



# Localization Strategies in Fashion Influencer Marketing: An exploratory study

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Videopresentación

## ABSTRACT

The Internet is an environment without borders, where fashion brands connect with their consumers, especially through social networks. Instagram, TikTok or YouTube have become the preferred channels to establish a personal and bidirectional communication with followers and at the same time a commercial communication channel. One of the social media marketing strategies that fashion brands are using the most is Influencer marketing. In recent years, academic studies in relation to influencer marketing have increased significantly. However, the literature shows that there are still many gaps in which it is desirable to develop studies. In this sense, marketers are often faced with the dilemma of carrying out campaigns with global influencers or, on the contrary, localizing their strategies using in-

fluencers from the countries, cities, or areas where the communication and marketing campaign will be developed, allowing a better interaction with the language, traditions, and culture of the target audience. This exploratory study aims to provide a better understanding of the relationship between influencer marketing and localization strategies. To do so, it analyzes the influencer marketing strategies of five fashion and lifestyle brands (Daniel Wellington, Sephora, APM Múnaco, H&M, and Dolce & Gabbana) observing the global or local approach of their actions with influencers and their consequences.

**Keywords:** influencer marketing, localization, fashion brands, lifestyle, social media.

## RESUMEN

*Internet es un entorno sin fronteras espacio-temporales, donde las marcas de moda conectan con sus consumidores, especialmente a través de las redes sociales. Instagram, TikTok o YouTube se han convertido en los canales preferentes para establecer una comunicación personal y bidireccional con los seguidores y al mismo tiempo en un canal de comunicación comercial. Una de las estrategias de marketing en redes sociales que más están utilizando las marcas de moda es el marketing de influencia. En los últimos años los estudios académicos en relación con el marketing de influencia han aumentado notablemente. Sin embargo, la literatura muestra que todavía son muchos los gaps existentes en los que es conveniente desarrollar estudios. En este sentido, los profesionales del marketing se encuentran con frecuencia ante la disyuntiva de realizar*

*campañas con influencers globales o por el contrario localizar sus estrategias utilizando influencers de los países, ciudades o área donde se va desarrollar la campaña de comunicación y marketing, permitiendo una mejor interacción con el idioma, las costumbres y cultura del público objetivo. Este estudio exploratorio tiene como objetivo profundizar en la relación entre el marketing de influencia y las estrategias de localización. Para ello, se analiza las estrategias de influencer marketing de cuatro marcas de moda y lifestyle (Sephora, APM, H&M y Dolce & Gabbana) observando el enfoque global o local de sus acciones y sus consecuencias.*

**Palabras-clave:** marketing de influencer, marcas de moda, estilo de vida, redes sociales.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Consumers influence other consumers in several ways, for example spreading information, showing behavioral models who inspire imitation, giving or asking for advice. In other words, “consumers are influenced by other consumers. They imitate purchase and consumption behavior they admire, gather information from other consumers in the process of social communication, and seek advice from others who have a greater knowledge and experience” (Flynn et al., 1996, p. 137).

However, in the digital era, with the massification of users in social networks, there has been an increase in profiles of digital influencers (Duncan Brown & Hayes, 2008; Li et al., 2011; WOMMA, 2017): people with large online communities that influence the opinion and behavior of their followers. Given this phenomenon of digital influencers, marketers and researchers focus their attention on online influence, especially in social networks such as Twitter (Bakshy et al., 2011; Wu et al., 2011), Facebook (Murphy & Schram, 2014; Trusov et al., 2010) or Instagram (Breves et al., 2019).

In fact, in recent years influencer marketing is taking more presence in companies and budgets are constantly increasing to collaborate with digital influencers (Ranga & Sharma, 2014; SanMiguel, Guercini, & Sádaba, 2019a). In 2019, Influencer marketing was 6.5 Market size in billion U.S. dollars (Statista, 2019). Briand Solis (2016) explains that influencers in the digital environment will continue to grow as consumers look for more specific information. Digital influencers are “an army of online experts, extroverts, reach fragile and elusive audiences where other traditional marketing programs cannot do it” (p. 1).

Today, the entire world is digitalized, especially during the difficult period of the Covid-19 pandemic. Indeed, the year 2020 was a fundamental year for new technology discoveries (Shu Wei Ting et al., 2020), but due to the pandemic, the world has had to undergo a dizzying digital transformation to face the new challenges. Companies began to pay even more attention to digital marketing and how to improve brand management, awareness and positioning online.

For this reason, influencer marketing experienced great growth in the aftermath of the pandemic. Companies found a perfect ally in influencers to continue promoting their products and creating content. Some companies, especially fashion, luxury, and beauty companies, collaborated with influencers worldwide and others preferred to collaborate with influencers with fewer followers but greater impact in their countries and cities (Fancisco et al., 2021; Femenia-Serra & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2022). It is necessary to highlight the lack of literature and studies on the union of these two important concepts and strategies, influencer marketing and localized marketing, for this reason, the present research wants to bring light on this gap.

Influencer Marketing was born with the growth of social media, and with a new type of advertisement, different from the traditional one of marketing communication. Thanks to social media, brands can address customers directly, building a strong relationship with them, and make them loyal to the brand. Brands, however, have to be careful to choose the right influencer for their campaigns, in order to communicate the right message.

It's important to underline that until now there are only a few studies that connect the concept of influencer marketing with the concept of localization of communication and marketing strategies. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to underline and delve into the relationship between influencer marketing and localization strategies. First, on one side, it's important to understand the different influencer marketing strategies; and, on the other side, find out if companies are performing influencer marketing plans based on localization strategies, as an action to better reach their audiences. Consequently, this paper raises two research questions: What kind of influencer marketing strategies are brands engaging in? and Are fashion brands applying location strategies in their influencer marketing actions?

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Fashion Influencer Marketing Strategies

We are in the era of connectivity, where users and customers have the possibility of being in continuous contact with each other and with brands and institutions. Social networks have fostered the emergence of new opinion leaders with millions of followers. Academic literature has paid attention to this digital phenomenon through the study of *Social Media Influencers* (SMIs) (Borchers 2019; Li et al., 2011), people with large online communities who influence the opinion and behavior of their followers. “Marketing researchers and practitioners are interested in targeting individuals in social networks who may have disproportionately higher levels of influence over others in their network” (Phan & Godes, 2018, p. 259).

Influencer marketing is “the science of involving different profiles of opinion leaders and influential consumers in favor of a company, with the objective of strengthening its brand image and boosting sales through the content they share among their contacts and audience. The most common influencer marketing strategy is the collaboration of an influencer with a brand to promote a product or service” (SanMiguel, 2020, p. 209). In fact, in recent years influencer marketing has become more prominent at companies and budgets are constantly increasing to collaborate with digital influencers (SanMiguel, et al., 2019). Some of the benefits of social media influencer and influencer marketing for brands include: Engaging the online promotions; Increasing a company’s presence in large or small communities; Establish a loyal relationship between brands and customers; Increasing a company’s authenticity thanks to influencers; create online contents; increasing the online traffic and engagement (SanMiguel, 2020).

New influencer marketing strategies differentiate between Organic Influencer Marketing (OIM) and Paid Influencer Marketing (PIM), as well as User Generated Content (UGC) and Influencer Generated Content (IGC) (Lou and Kim 2019; Lou and Yuan 2019; SanMiguel 2020), and try to combine both content possibi-

ties to offer the best experience for consumers. Indeed, the report published by Influencer.com and Globalwebindex.com, *The Age of Influence: How COVID-19 Has Propelled Brands into the Era of Influencer Marketing* (2020, p. 3) explains that “Influencer marketing offers important ways of staying in tune with consumer expectations through the personalities at the heart of these cultures (...) Coronavirus hasn’t created this ‘new normal’ of more meaningful relationships between creators and consumers. It has simply propelled influencer marketing along the trajectory on which it was already heading”.

Several academic studies have analyzed the impact of influencers in the fashion industry as trend disseminators (Quelhas-Brito et al., 2020), content developers (Jacobson & Harrison (2022), or leaders in consumption processes (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). Research conducted by Ewers (2017) describes three aspects in which influencers impact the fashion consumer. Firstly, Brand Attitude, as fashion brands select influencers that reinforce the brand concept and convey the influencer’s positive values to the brand. Secondly, Credibility: the influencers that brands select have to be credible, i.e., the relationship between the fashion brand and the influencer has to be related to the influencer’s lifestyle. Thirdly, Purchase Intention, as influencers recommend products to their followers, encouraging them to buy them. Although sometimes they can also discourage the purchase.

The success of influencer marketing plans depends largely on two actions that brands must take before collaborating with influencers (SanMiguel, 2020). First, they must conduct an in-depth analysis of consumer behavior: what they are like, how they buy fashion, what is the difference between generations and what influencers can help them with in the buying process. Then, they have to choose the right influencer for the objectives that they intend to achieve during the campaign or collaboration. Therefore, the influencer must identify with the brand’s values or be aligned with them. Another factor pointed out by SanMiguel (2020) is the importance of studying the geographical area of influence.

## 2.2 Localization Marketing Strategies

Location marketing strategies have always been a matter of debate for academics and practitioners: “One of the most controversial and frequently debated issues in the international marketing/advertising literature centers on whether international marketing strategies should be standardized across national markets or localized to individual national markets” (Cheon et al., 2007, p. 110). Studies have highlighted the positive relationship between localization and target approach; and at the same time the risk of not being internationally consistent in the message and brand image due to an excess of localization and lack of standardization (Cheon et al., 2007).

Today, the world is entirely interconnected without any geographical boundaries. People can communicate with anyone they want in every part of the world with just one click. Localization could be seen as part of globalization; it is about “going global by adapting local” (Simon-Miller, 1986; Fan et al., 2016). Localization is defined as the “process of modifying products or services to account for differences in distinct markets” (LISA, 2007, p. 11). Pym (2012, p. 3) defines localization as “adapting features to suit a particular locale, which is in turn understood as a market segment defined by criteria including language, currency and educational level or income bracket, depending on the nature of the communication”. It is important to underline that the concept of localization in academic studies has hardly been related to the field of fashion or influencer marketing. Likewise, its relationship with the digital marketing field is still limited, despite it being fundamental for the two fields to work together to succeed in the digital environment and to allow the fashion industry to become a reality (Noris et al., 2020).

In this sense, it is convenient not to confuse location strategies with location-based marketing, which is “any application, service, or campaign that incorporates the use of geographic location to deliver or enhance a marketing message/service. Geographic location data may be obtained via a wide variety of methods and technologies” (Jaradat et al., 2015, p.1).

Professional literature regarding digital marketing and localization strategies has focused on highlighting the importance of content localization. Munro (2019) defines it as follows: “Localized content is a visual or written asset modified to be usable for a specific place in the world. This could be a city, state/province, region, country, or continent” (p.1), and also points out four key aspects for brands:

- » Marketers need to ensure content aligns with the local audience – this goes beyond a simple translation of language –; it is more about adding a local touch to the content by modifying colors, puns, metaphors, cultural norms, and regional visuals.
- » Global expansion shouldn’t occur at the cost of a relevant customer experience – brand consistency is key.
- » Four elements brands need to consider when implementing localized content strategies are: visual elements, language, cultural nuances and brand consistency.
- » Marketers put a lot of thought into what traits to include when they target audiences with content, but the same level of attention doesn’t always go into the visuals used – some campaigns end up using one-size-fits-all images instead of tailoring them to specific audiences, which is a costly mistake.

The prestigious content and digital tools platform Semrush in “What is content localization?” (Kura, 2020) agrees with Munro (2019) that localization is more than just translation and adds: “Localized content experiences better engagement than non-localized content due to targeted relevance and the audience’s ability to easily understand the context (...) Without localization, you could be missing out on a large portion of people who could become your next client or customer”.

In the fashion industry, fast fashion brands tend to combine global marketing and communication strategies with local campaigns. The size of the company, the large number of shops in multiple countries, the need to create “fast marketing” campaigns that reach a large audience, all contribute to this combination of strategies (Sheridan, Moore, & Nobbs, 2006). Luxury brands, on the other hand, tend to run more global and standardized campaigns in order to better control brand perception (Kapferer and Bastien, 2009). However, generalizations should not be made. Although it is important to note that social media gives brands the possibility to run localized campaigns more cheaply and quickly. In fact, it is common for luxury brands in China to collaborate on social media with Chinese celebrities to increase their brand awareness (Liu et al., 2016). “When consumers see a social media message with a celebrity from the same ethnic group, they tend to consider him/her as the ingroup member” (Yu & Hu, 2020, p. 2).

The most recent research that addresses the topic of localization and influencer marketing is that of Yu & Hu (2020): *When luxury brands meet China: The effect of localized celebrity endorsements in social media marketing*. The researchers again point out the problem of the trade-off between standardizing communication or locating celebrities who collaborate with the brand in different markets. The study analyzes the case of luxury brands in China and analyzed whether “Chinese celebrities can trigger more interactions on social networks and enhance the luxury perception of the brand than Western celebrities” (Yu & Hu, 2020, p. 1) and the results of the study showed the positive effectiveness of locating celebrities on social networks.

Fashion companies analyze how to transmit cultural values and products (Noris et al., 2020). More and more companies nowadays are trying to make their products internationally, to expand their businesses around the globe. In order to apply this strategy in a successful way, a company must adopt some aspects that will make its products accessible and understandable by everyone. A localized campaign is really important when talking about differences in culture, conventions of each country and beliefs systems; not localizing a campaign could bring a negative reputation for the

brand. An example of this negative aspect is the case of Dolce & Gabbana, when they decided to work with the Chinese actor Zuo Ye on a campaign based in Shanghai (November 2019). In this case the Italian brand chose the right influencer, but the message was absolutely wrong, with the result that followers were disgusted by this advertisement.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This research is based on a qualitative research technique: the case study method with an interpretive approach (Andrade, 2009). The research examined localization strategies to provide a case study of influencer marketing campaigns developed by lifestyle brands. For this reason, five lifestyle brands are described in terms of how they work with digital influencers, focusing on how the localization strategy works. The aspects analyzed in each case were: (a) Analysis of marketing and communication campaigns and collaborations; (b) Analysis of influencer marketing campaigns; (c) Analysis of localization strategies through influencer marketing.

The sample was selected for convenience. The five brands have been working with influencers for several years, so their influencer marketing strategies are more professionalized, allowing them to find localization strategies. In addition, the sample serves to analyze the various business models that we find in the lifestyle industry: Luxury and Fast Fashion, Jewelry and Watches, and Beauty. The brands selected for the study were: (1) Daniel Wellington: a digitally native watch brand, which sells worldwide, and used influencer marketing as its main marketing and communication strategy. (2) Sephora: beauty and cosmetics brand born in France, global brand with shops around the world selling both luxury and affordable products; (3) APM Monaco: jewelry brand born in Montecarlo, which has more than 200 shops and frequently runs campaigns with brand ambassadors and influencers; (4) H&M: fast-fashion brand born in Sweden, world-renowned brand that combines a variety of communication strategies; (5) Dolce & Gabbana: luxury fashion brand born in Italy, one of the luxury brands working most frequently with celebrities and influencers.

## 4. CASE ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Daniel Wellington influencer marketing localization strategies

The birth of Daniel Wellington's watches took place in 2006. His Founder, Filip Tysander, met an Englishman, Daniel Wellington, passionate about vintage watches. The strategy to make the brand known around the world was through influencer marketing. The strategy was not having sponsors, but gifting Daniel Wellington's watches to influencers, in exchange for advertising on social media. This was an absolute winning strategy at the basis of Daniel Wellington's success throughout the years.

The success of these watches was also thanks to the promotion only with social networks, an idea that Filip Tysander had since the beginning. With social networks, the brand had the opportunity to choose its target, which was young people, and to focus on it. The brand was mostly concentrated on Instagram, the social network that most cares about the visual and graphic aspect of a profile, and the result was that now the brand is at the center for the watch business. With Instagram, the brand made four important processes: (1) Influencer Marketing Campaigns: DW selected some influencers to promote the brand in exchange for Daniel Wellington's watches. The goal of Daniel Wellington is not to focus just on one big influencer or celebrity, but to focus on more small influencers that show the watch with the hashtag #danielwellington. (2) Brand Hashtag: with #danielwellington, the aim of the brand was to encourage people to post photos and videos with DW's watches on social networks. Daniel Wellington's strategy was to create three different hashtags in order to gain more visibility and more customers. #picoftheday, #pickofthemonth and #captioncontest are the newest hashtags created by the brand with the aim of engaging more public. These particular hashtags were launched by the brand in order to have more engagement from its community. The goal of these hashtags was to make the brand more visible and public, re-posting photos of people that used these hashtags and nominating a

winner of the day, a winner of the month, and a winner for the best contents published. This strategy was so successful that every day and every month people post photos with a Daniel Wellington's watch, only to be re-published on the brand's official profile. In this way, the brand has several contents to publish every day, and very different people have the opportunity to be on an account with millions of followers. Daniel Wellington's influencer marketing strategy was based not only on micro-influencers, but at the same also on the User Generated Content (UGC). (3) Location based hashtags: #DWLosAngeles, #DWNewYork. (4) Promotional Codes.

Daniel Wellington prefers to work with micro-influencers since the birth of the brand. At the beginning, this strategy was selected by the brand because the founder couldn't afford any collaborations with VIPs or macro-influencers, so he decided to work only with small influencers. The partnership with them was a sort of "exchange", in the sense that the brand sent the product to the influencer without any payment, and in exchange the influencer had to promote the product on his/her social networks. This strategy was successful immediately, and the brand decided to follow it through the years.

The brand's campaigns are among the few occasions in which Daniel Wellington works with celebrities or macro-influencers, in this case named brand ambassadors. Regarding both IFM and UGC, Daniel Wellington works with a selected number of influencers, which come from different countries and different backgrounds. This is not a random strategy, but a precise one, because the brand knows the importance of differentiating its contents on the basis of countries and backgrounds, in order to enlarge its audience online. For example, The Iconic Link Collection of 2019 was thought to be presented by some influential people from different backgrounds and work. The advertisement was about a photo shooting of the brand ambassadors wearing Daniel Wellington's watches (thefashionisto.com). Brand ambassadors are Hailey Bieber (USA-Model), Odell Beckham Jr (USA-Football Player), Paulo Dybala (Argentina-Football Player) Lay Zhang (China-Entertainer) Ayushmann Khurrara (India-Actor), and Radhika Apte (India-Actress).

Since influencer marketing is a key strategy for the brand, it collaborates with influencers from all over

the world. Indeed, micro-influencers or brand ambassadors chosen by Daniel Wellington are from any country around the Globe. Since the Chinese market is a world leader, Daniel Wellington wants to expand its success on that part of the world. For this reason, the brand tends to choose Chinese ambassadors or micro-influencers.

Each social network profile of Daniel Wellington is written in English, from the biography to every caption on its posts. Some micro-influencers publish photos on their personal profiles with a Daniel Wellington's watch and write the captions in their official language. The following table shows the influencers who have collaborated in two Daniel Wellington campaigns and the country where they are located:

CAMPAIGN	BRAND AMBASSADOR	PROFESSION	COUNTRY
#DWMoments	Drew Ray Tanner	Actress	Canada
#DWMoments	Bora Kim	Influencer	Korea
#DWMoments	Anthony Colette	Dancer	France
#DWMoments	Zulu Mkhathini	Artist	South Africa
#DWMoments	Karolina Pisarek	Model	Polonia
#DWMoments	Janni Olsson Delér	Influencer	Sweden
Iconic Link Collection	Hailey Bieber	Model	USA
Iconic Link Collection	Odell Beckham Jr.	Football Player	USA
Iconic Link Collection	Paulo Dybala	Football Player	Argentina
Iconic Link Collection	Lay Zhang	Entertainer	China
Iconic Link Collection	Ayushmann Khurrara	Actor	India
Iconic Link Collection	Radhika Apte	Actress	India

Table 1: Daniel Wellington's International Campaigns

## 4.2 Sephora Influencer Marketing Localization strategies

The French multinational company Sephora was born in 1970 in Limoges. Now it's based in Paris. The official website of Sephora says that: *"Our purpose at Sephora is to create an inviting beauty shopping ex-*

*perience and inspire fearlessness in our community"* (sephora.com).

Sephora has an official account on almost every social media platform, from Instagram to Tik Tok. It counts for each profile million of followers and the number is growing day by day: Facebook (19 M likes); Twitter (2.3 M followers); Pinterest (902 K followers); LinkedIn (1.1 M followers); YouTube (1.29 M Subscribers).

The particular and important aspect regarding Sephora's Social Media strategy is that of creating different official accounts differentiated by countries. Sephora understood that in the sector in which it works, people take inspiration from women and men that are similar to them. Sephora has more than one official ac-

count because in these years the beauty and cosmetics world is very popular, but for example, in each country there are different trends, different styles or different make-ups, and in this way, Sephora can divide them. In each different profile, Sephora tends to work with local influencers or brand ambassadors, but it's not a rule. In this way, the brand can create different feeds or con-



tents for each profile, in the sense that every country has its own trends and products that are more used by its customers.

The purpose that Sephora has on its social media strategy is always the same: “Let’s beauty together”, in the sense that the brand tries to have a clear and trustfulness conversation with its customers, with live chats or with live streaming. Sephora, compared to other brands, is not doing a proper influencer campaign on its social networks. Instead, what the brand does online is promoting products that sell inside its stores. Most influencers that compare on Sephora’s official accounts, are promoting some brands or products that are present in stores, but occasionally there are collaborations directly with Sephora’s products. Further, just a few of Sephora’s profiles collaborate with influencers, for example Sephora Italia. On the other hand, Sephora India does not run any campaigns with these types of promoters. Sephora has products from other brands in its stores, so most of the time it republishes what they post on their profiles.

Sephora considers fundamental the idea of “community”, of sharing the same values and the same ideas. For this reason, each official profile has its own hashtag that most of the times became viral:

- » Sephora - #sephorasquad
- » Sephora Italia - #SephoraBeautyCommunity
- » Sephora Spain - #SoloenSephora

- » Sephora France - #TheUnlimitedPowerOfBeauty
- » Sephora Brasil - #sephorainsira
- » Sephora Serbia - #TheUnlimitedPowerOfBeauty
- » Sephora India - #ExclusivelyAtSephora
- » Sephora Greece - #SephoraUnlimitedStories
- » Sephora Polonia - #SephoraCollection
- » Sephora Romania - #TheUnlimitedPowerOfBeauty
- » Sephora Bulgaria - #TheUnlimitedPowerOfBeauty

The graph below summarizes all the international influencers selected by Sephora for campaigns or collaborations, divided also by the different official Instagram accounts of the French brand. The strategy of Sephora is *Influential customer-centric*, in which the brand is focused on its customers and wants to put them into the center of its success (SanMiguel, 2020). All of Sephora’s official profiles are customer-centric, since the fact that it creates profiles almost for each country in the world, the goal is to let the customer feel comfortable and that the customer can recognise themselves in Sephora’s products.

SEPHORA ACCOUNT	INFLUENCER	ACCOUNT INSTAGRAM	COUNTRY	SECTOR	Nº FOLLO WERS	HASHTAGS
@sephora	Ryan Potter	@ryanbpotter	US	Youtuber & Makeup Artist	366 K	#sephorasquad
@sephora	Selena Gomez	@selenagomez	US	Actress/Singer	192 M	/
@sephora	Kevin Ninh	@flawlesskevin	US	Makeup Artist	459 K	#sephorasquad
@sephora	Monica Veloz	@monicastyle-muse	US	Beauty Youtuber	353 K	#sephorasquad

SEPHORA ACCOUNT	INFLUENCER	ACCOUNT INSTAGRAM	COUNTRY	SECTOR	Nº FOLLO WERS	HASHTAGS
@sephora	Sarah Louwho	@sarah_louwho	US	Hairstylist	351 K	#sephorasquad
@sephora	Grace Atwood	@graceatwood	US	Blogger	157 K	#sephorasquad
@sephora	Tiff Benson	@tiffbenson	US	Makeup Artist	79.5 K	#sephorasquad
@sephora	Tennille Murphy	@thetennillelife_	US	Interior Designer	165 K	#sephorasquad
@sephora	Nabela Noor	@nabela	US	Blogger	1.6 M	#sephorasquad
@sephoraitalia	Elisa Maino	@la_mainoo	Italy	Blogger	2.5 M	#sephorabeauty-community
@sephoraitalia	Virginia Tomarchio	@virginiatomarchio	Italy	Dancer	491 K	#sephorabeauty-community
@sephoraitalia	Giulia Gaudino	@giuliagaudino	Italy	Fashion Blogger	603 K	#sephorabeauty-community
@sephoraitalia	Martina Pinto	@martinapinto	Italy	Actress	216 K	#sephorabeauty-community
@sephoraitalia	Greta Agazzi	@greta_ag	Italy	Makeup Artist	140 K	#sephorabeauty-community
@sephoraitalia	Giulia Sinesi	@giuliasinesi	Italy	Beauty Expert	123 K	#sephorabeauty-community
@sephoraitalia	Giulia Salemi	@giuliasalemi	Italy	Show Girl	1.1 M	#sephorabeauty-community
@sephoraitalia	Martina Luchena	@martinaluchena	Italy	Influencer	706 K	#sephorabeauty-community
@sephoraitalia	Natalia Paragoni	@natyparagoni	Italy	Influencer	749 K	#sephorabeauty-community
@sephoraitalia	Virginia Stablum	@virginia.stablum	Italy	Influencer	389 K	#sephorabeauty-community
@sephoraitalia	Giulia Valentina	@giuliavalentina	Italy	Influencer	823 K	#sephorabeauty-community
@sephoraitalia	Chiara Ferragni	@chiaraferragni	Italy	Influencer	20.9 M	#sephorabeauty-community
@sephora_spain	Maria Hernandez	@mariahernandezc	Spain	Influencer	100 K	/
@sephora_spain	Alexandra Federicca	@afedericca	Spain	Artist	308 K	/
@sephora_spain	Belen Hostalet	@belenhostalet	Spain	Influencer	814 K	/

SEPHORA ACCOUNT	INFLUENCER	ACCOUNT INSTAGRAM	COUNTRY	SECTOR	Nº FOLLO WERS	HASHTAGS
@sephora_spain	Patricia Garela	@patriciagarela	Spain	Content Creator	52.7 K	/
@sephora_spain	Ana Molina	@dr.anamolina	Spain	Doctor	98.7 K	/
@sephora_spain	Teresa bass	@teresa_bass	Spain	Model	302 K	/
@sephora_spain	Sergio Pardo	@srgpardo	Spain	Influencer	74.2 K	/
@sephora_spain	Sara Baceiredo	@sarabace2	Spain	Influencer	368 K	/
@sephora_spain	Carla Hinojosa	@carlahinohosar	Spain	Digital Specialist	242 K	/
@sephora_spain	Silvia Garcia Bartabac	@bartabacmode	Spain	Youtuber	392 K	/
@sephora_spain	Lele Pons	@lelepons	Venezuela	Singer	41.5 M	#sephoraspain
@sephorafrance	Huda Kattan	@hudabeauty	France	Makeup Artist & Blogger	47.7 M	#sephorafrance #sephoraloves-huda
@sephorafrance	Chloé Bleinc	@chloebbbb	France	Influencer	904 K	#sephorafrance
@sephorafrance	Alva Claire	@alvaclaire	France	Model	13.2 K	#sephorafrance
@sephorafrance	Maeva	@maevabt_	France	Youtuber	137 K	#sephorafrance
@sephorafrance	Bilal Hassani	@iambilalhassani	France	Singer	600 K	#sephorafrance
@sephorafrance	Shrine Boutella	@shirineboutella	France	Actress	2.3 M	#sephorafrance
@sephorafrance	Sananas	@sananas2106	France	Influencer	2.3 M	#sephorafrance
@sephorabrasil	Jessica Flores	@jessicaflores	Brasil	Blogger	606 K	#sephorabrasil
@sephorabrasil	Natalia Cardoso	@nahcardoso	Brasil	Digital Creator	8.7 M	#sephorabrasil
@sephorabrasil	Iza	@iza	Brasil	Singer	13.4 M	#sephorabrasil
@sephorasrbija	Adria Arjona	@adriaarjona	Serbia	Actress	604 K	#sephorasrbija
@sephorapolska	Klaudia Owczarek	@klaudia.owczarek	Polonia	Artist	440 K	#sephorapolska
@sephorapolska	Sandra Dorsz	@sandra_dorsz	Polonia	Model	211 K	#sephorapolska
@sephorapolska	Kinda Kostrzewa	@anielskieskrzydlo	Polonia	Actress	186 K	#sephorapolska
@sephoraaus	Erin Holland	@erinvholland	Australia	Blogger	390 K	#sephoraaus

Table 2: Example of Sephora's International Influencers (own elaboration 24.09.2020)

The French brand tends to collaborate with micro-influencers, celebrities, or even regular people. It does not focus on a proper IFM strategy; in this sense, the company has a short-term relationship with them, which is neither a real collaboration nor a partnership. Indeed, the brand's strategy involves reposting videos or photos from different profiles on its official account. Despite the short-term nature of its influencer relationships, the company is a leader in its sector, and customers are influenced by it.

### 4.3 APM Monaco Influencer Marketing Localization strategies

APM Monaco is a modern luxury jewelry brand founded in Montecarlo in 1982 by Ariane Prette. Manufacturing was later moved to China in 1992, and the head offices are now in Hong Kong. Initially, the brand was only present in Monte Carlo and France. However, due to its growing success, it expanded by opening stores in other countries. APM Monaco is a relatively new jewelry brand, and its campaigns have a strong presence of celebrities or macro-influencers. The brand primarily focuses on Instagram and YouTube. It doesn't have a large following on other social media platforms. Collaborating with celebrities or macro-influencers, such as Chiara Ferragni, has positioned APM Monaco as a top-level brand in the premium jewelry sector. On its Instagram profile, the brand predominantly shares posts and videos related to ongoing campaigns, featuring the chosen influencer for that specific campaign.

APM Monaco is part of that segment of brands that only pursues influencer marketing strategy. The brand focuses its attention on collaboration campaigns with celebrities or macro-influencers to gain visibility and a larger audience in a shorter time. In this respect, one successful strategy was selecting the world-famous Italian influencer, Chiara Ferragni. The brand works with various types of influencers in different ways. Celebrities and macro-influencers, who serve as the faces of campaigns, have a contractual relationship and are paid by the brand. APM Monaco counts some of the world's most influential individuals as its brand ambassadors. These individuals are not chosen randomly but for spe-

cific reasons and from particular countries. Although the brand's official social media accounts only showcase the influencers or celebrities with whom they collaborate, the brand also engages with micro-influencers. For example, Gaia Viola Giraudi, a 27-year-old with 43.4K followers, was chosen as a brand ambassador by the French brand. The collaboration between APM Monaco and Gaia took place entirely on Instagram.

The following table shows an example of the international influencers with which the brand has collaborated:

BRAND AMBASSADOR	COUNTRY
Chiara Ferragni	Italy
Caroline Receveur	France
Yuwei Zhangzou	China
Gilda Ambrosio	Italy
Negin Mirsalehi	Holland
Olivia Culpo	United States
Julie Sariñana	United States
Julia Restoin Roitfeld	France
Camila Coelho	Brasil
Yao Chen	China
Aimee Song	United States
Kristina Bazan	Bielorussia
Caroline Daur	France

Table 3: APM Monaco International Brand Ambassadors

One notable aspect of APM Monaco's brand ambassador selection is the strong presence of influencers from China. With its headquarters and offices based in Hong Kong, the brand emphasizes the importance of the Chinese market. APM Monaco was a pioneer in entering and focusing on this market segment. Presently, the brand's strategies are primarily geared towards Asia. This is exemplified by their collaboration with Chinese actress Yao Chen in Beijing.

#### 4.4 H&M Monaco Influencer Marketing Localization strategies

H&M has a significant presence on social media, with over than 36 million followers on Instagram and nearly 100 K followers on TikTok. Its success worldwide contributes to the growing numbers. H&M differentiates its Instagram accounts not by country, but by sections such as H&M kids or H&M man. Each profile has different models, collaborations, hashtags, influencers, collections or campaigns. The @hmhome Instagram profile is the only one that doesn't feature models or influencers.

The influencer marketing of the Swedish brand is not very prominent. It means that the company does not focus on working with specific influenc-

ers or celebrities. While the brand publishes content about campaigns or collaborations on its social media profiles, it has launched some projects with influencers, such as the #HMLeague, a collaboration of H&M with 23 ambassadors introduced in 2019. This action involved a year-long project centered around H&M's spring collection. These influencers or ambassadors featured the Swedish brand by creating content about it and participating in events.

The following table shows an example of the international influencers with which the brand has collaborated:

ACCOUNT	INFLUENCER	COUNTRY	PROFILE	SECTOR	Nº FOLLOWERS	HASHTAGS
@hm	Malou Peterson	Sweden	@maloupeterson	Skier	72.5 K	#HMSPORT
@hm	Sara Ollila		@saraollila	Blogger	29.1 K	#HMStudio
@hm	Blair Eadie	USA	@blaireadiebee	Influencer	1.6 M	#HMStudio
@hm	Young Empe- rers	USA	@young_empe- rers	Content Crea- tor	169 K	#HMStudio
@hm	Alton Mason	USA	@altonmason	Model	348 K	#HMStudio
@hm	Veronika Heil- brunne r	France	@veronikaheil- brunn er	Model	216 K	#HMStudio
@hm	Barbie Ferreira	Brasil/US A	@barbieferreira	Model/Ac- tress	2.4 M	#HMStudio
@hm	Romy De Fon- seca	USA	@romydfonseca	Blogger	88 K	#Kangolxhm
@hm	Lauren Arthurs	Ireland	@laurenarthurs	Blogger	105 K	#Kangolxhm
@hm	Mabel Alabama Pearl McVey	USA	@mabel	Singer	1 M	#Kangolxhm
@hm	Molly Hammar	Sweden	@mollyhammar	Singer	57 K	#HMCons- cious
@hm	Sheryl Luke	USA	@walkinwonder- land	Blogger	391 K	#giulivaheri- tagex hm

ACCOUNT	INFLUENCER	COUNTRY	PROFILE	SECTOR	Nº FOLLOWERS	HASHTAGS
@hm	Karla Alajdi	Denmark	@karla_alajdi	Influencer	70.5 K	#giulivaheritageex hm
@hm	Anja Camilla Alajdi	Denmark	@anjacamilla-alajdi	Influencer	4 K	#giulivaheritageex hm
@hm	Eni	UK	@eniswardrobe	Blogger	18.8 K	#giulivaheritageex hm

Table 4: H&M Influencers

H&M doesn't normally work with particular influencers, but in some campaigns, it collaborated with international influencers.

ers for this organic influencer marketing concept. This strategy applies to all of H&M's social media accounts. Across various platforms, including Instagram, YouTube,

INFLUENCER	COUNTRY	ACCOUNT	FOLLOWERS
Chiara Ferragni	Italy	@chiaraferragni	21.6 M
Bianca Brandolini	Italy	@biancabrandolini	516 K
Kendall Jenner @kendalljenner 141 M	United States	@kendalljenner	141 M
Chris Lee	China	@chrislee	2.1 M
Ross Lynch	United States	@ross_lynch	8.8 M
Mabel	United States	@mabel	1 M

Table 5: H&M Influencers on International Campaigns

Table 5 shows some examples of international influencers, but the particularity of H&M is that it has no direct relationships with influencers or celebrities, but with the brand. For example, the collaboration H&M X Gianbattista Valli shows the influencer Chiara Ferragni and the top model Kendall Jenner, but they were just part of the collaboration and not work directly with H&M.

H&M uses the hashtag #HMxMe on its social media profiles to repost photos or videos published by other accounts, not only celebrities or influencers. This approach allows anyone who wishes to be part of the H&M community online to have an opportunity. The brand employs short-term relationships with influenc-

and Twitter, the brand tends to publish its collaborations from the current moment. However, in such cases, the brand maintains medium to long-term relationships with brand ambassadors or campaign faces. For instance, in the H&M X Kangol collaboration, American singer Mabel is the brand ambassador for the entire campaign and is mentioned on H&M's social accounts.

#### 4.5 DOLCE & GABBANA INFLUENCER MARKETING LOCALIZATION STRATEGIES

The Italian brand focuses on collaborations with celebrities, testimonials or influencers for its entire

social media marketing strategy. The brand recently decided to follow the latest trends and shifted its strategy towards Millennials. Instead of using traditional models for runway shows, the brand now features influencers. It also focuses on the social media predominantly used by this target audience, such as Tik Tok, where it shares short videos about the latest collections or campaigns.

Moreover, Dolce & Gabbana’s official Instagram profile showcases its campaigns and reposts content from celebrities or influencers wearing their brand. One unique aspect of its campaigns is selecting faces that are currently famous or known to their audience. For example, in their latest campaign, they chose Michele Morrone, an Italian actor who gained popularity through his role in a trending Netflix movie. The brand also publishes content on Instagram IGTV, in order to show to the public some “behind the scenes” of the company, or some videos, in order to explain better what it does, that sometimes a post cannot explain.

Dolce & Gabbana’s main social media strategy involves collaborating with celebrities or macro-influencers in almost every campaign. This approach strengthens the brand’s visibility and power, despite being a luxury fashion brand. Dolce & Gabbana has two different official Instagram accounts: @dolcegabbona and @dolcegabbona\_man, differentiating between women’s and men’s clothing and accessories.

The brand recognizes the importance of influencers and celebrities. From the beginning, they selected well-known individuals for their campaigns and runway shows. Monica Bellucci, for example, was one of

the first actresses to appear in a Dolce & Gabbana advertisement. In recent years, the brand has directed its attention towards the millennial generation, acknowledging their significance. Some influencer collaborations include:

- » Mariano Di Vaio (Italy - Model and Influencer): In 2019, the Italian model and influencer became the brand ambassador for Dolce & Gabbana’s perfume campaign called “K.” He was selected by the brand again when he and his wife participated in the runway show dedicated to families.
- » Emilia Clarke (USA - Actress): The renowned American actress was chosen as the testimonial for Dolce & Gabbana’s perfume “The Only One.” The campaign was shot in Sicily, and Clarke even sings the Italian song “Quando, Quando, Quando.”

Regarding influencer marketing localization strategies, the Italian luxury fashion brand tends to work with Italian celebrities, brand ambassadors, or influencers. However, the brand has also collaborated with several international influencers and celebrities, enhancing its power and visibility.

The following table shows an example of the international influencers with which the brand has collaborated:

INFLUENCER	COUNTRY	PROFESSION	CAMPAIGN/PROJECT
Emilia Clarke	United States	Actress	“The Only One” Fragrance
Jacob Elordi	United States	Actor	#DGEDitorials
Sia	United States	Singer	TrevorProject
Marina Rebeka	Lettonia	Singer	#teatroallascala
Dj Khaled	United States	Singer	#DGCelebs
Crystal Fung	China	Model	#DGCelebs

INFLUENCER	COUNTRY	PROFESSION	CAMPAIGN/PROJECT
Maria Pedraza	Spain	Actress	#DGCelebs
Anitta	Spain	Singer	#DGCelebs
Ester Exposito	Spain	Actress	#DGCelebs
Sharon Stone	United States	Actress	#DGCelebs
Helen Mirren	United States	Actress	#DGAltaGioielleria
Kerry Washington	United States	Actress	#Emmys2020
Kitty Spencer	United Kingdom	Model	#DGCelebs
Joey Chubz	China	Singer	#DGEDitorials
Sofia Vergara	Colombia	Actress	#DGCelebs
Claudia Schiffer	Germany	Top Model	#DGDevotionbag
Madonna	United States	Singer	#DGCelebs
Nicky Jam	Puerto Rico	Singer	#DGCelebs

Table 6: Dolce&Gabbana Campaigns with International Influencers

## 5. DISCUSSION

As stated by Cheon et al. (2007), there is no consensus on whether it is better to standardize marketing strategies across markets or to localize strategies in each country and, as seen in the case studies, the brands analyzed make different decisions. For instance, the case of Daniel Wellington is a clear example of “going global by adapting local” (Fan et al., 2016; Simon-Miller, 1986). Daniel Wellington has established a strong relationship with influencers, particularly micro-influencers. The brand has consistently implemented an influencer marketing (IFM) strategy throughout its history, relying solely on digital ads through social media platforms, without traditional advertising methods. Daniel Wellington is a pioneer in advertising on Instagram with influencers, which has been a key factor in its success. The brand follows a strategy of gifting watches to selected influencers, who then promote the product on their social media accounts. This approach ensures a continuous flow of content for the brand while increasing the visibility of the influencers by associating them with a globally recognized and successful brand. The company does not work exclusively with specific in-

fluencers, but rather collaborates with a variety of small influencers, preferably different individuals each time, to reach a diverse audience. The brand also prefers to work with international influencers to expand its reach across different countries, collaborating with influencers from 10 different countries worldwide.

The case of Sephora is a case of localisation through the adaptation of language, culture and communication (Pym, 2012), with the aim of targeting specific markets and audiences. But what mainly localizes the brand are its social media strategies, through the accounts for each country. It operates separate social media accounts for various countries, such as @sephoraitalia or @sephoraspain, to cater to specific markets. It is important to note that Sephora does not work extensively with influencers in general and does not have a comprehensive IFM plan. The brand does not differentiate between types of influencers on its official social media accounts but rather features diverse individuals promoting its products. This localization strategy allows users to feel more comfortable and find products that are targeted for their specific country of origin. The



brand's videos and photos on social networks are also tailored to each country. For example, Sephora Italia's content is more focused on Italian influencers or individuals. Sephora adopts an influential customer-centric strategy on its social media profiles, wherein its customers and their online content become the real influencers with whom Sephora collaborates.

The third brand chosen is APM Monaco, a company that has gained visibility in other countries through collaborations with celebrities, is a good example of influencer marketing localization and at the same time, the brand consistency. As has been explained in the literature, excessive localization can lead to a lack of international consistency in the message and brand image (Cheon et al., 2017; Muro, 2019). APM Monaco has a well-executed influencer marketing localization strategy. The brand works with a select number of brand ambassadors from different countries and backgrounds for each campaign. While its official social media accounts only showcase brand ambassadors, APM Monaco also collaborates with small influencers, providing them with products to promote on social media. The brand's unique approach is to maintain a consistent set of brand ambassadors for different campaigns, with individuals chosen from various countries and backgrounds to diversify the audience and enhance the brand's visibility.

In turn, H&M has a strong presence on social media, with three different official profiles. The brand does not have a well-defined influencer marketing strategy and focuses less on influencers in general, but the important thing is that it has localized strategies but less related to influencer marketing. The brand collaborates with international celebrities or stylists, but it doesn't have a real or precise influencer marketing strategy. However, H&M does collaborate with influencers for specific campaigns, such as the #HMLEague, which involved several brand ambassadors.

Finally, the case of Dolce & Gabbana is a clear example of a luxury brand that localized celebrity endorsements in social media marketing (Yu & Hu, 2020). Dolce & Gabbana has a strong attachment to Sicily and Italian traditions, and all its campaigns and collaborations are designed with an emphasis on Italy's iconic and distinctive style. In recent years, the company has targeted its online strategy towards millennials, working with influencers and top models from this age

group. The brand follows a localized strategy and selects brand ambassadors and influencers from various parts of the world. Even though the influencers may be foreigners, they often speak or sing in Italian, highlighting the brand's attachment to its country. Dolce & Gabbana's official social media accounts repost content from famous individuals with the hashtag #DGCelebs, featuring them wearing D&G clothes at significant events such as the Grammys or Oscars.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Influencer marketing is a crucial strategy that brands and companies utilize to work effectively with influencers from various countries and backgrounds. It allows brands to create personalized advertisements, target specific audiences, and expand their visibility and success in the digital world. The choice of influencers depends on the brand's values and beliefs.

There is no consensus on which marketing strategy is better: global campaigns that provide a unified message and a strong, consistent image or localized campaigns that adapt to the culture, style, and languages of each country. In the fashion industry, fast-fashion brands tend to combine both approaches, while luxury brands often opt for standardized global strategies. However, cultural and social media usage differences –as mentioned in section 2.2– enhance the localization of campaigns for luxury brands, especially in certain parts of Asia.

Moreover, fashion brands employ localization strategies in their influencer marketing actions. Local influencers play a crucial role in successful localization strategies as they establish a more relatable connection with their followers. This aspect is particularly relevant for beauty brands. For example, Sephora differentiates its social media accounts for different countries and features local influencers specific to each market.

Overall, localization strategies in fashion aim to connect with individuals regardless of their culture, while also tapping into the aspirational desire for novelty, the different, and the exotic. Combining peer influence strategies with the desire for something different and unique enhances the effectiveness of localization strategies.

The most important limitation of this research is the fact that influencer marketing localization strategy is quite a new concept studied in recent years and,

therefore, little research on it is available. In order to understand in detail the concept of influencer marketing localization strategies, additional analysis and studies in the future are required. This aspect is crucial to pro-

viding a more comprehensive account of the differences of localization strategies in influencer marketing in different brands. \

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