the Spearman's and Kendall's coefficients. But "*Kendall's coefficient produces consistently narrower confidence intervals, and might thus be preferred*" (Puth et al., 2015). In fact, Kendall rank correlation (non-parametric) is an alternative to Pearson's correlation (parametric) when the data has failed one or more assumptions of the test. This is also the best alternative to Spearman correlation (non-parametric) when the sample size is small and has many tied ranks. Kendall's coefficient values can range from −1 to 1. A positive value indicates a positive association while a negative one also indicates a negative association. The higher the value, the stronger the association.

Following our sample data, we form the following sub-hypothesis while conducting the test:

- H0: There is no association between brand awareness and the number of followers an influencer might possess
- H1: the number of followers of an influencer has an impact over the brand awareness it generates.

The p-value indicates the likelihood of obtaining the sample, If the p-value is less than or equal to a predetermined significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative one.

Kendall's rank correlation tau evaluation Micro influencer's impact over brand awareness:

Z	P value	Tau
4.3955	1.105e-05	0.488137

Kendall's rank correlation tau evaluation Macro influencer's impact over brand awareness:

Z	P value	Tau
7.2925	3.042e-13	0.8000177

We can observe from the tables that we have a significant P-value that is less that 0.05; we reject the null hypothesis and affirm that the number of followers has a positive impact over the brand awareness, which means that the higher is the number of followers, the higher will be the brand awareness that is generated. In this sense, our results also highlight the fact Macro influencers, hold a higher impact over brand awareness compared to the micro influencer (0.80>0.48).

We thus, affirm our 1st hypothesis, stating that a macro influencer will generate higher brand awareness than a micro-influencer.

Hypothesis 2:

The next hypothesis we want to test is the following:
H2: An influencer that is perceived to be coherent with the brand, will generate higher brand awareness compared to an influencer that is not.

In this scenario we want to know if an influencer that is seen to share similarities and coherence with the brand will generate a higher brand awareness compared to an influencer that is not perceived in the same way. We kept the same Instagram models used for the first hypothesis. The first macro influencer, named Millie court is a tv reality actress that is thought to not hold much legitimacy in the modeling and fashion world, thus, is not supposed to be seen as coherent

as the second micro influencer, named Georgia Bayliss, who is a 26-year-old British fashion model and mannequin since her childhood. To start with, we explore the two influencers: micro influencer and macro influencer through descriptive statistics

Type	Count	Mean	Standard Deviation
Macro	50	3.07	0.535
Micro	50	4.19	0.856

Table 8: Table displaying the descriptive statistics for Hypothesis 2

We can also observe in this case a difference in means between the two categories of influencers with a higher perceived coherence value for the Micro influencer - Georgia Bayliss- who is already a fashion model posing for many brands in the fashion industry. We continue illustrating this difference by visually graphing our data through a boxplot presenting the observed means according to the types of influencer's perceived coherence.

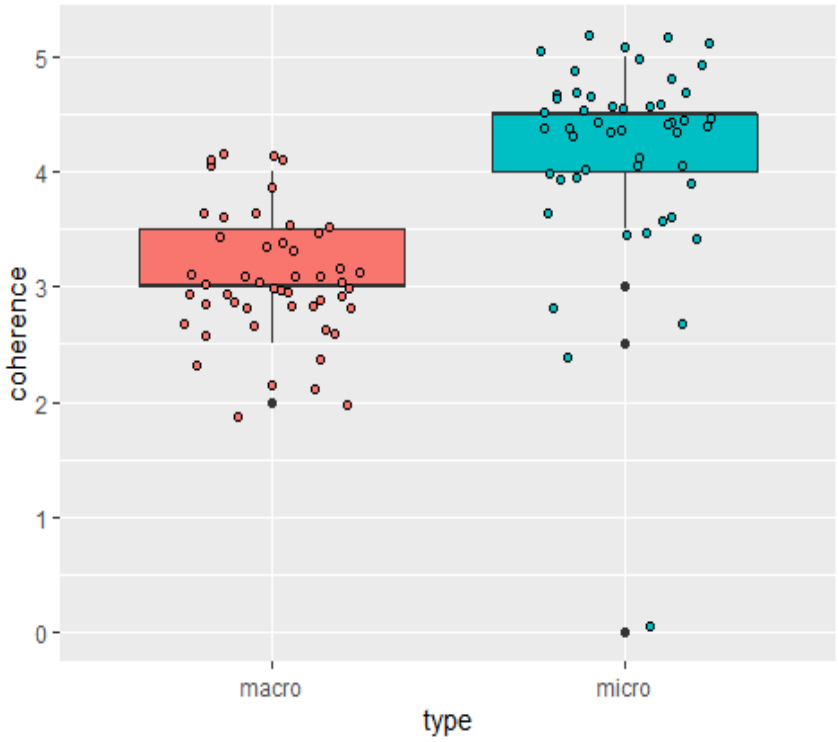


Figure 13:Boxplot presenting the perceived coherence means according to the type of influencer

The boxplot confirms the superior score observed for the micro influencer Georgia, who scores at 4.19 over 5, and is seen to have a higher coherence and share more similitudes with ASOS as a brand compared to the macro influencer, Millie, whose mean is of 3.09 over 5, and

encounters a generally good but lower coherence score in this case. Subsequently, to statistically assess the observed difference between the two groups according to the boxplot and eventually conclude on which group generates a higher brand awareness in comparison to the other, a paired sample T-test is performed for the same reasons as addressed before. In order properly conduct the t-test, we set the following hypotheses:

- H0: μ1=μ2 (the means of the two influencers' groups is equal)
- H1: μ1 is different from μ2 (the means of the two influencers' groups is unequal)

T	Df	P value	Conf. Interval	Mean of the differences
-14.934	49	2.2e-16	0 -0.9692887	-1.12

Table 9: Table displaying the T-test of the hypothesis 2

We can see in this case, that our P-value is equal to 2.2e-16 which is inferior to 0.05. We can thus conclude that the difference between the two groups is therefore significant (t test = -14.934, Df = 49, p = 2.2e-16). It can therefore be said that influencer's coherence with the brand has an impact over brand awareness.

Finally, for the same previously stated reasons, we perform a Kendall correlation tau to measure the ordinal association between our two variables: In this case the coherence of the influencers with the brand, and the generated brand awareness. Following our sample data, we form the following sub-hypothesis while conducting the test:

- H0: There is no impact from the coherence of an influencer with the brand over the brand awareness it generates.
- H1: the coherence of an influencer with the brand has an impact over the brand awareness it generates.

The p-value indicates the likelihood of obtaining the sample, If the p-value is less than or equal to a predetermined significance level (α = 0.05), we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative one.

Kendall's rank correlation tau evaluation Micro influencer's impact over brand awareness:

Z	P value	Tau
4.3955	1.105e-05	0.488137

Kendall's rank correlation tau evaluation Macro influencer's impact over brand awareness:

Z	P value	Tau
7.2925	3.042e-13	0.8000177

We can observe from the tables that we have a significant P-value that is lower than 0.05; we reject the null hypothesis and affirm that the coherence of an influencer has a positive impact over the brand awareness, which means that the higher is the coherence shared between the influencer and the brand, the higher will be the brand awareness that is generated. In this sense, our results also highlight the fact our fashion model micro influencer -Georgia-, holds a higher impact over brand awareness compared to tv reality star and macro influencer -Millie- since the latter scores at 0.49 compared to 0.80.

Consequently, we can validate our 2nd hypothesis, stating that an influencer that is perceived to be coherent with the brand, will generate higher brand awareness compared to an influencer that is not.

Hypothesis 3:

Lastly, the third hypothesis we want to test is the following:
H3: A moderate product placement will generate higher brand awareness than explicit product placement.

In this scenario, we want to assess if products that are explicitly displayed on an Instagram post, meaning we can only see the product itself, will generate a lower brand awareness compared to moderate product placements, that are subtly presented. To start with, we explore the two groups: moderate and explicit through descriptive statistics:

Type	Count	Mean	Standard Deviation
Explicit	50	1.7	0.452
Moderate	50	3.3	0.920

Table 10: Table displaying the descriptive statistics for Hypothesis 3

We observe a difference in means between the moderate and the explicit groups with a way higher mean for the moderate groups that are perceived as more appealing and educative compared to the explicit product placements. We continue illustrating this difference by graphing a boxplot presenting the observed means according to the types of product placements:

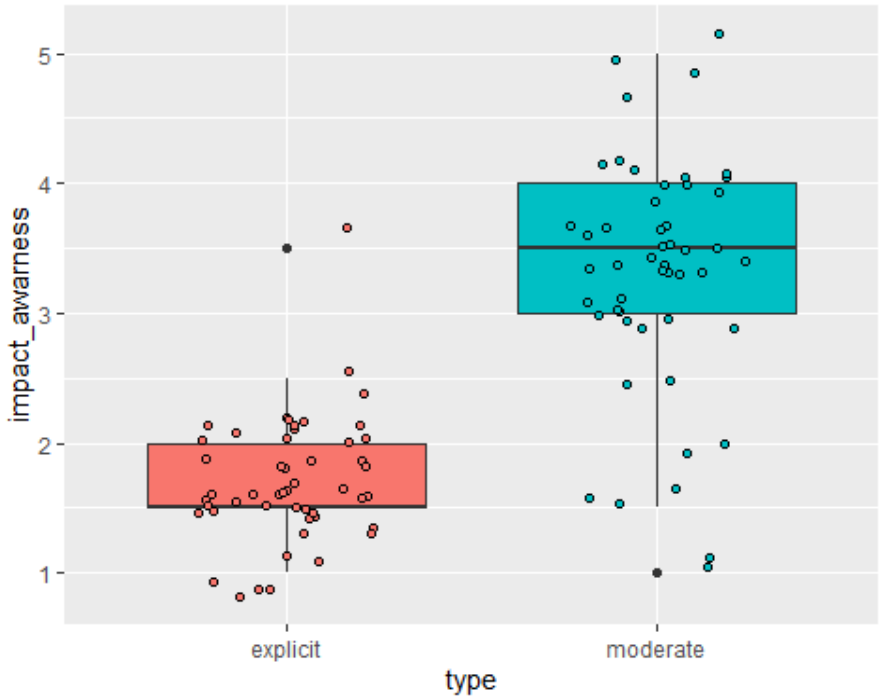


Figure 14:Boxplot presenting the brand awareness' impact according to the product placement types

The boxplot visually reinforces the superior score observed for the moderate group, who scores at 3.3 over 5, and is seen to generate a higher brand awareness compared to the explicit group, that just shows ASOS products on an Instagram post without any influencer or model presenting them subtly. The latter mean is of 1.7 over 5 and is perceived to be a less appealing compared to the 3.3 moderate's mean.

Ultimately, to statistically assess the observed difference between the two groups according to the boxplot and eventually conclude on which group generates a higher brand awareness in comparison to the other, a paired sample T-test is performed for the same addressed reasons. In order properly conduct the t-test, we set the following hypothesis:
H0: $\mu 1=\mu 2$ (the means of the two product placement modalities are equal)
H1: $\mu 1$ is different from $\mu 2$ (the means of the two product placement modalities are unequal)

T	Df	P value	Conf. Interval	Mean of the differences
13.292	49	2.2e-16	1.84 - 1.35	1.6

Table 11: Table displaying the t-test for Hypothesis 3

According to the result of the performed paired t-test, we can conclude, that our P-value is equal to 2.2e-16 which is inferior to 0.05. We can thus conclude that the difference between the two groups is therefore significant (t test = -13.292, Df = 49, p = 2.2e-16). A conclusion is made stating that the way a product is place has an impact over the generated brand awareness.

Finally, following the same methodology and reasons, we will perform a Kendall correlation tau to measure the ordinal association between our two variables: In this case the product placement: Moderate or explicit, and the generated brand awareness. Following our sample data, we form the following sub-hypothesis while conducting the test:

- H0: There is no association between brand awareness and the way a product is placed.
- H1: the way a product is placed has an impact over the brand awareness it generates.

The p-value indicates the likelihood of obtaining the sample, If the p-value is less than or equal to a predetermined significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), we reject the null hypothesis.

Kendall's rank correlation tau evaluation of Moderate product placement impact over brand awareness:

Z	P value	Tau
5.2343	1.656e-07	0.5886367

Kendall's rank correlation tau evaluation of Explicit product placement impact over brand awareness:

Z	P value	Tau
4.4436	8.848e-06	0.5266949

We can observe from the tables that we have a significant P-value that is lower than 0.05 for both variables; we thus, reject the null hypothesis and affirm that the product placement on Instagram's post has a positive impact over the brand awareness. In this sense, our results also highlight the fact that both our coefficients are close: 0.58 for the moderate product placement correlation with the brand awareness against 0.52 for the explicit product placement correlation with the brand awareness. The close coefficients allow us, however, to conclude over the positive impact that product placement holds over brand awareness and to affirm the slight superiority of the moderate product placement over the explicit one.

We can thus, validate our 3rd hypothesis, stating that a moderate product placement will generate higher brand awareness than explicit product placement.

Summary of the results:

A conclusion can be built from this empirical study carried on the impact of influencer marketing over brand awareness. Indeed, we can now affirm that the three formulated hypotheses are validated. The results are consequently shown in the following table:

	Hypothesis	Validated or not
H1	A moderate product placement will generate higher brand awareness than explicit product placement.	Validated.
H2	An influencer that is perceived to be coherent with the brand, will generate higher brand awareness compared to an influencer that is not.	Validated.
H3	A moderate product placement will generate higher brand awareness than explicit product placement.	Validated.

PART 3: General conclusion

Theoretical contributions

As a reminder, the purpose of this study is to answer the following research question: "To what extent does influencer marketing impact brand awareness". The following notes summarize the obtained results. On a firsthand, the results drawn from the first hypothesis show us, that among the micro and macro-influencers, it is the macro-influencers that generate the highest level of awareness. Our analysis therefore confirms the words of De Veirman who previously stated that "*a high number of followers and likes are likely to result in a wide reach of the message*". It is indeed the case, because macro influencers are more followed and thus famous, so they

deliver their message to a wider audience who will therefore know the form a more extensive awareness compared to the narrowed audience of micro influencers. It is therefore advisable for brands to target the largest communities if the goal is to generate awareness.

Secondly, Regarding the impact of coherence over brand awareness. We were able to provide details regarding the match-up hypothesis according to which an influencer is more effective when there is consistency between him and the product he is promoting (Till & Busler, 2000). Indeed, the literary review tells us that influencers are more effective when they are perceived as consistent with the brand (Kamins, 1990; Till & Busler, 2000). Our hypothesis test largely validates the theoretical model with a score of 0.8000177 for the micro influencer that is in our case consistent with the studied brand, against half of the score for the influencer that is not, (i.e., 0.488137 for the macro influencer). This may be explained by the fact that as Heider's cognitive coherence theory previously mentioned, the need for similarity between two associated entities is a constant inner quest of each consumer. It is noteworthy to point out here that the influencers' perceived fame has not impacted the importance of the place given to its coherence (Millie court being the macro influencer that is more famously known, but yet, has been rated less coherent). It is therefore advisable for brands to choose an influencer who stands out in a field of expertise and, holds a significant connection and consistency by his attribute to the brand's image.

Finally, regarding the type of product placement to favor, our analysis supports the conclusions of Jin & Muqaddam (2019), who previously stated that product placements on Instagram, in which the influencer wears the brand's products (moderate), turn out to be more convincing and effective. Certainly, the awareness generated is higher in the context of a moderate product placement 0.527 but remains very close to the results of an explicit product placement (0.5092). These results affirm, in a sense, the words of the author, who had underlined the fact that an explicit product placement on the brand's website and social media could be effective because it was intrinsically what consumers would expect. It is therefore advisable for brands to present their products explicitly on their social media if desired, but to do it in a moderate way when an influencer is asked to promote it on their account.

Managerial contributions

Based on the obtained results, several recommendations can be formulated. Therefore, this part aims firstly to guide brands choosing the right influencer to collaborate with, and secondly to help an influencer better identify his audience or if not done yet, get started in influencer marketing.On a firsthand, when a brand collaborates with an influencer, it is important to define the promotional objectives of the campaign. If the goal is to generate awareness, then the brand should favor an influencer with a large base of followers, so that the message reaches the widest consumer base possible. If the goal is for instance, to generate engagement, micro influencers with a narrower follower base could be preferred in this case (Silalahi, 2021).That said, the number of followers is not the only metric to which a brand must refer for its choice. Indeed, based on the results obtained by this study, we recommend that brands attach importance to coherence. You want to be sure as a brand that the influencer's audience matches your target market and that they're real. Thus, importance is given to the area of expertise, values, language, and interests shared by the influencer that must harmonize with the brand. Consistency is therefore a key variable for a successful awareness strategy. Finally, once the influencer is chosen, the way the latter is going to present the product shall be discussed. Indeed, in line with the product placement methods discussed, we recommend spontaneous and subtle product placements when a campaign is launched with an influencer. That said, brands can always explicitly highlight product details on their communication channels. But spontaneous recommendations are now increasingly appreciated, and this is something brands should keep in mind.

On the influencers' side, to stand out and define an audience, transparency, and consistency in the niche of expertise that has been established are principles to display. Indeed, by setting forth the values that one stands for as person and that a brand could share is a key asset to have.
The number of followers is certainly important, but it shall be accompanied by coherence. Finally, for individuals wishing to become influencers, few criteria's must be met. Indeed, your content should incentivize brands to collaborate with you. You will need to measure the extend and reach of your posts. If you do not bring an added value to the brand, there will be no incentive to collaborate with you on the other hand. Therefore, you need to stand out in a particular niche and define your target audience. Capitalize on what return on investment you could offer to the brands: For instance, you are commonly being called to offer visibility, so you need to benefit from one. Thus, gaining in notoriety is crucial. You can leverage on

different social media accounts at the same time for that: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok etc. The number of followers is indeed an important metric to consider. The first step would therefore be to develop this base audience

Limits and future directions

Finally, this last part puts forward the limits and the various research that could be carried out in order to refine our study. First, we can cite as a limitation the gender and age of the respondents to our questionnaire. Indeed, among the 50 respondents, 35 are women and only 15 are men. In addition, 31 of these people are in the 21-24 age category, with the oldest person being 27 years old. This may represent a bias in our study, as we do not know whether men and people over 27 would confirm our results. Second, we wonder if the results would have been the same using another category of products as well as different influencers examples. This leads us to consider additional research in different areas and with different models that would frame another coherence perception. We could therefore from a question related to which category of influencer has the highest impact: the lifestyle influencer? fashion? beauty? travel ? gym? etc. We could go beyond the “number of followers” metric and ask ourselves as to which category of influencer generates the highest awareness. Regarding moderate product placements, it would be interesting to know in which context moderate product placement generates awareness the most. For example, during a moderated product placement, we would ask ourselves if a photo taken in such a place and in such a way would generate higher visibility than a photo taken in another place and in a different other way.

TABLE OF FIGURES

APPENDIX A:

Questionnaire design

Introduction and selection

- Do you have an Instagram account?
If "no" stop the questionnaire

- Do you follow any influencers?

- Do you like fashion? If "no" stop the questionnaire.

General information

What is your gender:
Male / Female

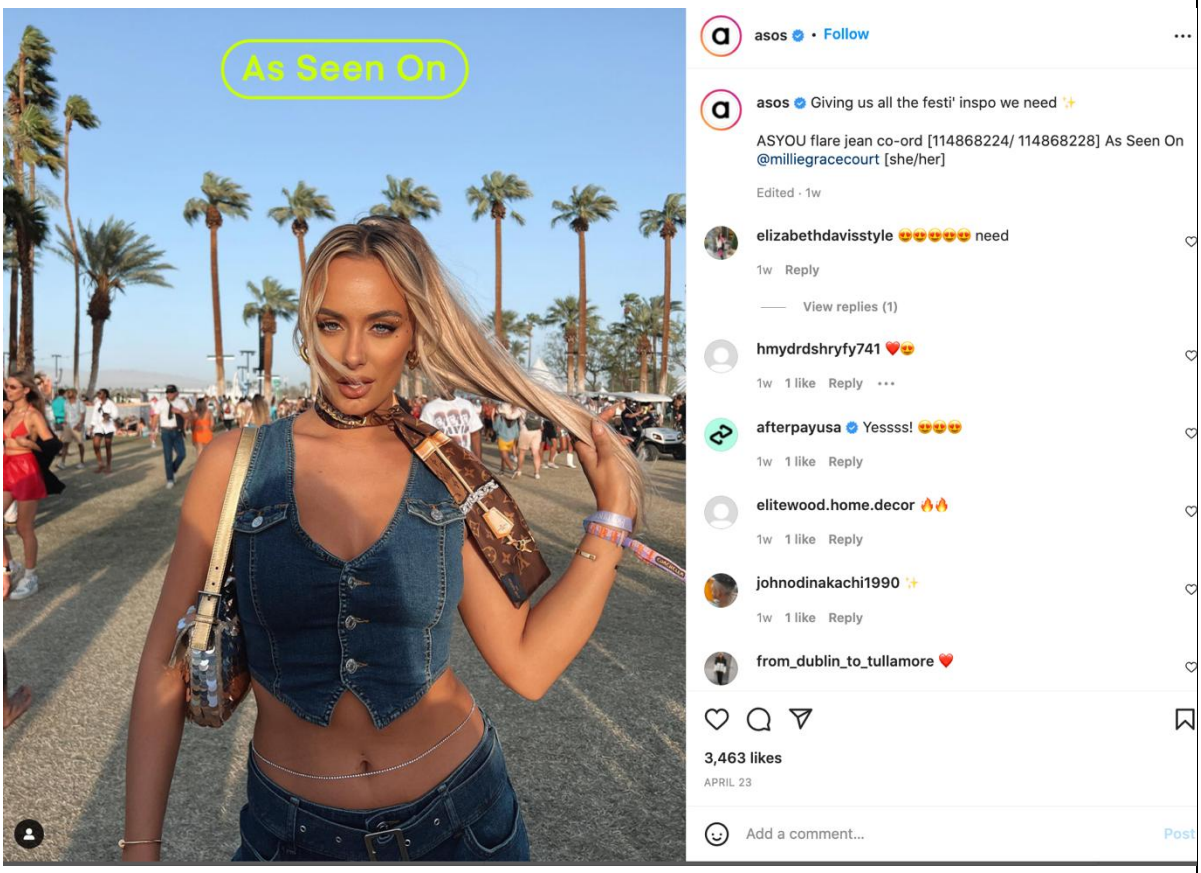
What is your age:
-open question-

Brand Awareness: ASOS

- On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate (1 = not at all, 7 = completely):
You know the brand Asos
You can recognize this brand among other competing brands
You have no trouble imagining this brand in your head

Hypothesis 1: Number of followers:

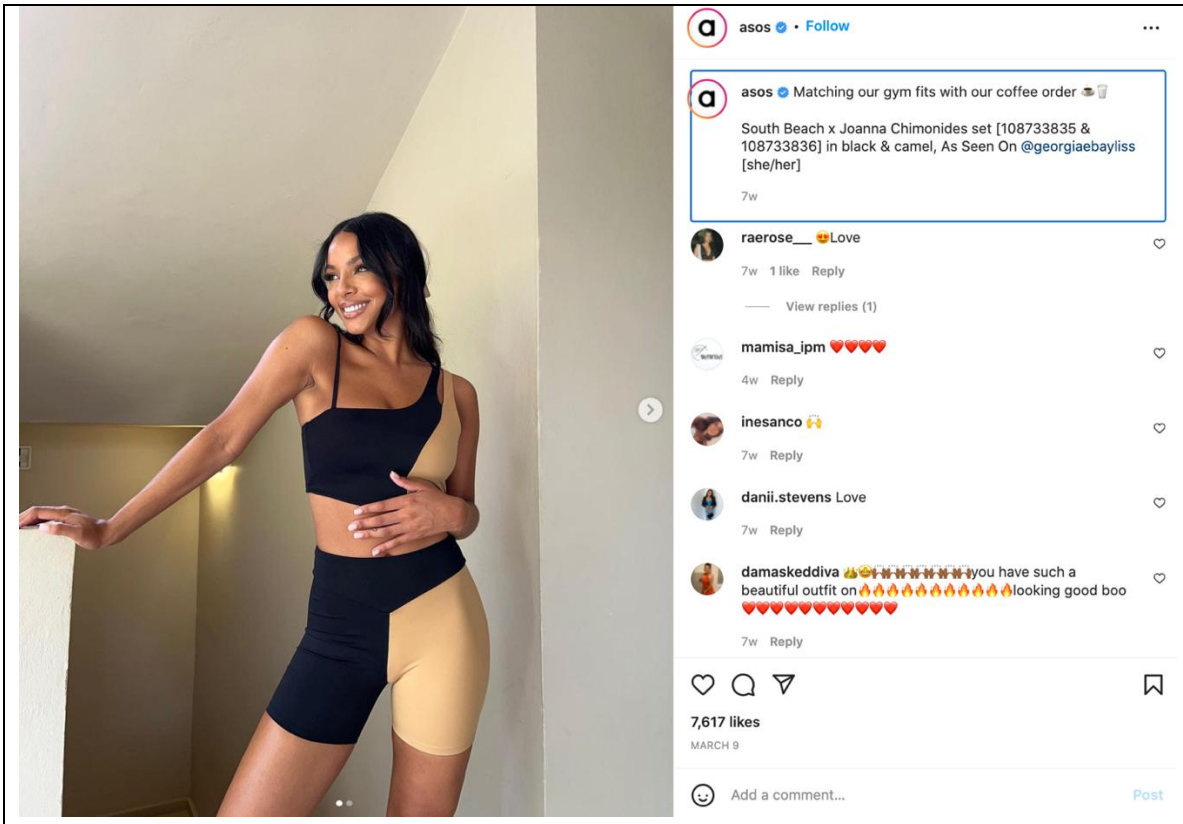
- Millie Court is a 25-year-old British Instagram influencer, known after her participation in the tv reality show Love Island. She has more than 1.9 million of followers on Instagram.



On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate (1 = not at all, 7 = completely):

- You have already heard of this influencer
- This influencer is famous

- Georgia Bayliss is a 26-year-old British fashion model and social media influencer. She has 225K followers on Instagram.



On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate (1 = not at all, 7 = completely):

- You have already heard of this influencer
- This influencer is famous

Hypothesis 2: Coherence

On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate (1 = not at all, 7 = completely):

Millie :

- There is a close connection between Millie Court and ASOS fashion brand
- It makes sense that Millie court is sponsored by a fashion brand

Georgia :

- There is a close connection between Georgia Bayliss and ASOS fashion brand
- It makes sense that Georgia Bayliss is sponsored by a fashion brand

Hypothesis 3: Product placement

"Explicit"

On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate (1 = not at all, 7 = completely):

- I know the brand better after this publication
- I have a better overall impression of the brand after this post

" Moderate "

On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate (1 = not at all, 7 = completely):

- I know the brand better after this publication
- I have a better overall impression of the brand after this post

Brand Awareness: conclusion

On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate (1 = not at all, 7 = completely):

- You know ASOS
- You can recognize this brand among other competing brands
- You have no trouble imagining this brand in your head

APPENDIX B

```
library(WriteXLS)

#write_xlsx(final_data, path="C:/Users/omark/Desktop/Stage/final_data_habi
b.xlsx")

library(readxl)
final_data <- read_excel("C:/Users/omark/Desktop/Stage/final_data_habib.xl
sx")
head(final_data)

## # A tibble: 6 x 14
##   InstagramAccount Influencer FashionInterest   Age Gender brand_awar_B
##              <dbl>      <dbl>           <dbl> <dbl>  <dbl>        <dbl>
## 1                1          1               1    19      1         1
## 2                1          1               1    19      1         1
## 3                1          1               1    20      1         1.33
## 4                1          1               1    20      1         1.67
## 5                1          1               1    20      1         1.67
## 6                1          1               1    20      1         1.67
## # ... with 8 more variables: impact_N_macro <dbl>, impact_N_micro <dbl>
,
## #   brand_awar_A <dbl>, explicit <dbl>, moderate <dbl>, coherance_macro
<dbl>,
## #   coherence_micro <dbl>, brand_awar <dbl>

# plot of data #
#plot(final_data$coherance_macro, final_data$brand_awar_A , pch = 19, col
= "lightblue")

# Regression line
#abline(lm(final_data$brand_awar_A  ~final_data$coherance_macro ), col = "
red", lwd = 3)

pacman::p_load(dplyr, ggplot2, writexl,tidyverse,ggpubr,rstatix)

#new_data_new <- new_data%>% mutate(
 ### brand_awar_B= ((Brandknow1 + Brandrecognition1+ BrandRecall1)/3)  ,
  ##impact_N_macro= ((Millienoto+MillieReco)/2),
  ##impact_N_micro= ((GeorgiaReco+Georgianoto)/2),
  #brand_awar_A= ((brandrecognition2+ brandrecall2+brandknowledge2)/3),
  #explicit= ((Explicit1 + Explicit2)/2),
  #moderate= ((moderate1+moderate2)/2),
  #coherance_macro= (CoherenceMillie2+ CoherenceMillie)/2 ,
  #coherence_micro= (CoherenceGeorgia + CoherenceGeorgia2)/2 , brand_awar
= (brand_awar_A+ brand_awar_B)/2)%>% select(c(1:5),c(24:32)#)

#head(new_data_new)

#install.packages("DescTools")
library(DescTools)
at1<-CronbachAlpha(final_data[,1:14], conf.level = 0.95, cond = FALSE, na.
```

```
rm = T)
at1
```

```
## Cronbach Alpha         lwr.ci         upr.ci
##      0.9203831      0.9113603      0.9288619
```

```
library(stats)
```

```
bartlett.test(final_data)
```

```
##
##  Bartlett test of homogeneity of variances
##
## data:  final_data
## Bartlett's K-squared = Inf, df = 13, p-value < 2.2e-16
```

```
# arranging data to be used for the T-test:

data_t_test<-final_data%>%select(coherance_macro)%>%
  mutate( type= "macro", coherence= coherance_macro)%>% select(-coherance_
macro)

data_t_test2<-final_data%>%select(coherence_micro)%>%
  mutate( type= "micro", coherence= coherence_micro)%>% select(-coherence_
micro)

data_t_test2[is.na(data_t_test2)]= 0
summary(is.na(data_t_test2))
```

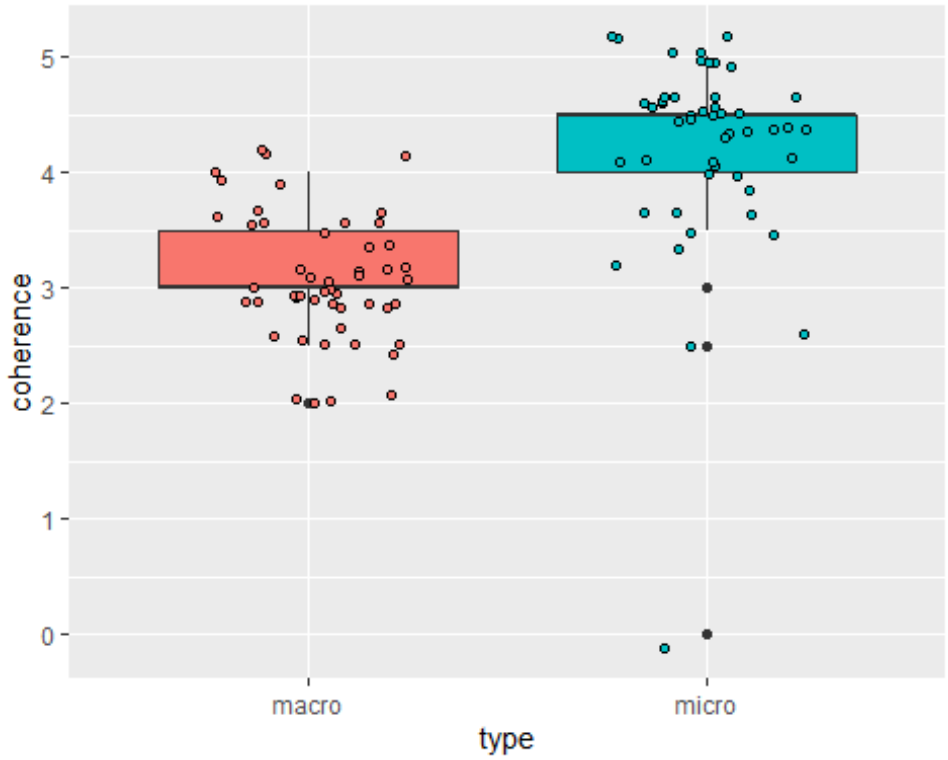
```
##     type         coherence
##  Mode :logical   Mode :logical
##  FALSE:50        FALSE:50
```

```
# merging the two datasets:
data_t_new<- rbind(data_t_test, data_t_test2)


data_t_new %>%
  group_by(type) %>%
  summarise(
    count = n(),
    mean = mean(coherence),
    sd = sd(coherence)
  )
```

```
## # A tibble: 2 x 4
##   type  count  mean    sd
##   <chr> <int> <dbl> <dbl>
## 1 macro    50  3.07 0.535
## 2 micro    50  4.19 0.856
```

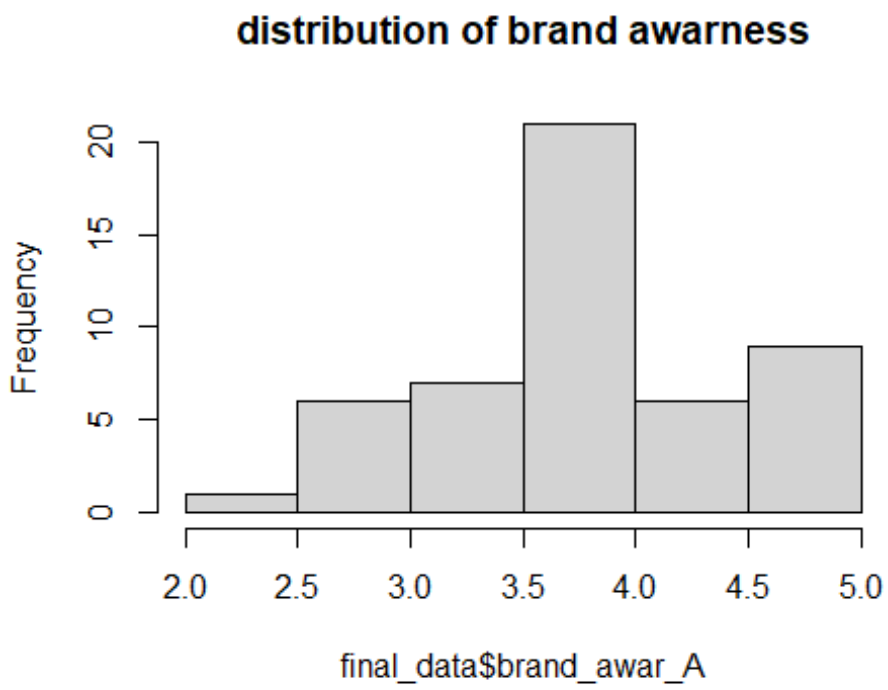
visualizion via boxplots:

```
data_t_new %>% ggplot(aes(x=type, y= coherence, fill= type)) + geom_boxplo
t(show.legend = F) + geom_jitter(show.legend=F, width= 0.25, shape=21, col
or="black")
```



performing paired t-test:

```
# performing t-test:
res <-t.test(coherence ~ type, data=data_t_new, paired= T)
res

##
##  Paired t-test
##
## data:  coherence by type
## t = -14.934, df = 49, p-value < 2.2e-16
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  -1.2707113 -0.9692887
## sample estimates:
## mean of the differences
##                   -1.12

hist(final_data$brand_awar_A, main= "distribution of brand awarness")
```




```
shapiro.test(final_data$brand_awar_A)

##
##  Shapiro-Wilk normality test
##
## data:  final_data$brand_awar_A
## W = 0.95226, p-value = 0.04229

#par(mfrow=c(1:2))

result= cor.test(x= final_data$coherence_micro, y= final_data$brand_awar_A
, method= "kendall")

## Warning in cor.test.default(x = final_data$coherence_micro, y =
## final_data$brand_awar_A, : Cannot compute exact p-value with ties

print(result)

##
##  Kendall's rank correlation tau
##
## data:  final_data$coherence_micro and final_data$brand_awar_A
## z = 7.5626, p-value = 3.95e-14
## alternative hypothesis: true tau is not equal to 0
## sample estimates:
##      tau
## 0.884113

# for the macro influencer:
result= cor.test(x= final_data$coherance_macro, y= final_data$brand_awar_A
, method= "kendall")
```

```
result
```

```
##
##  Kendall's rank correlation tau
##
## data:  final_data$coherance_macro and final_data$brand_awar_A
## z = 6.6875, p-value = 2.269e-11
## alternative hypothesis: true tau is not equal to 0
## sample estimates:
##       tau
## 0.7708814
```

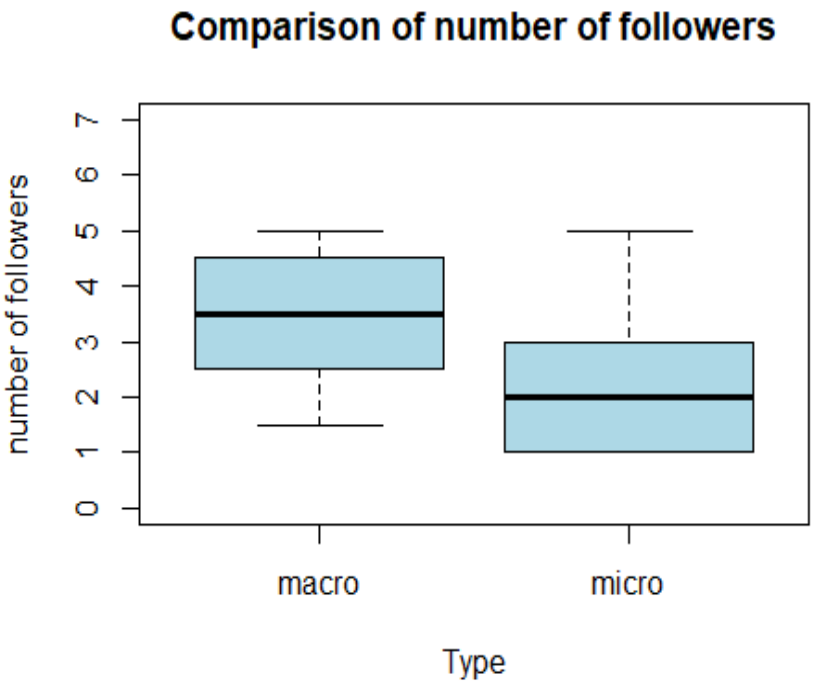
```
set3<-glm(brand_awar_A ~ coherance_macro + coherence_micro, data= final_da
ta, family= "gaussian")
set3
```

```
##
## Call:  glm(formula = brand_awar_A ~ coherance_macro + coherence_micro,
##     family = "gaussian", data = final_data)
##
## Coefficients:
##     (Intercept)  coherance_macro  coherence_micro
##          0.1787           0.2507           0.6918
##
## Degrees of Freedom: 48 Total (i.e. Null);  46 Residual
##   (1 observation effacée parce que manquante)
## Null Deviance:       16.62
## Residual Deviance: 2.495     AIC: 1.147
```

```
data_test<-final_data%>%select(impact_N_macro)%>%
  mutate( type= "macro", impact_of_n= impact_N_macro)%>% select(-impact_N_
macro)

data_test2<-final_data%>%select(impact_N_micro)%>%
  mutate( type= "micro", impact_of_n= impact_N_micro)%>% select(-impact_N_
micro)

# merging the two datasets:
data_t_new3<- rbind(data_test, data_test2)


data_t_new3 %>%
  group_by(type) %>%
  summarise(
    count = n(),
    mean = mean(impact_of_n),
    sd = sd(impact_of_n)
  )
```

```
## # A tibble: 2 x 4
##   type  count  mean    sd
##   <chr> <int> <dbl> <dbl>
## 1 macro    50  3.44  1.13
## 2 micro    50  2.14  1.07
```

```
boxplot(impact_of_n~type,
  data=data_t_new3,
  main="Comparison of number of followers",
  xlab="Type",
  ylab="number of followers",
  col="lightblue",
  border="black",ylim=c(0,7)
```



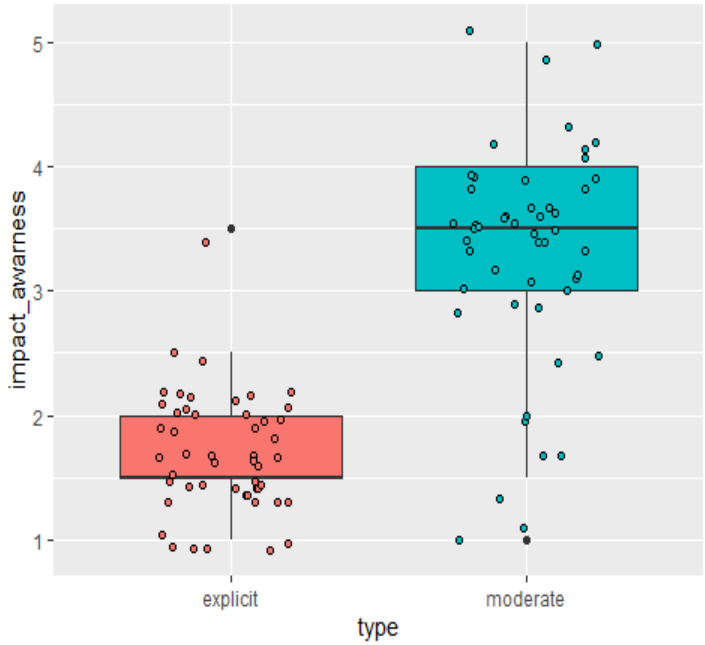

```
res <-t.test(impact_of_n ~ type, data=data_t_new3, paired= T)
res

##
##  Paired t-test
##
## data:  impact_of_n by type
## t = 7.8032, df = 49, p-value = 3.825e-10
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  0.9652075 1.6347925
## sample estimates:
## mean of the differences
##                     1.3

#### on laisse tomber le tau de kendall###
result= cor.test(x= final_data$impact_N_micro, y= final_data$brand_awar_A,
method= "kendall")
print(result)

##
##  Kendall's rank correlation tau
```

```
##
## data:  final_data$impact_N_micro and final_data$brand_awar_A
## z = 4.3955, p-value = 1.105e-05
## alternative hypothesis: true tau is not equal to 0
## sample estimates:
##      tau
## 0.488137

# for the macro influencer:
result= cor.test(x= final_data$impact_N_macro, y= final_data$brand_awar_A,
method= "kendall")

result
##  Kendall's rank correlation tau
##
## data:  final_data$impact_N_macro and final_data$brand_awar_A
## z = 7.2925, p-value = 3.042e-13
## alternative hypothesis: true tau is not equal to 0
## sample estimates:
##       tau
## 0.8000177

## performing a glm

set1<-glm(brand_awar_A ~ impact_N_macro + impact_N_micro, data= final_data
, family= "gaussian")
set1

##
## Call:  glm(formula = brand_awar_A ~ impact_N_macro + impact_N_micro,
##     family = "gaussian", data = final_data)
##
## Coefficients:
##    (Intercept)  impact_N_macro  impact_N_micro
##         2.1133          0.4473          0.1066
##
## Degrees of Freedom: 49 Total (i.e. Null);  47 Residual
## Null Deviance:       19.06
## Residual Deviance: 3.431     AIC: 15.93

#str(new_data_new)
moderate<-final_data%>%select(moderate)%>%
  mutate( type= "moderate", impact_awarness= moderate)%>% select(-moderate
)

explicit<-final_data%>%select(explicit)%>%
  mutate( type= "explicit", impact_awarness= explicit)%>% select(-explicit
)

data_t_test2[is.na(data_t_test2)]= 0
# merging the two datasets:
moderate_explicit<- rbind(moderate, explicit)
#head(moderate_explicit)
```

```
moderate_explicit%>%
  group_by(type) %>%
  summarise(
    count = n(),
    mean = mean(impact_awarness),
    sd = sd(impact_awarness)
  )
```

```
## # A tibble: 2 x 4
##   type     count  mean    sd
##   <chr>    <int> <dbl> <dbl>
## 1 explicit    50   1.7 0.452
## 2 moderate    50   3.3 0.920
```

```
moderate_explicit%>% ggplot(aes(x=type, y= impact_awarness, fill= type)) +
geom_boxplot(show.legend = F) + geom_jitter(show.legend=F, width= 0.25, sh
ape=21, color="black")
```




```
res4 <-t.test(impact_awarness ~ type, data=moderate_explicit, paired= T)
res4
```

```
##
##  Paired t-test
##
## data:  impact_awarness by type
## t = -13.292, df = 49, p-value < 2.2e-16
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
##  -1.8419 -1.3581
## sample estimates:
## mean of the differences
##                    -1.6
```

```r
result= cor.test(x= final_data$moderate, y= final_data$brand_awar_A, metho
d= "kendall")
print(result)
```

```
##
##  Kendall's rank correlation tau
##
## data:  final_data$moderate and final_data$brand_awar_A
## z = 5.2343, p-value = 1.656e-07
## alternative hypothesis: true tau is not equal to 0
## sample estimates:
##       tau
## 0.5886367
```

```r
# for the macro influencer:
result= cor.test(x= final_data$explicit, y= final_data$brand_awar_A, metho
d= "kendall")

print(result)
```

```
##
##  Kendall's rank correlation tau
##
## data:  final_data$explicit and final_data$brand_awar_A
## z = 4.4436, p-value = 8.848e-06
## alternative hypothesis: true tau is not equal to 0
## sample estimates:
##       tau
## 0.5266949
```

```r
set1<-glm(brand_awar_A ~ moderate + explicit, data= final_data, family= "g
aussian")
set1
```

```
## Call:  glm(formula = brand_awar_A ~ moderate + explicit, family = "gaus
sian",
##     data = final_data)
##
## Coefficients:
## (Intercept)     moderate     explicit
##      1.8698       0.3468       0.5092

## Degrees of Freedom: 49 Total (i.e. Null);  47 Residual
## Null Deviance:       19.06
## Residual Deviance: 8.647     AIC: 62.16
```

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