Influencers and coronavirus. Contents on the COVID-19 pandemic in social network prescriber publications in Spain (2020): the case of Instagram

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic declared in March 2020 meant that the population was confined to their homes. This is the first major global crisis faced by a hyperconnected society, so the use made of social networks makes a clear difference to the management of other previous disasters. Given this new scenario and immediately, we plan to monitor the use of these networks but referring to a very specific aspect: the influencers. In the present paper we assess the information on the crisis carried out by this type of prescribers in Spain at the very start of the crisis, attempting to evaluate their positioning and the possible influence of this on citizen behaviour and focusing on the case of Instagram.

Keywords
Influencers, coronavirus, crisis social networks Instagram, Spain.

Resum

La pandèmia de la COVID-19, declarada el març de 2020, va suposar el confinament de la població a casa seva. Es tracta de la primera gran crisi mundial que s'enfronta amb una societat hiperconnectada, per la qual cosa l'ús realitzat de les xarxes socials marca una clara diferència amb la gestió d'altres catàstrofes anteriors. Davant d'aquest nou escenari, i d'una forma immediata, ens plantegem realitzar un seguiment de l'ús efectuat d'aquestes xarxes, però fent referència a un aspecte molt concret: els i les influencers. En aquest treball hem dut a terme una valoració de la informació sobre la crisi proporcionada per aquest tipus de prescriptors a Espanya en els primers moments de la crisi, tot intentant valorar el seu posicionament i la possible influència d'aquest en el comportament ciutadà, i ens centrarem en el cas d'Instagram.

Paraules clau
Influencers, coronavirus, crisi, xarxes socials, Instagram, Espanya.

1. Introduction

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 virus, known as the "coronavirus", a global pandemic (Sevillano 2020). Since that moment, and already in previous weeks, many countries declared a state of alarm by confining their citizens to their homes. Spain imposed this situation on 14 March (BOE - Spanish Official State Bulletin 2020). The closure of citizens in their homes with limited mobility meant that social network traffic skyrocketed. According to data from the consulting firm ComScore, only during the first month of confinement the consumption of social networks increased by 55% (Sánchez 2020) and, more precisely, "as the levels of use of social networks increase as a recurring habit (...) there is a great possibility that these behaviours (...) will continue after the pandemic" (Reason Why 2020). We must take into

account, therefore, that we are facing the first global pandemic in a hyperconnected world (Sánchez 2020).

In this context, the authorities focused on educating the population about the need for this confinement and the preventive measures to be taken in view of the constant increase in contagion, with actions that included advertising campaigns (Government of Spain 2020) and even messages in the street. However, in a context of over-consumption of digital media (Díz 2017), the position adopted by influencers could support or hinder institutional proposals and could even determine how the crisis could evolve.

By this we mean trying to confirm whether the capacity of influence of these prescribers is more social than commercial, especially if we consider that a lot has been said about the influence of social networks in political contexts (Fernández, Hernández & Sáenz 2018) but their role linked to commercial

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marketing, beyond the fashion market, seems to have been overlooked (Padilla & Oliver 2018). We therefore consider the contents of social networks, taking into account that there are many points of view: the very use of these networks as mobilizers of public opinion; the real capacity of influencers to prescribe and even to manage crisis communication, or the capacity of participation of the public, all of which are valued in this work.

2. Theoretical framework: Influencers and social networks

2.1 Influencers: definition, characteristics and current assessment

Our starting point for this research to be correct is to understand what we mean by the term influencer and how we differentiate it from other communicative phenomena within social networks. The current assessment of this figure as a prescriber of contents or products is mostly related to the number of followers of each one. However, it is important to establish a series of additional considerations to be able to understand a little more its role and its communicative consequences and even the existing criteria for that assessment.

2.1.1 What do we mean by influencer?

The influencer figure comes from the traditional concept of the prescriber in commercial communication. Prescription of products has been one of the most used resources in the history of modern advertising, although this prescription was more effective –according to all data– when the prescribers were recognised persons and, above all, linked to the world of cinema or television (Taveras 2014). Thus, "the use of celebrities in communication increases the credibility of the messages, increases the memory and recognition of the brands advertised, improves the attitude towards the organization that sells the customer, and even increases the purchase credibility" (Agrawal & Kamakura 1995: 56).

The term *influencer* became particularly interesting in Spain from 2015 onwards, when we gathered works that talk about influence marketing (Castelló-Martínez & Pino 2015) and a change of trend became apparent, whereby the recommendation of other consumers became the most reliable information method for buyers in the face of the mistrust generated towards conventional advertising (Nielsen 2015).

Many studies confirm the effectiveness of advertising based on the use of well-known characters, based on their credibility (Zapata & Martínez 2016) and therefore: "The association of a product or a brand with a famous character is based on an aspirational dimension of the audience and on mechanisms of identification of the audience with the character that help to form the ideal self-concept. The famous person is thus presented as a representative of the target's inclinations, tastes and preferences" (Castelló-Martínez & Pino 2015).

From this influence marketing and the use of celebrities to

prescribe commercial products or services, there has been an evolution towards the use of the term *influencer*, (Freberg 2011) to allude to "that person with knowledge, prestige and presence in certain areas in which his or her opinions can influence the behaviour of other people" (Fundéu 2019).

We see, therefore, that the Anglo-Saxon literature had already been addressing the new situation of prescribers-influencers for several years due to the growth of social networks (Bakshy, Galeotti & Goyal 2009) but also to the changes in the needs of the public. In Spain, this figure was immediately related to fashion, the female gender and Instagram, establishing a category of prescribers who were "the instagramers". However, this phenomenon has not been included in the academic literature of reference, despite having become one of the main themes of the final year papers of the communication degrees of Spanish universities (Sierra, Liberal & Luceño 2018).

For our study we establish a definition of influencer linked to the function expected of him or her in a marketing plan. Thus, we speak of an influential or relevant person in a certain sector, who can communicate directly with the public. This influencer would collaborate with companies to make known, improve the attitude or influence a certain behaviour on their products or services, in such a way that both benefit from this collaboration. We are therefore defining a very clear model of influencer.

2.1.2. How are influencers currently assessed?

Today, influencers are considered one of the main resources of commercial communication. The fundamental fact is that 68% of Internet users follow influencers in Social Networks (IAB 2020), and it is the "Millennial Generation" which has given greater growth to this content (Guillén 2018) and establishing a direct relation between them and the influencers.

Management of the campaigns disseminated by this means is carried out through specialised agencies in 56.5% of the cases and in almost all of them they seek to work on branding and to capture new audiences (41%), to build up current targets (34%) or to increase the community of followers (29%). Similarly, the network they use the most is Instagram (67%) (Brandmanic 2018).

Advertisers seem to have relied on this formula for several reasons, the main one being the measurability that digital media provide, with initially very positive data regarding the effectiveness of influencers. The data is good from the point of view of Earned Media Value, on achieving an impact that would mean a much higher cost in paid media (Redigolo 2014).

The latest Infoadex study on advertising investment in Spain has included, within the estimated media (formerly called non-conventional media), a category called "Influencers", which in 2018 represented a total of 37 million euros. Globally, the growth experienced in the investment of influencers means that in 2020 this market is expected to move 10 billion dollars, having marked a year-on-year growth of 83% in countries such as the United States and Canada (Puro Marketing 2019).

The complexity that this resource has reached derives from

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the wide offer available for the brands. In this way, platforms such as Audiense, Coobis or SocialPubli have been developed that allow for identifying the most appropriate profiles according to the target audience the brand wants to address, emphasising that not only the numbers of followers determine this choice. Once the appropriate influencer has been identified, a financial remuneration for his or her services is made, thus evolving from the beginnings of this dynamic in which payment for influencer was made by means of product samples.

Measuring the effectiveness of influencers is an early concern for advertising companies. The *2019 Study of Advertisers with Influencers* (SocialPubli.com 2019), provides the specific data that the measurement is made mostly through the interaction rate (26.4%), 19% by visits and reach, 13.2% by the generation of traffic to the website and with a similar figure (13.2%) also sales, leads, acquisition or registration, being below 12.4%, the improvement of brand awareness, and, much further back, the clicks or new followers (7.4%).

2.1.3 Types and rates of influencers

At this point, another important issue is to determine the typology of influencers configured over the years. We establish four categories according to the projection they achieve:

a) Citizens. This is a social network user who, in principle, has no more attributes than others to influence their contacts. They are just people who talk and share information on social networks without having to be oriented towards a brand or service as, in fact, has no relationship with them (Ayala 2014). In this case, their importance does not derive from their individual role, since their only opinion may not be important for the brand, but the sum of many may influence it.

b) Advocates. They are also anonymous users of the networks, but they clearly show their support or defence towards a brand, product or service, but they do so out of real affinity with the brand, without receiving remuneration for that fact. This is a possibility that is highly valued by brands since it transmits a positive feeling through word of mouth (García 2009). The studies conducted relate online prescription of users with online sales in a positive way (Saavedra, Linero & Gutiérrez 2011).

c) Brand Ambassador. In this case we move to a paid figure (either financially or by product) who receives a payment from the company to set up a transparent commercial agreement that brings benefits to both parties. Unlike advocates, ambassadors are chosen by the brand and are authorised to represent it, speak and act as such. Companies take these actions in order to make their name stronger and to expand their community (Taylor, Lewin & Strutton 2011). At this point, we also cannot lose sight of the fact that brand ambassadors can be employees, volunteers, partners and, of course, influencers or celebrities or any other figure with impact capacity (Marketing Directo 2019).

d) Microinfluencers. Unlike brand ambassadors microinfluencers do not have a long-term link with the brand they are promoting but are contacted punctually or on several occasions, but there is no exclusivity. They are also paid, and this responds

to the diffusion they give to the firm with their communication channel in addition to the fact that they are usually related to the area or sector of the brand, so they have a loyal community of followers who consider them prescribers. This does not mean that they do not work with other types of products since, in fact, they are considered a means of dissemination of interest.

We should point out that many agencies and professional entities differentiate between micro and macro influencers, making a difference in the number of followers, with micro ones reaching up to 30,000 and macro ones exceeding that figure (Alampi 2019). At the same time, the minimum to be considered an influencer would be having 1,000 followers. In the last year, low figure profiles but adequately segmented and with quality followers have achieved very positive results for the brands (Main 2017).

e) Celebrities. These are individuals who are highly recognised by society and who have the ability to use their status to amplify their messages. They are the most far-reaching of all the categories mentioned and therefore cost the most. They would include, actresses, actors, musicians, writers, sportsmen, artists, among others. In this case, the number of followers is well over 100,000 and the level of effectiveness is related to the confidence that the character brings (Schouten, Janssen & Verspaget 2020).

As for the cost of these actions, there is a great deal of obscurantism in terms of fees, although we have found data indicating that around 120 and 150 euros is paid per photo on Instagram in accounts with 10,000 fans; 500 euros for 50,000 and from 2,500 in the case of having more than half a million followers (Marketing Directo 2019b). Of course, these figures vary depending on the influencer, the brand and even their own rates. Globally, Table 1 provides a summary with different average rates.

2.2. The situation of social networks

2.2.1 Social Networking Penetration in Spain

As we have mentioned, the growth of influencers around the world has a direct relation to the penetration achieved by social networks. In Spain, the latest data provided by the International Advertising Bureau (IAB) report for 2019 indicates that 85.5% of Internet users aged 16-65 use social networks, which means that 25 million users in Spain have reached the stage of maturity of this medium, thus curbing its continued growth. The profile of network users is divided between 49% of men and 51% of women with an average age of 30 years.

As for the use of social networks, an average of 3.7 networks per user are used in a declarative way and they know more than 6 in a suggested way. Leading the ranking are WhatsApp ranking (88%), Facebook (87%) and YouTube (68%), the latter being the one with most young followers (76% are between 16 and 30 years old). Instagram, in fourth place, is the one that has gained more followers (from 49% to 54%). In fifth

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Table 1. Global influencer rates by social network and reach (March 2019) Figures in dollars

	Nano-influencer	Micro-influencer	Influencer	Celebrity
Followers	**500 – 5,000**	**5,000-30,000**	**30,000-500,000**	**500,000 or more**
Instagram				
- Post	100	172	507	2,085
- Video	114	219	775	3,138
- Story	43	73	210	721
YouTube video	315	908	782	3,857
Facebook post	31	318	243	2,400

Source: eMarketet, 2019.

place, Twitter remains with 50%. In terms of usage preference, WhatsApp remains the favourite (as it did in 2017 and 2018), followed by Facebook. On the other hand, Instagram is in third position, ahead of YouTube, especially motivated by women and the 16-30 target. The fifth position is still occupied by Twitter, which stands out among men.

Social networks are a channel of influence and information. 47% of those surveyed consider that they influence when buying a product or service and 55% declare that they have looked for information about products or services in social networks before making a purchase, especially the female and under-45 target. In addition, 41% actively participate in networking about purchases made on the Internet (IAB 2020).

One of the keys to the success of social networks seems to lie in the concept of community: "the feeling of being part of a truly global community that connects emotionally. Contemplating an image made by another person can help us connect in an extraordinarily intimate way, despite the fact that people are jotted around in different places. And it is this very intense connection that can make great bonds" (Alonso 2015).

2.2.2. The importance of Instagram

If we focus specifically on Instagram, the social network is perceived as the channel for consuming videos and photos, with selfies the most common. Its audience is mostly between 16 and 31 years old (40%) and 32 to 45 (38%), averaging it at 35.5 years. Instagram has a user rating of 7.8 out of 10 and a spontaneous notoriety of 69%, which means that it is well known among the public (AIMC 2019).

Further examining the reality of this network, on which we will concentrate our research, we cannot lose sight of its commercial capabilities. Thus, 50% of Instagram users follow at least one brand (Mention 2018) and it has become a very suitable platform for commercial communication due to its low cost, the possibilities of its multimedia content, its wide visibility, the ease of its management and the incorporation – already a year ago– of Instagram Shopping that allows direct sales through the platform.

The presence of brands on Instagram is therefore more than necessary, especially if we consider that 83% of this network's users declare to have discovered new products or services on Instagram (Mention 2018). Ahead of Spain we can see the steps of the United States where 71% of companies use Instagram and have confirmed that this network can generate four times more interactions than Facebook and, in fact, get a 15% reach of advertising worldwide (We are Social 2019).

Instagram is therefore confirmed as an effective way of disseminating branded content and with sales capacity, it is considered that 80% of users have decided to buy a product or service after consulting information on it in this medium. The question is, therefore, how to manage these communication possibilities of this network, with influencers being one of the most frequent options (Casaló, Flavián & Ibáñez-Sánchez 2018).

In this regard, 68% of users claim to follow influencers in social networks, with Facebook (45%) and Instagram (40%) the networks where most influencers are followed, followed by YouTube (33%) and Twitter (23%). 37% consider influencers to be credible and the same percentage believes that their comments are fairly or very advertising (IAB 2020).

3. Subject of study, starting hypothesis and methodology

Taking into account the starting point indicated in the previous section, our research focuses on analysing the role of the main influencers in Spain in the coronavirus crisis. More specifically, the main objective of our study is to assess how the main Spanish influencers have addressed (or not) the issue of the coronavirus in their social networks, specifically monitoring the case of Instagram. We have decided to approach this subject of study taking into account the need to answer a series of research questions posed from a general perspective. Thus, we start from an initial question that revolves around the use that the so-called influencers have made during the COVID-19 crisis of the Instagram social network. Based on this initial question, we developed research that also allowed us to determine the different uses of posts versus stories and, above all, what type of content was used in a context where the usual activity related to fashion and brand promotion, which was generally carried out by influencers in this network, could not be developed.

All of the above raises an important question regarding the involvement of influencers in the crisis, given the reality that

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this is a crisis in which consumption was sharply reduced and, therefore, their role was questioned. Their position in the face of the pandemic is therefore a considerable unknown. At this point we cannot lose sight of the fact that their ability to prescribe can be fundamental in managing a crisis from the perspective of social awareness and solidarity.

In order to be able to respond to these hypotheses, we have to develop a specific methodology that goes through several phases. Thus, our first step must be to compile all the academic research that exists up to now on the reality of influencers. Once we can delimit this phenomenon and what we mean by it, we can go one step further and carry out the content analysis of the Instagram network corresponding to the 50 most important influencers. A content assessment will be established, designing a system that aims to be applied in this study and also its validity for future research and even in the follow-up of this case. This is, in any case, a qualitative methodology that will not use quantitative references to justify the conclusions of the project. We must also stress that these are initial conclusions (this is an open crisis) and we must contrast them with data from primary sources.

Once again, it is necessary to emphasise that in this type of research, content analysis is a fundamental method (Fernández 2002), as we seek to understand how the influencers influence their audiences and, above all, what type of messages they deliver in broad (qualitative) terms.

In this case, and taking into account our starting point in which we stated that the importance of influencers is not only granted by their number of followers, not even by their "likes" or interactions but by their prescriptive capacity valued in terms of social and non-commercial effectiveness, it was especially important to be able to determine the analysis sample. We must bear in mind that there are numerous rankings of assessment based on a variety of criteria, but in our case we have located a ranking based on the assessments of conventional prescribers in the country.

Thus, we justify the selection of the 50 main influencers taking into account the ranking elaborated by the Marqués de Oliva Foundation (2020) and we limit ourselves to Instagram taking into account that it is the network where the companies have focused their investments in influencer campaigns (Marketing Hub 2019) and have registered greater increases in advertising investment in general. More specifically, advertising on Instagram has increased by 70% in 2019, in its global stories section, which leads to this network having 10% of total advertising investment (IAB 2020).

With a sample of the 50 leading Spanish influencers, we have tracked all posts published on Instagram by each of them in the period of 18 February and 19 March 2020. This means a whole month of analysis, marking the closure of the sample on the date of delivery of this article (March 19), which allows establishing an evolution before and during the outbreak of the crisis. With regard to the stories and due to their ephemeral nature, we focus on 19 March as the last available valuation date. All

these contents have been downloaded by making screenshots. A direct observation of each of the publications has been carried out on the exhibition, either static images (photography, illustration, etc.) or moving images (video), analysing both the visual and textual parts (text of the publication: message and use of specific hashtags on the subject of study).

4. Analysis: the behaviour of influencers during the coronavirus crisis in 2020

In order to determine the influencers we are going to monitor, we have used "Marqués de Oliva" Business Foundation's ranking, which publishes a list based on 25,000 interviews. The last one was carried out between November 2018 and February 2019. As a result, the 50 most important influencers in Spain were determined. On the sample we have made a first review of their profiles, determining that most are women and are linked to fashion (area of work). We have also seen the number of followers in Instagram. In the follow-up we have verified that many of the profiles are not defined at a professional level (Prof.) and those that do are linked to fashion, above all models, or to the audiovisual world: photographers, designers, artists... (the data of this sample are collected for consultation in Annex 1).

According to the selection criteria, it is not the number of followers that determines whether an influencer is influential, but other elements are taken into account. In spite of this, we cannot ignore that the number of followers weighs, and a lot. The review carried out also allows us to determine that the importance of influencers is related to their presence in other networks or media (medium), especially in YouTube and, of course, having a blog that, in many cases, has been the starting point to achieve the presence and follow up they have. The commercial purpose of these profiles can be seen in the fact that they promote their business (Shop) or that of other brands. Once again, it is an aspect that would be of great interest for a specific study but that has no place in the present analysis.

Once we understand the research sample, we proceeded examine it, giving rise to a new data collection (Table 2) in which we indicate the profile, its followers and the total number of posts published in the account since its creation (Total Post A), which allows us to determine whether it is a profile of sporadic, frequent or saturated publications.[1]

Regarding the data on the frequency of publications, we establish a direct correlation between profiles that promote their own brand (A) or of commercial brands (B) in the Shop section, so that those who carry out these promotions are the ones who upload the greatest number of publications to Instagram.

In addition to this general appreciation, we have managed to count the number of posts published during the period analysed (Total Post B), and we have not been able to establish a relationship between the most saturated profiles and a greater participation. In fact, it is striking how some medium-frequency profiles (@paulaarguellesg) reduced their publications in this

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period and others of low frequency (@marivalero22) increased it notably. In total, the 50 influencers published between February 19 and March 19, 1,338 posts, which means an average of 27 posts per profile over that month.

If we continue examining them, we have identified the posts that talk about the coronavirus crisis. To do this we have reviewed the content of the 1,338 published posts determining those that included text, images or hashtag on the subject, with a final figure (Total post C) of 172 posts, which is an average of 3.4 posts per profile on the coronavirus crisis. This figure, which is initially noted as low, must face another of the questions analysed, which is the date on which the influencers made the first publication on the subject. As we can see (post date), most of them started to talk about it between the 12th and 16th of March, just when the Central Government applied concrete measures against the infection and declared the state of alarm.

In addition to this, there are a few exceptions such as @ristomejide, who in February uploaded a video of his television programme talking about the subject, or @balamoda, who on the 10th of March commented on the problems that were occurring in Madrid. Thus, we establish an informal correlation, not included in the table, and which should be taken into account in more extensive studies, since the attention paid by the influencers to the problem is related to their place of residence. The comments of people from Madrid are more intense than those from other places in Spain and are those of people like @collagevintage who lives in Los Angeles are later.

The number of "likes" carried out on the first post about the crisis has also been assessed, finding, once again, notable differences in which there is a correlation between the volume of followers and the capacity to achieve this validation by the public. Note that the first five influencers (with @giorginagio as the winner) have almost three million more "likes" than the rest of the list. We have not gone into the possibility of establishing a specific weight to the likes in the capacity of interaction of each content, since this would mean the extending the initial research and, therefore, the extension of the subject of study, leaving this topic as a possibility for future research.

To complete the research we have also established a classification of the contents about the coronavirus in the analysed posts. Thus, we have differentiated between those that only included a hashtag referring to the crisis (A) (in most cases the #yomequedoencasa), those that included messages of encouragement to their followers and to the country in general (B) and also recorded negative content about the discomfort that the crisis and quarantine was generating (C). A specific category was created for messages that only described a specific moment arising from the crisis (D) and many texts were also taken into account in which the profilers made profound reflections on the situation or even acted as informants for their followers (E). Finally, the most frequent as the days went by, was the one related to the contents of advice to carry out the quarantine or even entertainment actions-as

they explained-to make the time pass better. In all cases, the constant is the direct appeal to the public looking for interaction and participation.

The use of Instagram stories deserves a special mention. We have collected the number of videos and images included in this format during March 19th, seeing how many of the influencers took advantage of the quarantine to do a detailed monitoring of their daily activity, with lots of videos in just a few hours. At this time, video tutorials abound for cooking, sports and even painting at home.

5. Results and conclusions

The results of this brief analysis are summarised in Table 2. The use of the Instagram social network by influencers during the crisis has raised a number of questions of interest regarding our subject of study. The importance acquired by the stories versus the posts can be seen in the fact that the number of contents through the stories during a single day exceeds, in many cases, the total number of publications in post format during a month. The influencers have registered very high rates of "likes" in the shared contents that dealt, in some way, with the coronavirus crisis, although these have been very few in a total of 50 accounts analysed.

As most of the influencers are people are involved in the fashion world, quarantine and confinement is a major limitation to their activities, although they seem to have replaced this problem with a greater focus on sport, cooking and leisure activities, including dynamics such as the suggestion of audiovisual or musical content.

It is surprising that the influencers with the largest number of followers have not been the most involved in the crisis in quantitative terms, although they have been from a qualitative point of view. Thus @dulceida, spoke of the need to stay home well in advance (10 March) and @alexandrapereira included a highlight section entitled "Coronatime" with stories about cooking and other activities it home. There is a clear coincidence that all the influencers who included content on the subject have done so in a quite positive sense encouraging people to stay at home, with small peculiarities such as the complaints of @teresaandresgonzalvo and @martalozanop about the cancellation of Las Fallas in Valencia.

We cannot ignore the 7 influencers who, as of 19 March, had not mentioned anything at all about the problem in their profiles. It coincides that three of them (@goicoechea; @ sergiocarvajal7; @joanpala) are professional models who use the Instagram almost as a book of working photos without comments or textual contents, while another three make artistic works having thus their particular portfolio (@patryjordan; @ hiclavero; @paulaarguellesg), and it is not possible to assess the remaining case (@gracyvillareal).

On the opposite side are the influencers who have generated the greatest amount of content around this problem. @meryturiel and @martacarriedo did nine publications although both have

Table 2. Analysis of the publications on COVID-19. Influencers in Instagram (19 February to 19 March 2020)

	Instagram	Followers	Total post (A)	Total post (B)	Post date	Likes post	Total post (C)	Type of post	Stories
1	dulceida	2.7 mill.	8,070	42	12/03	166,170	6	B / E / F	19
2	saracarbonero	2.6 mill.	1,374	13	14/03	57,035	3	E / F	7
3	paulagonu	2.0 mill.	2,250	20	18/03	108,191	2	C / F	20
4	alexandrapereira	1.8 mill.	3,071	44	12/03	37,211	8	B / C / E / F	23
5	georginagio	18.4 mill.	402	11	16/03	4,411,025	2	A	0
6	lauraescanes	1.5 mill.	2,192	23	12/03	91,539	4	E / F	23
7	collagevintage	1.1 mill.	6,697	17	16/03	11,634	2	E / F	3
8	goicoechea	1.1 mill.	1,643	32	0	0	0	0	5
9	pelayodiaz	1.0 mill.	6,796	43	13/03	16,048	4	B / E	0
10	albapaulfe	1.0 mill.	2,185	13	14/03	50,224	2	B	12
11	galagonzalez	1.1 mill.	8,044	45	12/03	11,861	2	D	0
12	verdeliss	1.2 mill.	3,350	35	12/03	55,375	8	B / E / F	28
13	sergiocarvajal7	1.0 mill.	1,504	10	0	0	0	0	13
14	ristomeijde	1.2 mill.	1,002	10	26/02	98,942	3	E	1
15	rocio0sorno	1.1 mill.	2,253	30	13/03	59,062	5	F	16
16	mariapombo	1.4 mill.	2,592	28	15/03	147,138	2	B	15
17	patryjordan	993K	985	2	0	0	0	0	6
18	ninauc	798K	3,002	66	12/03	10,224	2	D	12
19	belenhostalet	814K	2,960	47	14/03	17,515	8	C / F	11
20	martalozanop	846K	2,107	14	10/03	51,300	2	B / C	7
21	meryturiel	826K	3,182	32	14/03	39,816	9	B / E / F	28
22	martacarriedo	570K	8,834	53	13/03	7,839	9	D / F	36
23	misshedwig	539K	3,086	7	14/03	1,073	2	E	10
24	trendy_taste	539K	4,906	20	12/03	7,565	7	F	9
25	madamederosa	578K	4,286	35	14/03	110,678	3	E	4
26	gracyvillarreal	599K	2,287	32	0	0	0	0	0
27	teresaandresgonzalvo	545K	2,798	20	10/03	50,487	2	C / A	20
28	paulaordovas	486K	10,600	60	15/03	18,829	1	F	0
29	alexdomenec	412K	3,286	31	14/03	16,520	5	A	11
30	jasojudith	483K	996	16	14/03	34,806	1	F	19
31	gigi_vives	434K	4,918	49	13/03	7,909	2	A	7
32	mariafrubies	543K	2,827	28	13/03	35,209	7	B / F	8
33	marcforne	399K	7,802	77	13/03	7,432	4	D	12
34	andreabelverf	439K	4,068	38	13/03	8,254	4	F	5
35	rocioccamacho	511K	1,000	23	13/03	24,526	4	B / C /F	28
36	bartabacmode	393K	8,304	31	12/03	7,870	6	B /F	8
37	andreacomptonn	374K	3,658	19	13/03	22,300	2	B	0
38	alexchiner	331K	522	11	11/03	16,611	3	C	6
39	hiclavero	469K	215	4	0	0	0	0	0
40	pau_eche	3,0Kl.	7,501	44	13/03	61,908	8	B	6
41	Ines_arroyo	328K	3,927	12	18/03	4,029	2	E	8
42	mariavalero22	321K	673	32	14/03	38,957	6	F	40
43	laubalo	350K	1,037	8	14/03	54,586	2	B	20
44	itziaraguilera	247K	1,003	10	16/03	5,711	2	B	12
45	izhan_go	218K	1,455	6	15/03	24,059	1	D	12
46	joanpala	211K	1,385	30	0	0	0	0	0
47	balamoda	243K	6,289	23	10/03	4,248	6	B	10
48	carlahinojosar	235K	1,829	37	12/03	2,576	8	A / B / C	1
49	paulaarguellesg	207K	2,361	0	0	0	0	0	0
50	vickygom3z	226K	655	5	15/03	34,789	1	A	0

Legend. Total post (A): total number of post in the profile/ Total post (B): total number of in the studied period. / Post date: date of the first post about the issue. / Likes post: number of likes of the first post. / Total post (C): total number of post about the issue in the analysed period. / Type of post: post categories according to content. A: only hashtags; B: positive; C: negative; D: neutral; E: reflexive or informational; F: tips and entertainment. / *Stories*: number of *stories* during the last day of analysis: 19 March 2020.

Source: Authors, 2020.

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very different profiles, the former more homely and highlighting her role as a mother from the United States while the latter uses selfies and exercises to do at home. In the next level, with 8 publications, there are 6 profiles that coincide with highly notorious influencers such as @dulceida, @alexandrapereira or @pau_eche, who is the actress, Paula Echeverría who seems to have adopted a very active role even working in fundraising. It is precisely charity actions that should be an important feature of prescribers in the face of the crisis without, until the day the analysis is completed, too many of them have been collected, beyond the demand for #yomecorono made by @pau_eche and @dulceida. The specific initiatives that stand out are in the profile of @rocio0sorno who offered her sewing workshop to make masks free of charge for hospitals in her area or the remarkable move of @madamederosa who went back to her job as a nurse at that time.

The solidarity of most of the influencers is understood by the contribution with a wide range of activities for the home, mostly sports exercises like those performed by @paulaordovas live or @lauraescanes on Instagram TV or making available to the fans lists of songs (@misshedwig) or films. The opinionated content on the social and political situation is very scarce and comes from male profiles (@sergiocarvajal7; @pelayodiaz) and is not collected in the posts but in the stories, with individual messages directly to the camera.

But the final proof of the total commercial bias acquired by the influencers is not only in the fact that during the crisis they continued with their commercial activities (@goicoechea held draws with brands) but also that they tried to adapt this sales process to the situation at the time. Thus, @marcforne makes his first post about the quarantine coincide with content about the distributor Zalando, indicating that they can buy at home and @gigi_vives takes advantage of the recommendations on films for confinement to announce a make of televisions. We found more content of this type and, in fact, @mariapombo shares in her contents the unboxing of Zara packages that have just arrived at her home.

It is clear that the crisis may pose a problem for influencers if their contents lose interest for their followers, so we cannot determine if the continuity of their commercial activities has an economic purpose or if they are trying to maintain normality in order to continue connecting with their audiences. The messages are clearly positive and encouraging, trying to avoid the feeling of tiredness or concern that is present in the media during this period. Shopping is encouraged, but sport and conversation are also encouraged. Most of the posts include questions to find out how the recipients are doing and even games or direct contacts are considered (@lauraescanes includes questionnaires in her stories).

Clearly, the role of the influencers has been revealed as another way of entertaining society. Their involvement is positive from the expression of the need to respect confinement, but they struggle with the need to maintain a normality that allows them to maintain their contact with the public and, above all, their

influence on them. The profiles' commercial activity is clear, constant and direct and, in spite of having to adapt to making social awareness messages, they cannot make this final object of their activity disappear. Our country has reacted positively to this way of managing the problem, maintaining and even increasing the monitoring of these profiles.

Note

1. The average number of monthly publications for each account has been calculated from the total number of posts and the year of creation.

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Annex 1. The top 50 *influencers* in Spain. Main data (2020)

	Nombre	Instagram	Prof.	Area	Blog	Media	Shop	Followers
1	Aida Domènech	dulceida	--	M	X	--	A	2.7 mill.
2	Sara Carbonero	saracarbonero	Journalist	LS	X	Elle	B	2.6 mill.
3	Paula Gonu	paulagonu	--	M	--	YT	--	2.0 mill.
4	Alexandra Pereira	alexandrapereira	--	M	X	---	A	1.8 mill.
5	Georgina Rodríguez	georginagio	---	S	X	---	--	18.4 mill.
6	Laura Escanes	lauraescanes	Model	LS	--	---	--	1.5 mill.
7	Sara Escudero	collagevintage	--	M	X	---	A	1.1 mill.
8	Jessica Goicoechea	goicoechea	Model	B	X	---	A	1.1 mill.
9	Pelayo Díaz	pelayodíaz	Advertiser	M	X	---	--	1.0 mill.
10	Alba Paul Ferrer	albapaulfe	--	V	X	---	B	1.0 mill.
11	Gala González	galagonzalez	Model	M	X	Book	A	1.1 mill.
12	Verdeliss	verdeliss	---	M	X	YT	A	1.2 mill.
13	Sergio Carvajal	sergiocarvajal7	Model	M	--	YT	--	1.0 mill.
14	Risto Mejide	ristomejide	Advertiser	O	--	Book	---	1.2 mill.
15	Rocío Osorno	rocio0sorno	Designer	M	--	--	A	1.1 mill.
16	María Pombo	mariapombo	---	M	X	--	B	1.4 mill.
17	Patricia Jordán	patryjordan	Blogger	F	X	YT	A	993K
18	Nina Urgell	ninauc	--	B	--	--	--	798K
19	Belén Hostalet	belenhostalet	--	LS	--	--	--	814K
20	Marta Lozano	martalozanop	Model	M	--	--	--	846K
21	María Turiel	meryturiel	---	M	--	--	--	826K
22	Marta Carriedo	martacarriedo	Marketing	M	X	--	A	570K
23	Carol Peña	misshedwig	Photographer	A	X	--	--	539K
24	Natalia Cabezas	trendy_taste	---	M	X	YT	--	539K
25	Ángela Rozas Saiz	madamederosa	---	M	X	--	..	578K
26	Grace Villareal	gracyvillarreal	--	LS	--	YT	--	599K
27	Teresa Andrés Gonzalvo	teresaandresgonzalvo	Model	LS	--	--	--	545K
28	Paula Ordovás	paulaordovas	--	M	X	Vogue	--	486K
29	Alex Domènech	alexdomenec	--	LS	--	--	--	412K
30	Judith Jaso	jasojudith	Youtuber	LS	--	YT	--	483K
31	Gigi Vives	gigi_vives	Creative	A	--	--	A	434K
32	María Fernández-Rubíes	mariafrubies	--	LS	--	YT	--	543K
33	Marc Forné	marcforné	Model	M	--	--	--	399K
34	Andrea Belver	andreabelverf	Blogger	M	X	--	B	439K
35	Rocío Camacho	rocioccamacho	Entrepeneur	LS	X	--	A	511K
36	Silvia García	bartabacmode	--	M	X	YT	A	393K
37	Andrea Compton	andreacomptonn	Youtuber	LS	--	YT	--	374K
38	Alex Chiner	alexchiner	--	LS	--	--	--	331K
39	Pau Clavero	hiclavero	Artist	A	X	--	A	469K
40	Paula Echeverría	pau_eche	Actress	M	X	--	A	3.0 mil.
41	Inés Arroyo	ines_arroyo	Entrepeneur	M	X	--	A	328K
42	María Valero	mariavalero22	Creative	A	X	--	--	321K
43	Carla Laubalo	laubalo	Creative	A	--	YT	--	350K
44	Itziar Aguilera	itziaraguilera	Artist	A	--	--	A	247K
45	Izhan Go.	izhan_go	---	A	--	YT	--	218K
46	Joan Palá	joanpala	--	LS	--	--	B	211K
47	Belén Canalejo	balamoda	Blogger	LS	X	--	A	243K
48	Carla Hinojosa	carlahinojosar	Digital	M	--	--	A	235K
49	Paula Argüelles	paulaarguellesg	Creative	M	--	--	B	207K
50	Vicky Gómez	vickygom3z	Artist	LS	--	YT	--	226K

Legenda: Prof.: Profession / Área: M. Mode; L. Life Style; S. Health; B. Beauty; O. Opinion; A. Art; F. Fitness. / Shop: A. Own; B. External brand. / Followers: number of followers in Instagram.

Source: Authors, 2020.

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