

Training Concerns of Micro-influencers on Advertising and Marketing

Abstract

Influencers have emerged as influential figures un bridging the gap between brands and consumers, establishing this practice as a viable profession in advertising. Among the diverse spectrum of influencers, micro-influencers, characterized by their follower count of less than 100,000, excel in fostering engagement due to their perceived authenticity and credibility. This study surveyed 290 micro-influencers regarding their educational needs and aspirations.

The findings reveal that, despite possessing university degrees, micro-influencers often lack specialized training in digital content creation. Many express a strong desire to receive formal education at the university level to enhance their professionalism, with degrees in marketing or advertising being deemed particularly relevant. However, they encounter significant obstacles, primarily related to financial constraints and time availability. Consequently, universities face the imperative challenge of contributing to the professionalization of micro-influencers, a role that has traditionally been assumed by the industry.

Keywords: Advertising; Marketing; Social Influence; Teaching and Training; Career; Professional Profile; Social Influence; Professional Profile

1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing body of research dedicated to the examination of influencer marketing (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017; Arora, Bansal, Kandpal, Aswani & Dwivedi, 2019; Childers, Lemon & Hoy, 2019; Kay, Mulcahy & Parkinson, 2020). Of particular significance is the remarkable increase in the number of professionals dedicated to this field, known as influencers (Trehan, 2022). Notably, Spain leads Europe in the prevalence of digital influencers, constituting 15% of the 10.5 million active influencers on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube (IAB Spain, 2022).

This surge in influencers has transformed them into pivotal figures capable of bridging the gap between brands and consumers. It has evolved into a full-fledged profession and a promising career path, especially for students pursuing studies in advertising (Establés, Guerrero-Pico & Contreras-Espinosa, 2019; Vizcaíno-Verdú, de-Casas-Moreno & Aguaded, 2019; Fernández-Gómez & Feijoo, 2022). However, an essential aspect yet to be explored is the prior training and education received by individuals entering this role.

Recent data indicates a significant rise in the aspirations of children and adolescents to become influencers in adulthood. In Spain, one-third of teenagers express a desire to pursue careers related to online content creation (Gómez-Miguel & Calderón-Gómez, 2022). In the United States, a report based on a survey of 2,000 respondents highlights that 54% of young individuals aged 13 to 38 aspire to become influencers (Morning Consult, 2019). A study conducted by the multinational company Lego, involving 3,000 children aged 8 to 12 in China, the United Kingdom, and the United States, reveals that today's children are three times more likely to aspire to become YouTubers (29%) than astronauts (11%) (The Lego Group, 2019).

Therefore, universities must be prepared to educate students in emerging digital professions. Academic institutions need to adapt to market demands, particularly within the advertising industry, which requires professionals skilled in crafting compelling social media posts (Alvarez-Flores, Núñez-Gómez & Olivares-Santamarina, 2018).

Within academia, enhancing increasing the employability of graduates remains a key goal for universities. To achieve this objective, it is imperative to understand the skills demanded by the labor market (Pizarro-Lucas, Cabañas-Abelló, Martínez-Pellicer & García-Casarejos, 2021). Consequently, research efforts have been devoted to identifying the professional competencies required in various digital professions, such as search engine optimizers (Escandell-Poveda, Papí-Gálvez & Iglesias-García, 2022 or Escandell-Poveda, Papí-Gálvez & Iglesias-García, 2023) and community managers (Clemente-Mediavilla & Antolín-Prieto, 2019). Surprisingly, this focus has not extended to the realm of influencer marketing, a field closely related to advertising studies. While advertising students are encouraged to acquire knowledge of social networks, the specific role of influencers often remains overlooked.

As a result, the curricula of the Bachelor's Degrees in advertising or marketing among others, have incorporated courses on virtual community management or digital marketing to adapt to the demands of the labor market. However, influencer marketing as such is not a course that is part of the training of these future professionals. And it is an aspect that is studied within other digital courses.

Furthermore, micro-influencers, defined as with fewer than 100,000 followers, have emerged as a distinctive category within this landscape. They excel in fostering engagement by establishing intimate connections with their audiences, often perceived as more authentic and credible (Conde & Casais, 2023). Peres and Silva (2021) shed light on this subgroup, revealing that many micro-influencers are women with graduate degrees who juggle other professions and operate independently of influencer agencies. This underscores the lack of formal professionalization within their field.

This research seeks to unravel the concerns and training aspirations of micro-influencers, a rapidly growing profession. It delves into their inclination to seek formal education for professionalization, offering valuable insights for educational institutions. These insights will enable these institutions to align their training programs with the evolving landscape shaped by the widespread use of social networks and the burgeoning influencer profession.

2. Literature review

2.1 Influencer marketing as a profession and the case of micro-influencers

Influencer marketing amalgamates social networks as advertising platforms with users, including opinion leaders or celebrities, known as influencers, through whom brands communicate to reach a broader audience. Brands often emphasize the advantage of generating authentic content related to their products or services (De Veirman et al., 2017).

Social media influencers are typically categorized into three groups based on their follower count: mega-influencers (> 1,000,000 followers), macro-influencers (100,000 – 1,000,000 followers), and micro-influencers (1,000 – 100,000 followers). Each category exhibits distinct characteristics, advantages, and drawbacks (Tarifa & Cárdbaba, 2022). Notably, advertisers are increasingly recognizing the value of micro-influencers, who are ordinary individuals with a significant influence within specific communities. Micro-influencers possess dedicated followers characterized by higher levels of trust and engagement (Conde & Casais, 2023).

Indeed, there is a growing discourse regarding the significance of influencers with smaller audiences. The Top Digital Trends for 2023 (IAB Spain and Adventia, 2023) report identifies micro-communities as a trend in brand communication. It underscores the

importance of engaging with smaller, more diverse audiences across various age groups and genders, where interactions with individuals who share common interests take precedence, fostering a strong sense of belonging.

However, limited research has been conducted on the profiles of micro-influencers. The debate on the value of influencers with smaller audiences began only a few years ago, and scientific production on micro-influencers is still incipient (Casaló et al. 2020). Peres and Silva (2021) emphasize that unpaid content creators in the lifestyle and fashion sector, primarily young women, remain largely unknown in terms of their education, even though brands actively collaborate with them to reach consumers. Alongside such data, certain studies underscore the challenges of sustaining a career as a micro-influencer (Villegas-Simón, Fernández-Rovira, Giraldo-Luque & Bernardi, 2022). Advertisers and advertising agencies often perceive micro-influencers as amateurs, leading to collaborative arrangements that downplay the existence of a commercial relationship. Consequently, compensation for micro-influencers is typically minimal, often consisting of products or coupons (Arriagada, 2021).

On the contrary, some contend that being an influencer can indeed evolve into a sustainable profession (Sanders, 2022), contingent upon proper training and mentoring (Meneses, 2022). Several studies affirm that accomplished digital content creators can monetize their endeavors and even transform them into full-fledged careers (Stoldt, Mariah, Ekdale & Tully, 2019; Suciu, 2020; Leung, Zhang, Gu, Li & Palmatier, 2022). Consequently, digital content development is trending toward heightened professionalism, thereby enhancing the quality of information presented, as well as refining marketing and communication strategies (Van Driel & Dumitrica, 2021).

However, despite the professionalization of influencer careers for some, consumers often perceive them as relatively unskilled (Bratu, 2019; Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2019) due to the absence of formal education.

2.2 The role of advertising education and the lack of academic studies in the influencer field

Some studies emphasize the increasing significance of influencers in shaping digital communication campaigns for brands (Li, Radzol, Cheah & Wong, 2017; Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019; Trivedi & Sama, 2020; Belanche, Casaló, Flavián & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2021; Liu, 2021). They also explore the impact of such campaigns on consumers (Bu, Parkinson & Thaichon, 2022; Kim & Kim, 2022; Mundel, Wan & Yang, 2023).

In Spain, academics have recognized the need for alignment between advertising studies and the industry (Álvarez-Flores et al., 2018; Fernández-Gómez & Feijoo, 2022) and have explored program offerings for advertising graduates (Clemente-Mediavilla & Antolín-Prieto, 2019). However, little is known about the training concerns of micro-influencers and whether universities can adequately prepare them for their roles. Hence the need, just as previous studies have addressed how to train students in digital skills such as SEO or

Community Manager, among others, to address the need to prepare them to be influencers.

The industry has highlighted a lack of professionalization among influencers, who often lack knowledge of industry practices (Icmedia, 2021). To professionalize the sector, there is a need to instill professional skills in influencers, enabling them to execute more rigorous campaigns.

While scientific production in this field has shed light on the strategies employed by both macro and micro-influencers and the platforms and social networks they utilize (Alassani & Göretz, 2019; Jayasinghe, 2021), there is a compelling case for offering training in areas identified as crucial by research. This includes creating authentic content that allows influencers to strategically engage with their followers while attracting potential advertiser brands (Zniva, 2023).

Research on influencer training is essential, despite the fact that various university degrees in Spain, mostly related to communication (RTVE, 2021), and courses such as the one offered by the Autonomous University of Madrid in 2018 (Salas, 2018), attempt to address this need. Nevertheless, there remains room for improvement in formal training. While advertising studies have begun to recognize influencer roles as potential career outlets (UNIR Revista, 2022), the academic exploration of this aspect remains incomplete.

In other words, in addition to the fact that no specific courses have been incorporated to train in influencer marketing, there are no specific training courses either. The case of the Irish university, South East Technological University (SETU), which has announced the incorporation of a degree in Content Creation and Social Media, a career to become a professional influencer, stands out (Reason Why, 2023).

The evolving landscape demands new competencies—professional, academic, and specific—which necessitate educational transformations (Neill & Schauster, 2015; Tejedor & Cervi, 2017; Childers, 2022). However, current curricula often lag behind the demands of the professional digital advertising sector (González-Oñate, Fanjul-Peyró & Hernández-Gallego, 2021). In fact, the inclusion of new digital profiles remains limited, with content creation specialists featured in only 7 out of 35 Spanish universities offering degrees in advertising (Fernández-Gómez & Feijoo, 2022). Academic courses specializing in social media strategy, analytics, and campaigns are crucial to adequately prepare students for future employment (Childers, 2022; Mishra & Mishra, 2020; Fang, Wei, Huang & 2019).

There is a noticeable gap in knowledge concerning the path to becoming a professional in this field, particularly regarding the most appropriate type of training.

3. Research questions

The primary objective of this study is to examine the training of micro-influencers in the fields of advertising and marketing in Spain, as well as to gauge their interest in specializing in these professional domains.

To achieve this objective, we have formulated the following research questions:

RQ1 What training have microinfluencers undergone to perform their role as content creators?

RQ2 What training would microinfluencers pursue to enrich their role as content creators?

RQ3. Do Sociodemographic characteristics (gender, age educational level), thematic specialty or motivations for being a microinfluencer have a significant impact on the concerns of microinfluencers?

RQ4. Does the training that microinfluencers have received as content creators imply differences in their comprehension of:

- a. how an advertising agency works?
- b. how a communication department works?

RQ5. Does their intention to train as content creators imply differences in their comprehension of:

- a. how an advertising agency works?
- b. how a communication department works?

These research questions will guide our investigation into the training and educational aspirations of micro-influencers in the realms of advertising and marketing.

4. Method

A survey was distributed to users of a Spanish platform that connects influencers and brands and automates the advertising campaign management process (<https://fuelyourbrands.com/>). The questionnaire received responses from 290 micro-influencers between December 2022 and February 2023, ensuring a confidence level of 95% with a margin of error of 6%. Ethical suitability for the survey was positively assessed by the Research Ethics Committee of Universidad Internacional de La Rioja (UNIR).

Table 1 provides an overview of the survey variables used to understand the educational concerns of influencers. The questionnaire consisted of sections that explored the sociodemographic and psychographic characteristics of the influencers. Questions included age, gender, number of followers, preferred social network, sector of activity, reasons for working as content creators, and the number of brands they collaborate with annually. The Fuelyourbrands platform's classifications were used for variables like sector and follower count. For reasons for being an influencer (refer to Table 3), a hierarchical order question was included, allowing respondents to rank reasons from 1 (least important) to 9 (most important).

The second section of the survey delved into the influencers' training and preparation for their role. Questions in this section covered their highest level of completed studies, whether they received training as content creators, their interest in pursuing a university degree related to this field, and which degrees they believed would provide suitable preparation. This section included a mix of open-ended, multiple-choice, and Likert-type scale questions.

The third section aimed to determine whether influencers were familiar with how advertising agencies and brand communication departments, central figures in influencer marketing, operate. These questions were dichotomous (1=Yes; 2=No).

Table 1. Survey Variables Pertaining to the Educational Concerns of Micro-influencers

As outlined in the theoretical framework, prior research primarily examined the relationship between influencers, brands, and consumers from a reception perspective. This led to studies analyzing content on social networks or conducting consumer interviews. While there have been investigations into advertising agencies, there's a need for deeper insights into influencers as message emitters. For this questionnaire, some variables from a study on micro-influencers by Peres and Silva (2021) were adapted. This study involved qualitative interviews with 16 micro-influencers and quantitative surveys with 166 consumers in the hotel industry. Industry studies, such as research on agencies in the United States by Carpenter, Lemon and Mariea (2018), studies by Sanz-Marcos, Jiménez-Marín and Elías-Zambrano (2019), or Smolak and Lopez's (2020) work on Spanish agencies, served as additional references. The White Paper on Responsible Influence, a project co-financed by the European Union, initiated by Icmmedia (2021), was also consulted. This project involved 40 in-depth interviews with various stakeholders in the influencer ecosystem.

Statistical analysis employed SPSS software version 25.0. To address research questions PI3 and PI4, chi-square tests assessed the relationship between micro-influencers' educational concerns and their knowledge of advertising agencies and brand communication departments. To determine differences based on respondents' age, gender, and education level (PI2), the chi-squared test was used. The Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test was employed to identify variations in educational concerns based on motivations for being an influencer.

4.1. Participants

The surveyed influencers were predominantly female (81.4%), with most falling between 25 and 44 years of age (see Table 2). Over 50% of the sample had completed a university education, while 21.4% had vocational training.

Instagram was the primary platform for these influencers (85.2%), with nearly half having between 10,000 and 50,000 followers (47.9%). Profiles with 3,000 to 10,000 followers were also significant, while those with over 50,000 followers were less common (11.4%).

Their content creation was mainly focused on lifestyle (63.8%) and beauty (48.6%), followed by food (37.6%) and fashion (36.2%).

Table 2. Description of the sample

Motivations for becoming influencers were diverse, as presented in Table 3. The most common motivations included leisure and entertainment, receiving rewards from collaborating brands, building a community, and collaborating with reputable brands. An interest in the advertising and marketing profession also emerged as a motivating factor.

Table 3. Motivations for being influencers.

5. Findings

In this section, we present the results categorized into two sections to address the research questions. Firstly, we outline the key findings related to the educational background of micro-influencers and their intentions regarding further education. Secondly, we examine how their educational levels correlate with their knowledge of the communication and advertising sectors.

5.1. Training and Educational Aspirations of Micro-influencers

When micro-influencers were asked about their training for their role, it was discovered that nearly 75% of the respondents had not received any formal training. However, 40% expressed a desire to receive training in the future. Among those who had pursued some form of education, the most common sources were courses offered by companies and institutions (9.3%), followed by official courses provided by universities (5.9%).

Table 4. Educational Aspects: Training Received and Intentions for Future University Studies

Concerning their outlook on future training, it's noteworthy that one-third of micro-influencers consider it optional to continue their training to excel in their role. While almost 55% of the sample expressed a desire to pursue university studies to professionalize their activities, 30.7% cited obstacles related to time constraints or financial limitations.

Table 5. University Study Preferences

Regarding the academic backgrounds that micro-influencers find most relevant for their roles, it was found that a degree in marketing was perceived as the most aligned with their professional interests, followed by degrees in advertising and audiovisual

communication¹. In contrast, Bachelor's Degrees in communication and journalism were seen as less relevant to the influencer domain.

Sociodemographic variables such as gender, age, and educational level did not significantly impact the educational aspirations of micro-influencers. However, a significant relationship was observed between the level of education and the training they had received ($\chi^2(30, N=290)= 46.745, p<.05$).

In general, we observed that individuals with lower educational backgrounds exhibited a higher interest in pursuing training in the field of content creation (Table 6). An exception was observed among those with undergraduate degrees who, despite not having received specific training for becoming influencers, expressed interest in such training (49.5%). Conversely, respondents with higher education levels (e.g., bachelor's or master's degrees) tended to have undertaken official university studies, with courses from companies or institutions being more common among those with primary, secondary, or high school education.

Table 6. Absolute and Relative Frequencies of Content Creator Training and Educational Levels

We also investigated whether different motivations for becoming influencers introduced significant variations in training concerns. Statistically, we found an association between some of the motivations (Table 7) and the variable of training received (although no relationship was found with the variable for continued training). For these cases, we employed the Kruskal-Wallis test, which yielded a significance level below .05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

It was revealed that those primarily motivated by financial gain tended to take official courses at universities to train as a digital content creator or through companies and institutions. Individuals more focused on obtaining rewards demonstrated a need for specific training or university studies. Additionally, micro-influencers with a strong interest in advertising and marketing as their primary motivation tended to receive training from the professional sector, including advertising agencies, intermediary platforms, and companies.

Table 7. Average Assessment of the Main Motivations for Micro-influencers and Their Level of Training Specialization

¹ Also named as broadcasting studies in other countries.

5.2. Training Levels of Micro-influencers and their Knowledge of the Advertising Industry

Firstly, it's crucial to note that almost 40% (37.9%) of the surveyed micro-influencers expressed a need to learn how advertising agencies operate (Table 8).

When we conducted the chi-square test to analyze the relationship between training received and knowledge of advertising agency operations, a significant association was identified ($\chi^2(5, N=290)= 15.438, p<.05$).

Interestingly, 84.5% of respondents who lacked knowledge of advertising agency operations had not received training for content creation. In contrast, although almost 70% of those who understood how advertising agencies function had not undergone formal training, most of the respondents who had completed courses from universities, companies, or advertising agencies possessed knowledge about advertising operations.

Table 8. Training Levels of Micro-influencers Based on their Knowledge of Advertising Agency Operations

Furthermore, 52% of the respondents expressed a need to gain knowledge of how the communication department of a brand or advertiser operates (Table 9). An association was found between the variable of training received and knowledge of the functioning of a brand or advertiser's communication department ($\chi^2(5, N=290)= 20.966, p<.05$). In line with this, 83.4% of individuals lacking comprehension of brand communication department operations had not undergone prior professional training.

As expected, individuals who had received some form of training, especially those who had completed official university courses, demonstrated greater knowledge of communication department operations.

Table 9. Training Levels of Micro-influencers in Relation to their Knowledge of Brand Communication Agency Operations

To continue their education, a statistically significant relationship was observed solely with their knowledge of advertising agency operations ($\chi^2(4, N=290)= 10.349, p<.05$). Notably, almost 31% of individuals lacking knowledge of agency operations considered further university training unnecessary, in contrast to 16.4% who believed it was necessary (Table 10).

Conversely, 29% of those with knowledge of agency operations expressed a desire to continue their university education. Additionally, 28.3% of micro-influencers familiar with advertising agency dynamics also expressed interest in further education but cited time or financial constraints.

Table 10. Intention for Pursuing University Education Based on Familiarity with Advertising Agency Operations

6. Discussion and Conclusions

Despite the social and academic prominence of influencers, especially those with fewer than 100,000 followers, this profile remains relatively understudied. Previous research has characterized micro-influencers as women with graduate education who engage in this activity as a hobby primarily on the Instagram social network (Peres & Silva, 2021). This study aligns with this profile, featuring respondents who are predominantly female, aged between 25 and 44, and possess undergraduate and graduate degrees. It suggests that even though they pursue this activity for leisure and entertainment, this generation has a desire to professionalize their work through specialized training in digital content creation.

We explored the training micro-influencers have received for their roles and found that nearly 75% of them have yet to undergo any formal training. This is a concerning statistic, particularly considering that influencer marketing in Spain accounts for an annual advertising investment of 63.9 million euros (Infoadex, 2023), being the second fastest growing media behind only esports and with the prospect of constant growth. Among those who have received training, it primarily consists of courses offered by companies or institutions. However, it's noteworthy that 55% of respondents express interest in pursuing a university degree, with marketing and advertising degrees being highlighted as the most valuable for their professional development.

In terms of the relationship between the training they've received and their knowledge of the sector, it is unsurprising that individuals with higher levels of education exhibit a better understanding of the workings of advertising agencies and the communication departments of advertisers. However, the connection between educational intentions and sector knowledge requires further clarification. Nearly 31% of those unfamiliar with how agencies operate consider further university education unnecessary. This presents a challenge to higher education institutions in attracting this emerging role in the industry to contribute to its professionalization. The data reveals that 40% of the sample lacks knowledge of agency work, and 52% are unfamiliar with the client's communication department—two pivotal components of the sector that should be studied within advertising degree programs (Fernández-Gómez & Feijoo, 2022).

On a positive note, among those familiar with the sector who express interest in further education at the university level, financial constraints (14.4%) and time limitations (13.9%) emerge as significant barriers. Financial constraints may arise because this activity often revolves around obtaining prizes and rewards, with remuneration less common for micro-influencers compared to those with larger followings (Conde & Casais, 2023). Pursuing education becomes a motivation for those seeking professional growth in this field. Considering that micro-influencers typically engage in various activities and operate in the digital realm, online education emerges as a viable option due to its flexibility. Currently, only four universities in Spain offer online advertising degree programs (Fernández-Gómez & Feijoo, 2022).

Additionally, an analysis of the relationship between sociodemographic variables and educational concerns reveals that micro-influencers who express a strong interest in advertising and marketing as their primary motivation have received training from the professional sector (advertising agencies, intermediary platforms, and companies). This underscores the opportunity for university education in advertising to contribute significantly to the professionalization of this emerging role within the sector.

In conclusion, it is essential to recognize that this study has exploratory limitations. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the educational concerns of micro-influencers and how universities can better cater to the sector's needs, future research should incorporate in-depth interviews to complement the information presented here. These interviews can shed light on the urgent need for universities to adapt their curricula to align with the evolving demands of the industry.

List of Tables

Table 1.

Survey Variables Pertaining to the Educational Concerns of Micro-influencers

	Variables
Sociodemographic and Psychographic Characteristics	Age Sex Field of Influence Primary Social Network for Content Sharing Number of Followers Number of Brands They Work with Per Year Reasons for Being an Influencer
Training and Preparation	Completed Studies Training for Digital Content Creation Potential Formal Training in the Future University Training Qualifications for This Role
Knowledge of the Advertising Industry	Knowledge of Advertising Agency Operations Knowledge of Brand Communication Department Functionality

Source: Compiled by the Authors.

Table 2.

Description of the sample

Sex	-Male: 51 (17.6%)
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	-Women: 236 (81.4%) -Other: 3 (1.0%)
Age Groups	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 years old: 36 respondents (12.4%) <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 years old: 110 respondents (37.9%) <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 years old: 103 respondents (35.5%) <input type="checkbox"/> 45-55 years old: 40 respondents (13.8%) <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer: 1 respondent (0.3%)
Primary Social Media Platform where the Influencer is Active	- Instagram: 247 (85.2%) - TikTok: 36 (12.4%) - YouTube: 5 (1.7%) - Facebook: 1 (0.3%) - Others: 1 (0.3%)
Number of Followers	- Fewer than 3,000 followers: 13 (4.5%) - Between 3,000 and 10,000 followers: 105 (36.2%) - Between 10,001 and 50,000 followers: 139 (47.9%) - Between 50,001 and 80,000 followers: 9 (3.1%) - More than 80,000 followers: 24 (8.3%)
Niche	- Family: 59 (20.3%) - Household: 59 (20.3%) - Lifestyle: 185 (63.8%) - Pets: 47 (16.2%) - Leisure: 81 (27.9%) - Solidarity: 12 (4.1%) - Beauty: 141 (48.6%) - Sports: 48 (16.6%) - Technology: 25 (8.6%) - Travel: 72 (24.8%) - Music: 15 (5.2%) - Food: 109 (37.6%) - Fashion: 105 (36.2%) - Other: 29 (10%)
Level of education	- Primary Education: 8 (2.8%) - Secondary education: 22 (7.6%) - Baccalaureate: 33 (11.4%) - Vocational training: 62 (21.4%) - EU (Undergraduate / Bachelor): 111 (38.3%) - EU (Master / Postgraduate): 50 (17.2%) - EU (Doctorate): 4 (1.4%)
Number of Brands Collaborated with in 1 Year	- Less than 5: 78 (26.9%) - Between 10 and 20: 124 (42.8%) - Between 20 and 30: 53 (18.3%) - Over 40: 35 (12.1%)

Source: Compiled by the Authors.

Table 3.
Motivations for being influencers

Reasons	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
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Economic interests	1	9	5.05
Obtaining rewards (discounts, free products)	1	9	6.11
Leisure and entertainment	1	9	6.66
Generate community around a topic	1	9	5.99
Change a perception or idea in society	1	9	4.37
Passion for advertising and marketing	1	9	5.01
Enjoy collaborating with favorite brands.	1	9	5.86
Flexibility (work and live when and where I want)	1	9	3.78
Family reconciliation	1	9	2.16

Source: Compiled by the Authors. Adapted from: Carpenter et al., (2018); Sanz Marcos et al., (2019); Smolak & Lopez (2020); Peres & Silva (2021) and Icmmedia (2021).

Table 4.

Educational Aspects: Training Received and Intentions for Future University Studies

		Frequency	Percentage
Training Received	Yes, through official university courses.	17	5.9
	Yes, through courses offered by companies or institutions.	27	9.3
	Yes, through courses provided by advertising agencies.	15	5.2
	Yes, through courses offered by platforms connecting influencers and brands.	14	4.8
	No, I have not received any specific training.	101	34.8
	No, but I am interested in acquiring it in the future.	116	40.0
Intention to Pursue University Education in the Future	Yes, I would like to, as it is a way to improve in this profession.	70	24.1
	Yes, but I don't have the time.	45	15.5
	Yes, but I do not have the financial resources.	44	15.2
	No, I do not consider it necessary for the successful development of my activity.	95	32.8
	I do not know	36	12.4

Source: Compiled by the Authors.

Table 5.

University Study Preferences

Degree	Min.	Max.	Mean
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Journalism Degree	1	5	1.78
Advertising Degree	1	5	3.36
Marketing Degree	1	5	3.94
Audiovisual Communication Degree	1	5	3.33
Communication Degree	1	5	2.60

Source: Compiled by the Authors.

Table 6.

Absolute and Relative Frequencies of Content Creator Training and Educational Levels

		Level of education							Total
		Primary Education	Secondary Education	Baccalaureate	Vocational Training	EU (Undergraduate / Bachelor's Degree)	EU (Master / Postgraduate)	EU (Doctorate)	
Training received	Yes, through official university courses.	0	0	0	1	11	5	0	17
		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	9.9%	10.0%	0.0%	5.9%
	Yes, through courses offered by companies or institutions.	1	1	5	8	7	5	0	27
		12.5%	4.5%	15.2%	12.9%	6.3%	10.0%	0.0%	9.3%
	Yes, through courses provided by advertising agencies.	0	0	2	3	9	1	0	15
		0.0%	0.0%	6.1%	4.8%	8.1%	2.0%	0.0%	5.2%
		0	2	1	6	1	4	0	14

	Yes, through courses offered by platforms connecting influencers and brands.	0.0%	9.1%	3.0%	9.7%	0.9%	8.0%	0.0%	4.8%
	No, I have not received any specific training.	3	9	11	23	28	23	4	101
		37.5%	40.9%	33.3%	37.1%	25.2%	46.0%	100.0%	34.8%
	No, but I am interested in acquiring it in the future.	4	10	14	21	55	12	0	116
		50.0%	45.5%	42.4%	33.9%	49.5%	24.0%	0.0%	40.0%
Total		8	22	33	62	111	50	4	290
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Compiled by the Authors.

Table 7.

Average Assessment of the Main Motivations for Micro-influencers and Their Level of Training Specialization

		Economic interests ¹	Obtaining rewards (discounts, free products)*. ²	Passion for advertising and marketing*. ³	Family reconciliation*. ⁴
Training received	Yes, through official university courses.	6.41	6.35	4.35	1.23
	Yes, through courses offered by companies or institutions.	5.77	5.11	5	2.74
	Yes, through courses provided by advertising agencies.	4.8	5.8	6.46	1.53
	Yes, through courses offered by platforms connecting influencers and brands.	3.28	6.28	6.28	3.07
	No, I have not received any specific training.	5.34	6.49	4.97	2.03
	No, but I am interested in acquiring it in the future.	4.67	6	4.81	2.22
* ¹ Sig = .010 // * ² Sig = .040 // * ³ Sig = .023 // * ⁴ Sig = .042					

Source: Compiled by the Authors.

Table 8.

Training Levels of Micro-influencers Based on their Knowledge of Advertising Agency Operations

		Knowledge of Advertising Agency Operations		Total	
		Yes	No		
Training received	Yes, through official university courses.	Count	16	1	17
		%	8.9%	0.9%	5.9%
	Yes, through courses offered by companies or institutions.	Count	21	6	27
		%	11.7%	5.5%	9.3%
	Yes, through courses provided by advertising agencies.	Count	12	3	15
		%	6.7%	2.7%	5.2%
	Yes, through courses offered by platforms connecting influencers and brands.	Count	7	7	14
		%	3.9%	6.4%	4.8%
	No, I have not received any specific training.	Count	57	44	101
		%	31.7%	40.0%	34.8%

	No, but I am interested in acquiring it in the future.	Count	67	49	116
		%	37.2%	44.5%	40.0%
Total		Count	180	110	290
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Compiled by the Authors.

Table 9.

Training Levels of Micro-influencers in Relation to their Knowledge of Brand Communication Agency Operations

		Knowledge of Brand Communication Agency Operations		Total	
		Yes	No		
Training received	Yes, through official university courses.	Count	15	2	17
		%	10.8%	1.3%	5.9%
	Yes, through courses offered by companies or institutions.	Count	18	9	27
		%	12.9%	6.0%	9.3%
	Yes, through courses provided by advertising agencies.	Count	10	5	15
		%	7.2%	3.3%	5.2%
	Yes, through courses offered by platforms connecting influencers and brands.	Count	5	9	14
		%	3.6%	6.0%	4.8%
	No, I have not received any specific training.	Count	43	58	101
		%	30.9%	38.4%	34.8%
	No, but I am interested in acquiring it in the future.	Count	48	68	116
		%	34.5%	45.0%	40.0%
Total		Count	139	151	290
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Compiled by the Authors.

Table 10.

Intention for Pursuing University Education Based on Familiarity with Advertising Agency Operations

			Knowledge of the operation of an advertising agency		Total	
			Yes	No		
Intention for Pursuing University Education in the Future	Yes, I would like to, as it is a way to improve in this profession.	Count	52	18	70	
		%	28.9%	16.4%	24.1%	
	Yes, but I don't have the time.	Count	25	20	45	
		%	13.9%	18.2%	15.5%	
	Yes, but I do not have the financial resources.	Count	26	18	44	
		%	14.4%	16.4%	15.2%	
	No, I do not consider it necessary for the successful development of my activity.	Count	61	34	95	
		%	33.9%	30.9%	32.8%	
	I do not know.	Count	16	20	36	
		%	8.9%	18.2%	12.4%	
	Total		Count	180	110	290
			%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Compiled by the Authors.

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