

Influencer marketing in Honduras: conception, management and performativity

El marketing de influencers en Honduras: concepción, gestión y performatividad



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Abstract:

The influencer marketing strategy (IMS) allows brands to communicate their messages and promote their products through the voice of an influencer. Understanding this strategy involves three key players: influencers, brands and advertising agencies. This research describes the current state of the IMS in Honduras. It identifies Honduran

Resumen:

La estrategia del marketing de influencers permite a las marcas comunicar sus mensajes y promocionar productos desde la voz de un influencer. Comprender esta estrategia implica a tres actores fundamentales: influencers, marcas y agencias de publicidad. Esta investigación describe la situación actual de la estrategia del marketing de influencers (EMI)

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influencers and seeks to understand brand perception, as well as that of advertising agencies, while adding performativity as a category of analysis. Three sources of data were employed for this research: influencer profiles in social networks through netnographic elements; narratives through semi-structured interviews with brands and advertising agencies; and content analysis on performative elements present in influencers. The IMS in Honduras is not heterogeneous and requires consolidation. There is a clear typology of influencer that corresponds to what is expressed in the literature. Advertising agencies have a greater structure in management of IMS and performativity allows for a broader analysis of this strategy. Continuity in the study of IMS is suggested due the scarcity of scientific works in Honduras and the importance of strengthening the research capabilities of marketers in the country is ratified.

Keywords:

Marketing; influencer; advertising; performance; social networks.

en Honduras, identificando a los influencers hondureños, conociendo la percepción de las marcas y agencias de publicidad e incorporando la performatividad como categoría de análisis. Se emplearon tres fuentes de datos: perfiles de influencers en redes sociales a través de elementos netnográficos, relatos por medio de la entrevista semiestructurada a marcas y agencias de publicidad y análisis de contenido sobre elementos performativos presentes en los influencers. La EMI en Honduras no es heterogénea y requiere consolidación. Existe una clara tipología de influencer que se corresponde con lo expresado por la literatura. Las agencias de publicidad poseen mayor estructura en el manejo de la EMI y la performatividad permite ampliar el análisis de esta estrategia. Se sugiere continuidad en el estudio de la EMI dada la escasez de trabajos de carácter científico en Honduras y se ratifica la importancia de fortalecer las capacidades investigativas de los mercadólogos en el país.

Palabras clave:

Marketing; influencer; publicidad; performance; redes sociales.

1. Introduction

Influencer marketing strategy (IMS) currently gains strength within digital marketing. It helps brands connect with their audience on social networks, where volume of followers and published content plays an important role. Technically, influencer marketing (IM) is defined as: the use of people with the ability to influence a potential consumer segment to convey messages on behalf of a brand (American Marketing Association, 2024).

Identifying and selecting influencers is thus a challenge faced by brands. These are called upon to persuade the target audience to try their products (Harrigan et al., 2021). Influencers play a fundamental role within the IMS. Their way of reaching users through their created and shared content on social media is what captures consumer attention. Therefore, using IMS implies a strategic vision that considers the audience, the sponsor and the network manager, to make the best use of it (Campbell & Farrell, 2020).

IM is a recent field of research that focuses on understanding its scope, effectiveness and potential threats (Leung et al., 2022). A scientific research approach to IMS allows formulating various theoretical and methodological positions that have an impact on its conception. Abhishek & Srivastava's (2021) bibliometric analysis sought to fill the existing critical gap for the mapping of influencer marketing. It aimed at creating knowledge to understand the strategy. Tafesse & Wood (2021) found that the number of followers and volume of content are positively and negatively associated, respectively, with follower engagement.

Yurika et al., (2022), on their part, proofed how influencer interactivity has a positive effect on purchase intention through a PLS-SEM structural equation modelling analysis with electronically collected data. On the other hand, De Veirman et al., (2017) stated that a high number of followers can lead to a higher perception of popularity and, consequently, to a higher

likability. This study provided information on influencer characteristics on Instagram in terms of their efficiency and potential reach.

1.1. Influencers and influencer marketing

Influencers are personalities or celebrities who are members of the online brand community and have a large number of followers on social media platforms: YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat or personal blogs, who exert influence on their followers (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Kim & Kim, 2021; Sanz-Marcos et al., 2021). Beyond the social media, the term influencer has a necessary path to observe from the different contributions made by researchers such as Katz & Lazarsfeld (1995), who in their work *Personal Influence* refer for the first time to opinion leaders, defining them as individuals who exert influence on people in their environment.

Likewise, Keller & Berry (2003) introduced the term *influentials* to connote the same figure, while Gómez (2018) speaks of people with a certain authority on particular topics, whose influence on social media makes them ideal representatives of a particular brand. In this sense, the concept of social influencer gained strength thanks to the emergence of web 2.0 in 2004, with forums and later blogs being the first digital spaces for the exchange of ideas.

These spaces, better organized, promoted a variety of topics and interests that included more expressive options in addition to text (Oneto et al., 2020). Likewise, the figure of the brand ambassador is similar in the field of marketing, bearing similarity to the influencer of today, as Feijoo-Fernández & García-González (2020) refer to brand ambassadors as representatives of a brand in front of the public.

Today, the typologies of influencers are varied (SanMiguel, 2020; Velar & SanMiguel, 2020; Campbell & Farrell, 2020; Rodríguez & Sixto, 2022). For the development of this research, a combination of the classificatory criteria of the aforementioned authors has been estimated. This can be seen in (table 1).

Table 1. Classification of influencers

Influencers Typology	Followers	Objectives	Characteristics
Nano-Influencers or Influentials	1-10K	Conversion and engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Few followers. - Lack of popularity. - Affordable collaborations.
Micro-Influencers	10k-500k	Effective conversions and high engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personalized audience. - Greater number of collaborations. - Low cost.
Macro-Influencers	500k- 1M	Brand recognition, generate new audiences and reputation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Established popularity. - They have jobs as musicians, athletes, models. - Good management of their work as influencers. - Mostly managed by agencies.
Mega-Influencers	1M-5M	Large-scale conversions, new audiences, brand awareness and reputation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most of them are actors, athletes and artists. - They generate trends in generations. - They are brand ambassadors. - Higher cost of collaboration.
Celebrities	+5M	New audiences, brand awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognized for their popularity before having a presence in social media. - Popular for the career they have: Athletes, politicians, actors and singers.

Source: created by the authors based on SanMiguel, (2020); Velar & SanMiguel, (2020); Campbell & Farrell, (2020); Rodríguez & Sixto, (2022)

Brown & Hayes (2008) point out the need to distinguish between marketing through influencers and marketing with influencers. The difference lies in that “instead of you embedding your messages and collateral through influencers (marketing through), it’s the influencers embedding their collateral within yours (marketing with)” (p. 113).

Therefore, in marketing through influencers, brands provide advertising content planned and thought by the brand itself to influencers to share with their audience. On the other hand, in marketing with influencers, brands use the content that the influencer creates and shares with their audience to make their image visible and reach new audiences. There is still a relationship between the brand and the influencer, but in this second approach the influencer is the one who creates the content, plans it and the brand takes advantage of it.

In this sense, and as previously mentioned, the relation established by a brand with the influencer within the IMS framework is for the influencer to endorse the product or service it offers while helping forge an image around it (De Veirman et al., 2017). Hence the importance of a proper selection. Influencer agencies specialize in this (Wolf et al., 2018). Nevertheless, hiring an agency is not mandatory for the development of the strategy since the brand can do the search or hiring on its own.

Influencer selection is also a central issue in IM and digital marketing studies. In this regard, Freberg et al. (2011) suggests focusing on the daily publications on a blog, the number of times it is shared and the number of followers the influencer has. Enke & Borchers (2021) estimate the compatibility between the influencer and the brand, fame, trust in their followers, style of content, type of audience, paid collaborations and the price they charge for the work. In De Veirman et al., (2017) it is stated that brands should choose the influencer by the number of followers. The greater the number, the greater the reach of the content. Likewise, the influencer should share some aspects such as brand values, since consumers will see reflected in the influencer the image of the brand.

1.2. *Performativity*

Performativity and performance are terms studied by various disciplines, each assuming its own conception. The word performance translated into Spanish is *actuación* and implies a “presentation in front of an audience or staging” (Taylor & Fuentes, 2011 p. 8) and is used very frequently in the different arts. Likewise, Ayerbe & Cuenca (2019) conceive performance as an artistic performance that is recorded under images or videos, same that are proof of the performance carried out. On the other hand, Phelan (1996), one of the founders of performance studies, establishes that performance as a live act cannot be saved, because from that moment it disappears and becomes something else.

Bauman (1975) observed and defined performance as a form of oral communication in which the subject acquires a responsibility to express in front of an audience. Such communicative action implies a competence that the speaking subject must have to communicate correctly. With this, it is possible to approach positions regarding IM and the action of the influencer as a communicative act. This recognizes the seminal contribution of Austin (1962) who refers as performative to any speech or statement that implies an action, not a simple description that pronouncing something must generate an effect.

The above refers equally to the considerations of performance and performativity from the art point of view, using the term “performance art” (Taylor & Fuentes, 2011, p. 7). The artistic process prevails in it (San Cristóbal, 2017), and the person performing is defined as a performative creator.

Similarly, the audience who witnesses a live performance, or who looks at a photograph or watches a video, is also part of the performance. As Fischer-Lichte (2011) describes in an example of performance: “...the spectators became actors through the impact of the shock” (p. 31). Emotions, reactions and audience interaction are part of the performative act. In this sense, Taylor (2012) regarding performance from the visual, considers the concept of performative as a more precise form of enunciation.

From a digital marketing and IM viewpoint, the performance, performative and performativity have their place in social media. These serve as an archive space storing everything done and said (performance). This idea of archive (Ayerbe & Cuenca, 2019; Taylor & Fuentes, 2011) refers to the possibility of saving as memory, the performances made in formats such as video, text and images.

Thus, for this research, performativity implies an act and a saying by a person (the influencer), to an audience that also becomes part of that act. The performance can be live or recorded, but it can also be a photograph. Therefore, the influencing action of IM, regardless of the format, allows the influencer to be seen and analyzed from performative elements such as speech (verbal

or written), voice, staging and body. The performativity, therefore, allows incorporating another analysis aspect to IM in the same line that would be the metrics of digital marketing applied to this strategy.

In this way, the present study aims to know the state of IMS in Honduras through the identification of Honduran influencers, analysis of IMS from the perception and experience of Honduran brands and advertising agencies and through the characterization of the influencer marketing strategy from a performativity perspective.

2. Methodology

The study is presented as non-experimental, descriptive and transversal under the interpretative hermeneutic method. The methodological design seeks to understand the IM from its three central actors: influencers, brands and advertising agencies. Table 2 shows the type of data analyzed for each of the sources consulted.

Table 2. Types of data analyzed

Data type	Data collection technique	Information analysis technique
Influencers profiles and publications in social networks.	Netnography	Influencer evaluation matrix: influencer type, collaboration, interactions and content, followers, among others.
Perception of influencer marketing strategy by brands and advertising agencies.	Semi-structured interview	Open coding, categorization and axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 2002).
Performative elements of influencer marketing.	Netnography	Content analysis.

Source: created by the authors

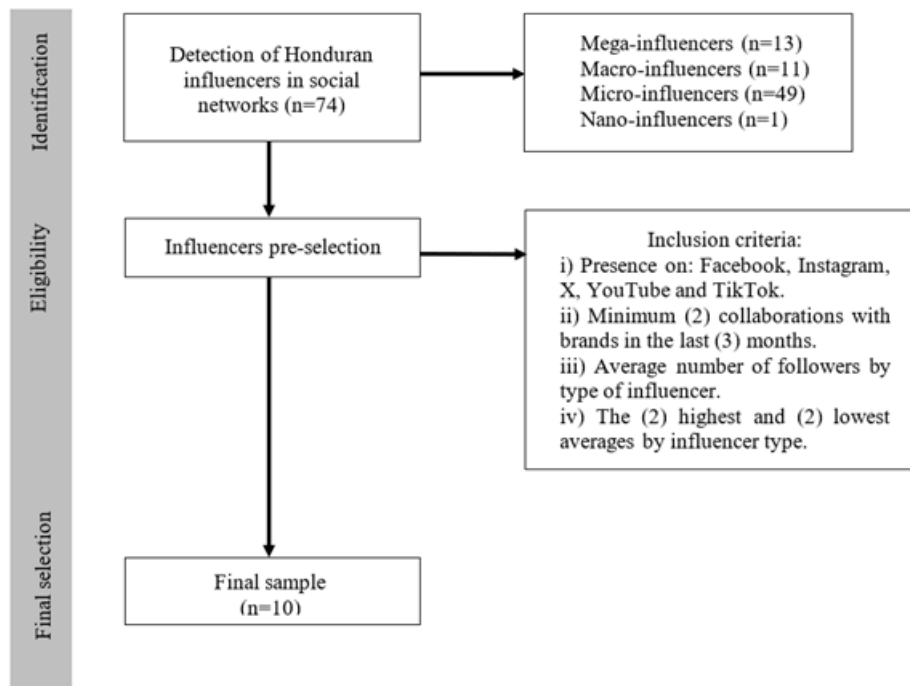
To determine the influencers profile, the stages of the netnography proposed by Kozinets were followed (2010):

Figure 1. Stages of netnography applied to the research

	Description	Development in research
Stages of netnography applied in research	Stage 1 Definition of research questions { They address central elements of the research topic, are open, broad and with an exploratory approach (Kozinets, 2010).	{ (RQ1) What is the state of influencer marketing strategy in Honduras? (RQ2) Who are the social actors involved as influencers in Honduras? (RQ3) How is the influencer marketing strategy perceived by brands and advertising agencies? (RQ4) What are the performative aspects of the influencer?
	Stage 2 Community identification and selection { It involves focusing on a specific event or occurrence that can be studied within a digital community (Kozinets, 2010).	{ Seventy-four Honduran influencers were identified with their respective digital communities, of which 10 influencers were considered (Figure 2).
	Stage 3 Observation of community participants { It involves genuine compression of information observed within online communities (Kozinets, 2010).	{ Photo and reel-type publications on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube in the period from January to June 2023 were analyzed.
	Stage 4 Data analysis and interpretation of results { It comprises the conversion of all data collected during the observation to transform them into a final document (Kozinets, 2010).	{ Creation of the Honduran influencers profile (Table 3).

Source: created by the authors

Figure 2. Influencer selection flow



Source: created by the authors

The content published by the influencers was selected under the following criteria: (1) publications in collaboration with brands, (2) not more than one year old. The analysis of this content was carried out by structuring an evaluation matrix (table 3). No statistical calculation was considered to obtain engagement (interaction).

The selection of key informants as brands and advertising agencies was by convenience. Three brands were chosen: one belonging to the clothing industry, a department store and a producer of oil and soap. The collaborations and tags observed in the profiles of the influencers to be analyzed were considered. The informants of these brands were: a marketing director, a digital marketing coordinator and a marketing assistant, respectively. Two advertising agencies were chosen due to their recognized track record in the country. The informants of these agencies were: a talent management manager and a media manager.

Regarding performativity, the data collected from the influencers profiles and published content were used. We proceeded by means of content analysis (Guix, 2008) examining the performative elements such as speech, voice, body and staging.

3. Results

3.1. *The profile of influencers in Honduras*

After a thorough immersion in the different digital communities in which the Honduran influencers analyzed in (table 3) are found, it can be recognized that in their typology (micro-macro-mega) influencers make Instagram the most used social network. The content published achieves good reach and engagement, evidence that it is the social network most positioned for advertising purposes. A high level of interaction was observed in the digital community in favor of both the brand and the influencer.

Regarding collaborations, these are presented in large, medium and small brands in all types of influencers. There is no particular preference or tendency for influencers to work with specific brands. In this regard, mega-influencers achieve good reach, brand visibility and high capacity to reach new audiences in almost all social networks in which they are active. However, they do not achieve adequate engagement due to the large number of followers they have. This makes it somewhat impossible to achieve the close interaction that should exist with their audience, and which is relevant for any brand in terms of its value. As for the content of this type of influencer, it is mostly promotional, communicating to the audience key messages that the brand wants to convey offers, promotions or giveaways.

In contrast, the performance of mega-influencers on TikTok varies significantly in terms of higher number of plays, positive comments and good reach. Despite the infrequency of their posts, their content always gets a high number of plays because they already have an established digital community. In addition, the type of content created allows them to remain trendy, making use of humor in video format, with great acceptance by the digital community, observing a greater bond of trust and connection. In this regard, it is important to note that micro-influencers, despite having a much smaller audience, find it favorable in terms of engagement to interact more easily and more closely with their followers. The largest number of their interactions are found on TikTok.

Only macro-influencers bet on the YouTube social network, being the only ones with active profiles. In this social network, content has focused on being more informative, emotional, telling more in depth about what brands do through storytelling. With this, the content is more specific and with a more segmented audience. There is interaction from the digital community with positive comments, they like the content and the amount of reproductions reached are numerous. This suggests that YouTube is a viable option for influencers looking to share more specific content or for Honduran brands seeking to reach more personalized segments with its products.

Table 3. Profile of Honduran influencers

Social Network	Selected influencers	Average Followers ¹	Type of influencer	Main topics ²	Average Likes ³	Average Comments ⁴	Average Reproductions ⁵	Publications analyzed ⁶
Facebook	Milagro Flores, Fredy J Rodríguez, Jennifer Aplicano.	665,500	Mega	Entertainment-comedy, travel, personal life.	63,806	1,614	915,654	7 photos, 8 reels
Instagram		780,000			68,666	396	806,817	6 photos, 9 reels
TikTok		2,266,667			463,966	4,317	5,449,867	15 reels
X		3,656			-	-	-	0
YouTube		10,205			-	-	-	0
Facebook	Shin Fujiyama, Adonay Bustillo, Gustavo Leone.	405,400	Macro	Informative-educational, lifestyle, comedy, personal life.	28,981	394	158,650	4 photos, 2 reels
Instagram		140,467			3,563	196	43,459	8 photos, 7 reels
TikTok		417,833			12,213	175	201,128	12 reels
X		4,320			-	-	-	0
YouTube		234,672			2,600	168	50,096	5 videos
Facebook	Rackiminchy, Carlo Costly, Demmy Aguilar, Mar Samadi	136,317	Micro	Sports, beauty, fashion, makeup, lifestyle.	1,958	87	3,323	4 photos, 4 reels
Instagram		50,553			8,583	107	105,329	6 photos, 14 reels
TikTok		147,036			19,382	107	214,458	15 reels
X		54,340			-	-	-	0
YouTube		47,897			-	-	-	0

Source: created by the authors

- 1 Total followers per social network of each of the selected influencers, then those totals averaged between the number of influencers that compose the influencer type category.
- 2 Type of content that predominates in the posts of the influencers analyzed.
- 3 Total number of likes for each of the posts published by the influencers on each social network and averaged across the number of influencers representing each influencer type category.
- 4 Total number of comments per post and then averaged across the influencers that belong to each influencer type category.
- 5 Total plays of each of the videos analyzed and averaged by the total number of influencers according to the type of influencer.
- 6 Total number of publications found with advertising content in each social network and analyzed by type of influencer.

3.2. Brands and advertising agencies in the management of influencer marketing strategies

Table 4 presents the open coding, categorization and axial coding resulting from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted with advertising agencies and brands. In light of this, the IMS management in the Honduran case involves its determinants, scope and content management.

Table 4. Emerging categorization of interviews

Open coding (citations)	Categorization	Axial coding
“Well established no, I think everyone handles it informally” (Marketing Director - Brand).	Conception of the strategy	Strategy determinants
“Choosing an Influencer is not easy because you have to see if they have a lot of followers, you have to see what their content is, you have to see what target that influence goes to” (Marketing Assistant - Brand).		
“Everyone says, I want 10, but when you show them how much they charge you for the 10, no, I don’t want them anymore” (Head of Talent Management - Agency).	Relationship cost-benefit	
“More or less, it is relative, it is relative because, well, sometimes we work with brands and sometimes we work with exchanges” (Digital Marketing Coordinator - Brand).		
“The truth is that it has worked for us, it generates new followers before a new public gets to know our product” (Marketing Director - Brand).	Estimation of the impact of the strategy	
“We haven’t measured it that well” (Digital Marketing Coordinator -Brand).		
“It is effective from that trial and error that you manage to verify the results of each one” (Media manager -Agency).		
“Not all the followers they have are real, some are bots, some are not, some are just there to be there, some only follow you because your face is pretty” (Talent Management Manager - Agency).	Validity of influencer metrics	
“The issue of buying fake followers is real, so I need to know what percentage of that community is really true” (Media manager - Agency).		

<p>“The agency’s role is to recommend what works best for the client and what can give the best results” (Media manager - Agency).</p>	<p>Campaign structuring</p>	<p>Content generation for the strategy</p>
<p>“When an Influencer is hired, he or she is directly hired by the public relations department, gets the company’s story and from there prepares a script and presents it” (Marketing Assistant - Brand).</p>		
<p>“They are told the do’s and don’ts, the script is sent to them and based on the script, their creativity and their way of addressing” (Media manager - Agency).</p>	<p>Content formulation</p>	
<p>“We let people have their space to create and let them do it the way they want” (Digital Marketing Coordinator - Brand).</p>		

Source: created by the authors

3.2.1. Strategy determinants

The IMS cannot be thought of or formulated univocally. The vision of brands and advertising agencies regarding the management of the IMS allows us to identify common and divergent points, being the most significant in terms of management, the cost and the strategic analysis of the influencer.

Hiring an influencer involves a cost that varies whether payment is made in cash or through the exchange of products for content. Some brands consider the strategy as affordable if the influencer accepts exchanges, as opposed to when they must pay with money. On the other hand, when the influencer is hired through an advertising agency, most influencers only accept cash as payments.

The intermediation of the advertising agency increases the cost of the strategy, which is not only calculated based on the influencer’s payment, but also estimating the agency’s fee for the service provided. This results in a relativity of the cost of the strategy. In both cases, but more when the agency’s intermediation is involved, it is understood that the IMS is an investment whose expected return is the one that justifies it. Likewise, in such cost estimation, the value of the influencer is a central point.

In the case of advertising agencies, the cost of hiring the influencer goes through a process of analysis and prior negotiation to agree on the price for the hiring. They use specialized digital platforms that allow them to evaluate the metrics that influencers have, the most common being: engagement, reach, likes and number of real followers (according to information from the agencies, the number of followers visible in the profiles is not always the real one since some influencers buy followers). On the other hand, each brand has its own system for analyzing influencers and all of them measure social media metrics by selecting people according to the type of product they want to promote. Here, the determination of costs and hiring process is more heterogeneous.

An example of this is the difference found in the way in which some brands choose to call the influencer using the qualifier of *talent*, because the term influencer is related to a higher position and price. This aspect, which is sensitive to further analysis in future research, highlights a very important factor in defining the IMS in Honduras in terms of management. It is understood that what exists in the country are talented people who act as influencers.

3.2.2. *Scope and results assessment*

The implementation of the IMS implies a post-campaign evaluation to know the results obtained from it. It is difficult for brands to identify and quantify the results in terms of return on investment. Brands use publication statistics to reference the behavior of some metrics of the strategy, mainly in terms of reaching new audiences, generating word-of-mouth advertising, staying in the minds of consumers and continuing to work with it. However, the metrics provided by social media are not able to determine how much money the hiring of influencers generates.

In this regard, agencies opt for two ways to measure the effectiveness of IMS. One, through the level of engagement and the video viewing rate, and the other, through publication metrics. Added to this, agencies do manage to evaluate the return on investment generated from hiring the influencer through the use of a digital tool. Agencies are clear in mentioning that the IMS is effective if each influencer is evaluated and selected correctly for each campaign.

However, the agencies themselves reported that some influencers hide profile metrics such as tags, number of comments and likes to have more privacy or because they did not get good results in their posts. However, through external tools, agencies can obtain information that may be hidden.

3.2.3. *Content generation for the strategy*

The implementation and development of the IMS can be carried out by an advertising agency as a specialized, knowledgeable entity, capable of promoting the brand's idea. This involves filtering the influencers profiles according to the proposed objectives, negotiating hiring and following up. However, the brand is the one who makes the final decision on who to hire. From this point on, the content generation process begins, a highly relevant aspect for the IMS management.

To do so, brands complete the brief requested by the agency with all the required information: brand colors, strategy objectives, messages to be communicated and other aspects. In the opposite case, when the IMS development is carried out directly by the brand, the marketing or public relations department defines the objective of the campaign, what they want to communicate, they look for and select the influencers and execute the strategy.

All content created by influencers, in most cases, goes through the approval of the brands to be published. For the creation of this content, advertising agencies and brands share guidelines with all the details they consider relevant: objectives, colors, message to be communicated, among others. It is important to mention that although influencers receive indications of what to do, what to say and what not to say, brands always try to provide some flexibility in terms of creativity and personality of each influencer to develop the content, respecting the non-negotiable by the brand.

3.3. Performativity in influencer marketing

IM is performative. A whole is configured in which speech, voice, audience, body and staging take part as performative elements found behind each content created by the influencer. These performative elements are specific to the influencer's actions during the development of the strategy. The inclusion of this category of analysis for the Honduran case has made it possible to expand the capacity of observation on aspects that are highly significant and little studied in relation to the IMS.

Table 5 summarizes the most important aspects related to the categories of analysis.

Table 5. Categories of analysis of influencer performativity

Type of influencer	Written Speech <i>In image or video (reel)</i>	Voice <i>(In video)</i>	Audience <i>(Person who comments on a content in social networks)</i>	Body <i>In image or video (reel)</i>	Staging <i>In image or video (reel)</i>
Micro	They include humorous Honduran slang.	Cheerful, energetic and clear tone of voice. Voice-over: the speech is perceived as more structured and orderly. Live voice: more natural and spontaneous.	Comments regarding the influencer's good work and very little towards the brand he/she promotes.	They become an "expert agent" captivated by the brand and rely on a smile to connect.	At the brand's commercial location. They use trending music that has gone viral on social networks.
Macro	Slightly more formal and concise speech.		Give their opinion about the work of the influencer and the brand or product they promote.		In the commercial establishment of the brand and they use ambient music.
Mega	They include humorous Honduran slang.		They build a character that represents Hondurans in their daily lives.	At the brand's commercial location. They frequently use incidental music.	

Source: created by the authors

The first performative element identified in the analysis of the posts on social networks was the written discourse that accompanies, in a descriptive sense, all the visual aspects of the posts on social networks. The use of words and phrases that enable emotional connection and greater closeness with the digital community is central in the construction of discursive forms complementary to the audiovisual. In these written messages, the use of hashtags, for example, configures discursive nuclei that are shared by the digital community, thus promoting viralization and the formation of discursive trends.

The use of the voice is another attractive element closely related to the discourse within the performance, no longer written but oral. The tone of voice used allows emphasizing what the brand wants to communicate. Emphasis in oral discourse is oriented to the effectiveness of the strategy. The voice projects credibility, closeness, trust and authenticity to the audience.

On the other hand, an essential element of performativity in terms of strategy is the interaction and reactions of the audience in the comments given to the content published by the influencers. The emotions manifested by the audience in front of

the performances are part of the performance itself. This is not separated from the act that is performed, it is its immediate consequence. The interaction of the digital community, beyond being a data or metric of analysis, is an element in which the performance can be re-signified from the different ways of interpretation that the audience has on what is communicated.

Another fundamental aspect in the analysis of the performativity in the IM is the body. In the full sense, the body is performative as a support that makes possible the representation of an idea (the influence) and a fundamental vehicle of connection in the act of communicating. A clear aspect of the body as a performative element is the use of impersonation or construction of a character by the influencer. The use of characters allows influencers to connect strongly with digital communities due to the everyday and popular nature of the scenes represented. In this way, the brand achieves greater closeness with its followers. The body is a medium that allows communicating a thought, an idea, or a message. Added to this is the facial expression (as body language or non-verbal), which results key in the analysis of posts in image format, since through it, it seeks to transmit approval, satisfaction, joy, security and confidence for the product or service that is being promoted.

Both the body and its gestures, the voice and the speech, as well as the personification, all converge in the scene. That is, the place where the performance takes place. The selection of a correct scene, controlling the space, the surrounding objects and the lighting allows projecting the image desired by the brand through the influencer. On the other hand, in a less controlled space, the influencer appears more natural and free, making the content even more genuine.

The scene is complemented by music, which is also part of the need for a sensory connection between the product, brand and audience. The use of music and its style allows to create an emotional atmosphere according to the content, audience and message to be communicated. It is worth noting that the music that becomes a trend implies almost in most cases to do similar things to the viralized fact. That is, if a song has been used in a certain social network to make a dance, show a before and after or record a behind the scenes, the influencer uses it to perform the same performance adjusted to its purpose.

4. Discussion

The purpose of this paper was to describe the current situation of IMS in Honduras. The results obtained allow establishing some relevant considerations regarding the use of this strategy in the country. It is necessary to consider the complex dynamics established by the actions of its three actors: the brands, the influencer and the advertising agencies.

Each of these actors assumes a very particular conception of the strategy, establishing guidelines that attempt to shape a way of doing marketing in social networks through an influential figure in the digital medium. This particular way of conceiving and using IM in Honduras shows that, although it is used regularly, it shows signs of little consolidation as an advertising tool.

On the brands' side, this little consolidation implies the lack of certain planning in the development of the strategy. Each one assumes it in a different way, very trial and error, therefore it is not homogeneous. On the contrary, advertising agencies have a better-defined way of planning the strategy since they do consider all the necessary aspects for its execution.

Although in the marketing field there is not a fixed structure on how to implement IMS, there are authors who establish a guide to follow to obtain good results. This type of orientation involves considering the objective of the strategy, the evaluation of the competition, the target audience, the selection of the platform, the objective choice of influencers according to the goals of the

campaign, consideration of their exclusivity and the costs involved in the development of the strategy (Haenlein et al., 2020). Likewise, it is essential to measure results and provide guidelines for the influencer to follow, without limiting their creative freedom (Haenlein et al., 2020; SanMiguel, 2020; Glenister, 2021).

In the case of the brands consulted, the objective selection of the influencer, the effective measurement of results and some costs involved in the development of the strategy are determinants that require greater attention in terms of conception and planning. In this sense and regarding the objective selection of the influencer, Gómez, (2018) & Oneto et al., (2020) suggest that brands should make sure to find a person who aligns with the company's philosophy, have a good level of engagement and consider the use of digital tools that detail the metrics that at first glance are not available in the influencers' profiles. Likewise, regarding the focus of brands on the number of followers that influencers have on their social media profiles as a central selection criterion, "selecting profiles simply based on the number of followers on social networks...is a mistake" (Castelló & Del Pino, 2015, p. 34).

In terms of the effective measurement of results, the creation of a promotional code for each influencer (Landreth, 2022; Falls, 2021), analyzing the comments generated around the brand to know how consumers feel, identifying the number of conversions generated from the influencer's content (SanMiguel, 2020) and trying to establish sales-oriented goals as this will allow them to measure the ROI Glenister, (2021) are some of the strategies that can be used for an adequate measurement of results and not rely exclusively on the metrics available in social networks. Measuring ROI is essential in the IMS.

Regarding the estimation of costs involved in the development of the strategy (SanMiguel, 2020; Glenister, 2021), the real price of influencers, the cost of using one social network or another, the format and type of content that also affect the total cost of collaboration with the influencer must be considered. In Honduras, the three aspects mentioned above are usually not considered within the EMI cost matrix of some brands. They agree on a limited budget that does not allow them to fully meet the objectives proposed at the time of executing the strategy.

On the other hand, in the case of advertising agencies, the concept of IMS has a significant element in terms of the way in which the influencer is recognized as a central actor in the strategy. The brands, from their experience in the management of the strategy, prefer not to use the term influencer because this implies placing them at a higher level and therefore, they relate it to a higher cost. In light of what has been observed, advertising agencies decide to use the term talent in an attempt to position the fact that brands pay for talent and not for the influencer term. In this regard, Berlioz & Rodriguez (2023) state that in Honduras influencers feel that the term influencer is treated in a derogatory manner, therefore, they choose to use other words that identify them as "content creator, personal communicator, personal brand ambassador, or opinion leader (p.3708)".

Although the purpose of this paper is not to delve into the concept of talent, it is inevitable not to mention it, since a change is perceived both denotatively and connotatively in the use of the word influencer. At the time of writing this section, the only reference found was that of (Albuquerque, 2023) who uses the term.

Beyond this, the typology used for the classification of influencers in Honduras (SanMiguel, 2020) is relevant, since it has made it possible to estimate the most relevant parameters from the perspective that facilitates the selection of influencers. In this sense, as far as this study is concerned, in Honduras, the category of mega-influencers is the most relevant within the strategy. This type of influencer is characterized because they enjoy great recognition and develop their functions efficiently (Conde &

Casais, 2023), they are influencers who have “created a celebrity status by their established expertise (Campbell & Farrell, 2020, p. 3)”, they help boost the image of brands (Borges-Tiago et al., 2023), they have the ability to position the brands that hire them, reach a large number of people and reach new markets (Albuquerque, 2023).

The aforementioned characteristics are totally adjusted to the Honduran reality for this type of influencer. Their collaboration with small, medium, and large brands is recognized due to the flexibility they have in accepting products in exchange for their content. In this sense, micro-influencers, who manage to achieve greater engagement (Rodríguez & Sixto, 2021; SanMiguel, 2020), collaborate with brands at more comfortable prices compared to other types of influencers (Villena, 2018; Gan et al., 2019). They are ordinary people who have a little influence over their digital community in social networks (Conde & Casais, 2023) and their audience is local. They collaborate with brands across all industries and many people consider their content to be more real than that of influencers with larger followings (Campbell & Farrell, 2020).

Other categorizations such as those of Schouten et al., (2021); Gómez, (2018); Venus et al., (2018) include the celebrity figure as a famous person who is known worldwide for his or her career in the artistic, sports or political environment and has more than 5,000,000 followers in social networks. In Honduras there is no such figure that meets the criteria mentioned by the aforementioned authors.

Regarding the social networks used for the development of the strategy in Honduras, Instagram and TikTok are the most used by influencers. The predominance of Instagram for the development of influencer marketing has been explained in the works of Nuñez, (2023); Zeler et al., (2020) who have shown that this social network allows access to content of interest, following other users, interacting directly with the content, making it possible to achieve greater results in terms of engagement and establishing links with their audiences. Similarly, Instagram allows publishing and editing content (Thomas, 2020), companies can create a profile in which “reputation, traffic and penetration” of these are made visible (Rivera-Abad, 2020, p.153) through various formats such as photographs, reels and Instagram TV (IGTV) (Sánchez-Amboage et al., 2020).

TikTok offers an opportunity as a promotional medium because it has become one of the most popular social networks, due to the ease with which content is disseminated through creative forms such as dances, video challenges, lipsync and songs (Dewa & Safitri, 2021). Likewise, it allows users to create authentic content that generates purchase interest in users (Sumanti et al., 2022), usually homemade videos, seen by digital communities as something more intimate and personal (Martin & Micalotto, 2021).

From the above it follows that, for the Honduran case analyzed, there is no difference between the types of influencers to use TikTok and Instagram. In this sense, for some brands and advertising agencies, TikTok is not considered as the first option for the fulfillment of commercial objectives; however, as stated in the literature, this should not be handled in this way given that, in recent years, studies confirm the boom that this platform has had in terms of product promotion.

The inclusion of performativity as a category of analysis for IMS has made it possible to visualize clear differences with respect to the performative elements present in the influencer’s performance and in the strategy itself. Studies on performativity and IM are scarce. While this research report is being written, the literature consulted reports the contributions of Pérez and Castro-Martínez, (2023) who, by analyzing publications on TikTok, observed the use of household objects and figures from

science fiction movies to communicate messages, the written discourse accompanying the publications was of a familiar type and the influencers provided a response to the comments made by the digital community.

Similarly, Balseca et al. (2020), doing a content analysis of YouTube publications of two influencers, observed that their clothing reflected their culture and traditions, they use humor to connect with their audience and make use of sound effects to capture the attention of the digital community. Also, Alejandro et al. (2023) in their study investigated influencers on the TikTok platform through an exploratory qualitative method in which they aimed to know the participation of the influencer in the phenomenon of communication with their followers through the discourse and personal image.

In this sense, it is ratified that this category can contribute to broaden the IMS analysis framework beyond the aspects exclusively derived from the theoretical and methodological frameworks so far developed around digital marketing and IM.

5. Conclusions

The IMS in Honduras is not heterogeneous and can be considered in the process of consolidation in terms of its conception and use. The influencers community has been developing as the use of IMS by brands has been gaining ground. There is a clear typology of influencer that corresponds to what is expressed in the literature.

The transition from traditional to digital marketing represents one of the main challenges for the Honduran market. However, in light of the results obtained, IM is becoming increasingly important in the design of marketing strategies regardless of the size of the brand that employs it. The perspective of the three social actors analyzed in this study: influencers, brands and advertising agencies allow us to estimate in part the state of IM in Honduras.

Advertising agencies have more structure in the management of the IMS than brands. The key to this is the proper structuring of IMS based on technical criteria in direct consonance with the evolution of the various digital platforms that serve as the basis for its implementation. Likewise, given the characterization achieved, the IMS analysis tools should be oriented according to the dynamics of social networks in marketing and, above all, in the country context. It is in this sense that the generation of data from the systematic study of this type of strategies becomes more important.

The inclusion of performativity as a category of analysis in the IMS, has allowed to broaden the technical criteria that can provide marketing a possible perspective to address aspects related to the action of influence on the consumer, understanding this as a doing and saying in situation, which is installed in the communicative domain with the different digital communities constituted around the figure of the influencer, from where brands find advantages for the establishment of their own discourse.

Finally, the limitations of this study in terms of access to information by agencies and brands that were available to participate as informants, highlights the need to continue developing further studies to cover more broadly the vision of the IM of these participating actors.

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7. Specific contributions from each author

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8. Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest contained in this article.

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