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The Influencer Career Path:
Characteristics, Prospects, and Challenges

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The Influencer Career Path: Characteristics, Prospects, and Challenges

Influencer Kariyer Yolu: Özellikler, Beklentiler ve Zorluklar

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	v
ÖZET	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW	5
1. ANTHROPOLOGY OF WORK	5
1.1. Energy	6
1.2. Incentive	7
1.3. Resources	8
1.4. Value	10
1.5. Tune	11
1.6. Place	12
1.7. Person	13
1.8. Technology	14
1.9. Identity & Alienation	16
1.10. Domains, Spheres & Systems	17
2. DIGITAL LABOR	18
2.1. Influencers as Digital Laborers	21
3. INFLUENCERS.....	22
3.1. Influencing as a Career	25
4. INFLUENCER MARKETING	27
4.1. Social Learning Theory	28
4.2. Electronic Word-Of-Mouth	29

4.3. Source Credibility Theory	29
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY	29
CHAPTER 3: RESULTS & DISCUSSION.....	33
3.1. Job Description	33
3.2. Planning & Collaboration	37
3.3. Content Creation & Marketing.....	41
3.4. Ethics.....	44
3.5. Influencer Economy	46
3.6. Follower Communication	51
3.7. Time Management	55
3.8. Impact of Place	58
3.9. Cyberbullying & Haters	63
3.10. Good Aspects	66
CONCLUSION.....	69
REFERENCES.....	75
APPENDIX.....	81

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the social media influencer career path from the anthropology of work perspective, revealing its characteristics as well as its prospects and problems. This study aims to investigate “What do influencers think and feel about their job? Is being an influencer as attractive a career path as it seems? How do influencers work? What difficulties do influencers encounter? How do they handle the challenges of being public people, marketers, and content producers?” The research questions are analyzed by conducting semi-structured interviews with 10 social media influencers. The study shows that being an influencer includes inspiring and influencing people on social media while being aware of responsibilities and potential consequences. Three work models including, independent, team-based, and agency-based are found with their advantages and drawbacks. The findings show that the influencer industry requires constant platform adaptation, keeping up with trends, and content management to reach a greater audience. Social media influencers must prioritize moral issues, openness, and credibility. The importance of understanding the influencer economy, which has economic, competitive, ethical, and strategic components, is also underlined in the study. The findings suggest that effective communication and managing follower expectations are the keys to success while influencers need to prioritize their well-being because time management and finding a work-life balance can be difficult. Participants reported that productivity and motivation are impacted by the place of work, including worries about cultural norms and work undervaluation. Besides, negative comments and cyberbullying have an impact on the participants' mental health and require resiliency. This study, which improves comprehension of the influencer profession from the anthropology of work perspective, offers important insights to academics, professionals, and prospective social media influencers. To address the changing dynamics of the influencer industry, more study is advised.

Keywords: Social Media Influencers, Anthropology of Work, Digital Labor, Influencer Economy, Work Models

ÖZET

Bu tez, sosyal medya fenomenliđi kariyer yolunu alıřma antropolojisi perspektifinden inceleyerek zelliklerini, geleceđini ve sorunlarını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu alıřma ile "Fenomenler iřleri hakkında ne dūřunuyorlar ve hissediyorlar? Fenomen olmak grndđ kadar cazip bir kariyer yolu mu? Fenomenler nasıl alıřıyor? Fenomenler alıřırken ne gibi zorluklarla karřılařıyor? Halka aık insanlar, pazarlamacılar ve ierik reticileri olmanın zorluklarıyla nasıl bařa ıkıyorlar?" sorularının yanıtlarını ortaya koymak hedeflenmektedir. Arařtırma soruları 10 sosyal medya fenomeni ile yarı yapılandırılmıř mlakatlar yapılarak analiz edilmiřtir. Bu arařtırma, fenomen olmanın sosyal medyada insanlara ilham vermeyi ve onları etkilemeyi, aynı zamanda sorumlulukların ve potansiyel sonuların farkında olmayı gerektirdiđini gstermiřtir. Bađımsız, ekip bazlı ve ajans bazlı olmak zere  alıřma modelinin avantaj ve dezavantajları bu alıřma ile tespit edilmiřtir. Bulgular, fenomen sektrnn daha geniř bir kitleye ulařmak iin srekli platform adaptasyonu, trendlere ayak uydurma ve ierik ynetimi gerektirdiđini gstermektedir. Arařtırmaya gre sosyal medya fenomenleri ahlaki konulara, aıklıđa ve gvenilirliđe ncelik vermelidir. Ekonomik, rekabeti, etik ve stratejik bileřenleri olan fenomen ekonomisini anlamının da neminin altı izilmiřtir. Bulgular, etkili iletiřim ve takipi beklentilerini ynetmenin bařarının anahtarı olduđunu ve fenomenler iin zaman ynetimi ve iř-yařam dengesini kurmanın zor olabileceđinden tr refahlarına ncelik vermeleri gerektiđini gstermektedir. Katılımcılar, retkenlik ve motivasyonun, kltrel normlar ve iřin deđersizleřtirilmesi ile ilgili endiřeler de dahil olmak zere iřlerinin gerekleřtirildiđi yerden etkilendiđini bildirmiřtir. Ayrıca, olumsuz yorumlar ve siber zorbalık katılımcıların ruh sađlıđı zerinde etkili olmakta ve dayanıklılık gerektirmektedir. alıřma antropolojisi perspektifinden sosyal medya fenomenliđi mesleđinin anlařılmasını destekleyen bu alıřma, akademisyenlere, profesyonellere ve sosyal medya fenomeni

adaylarına önemli içgörüler sunmaktadır. Fenomen endüstrisinin deęişen dinamiklerini ele almak için daha fazla çalışma yapılması tavsiye edilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Medya Fenomenleri, Çalışma Antropolojisi, Dijital Emek, Fenomen Ekonomisi, Çalışma Modelleri

INTRODUCTION

The growth of social media has completely changed how individuals communicate, consume information, and even connect with brands. New options and professional pathways have been made possible by this growth, including influencing through brand marketing with prominent social media influencers. Many people desire to build careers in social media influence. Nearly one-third of the 3,000 kids in research by Lego expressed a desire to work as a social media influencer in the future (Taylor, 2019). Being an influencer has become a new career path in this digital age. Influencers on social media sites like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, have the ability to influence perceptions, motivate followers, and advertise goods and services. With its promises of creative freedom, financial benefits, and the chance to connect with a large audience, this new career path has caught the interest and imagination of many.

I work at a health communication agency. We offer our clients various innovative communication plans, including influencer marketing strategies. Working at a communication agency allowed me to realize how and why brands are willing to work with influencers for their communication activities, and I also had the chance to work with a couple of influencer marketing agencies. At the same time, when I saw the collaboration budgets of influencers and how much money influencers with higher numbers of followers can earn, I wanted to examine this career path in more detail. One of the things I was curious about was whether this job was as perfect as it seemed. Since it is still a relatively new and quickly developing industry, I thought that there are a lot of unanswered questions. Is influencer marketing as attractive and as it seems? What difficulties do influencers encounter on a daily basis? How do they handle the challenges of being public people, marketers, and content producers? These queries

highlight the requirement for a thorough analysis of the influencer industry from an academic standpoint.

I did some literature review on influencer marketing and found numerous articles focusing on how effective influencer marketing is for brands. I encountered several theories that explain why influencer marketing is very beneficial for brands such as Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), and Source Credibility Theory (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Yet, I noticed that very little emphasis was placed on what it means to be an influencer, the working models, and the experiences of the people who do it. Hence, I decided to conduct a study on being an influencer with the aim of providing an in-depth examination of influencers' work models, highlighting their roles, challenges, and benefits. This study evaluates influencers and their work from an anthropology of work perspective to discover the social aspects that have not been emphasized as much as the economic ones. I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews with 10 influencers to have a better understanding of not only the influencers' experiences but also their thoughts and feelings.

Thus, this master's thesis aims to offer a comprehensive review of the intricate world of influencers, showing their functions, difficulties, advantages, and ethical considerations. With this study, I intend to explore the experiences, attitudes, and success techniques of a wide range of influencers. The study will offer a useful understanding of the characteristics of influencers and practical advice to prospective influencers thinking about this career option. This study will examine many aspects of the influencer profession to meet these goals. The study will first examine the motives and objectives of influencers to inspire and influence others through the exchange of ideas, ideologies, and lifestyles. The study will also look into the various work models used by influencers, such as working alone, in a group, or collaboration with influencer

marketing agencies. The goal of the research is to offer a detailed knowledge of the decisions influencers must make while forming their careers by examining the advantages and disadvantages of each model.

The study will also examine the dynamic interaction between influencers and the always-changing social media platform landscape. The ongoing need for platform adaption, keeping up with trends, and controlling algorithms to maximize reach and revenue will all be covered. The study will also emphasize the moral dilemmas that influencers face, such as honesty, openness, and the ethical application of their power. It will look at influencers' responses to social and political issues as well as how their online personas affect their careers and public personas.

The influencer economy and its financial, competitive, and strategic components will also be the main topics of this examination of the economic side of the influencer profession. The study will explore the difficulties influencers encounter when attempting to negotiate appropriate compensation, diversify their sources of income, and uphold positive relationships with companies. It will look into how follower numbers and engagement affect brand partnerships and attitudes, as well as what that means for influencers with different-sized audiences.

The study will also look at the difficulties influencers possibly have with time management. By investigating how they balance their personal and professional lives, this study aims to discover the working order. The effects of ambiguous boundaries on influencers' well-being, work satisfaction, and long-term viability will be looked at. Effective time management

techniques and the significance of giving oneself time for rest and renewal will be clarified by the research.

In the study's final section, the regional and cultural variables that affect influencers' experiences are discussed. The problems and opportunities particular to each location's surroundings will be examined, as well as how influencers in various places manage their job. The study will also look at how influencers' mental health and well-being are impacted by cyberbullying, unfavorable remarks, and dealing with haters.

In conclusion, the goal of this master's thesis is to advance academic knowledge of the influencer industry. The research offers useful insights to academics, business experts, and potential influencers by evaluating the roles, difficulties, advantages, and ethical issues associated with being an influencer. It clarifies the subtleties and intricacies of the influencer market and provides useful advice for navigating this developing career path.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

1. ANTHROPOLOGY OF WORK

Wallman (1979) defines the anthropology of labor as the study of ideologies that influence how work is conceptualized, experienced, and valued in various cultural contexts and cultures (Wallman, 1979). It emphasizes several resources that are necessary for survival, including labor, land, money, time, identity, and information (Wallman, 1979). It also looks into how resources are used, managed, and transformed into different types of labor arrangements (Wallman, 1979). The study of different realms of activity, exchange, or meaning and how they differ from one another are topics covered by the study of work anthropology. The anthropology of work also looks at how work relates to other facets of social life, such as power, ties, and identity. It also considers how shifts in politics, economics, and technology have an impact on and are influenced by changes in the labor market. By studying the anthropology of work, researchers may be able to better understand the varied ways that labor is organized and experienced in various communities and cultural contexts.

The Social Anthropology of Work describes work as a composite idea that cannot be understood in isolation from other dimensions of human life (Wallman, 1979). So, a tentative approach is needed to comprehend every aspect of it. The review also discusses the rise in interest in social anthropology recently, as well as the significance of the field in current discussions about labor.

Wallman (1979) divides the anthropology of labor into several sub-sections in her book to investigate it. These sub-sections are energy, incentive, resources, value, time, place, person, technology, identity, alienation, domains, spheres, and systems.

1.1. Energy

According to *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (June 1980), pp. 299–314, work is defined as "the application of human energy to things". It has the power to alter, maintain, or increase the value of the worker, the project under development, and the entire workplace. This term covers a variety of jobs, occupational categories, and economic sectors. The concept also includes managers, traders, mediators, gurus, and artists whose work cannot be assessed by the quantifiable results they provide. Since it may also involve the utilization of intangible resources like symbols and information, Wallman (1979) picture work as an "energy system" (Wallman, 1979). Even though the most basic definition of work is the expenditure of human energy to finish an endeavor, it should be underlined that work performed by humans is not merely a mechanical process. Individuals put forth effort to achieve their own personal, professional, or social objectives, and while some may be crystal clear about their goals, others may not. However, neither case is entirely automated; labor must be done to achieve these objectives in both instances.

The term "influencer" can also be defined in terms of the aforementioned meaning. The definition of work acknowledges that some types of work cannot be judged solely based on quantifiable results. An influencer is someone who uses intangible assets, such as social capital and communication skills, to further their own, other people's, or society's interests. As a result, it is possible to assess an influencer's work within the context of the anthropology of work perspective by taking into account the tools they use and the objectives they set.

1.2. Incentive

According to Wallman (1979), since work has many purposes and is also perceived as economic, religious, and political practices, it should not merely be seen as a means of generating a more materialistic or economic gain. Work incentives are a component of many different norms and are influenced by symbolic, social, and interpersonal elements. It is further suggested that the definitions of work that are most frequently used in society link it to a profession in the mainstream economy. So, it may be claimed that by posing the question of what constitutes unemployment, one can also explain what labor entails.

Being an influencer can be viewed as a type of employment that entails using intangible assets like social capital and communication abilities to realize individual, monetary, or social objectives. Even though influencers may not match the conventional criteria of labor that link it to a profession in the mainstream economy, their work is nonetheless influenced by the same symbolic, social, and interpersonal aspects that have an impact on work incentives.

The idea that labor should not merely be seen as a way to earn more money or material goods is also in line with the notion that influencers may also be driven by non-financial reasons such as a desire for social acceptance, for personal fulfillment, or to advance particular causes or beliefs. Influencers may experience work in a way that is impacted by economic, religious, and political activities, as well as by the same standards and expectations that apply to other types of employment.

According to the anthropology of labor, when assessing a sort of job, one should take into account the numerous motivations people have for working as well as the different forms it

might take. This implies that the assessment of an influencer should consider the larger social and cultural context in which their work is conducted as well as their economic or material outcomes.

1.3. Resources

According to Blackburn (1972), Klein (1976), and Willis (1977), the value of a profession extends beyond monetary gain in industrial society, and other elements such as identity, prestige, and time structure are important determinants of a career's quality. According to Jahoda et al. (1972) and Wadel (1973), the loss of a profession may result in the disappearance of these crucial non-financial resources and may affect how they are managed.

Psychologist Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory posits that human behavior is greatly influenced by self-regulation. According to this theory, "the ongoing exercise of self-influence" is what motivates and regulates behavior (Bandura, 1991, p. 248). So, for social media influencers, the success or failure of their content can impact their behavior. If a certain type of content performs well, they will naturally be incentivized to continue creating similar content. Bandura explains that there is a significant impact of perceived control on decision-making and self-regulation, which can either improve or hinder performance (Bandura, 1991, p. 270). If the content is performing well, influencers will have increased aspirations and set more challenging goals. On the other hand, if their content is failing, their aspirations will be lowered and their confidence in their abilities will be diminished.

Work should be acknowledged as the accomplishment of necessary tasks and the creation of significant values (Frankenburg re: Barth 1966). However, employment involves more than only the creation of material things and financial activity, as Malinowski's "fundamental necessities" propose. Work also includes the ownership and dissemination of knowledge, role-playing, and the recognition of individual significance and community identity. Six resources—identity, information, time, labor, and money—are therefore acknowledged as being essential for employment. It is possible to say that work is the creation, administration, or transfer of these resources.

From this point of view, being an influencer can be viewed as a type of employment that entails the production, administration, or transfer of significant resources like identity, information, time, labor, and money. Influencers can generate and use these resources to further their own, other people's, or society's objectives by utilizing their social capital and communication abilities.

The idea that a profession's worth goes beyond monetary gain and is determined by identity, status, and time constraints is consistent with the notion that influencers may be driven by non-economic factors like social acceptance, personal fulfillment, or a desire to advance particular values or causes. Losing a job may also result in the loss of crucial non-financial resources, which may affect how an influencer handles their workload.

Hence, rather than focusing exclusively on their financial or material results, influencers can be assessed based on the resources they produce, manage, or transition. This means that the numerous motivations people have for working and the various forms labor might take should be considered while evaluating an influencer.

1.4. Value

Work and its value involve managing resources and giving each resource value (Wallman, 1979). Employment can have worth on a personal, societal, or financial level that can be assessed using moral or financial criteria. However, these values are adjustable and depend on a variety of factors, such as the relative value of the resources, the technical approaches taken to complete the task, and the way the market is set up.

It should be mentioned that depending on the individual, social, and historical context, the value accorded to labor varies significantly not only across cultures but also within a society at a given time. Moreover, an actor's position within the system, comparative value, future orientation, and opportunity and alternative costs all have an impact on how much something is worth (Wallman, 1979).

The value that an influencer places on the resources they produce, oversee, or transfer as well as the environment in which they work can be used to assess their influence. It is obvious that the worth of labor is not constant and can change depending on a person's personal, social, and historical circumstances, as well as on an actor's place in the system, comparative value, future orientation, and opportunity and alternative costs.

As a result, to assess an influencer's work, it is important to take into account the resources they produce or manage as well as the value that is placed on them in their particular social, cultural, and personal context. An influencer, for instance, could add value thanks to their network of contacts, expertise, and skill in conveying concepts. Together with the monetary

rewards, they may also place value on their employment based on the social approval or personal fulfillment it brings.

However, outside variables like market structure, rivalry, and technology improvements can also have an impact on how valuable an influencer's work is perceived to be. For example, modifications to social media algorithms may affect an influencer's capacity to connect with their audience and make money.

So, from the perspective of anthropology of work, it can be understood that when evaluating being an influencer, it is necessary to look at the value assigned to the resources influencers create, manage, or transition, and the context in which they operate. The worth of work is not fixated and can be influenced by a variety of factors, including personal, social, and historical factors, as well as external factors like the organization of the market and competition.

1.5. Time

Work can have different meanings and values based on a range of variables, including culture, individual circumstances, historical context, and technical and social processes (Wallman, 1979). The way that work is viewed and appreciated is also influenced by factors like time and energy. The definition of work can change depending on the available resources and whether it is possible to employ someone else to complete a task. The worth of work is affected by the opportunity costs and alternative costs of achieving a goal, as well as by how various individuals within a system view the effort (Wallman, 1979). Age, cultural traditions, and level of energy are only a few examples of factors that might affect how time and labor relate to one another.

Depending on the society, individual circumstances, and historical setting in which an influencer operates, an influencer's value may change. Moreover, considerations like time and effort, as well as opportunities and alternative costs, may have an impact on the value of being an influencer.

The capacity of influencers to produce and manage resources like knowledge, identity, and social relationships may be valued. The social and technical procedures involved in influencer work may also have an impact on its worth. An influencer who successfully engages with their audience and develops a devoted following, for example, maybe more highly appreciated than one who is unable to do so.

In general, monetary gain alone cannot fully capture the value of being an influencer. Understanding the various elements that affect the significance and worth of work is essential. According to an anthropological perspective on work, social, cultural, and personal elements must also be taken into account when assessing influencer work in addition to economic reasons for determining a work's worth.

1.6. Place

The setting/place where a task is accomplished has an impact on its significance and worth. While some jobs are location-specific, others require unique environments to function effectively (Wallman, 1979). Whether the repair is done inside or outside of the home can affect its value. Domestic work, or work done at home, is typically economically undervalued. Yet,

compensation for work done outside the house varies. The worth of labor may also be influenced by the social and cultural advantages of working in particular places.

Being an influencer can be considered in terms of the setting in which the influencer completes their work and the value placed on it. Influencers who operate largely from home could have their work viewed as less valued than those who commute to typical offices. But, if an influencer's effort is connected to social and cultural advantages, it could be valued more highly. The value placed on an influencer's work can also be influenced by the cultural and social milieu in which they operate. For instance, influencers' work may not be as well-known or respected as it is in different societies. In general, several variables connected to the location, cultural norms, and social perceptions of the work they do may have an impact on the value of an influencer's work.

1.7. Person

Work can have different meanings and values depending on who does it. Typically, this occurs because the worker is valued more than the labor itself, rather than the other way around (Firth, Loudon, Murray, Searle-Chatterjee, Schildkrout, 1979, this volume). According to Wallman (1979), specialization on any basis can both bind and favor the worker because being allowed to do a certain job can fix both identity and livelihood while also imposing legally enforceable requirements. Physical characteristics such as sex, age, and nationality can serve as the foundation for specialization, which can restrict access to jobs and other opportunities. It is also noted that a specialized work division might result from a wide range of various circumstances (Wallman, 1979). A specialized division of labor can result from a variety of factors, including specialization by mandate and specialization by choice (Wallman, 1979).

Specialization can also emerge from specialization by default, which is when someone is compelled to pursue a particular career path because there are no other options (Wallman, 1979). Thus, it seems sensible that considering the elements that affect the meaning and worth of labor can help us understand how work is perceived in different countries and cultures.

According to Wallman (1979), the idea and value of labor can vary from person to person and from culture to culture. It is crucial to understand the different elements that affect the meaning and worth of labor, including specialization, which can have both benefits and drawbacks. Influencers can benefit from understanding these elements in a variety of ways as well. They can, for instance, successfully interact with their audience and provide content that is consistent with their values and worldview.

Also, it is crucial to recognize the many opinions and experiences of people who carry out various sorts of labor, particularly those who may be marginalized or underestimated. Influencers can utilize their platform to fight for fair and equitable treatment for all workers and to generate greater awareness and understanding of these problems.

1.8. Technology

When viewed in the context of time, the concept of labor division can be better understood. Labor is the time and energy that is spent on various sorts of work. It is impossible to evaluate a work's worth as a whole without considering the technology employed to complete it (Wallman, 1979). Technology benefits people in many ways, such as boosting energy or productivity. Moreover, technical advancements increase the possibility of transformation. It is also claimed that the topic of opportunity costs and the debate over technology are related

(Wallman, 1979, 16) and that people make choices based on the solutions they think will be most helpful for their jobs. Also, it is claimed that technology tools and items have more than one role, therefore people can categorize both technological objects and processes in the same way they do with places and people (Cohen, Gudeman, G. Mars, L. Mars, Ortiz, Searle-Chatterjee, 1979). Hence, worries about redundancy are not solely the result of resistance to technological advancement. A change in the technology used at work could indicate a change in one's identity and, as a result, pose a threat to it. Also, it may be argued that when a worker is transformed into a piece of technology, she or he completely distances themselves from the project they are working on.

The text emphasizes the significance of technology in influencing the significance and value of work from the standpoint of the anthropology of labor. Technology use can increase productivity and efficiency, but it also has effects on how employees feel about themselves and how disconnected they are from their jobs. Understanding how technology may affect the work you perform and how your audience perceives it is crucial if you want to be an influencer. The text also underlines the need of considering the energy and time invested in a task when determining its value, which may be helpful for influencers who are attempting to produce content and interact with their audience. Lastly, the topic of the division of labor emphasizes the significance of understanding the various elements that create the meaning and value of work and how they differ among countries and societies, which may be pertinent for influencers wanting to reach a worldwide audience.

A change in the technology used at work could indicate a change in one's identity and, as a result, pose a threat to it. Also, it may be argued that when a worker is transformed into a piece of technology, she or he completely distances themselves from the project they are working on.

1.9. Identity and Alienation

People can better understand how work is structured and how much value is placed on it by understanding the division of labor. The environment in which work is performed, the technology utilized, the worker's identity, and the degree to which the worker can relate to and manage the workflow are all factors that affect the value of labor (Wallman,1979).

How much a person identifies with their profession and how much they feel alienated from it can vary depending on historical, cultural, and personal factors (Wallman,1979). Consequently, it is clear that work is closely related to a person's self-esteem and sense of identity and that depending on the situation, it may be seen as a means of accomplishing goals or as a source of alienation.

The economic and social climate in which labor is performed has an impact on how much value is placed on it. The amount of value people place on work and the dynamics of relative power among different employees both have an impact on its value. In conclusion, the idea of the worth of labor is complicated, multidimensional, and affected by a variety of social factors.

It should be mentioned that the value and meaning of labor are influenced by a wide range of sociocultural elements and the complexity of the concept of work. Understanding the various ways that work might be viewed and valued in various cultures and societies is crucial for influencers. Understanding the effects of technology, the environment, and the identity of the worker on the value of labor includes this. It is also critical to recognize that power dynamics in the workplace and social and economic issues have an impact on the value of work.

Understanding these elements can help an influencer connect with their audience more effectively about the importance of work and how it affects both individuals and society at large.

1.10. Domains, Spheres, and Systems

The creation, management, and transformation of resources necessary for a living can be used to define the concept of work. They include things like territory, money, labor, knowledge, time, and identity. The value of a resource cannot be determined by its use or material value; rather, it can be assessed in terms of its personal, societal, or economic value.

By examining the distinctions between domains or arenas of activity, interchange or meaning, and interactions among resource systems, social anthropology explains what work is about. It is nearly impossible to assess, manage, or plan any aspect of employment without taking into account all of its other aspects and what is happening in other areas of livelihood (Wallman, 1979). A full system of work also begins long before any energy is needed for it, and it continues through creation, distribution, consumption, regeneration, and other processes (Harrison, 1979).

Being an influencer could be viewed as a type of labor that entails managing resources needed for survival. Via various social media platforms, influencers create content and develop their brands. This enables them to gain a sizable following and eventually monetize their influence.

Their ability to build and retain a sizable following, which in turn draws brands and marketers interested in paying for sponsored posts or partnerships, determines the worth of their

work. But their identity and the social and economic context in which they work have an impact on the worth of their labor as well. Influencers from underrepresented groups or those who don't meet conventional beauty standards could have a harder time developing their brands and luring sponsors.

However, the idea of employment in the context of being an influencer involves more than just producing content; it also involves managing and transforming resources like identity, information, and time. To create content, interact with their audience, and bargain with advertisers, influencers must properly manage their time. To remain relevant and draw in new customers, they must also constantly modify and evolve their brand.

In summary, acting as an influencer can be examined from the perspective of anthropology of work as a type of employment that entails producing, managing, and converting resources necessary for subsistence. Their capacity to garner and keep a sizable following determines the worth of their work, which is also influenced by their identity and the social and economic context in which they work.

2. DIGITAL LABOR

Since the beginning of trade, complicated global supply chains have existed, requiring workers from one region of the world to make things that would be sold and used by people in other countries without ever coming into direct contact with their final users (Schoukens & Barrio, 2017). There is a functional separation of duties between different parts of the world, but the effectiveness of delivering commodities depends on the transportation technologies and the distance between the production site and the end customers. In a worldwide production

network, it often takes longer to deliver commodities the further away the manufacturing location is from the final consumers. So, it may be concluded that historically there has been a strong correlation between what is produced and the places where it is produced and consumed.

The relationship between time and distance has almost completely vanished with the emergence of digital labor (Scott, 2011). The distance between employers, employees, and clients no longer has a substantial impact on how quickly a digital good or service is delivered. The standardization and modularization of labor activities, the advent of online marketplaces for digital work, and the growing use of automation all contribute to the location of service work losing importance (Scott, 2011). As a result, it is simpler to separate "the task" from particular geographical locations.

Modern research has used the term "digital labor" to describe a variety of tasks. They may involve doing tiny internet jobs from home, working in contact centers housed in huge corporate buildings, editing Wikipedia pages, and even using mobile devices to post images to social networking platforms (Fuchs, 2014; Graham, 2014; Scholz, 2013).

Production costs have decreased dramatically as a result of accessible internet connectivity and inexpensive computers, which have increased the available labor force. Digital labor platforms like Upwork.com and Freelancer.com now make it possible for people and companies to connect directly, regardless of where they are in the world. Workers are freed from the limitations of their local labor markets because the work can be distributed to any location in the world while still being completed at the worker's place of business. Because their work is frequently produced and supplied digitally, digital workers do not need to be physically close to their work like traditional workers do.

With about 50 million people signing up with digital job platforms, an industry worth over \$4 billion in transactions have resulted (Kuek et al., 2015). Although these workers must operate actual machines that must be connected to a wall outlet, their ability to work remotely has changed the sector. Despite its fixed location, they can work on tasks that come from any part of the world thanks to digital work.

According to Graham et. al.'s (2017a, 2017b) research, delivering jobs to those who couldn't previously access them in their local labor markets has also resulted in several important problems for employees. Lack of bargaining power, discrimination, volatility, and inadequate skill development are some of these problems. There are frequently ten times as many job seekers as there are open positions, which is a significant issue for Internet job marketplaces, also an excess of labor lowers labor costs and makes it harder for employees to bargain for improved working conditions (Graham et. al., 2017a, 2017b). Furthermore, the layout of these platforms promotes rivalry rather than cooperation among workers, who are frequently categorized as independent contractors rather than employees. This gives them the impression that they are independent businesspeople engaged in a global market rather than employees with common goals and entitlements to employment. The fact that workers are aware of their competition for jobs limits their ability to bargain for higher pay or better working conditions. So, it may be claimed that the development of digital technology and networking has led to the emergence of a worldwide market for digital labor, where workers compete with one another and see their power diminished.

2.1. Influencers as Digital Laborers

Influencers are a particular class of digital laborers whose duties include creating and disseminating information on social media sites. The influencer economy frequently exhibits flexible yet unstable kinds of work, much like other forms of digital labor like remote work or freelance work. Influencers frequently depend on brand sponsorships and partnerships to make money because they are typically self-employed and operate on a project-by-project basis.

Nevertheless, it should be noted, that influencers' work is typically extremely public and centers on building personal brands and fan bases on social media, unlike many other types of digital labor. This indicates that influencers frequently engage in highly performative work, continuously attempting to engage and build their following to draw in more lucrative commercial agreements.

The use of data analytics and computational methods to assess the efficacy of influencer campaigns and the performance of certain influencers is another feature of the influencer economy. As a result, influencers frequently fall under the same types of algorithmic control and monitoring as other types of digital labor, and companies and social media platforms continuously watch and assess their output.

Ultimately, the influencer economy can be thought of as a type of digital labor that blends self-employment, performance, and algorithmic control. It is also distinguished by a high level of visibility and precarity.

Bulut (2015) conducted a study on immaterial labor in the video game industry which looks at how this idea can help us in our understanding of industry labor practices, specifically

the distinction between above- and below-the-line workers (producers, designers, programmers, artists) and testers, community managers, and content localizers. According to the study, outsourcing, financialization, and deskilling have all contributed to the blurring of the lines between these categories. To collect data for the study, the researcher conducted fieldwork in a video game studio and interviewed a range of people. The study also covers the difficulties and precarity encountered by industry workers, as well as the possibility of organizing and resolving these problems. Overall, the study offers a critical examination of labor laws and practices in the video game business and emphasizes how crucial it is to comprehend immaterial work in this setting. This study suggests that people working in the video game industry indicate that they love their job since it is seen as a “cool job” in the society, and they simply love what they do. However, both above and below the line workers experience precarity due to the nature of the industry itself. It is suggested in the study that below the line workers are more likely to experience precarity than above the line workers. This raises the question of whether influencers with lower follower numbers, who can be seen as “below the line” experience more precarity than influencers with higher follower numbers, who may be seen as “above the line”.

3. INFLUENCERS

The rise of social media has had a significant impact on our methods of communication, as platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter allow people to connect globally. This growth has created new opportunities and career paths, including influencing through brand marketing with successful social media influencers. This literature review explores the definition of a social media influencer, the career opportunities, and the interaction between brands and influencers, as well as theories on influencer communication.

Influencers are individuals who use digital media platforms such as social media to shape public opinion and persuade their followers. They can influence the buying decisions of others due to their expertise, relationship, authority, or standing with their audience (Geysler, 2023). Social media influencers are individuals who have established themselves as experts in a particular field by consistently posting content related to that topic on various social media platforms (Geysler, 2023). They can be defined as people who have gained a substantial following of dedicated and interested individuals who trust their opinions. Brands often work with these influencers as they can create popular trends and persuade their followers to purchase the products they endorse.

Influencers maintain their credibility and connection with their audience through a combination of online presence and personal interactions including accessibility, authenticity, believability, implacability, and intimacy (Abidin, 2016). The key to their success is their ability to create a relatable persona, which appeals to their followers' desires to identify with them.

Influencers can be classified in multiple ways, including by number of followers, type of content, and level of influence (Santora, 2022). They can also be grouped based on their niche, where the impact they have on their audience varies. Mega-influencers may have large followings, but they may lack expertise in a specific niche, while micro or nano-influencers who are experts in a certain area can have a strong impact on their followers and be valuable for companies targeting that niche.

Influencers can also be divided into various categories based on the content they produce and share (Santora,2022). There are different types of influencers based on their niches including gamers, sports and fitness influencers, bloggers/vloggers, photographers, travel

influencers, beauty influencers, lifestyle influencers, fashion influencers, parenting influencers, etc. (Santora,2022).

I would like to provide more detail about the types of influencers who participated in this study. Santora (2022) suggests that sports and fitness influencers are often seen as sources of inspiration by their followers. They commonly promote sports-related products, healthy food and drinks, exercise plans, and more. Blogging and vlogging are the two most common forms of influencers (Santora, 2022). They are often considered macro and mega influencers with a substantial following on their blogs or YouTube channels. These influencers create engaging, high-quality content that sets them apart as experts in their niche. They often have a substantial following on other social media platforms in addition to their YouTube or blog audience. Photographers who have a large to moderate following on social media, and are classified as mega to micro-influencers, are often sought after by major camera brands to promote their equipment, lenses, and accessories (Santora, 2022). These photographers have a reputation for creating high-quality content. Beauty influencers share beauty-related information such as tips, product evaluations, tutorials, etc. (Santora, 2022). They can effectively raise awareness for a beauty brand and boost sales. Beauty influencers come from a variety of backgrounds and range from amateur enthusiasts to professional makeup artists. Santora (2022) indicates that fashion influencers are known for their expertise in clothing, jewelry, shoes, watches, and accessories. They share product reviews, promote products, collaborate with fashion brands, post videos about their shopping experiences, and provide styling tips and tricks. Lifestyle influencers provide an insight into their everyday life to their followers on social media (Santora, 2022). Many people can become lifestyle influencers, but the most popular ones post relatable or appealing content that their followers can incorporate into their own lives. Parenting influencers are known for providing advice and guidance for new parents, as well as sharing product

reviews and personal experiences as a parent, both positive and negative (Santora, 2022). They can promote a wide variety of products related to parenting.

Considering the examples given above, it can be understood that there are numerous influencer types based on the content they specialize in and share. Every day a new type of influencer emerges with new trends. The fact that new types of influencers keep emerging can be seen as a sign that this job has the potential to be a prominent alternative career path in the near future.

3.1. Influencing As a Career

The content influencers post is a crucial factor in how they are perceived by the audience, as it is their self-presentation. The concept of self-presentation is rooted in sociologist Erving Goffman's theory of interpersonal interaction, which analyzes how individuals project a desirable image. Social media influencers have the power to control how they want to present themselves online, as everything on social media is created by the individual, such as the videos they post on YouTube, the captions under their Instagram posts, and their profile information. The reputation of social media influencers is shaped by their self-presentation on the internet (Bullingham, 2013, p. 101).

Social media influencing is a career that many aspire to. A study conducted by Lego found that almost a third of 3,000 children wished to become social media influencers in the future (Taylor, 2019).

According to the vice president of influencer marketing and paid social at Valassis, "most [influencers] start blogging or sharing on YouTube as a passion project or a side hustle. Success doesn't happen overnight. You must build enough content and this process can

sometimes take years for your platforms to support you financially" (Suciu, 2020). Thus, it can be said that generally influencing starts with a strong interest which leads to being an influencer as a side job. However, it should be noted that this process mostly requires a lot of effort, time, and patience.

It is not necessary to have a large following to have a successful career in influencing, as brands prefer genuine influencers with high-quality content, who have not used bots to increase their followers (Suciu, 2020). In the last few years, the competition for followers increased highly, making it more challenging to build a following compared to 5 years ago.

Being an influencer still faces stigma as it is not considered a conventional career path. Brooke Miccio, who is a social media influencer and YouTuber, showcases the success of an influencer. After experiencing burnout from her 8 to 5 sales job, podcast, YouTube channel, and online business, Miccio decided to pursue influencing and now she earns a similar amount of income to her former sales job (Perelli, 2019). Her sources of income include podcast ads, YouTube AdSense, brand sponsorships, and merchandise sales.

Conklin (2020) suggests that the earnings of influencers vary significantly, with some making between \$30,000 and \$100,000 per year (Conklin, 2020). The compensation of influencers depends on the package that a brand purchases, which can include a dedicated video, Instagram posts, or mentions on a video (Bellotte, n.d.). The exact package and compensation are determined through negotiations between the brand and the influencer. Influencer Katy Bellotte mentioned in her podcast "Thick & Thin" that she earns roughly between \$2,500 and \$5,000 for an Instagram post and a full package, including an Instagram post, three Instagram stories, and a dedicated video on YouTube, can cost the brand "roughly between \$10,000 and \$15,000" (Bellotte, n.d.). However, it should be noted that these figures are only an estimate and do not account for taxes.

Brands pay close attention to engagement when working with social media influencers. Engagement refers to a user's interaction with a post, such as liking a post on Instagram or commenting on a Facebook post. This is important for businesses to know as it reflects the reach of the influencer. Low engagement levels on posts from influencers with high follower counts can raise questions about the authenticity of the influencer and their following. (Khan, 2017)

4. INFLUENCER MARKETING

Due to the growth of social media, advertising agencies have altered their strategies to achieve the best return on their investment, including influencer marketing. Brands collaborate with influencers to promote their brand and communicate information to their target audience (Burke, 2017). Influencer marketing is prevalent across a wide range of industries, including beauty and fashion, home and family, health and fitness, travel and lifestyle, food and beverage, business and technology, and entertainment (Burke, 2017).

Instagram appears to be the key social media platform for influencers (O'Malley, 2020). According to O'Malley (2020), Instagram has shown higher engagement for brands collaborating with influencers.

Freberg (2011) defines social media influencers as independent individuals who use platforms like YouTube and Instagram to share personal information and product experiences with their followers, influence their attitudes, and increase their following for potential brand partnerships. A survey by IZEA Worldwide (Suciu, 2020) found that the majority of social media consumers find influencer content more genuine and compelling than traditional advertising, with 56% of respondents reporting making a purchase based on a sponsored social media post from an influencer.

Advertising agencies are increasing their expenses on social media continuously. In 2014, \$17.74 billion was spent, and in 2019, digital advertising surpassed traditional advertising for the first time in the US, with \$130 billion spent on digital ads and \$110 billion spent on traditional ads (Bridge, 2019). Influencers agree with brands to reach their audience and promote their products, increasing influencer marketing campaigns. The use of the hashtag "ad" in influencer posts grew by 90.5% from 2018 to 2019, according to the social media marketing company named Socialbakers (O'Malley, 2020). Influencer marketing provides a significant return on investment, with businesses receiving over \$5 in profits for every dollar spent on influencer marketing. In 2020, 63% of marketers planned to increase their budget for influencer marketing the following year (Karamustafic, 2020, p.3).

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) mandates that social media influencers must make it known to their followers if they are partnering with a brand. They must reveal their relationship with the brand and any compensation or gifts received, so their audience is aware and not misled. This applies to both marketers and endorsers, and the connection must be clearly and conspicuously disclosed unless it is already clear from the context of the communication. The FTC requires influencers to have a "material connection" with a brand, meaning the relationship may impact the weight or credibility of the endorsement. This connection should be disclosed unless it is already obvious (Federal Trade Commission, 2017).

4.1. Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura's social learning theory posits that behavior can be acquired through direct experience or by observing others. According to Bandura (1977), based on the feedback received, individuals develop thoughts or assumptions about successful behavior, which then guide their future actions. This theory sheds light on why influencers have an impact on their

followers. Brands partner with influencers in the hope that their followers will imitate the influencer's behavior and purchase the promoted product.

4.2. Electronic Word-Of-Mouth

The rise of the internet has led to a change in how people communicate with each other, including word-of-mouth (WOM) communication. Traditional WOM refers to oral communication between acquaintances, while the digital era has introduced electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which is "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, and former customers about a product or a company via the Internet" (Cheung, 2010, p. 329). Influencers interact with their audience through e-WOM on social media platforms, where they build their following and communicate with their followers.

4.3. Source Credibility Theory

According to communication theory, "source credibility" refers to the listener's trust in a speaker. This theory says that the credibility of the speaker, which includes both their expertise and trustworthiness, can increase the value of the message and the likelihood that it will be accepted by the receiver (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). This idea is just as relevant in the relationship between influencer and audience as it is in traditional speaker/listener relationships (Chapple, 2017, p. 112).

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

In this study, to gain a broader perspective on being an influencer as a career choice, I benefited from semi-structured interviews to collect data. The reason why I chose this method was that it provides a deeper understanding of the topic through open-ended data about

influencer work, gives the chance to explore participants' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs on being an influencer, and creates a way to take a closer look into some personal and maybe even sensitive topics. I believe that it is very important to comprehend the perceptions, experiences, and assessments of the influencers in their own words. The interview method, according to Saldaña (2011), "is an effective way of soliciting documenting, in their own words, an individual's or group's perspectives, feelings, opinions, values, attitudes, and beliefs about their personal experiences and social world, in addition to factual information about their lives."(Saldaña, 2011)).

With the help of 13 interview questions about being an influencer/working as an influencer, I aim to examine influencers and their work. For this study, I decided to focus on Instagram influencers only although other social media platforms can be delved into such as YouTube and TikTok. I decided to focus on Instagram since the concept of being an influencer began to settle into our lives through Instagram. Also, the number of influencers on Instagram is rising day by day, so I decided to address this study on Instagram influencers and their work.

This study focuses on exploring the anthropology of influencer work by conducting 10 semi-structured interviews with individuals who identify themselves as influencers. This study aims to learn more about how influencers define their roles, plan their schedules, handle ethical dilemmas, and balance their personal and professional lives. Thus, I prepared 13 interview questions that address being an influencer. The topics of the questions can be grouped as the definition of being an influencer; planning, content creating, and marketing processes; follower communication processes; time management; influencer economy; potential risks and challenges of being an influencer; and the impact of culture.

For this study, I wanted to collect data from influencers who have different numbers of followers on Instagram since I aim to have a broader perspective on being an influencer. My goal was to understand the experiences, thoughts, and beliefs of both influencers with a higher number of followers and influencers with a lower number of followers. Thus, I tried to reach both ends. Also, I decided to conduct this study on different types of influencers to analyze influencer work from the anthropology of work aspect. On Instagram, there are numerous types of influencers with varying numbers of followers. So, I wanted to interview as many different types as possible to better understand being an influencer and to evaluate influencer work.

Since I work at a communication agency, I managed to contact the influencers with both higher and lower followings. When I decided on which types of influencers, I wanted to conduct my study on, I got in contact with the influencer marketing agencies that we already work with. Through the medium of influencer marketing agencies, I managed to get in contact with 3 of the interviewees. Although these influencer marketing agencies have greater access to various types of influencers with high and low followings, they were not as helpful as I had expected them to be. I thought I would be able to contact each one of the participants via influencer marketing agencies, however, I ended up trying to get in contact with influencers through the people I know. Most of the influencers working with influencer marketing agencies did not respond to the offer of being an interviewee for the study. So, I tried to get in contact with the influencers I follow on Instagram. Yet again, the e-mails and direct messages I sent to them remained unread.

After a couple more tries, I decided to contact the influencers I know. I sent some direct messages to them on Instagram and luckily, they wished to participate in the study. With the snowball sampling technique, I managed to have access to some more influencers through the

influencers I know. In the end, I managed to interview 10 influencers with a varying number of followers by purposive sampling techniques.

The participants of the study were Instagram influencers whose profiles are dedicated to different areas varying from fitness, fashion, and photography to lifestyle. 6 of the participants were females and 4 of them were males and the age range of the participants was 18 to 35. The following range of the participants was 1 million to 13,3 thousand. Only one of the participants was a student, the others had a job besides being an influencer.

I conducted 6 of the interviews via Zoom video conferencing, a commonly used video conferencing tool, and each one of them lasted about thirty minutes. I asked for the interviewees' permission to audio-record the meetings, and every one of them agreed. I also mentioned that I wouldn't share their identities, the audio recordings, and any information they provided during the interviews. The other 4 interviews were conducted in written form. I sent my interview questions with an overview of what this study focuses on and what it aims to evaluate. The participants answered the interview questions and sent their answers to me. At the beginning of each interview, I emphasized that they should feel free to answer the questions about how they felt like. I wanted the interviews to be as organic as possible, so I asked them to be as comfortable as they could be when answering the interview questions and to answer the questions as they felt comfortable. I took some notes about the participants' facial expressions and body language during each interview. However, it should be noted that there were certain limitations regarding the methodology of this study. I was able to observe the gestures of the people I interviewed on Zoom as much as they presented on their computer screens. In addition, I did not have the chance to observe the facial expressions, speech patterns, and gestures of the 4 people who sent me their answers to the interview questions in written

form. Yet, I did my best to observe the interviewees during the interview sessions by recording the session and focusing entirely on them instead of spending time taking notes. Also, I made sure that interviewees who sent their answers in written form understood the topic and interview questions by providing them with an overview of the study before sharing the interview questions with them. Due to the confidentiality agreement, I am not going to share the participants' identities and names. I am going to describe every one of the participants in a numerical order (Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 4...). With the help of these applications, I was able to get past the ethical concerns regarding the reliability of the study.

I conducted interviews between February 2023 and April 2023. I transcribed 6 of the interviews right after I conducted them via Zoom. After completing transcribing the audio recordings, I started analyzing the interviews through the written papers. I benefitted from thematic analysis to analyze the interviews. First, I tried to find out the repeated answers in the written documents, then I grouped them according to their content. Also, I looked at the statements that specifically highlight or indicate important issues and grouped them too. I tried to pay attention to the statements that surprised me as well, so I took some notes about those parts and included them in the findings section.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS & DISCUSSION

3.1. Job Description

In this research, I aimed to display an understanding of how influencers define their job, make plans for their time, navigate moral issues, and manage their personal and professional lives. Since it is an emerging career path, I wanted to further investigate this new model of

work. I wish to provide a broad overview of this job, so in this section, I shed light on the working model of influencers by focusing on the job description, planning and collaboration processes, content creation and marketing processes, ethical issues, influencer economy, follower communication, time management, the impact of space, cyberbullying, and the good aspects of being an influencer.

First, I would like to focus on the job description of being an influencer. By looking at Wallman's (1979) definition, which is work is *"the application of human energy to things"*, I wish to analyze how influencers describe their job/work. The reason why I wanted to start the analysis part of the study from the definition of the job is that I want to fully demonstrate how influencers describe their work. Since it is an emerging job, I believe that there is a need to provide an extensive explanation of the job. Although maybe some definitions were made or known about being an influencer, it is very significant to see how an influencer themselves describe their job.

Making job descriptions are quite significant in identifying specific competencies required for a position, a working model, the work environment, or the pressures of the work environment. For this reason, the description of being an influencer was necessary to understand what the work might entail and call for. Therefore, I asked the participants to express what it means to be an influencer and how it fits into their sense of identity.

Participant 6 explained being an influencer as follows: *"Honestly, I look at being an influencer as inspiring people a little bit in everything I do. Because I think about how I can benefit people in everything I do. For example, when I create content for Instagram, I ask myself why people should watch the content I produced. Do they find a piece of me in it? Or rather, do*

they find a piece of themselves when they watch it? As the name implies, it means "to influence". I want to influence people for the better. I think that being an influencer is a profession that means influencing people in a good way, and in some cases, it is a profession that means directing people a little. That's why I give extra importance and pay extra attention to what I share on Instagram." Participants defined being an influencer as influencing people as the word itself indicates. For them, it means being able to convey their thoughts, beliefs, and lifestyles to the people who follow them on social media. Participants indicated that their job is inspiring and that's why it's an important job. But it should be noted that having the power to influence people, comes with the responsibility of paying attention to their content and what they say and represent in their posts. Thus, it can be said that being an influencer gives one the chance to pass on one's thoughts, beliefs, interests, experiences, and lifestyles. However, it should be noted that while sharing these values, the message they give, and the thoughts and beliefs they represent matter significantly. So, it is undoubtedly necessary for them to be careful about what influencers include and exclude from their content.

Participant 5 explained being an influencer as follows: *"In my opinion being an influencer is presenting your life to a certain audience to the extent you want. It is the presentation of one's tastes, favorite things, one's own life in front of an audience in the way they want."* Each one of the participants indicated that they enjoy their job because it gives them the chance to do what they like and earn money in return. By posting the content they choose to share, including parts of their everyday lives, their interests and hobbies, moments they enjoyed, and experiences influencers not only have economic but also non-economic benefits.

For example, Participant 8 said, "*Being an influencer is like doing your hobbies and earning money for that.*" Participants stated that they are happy to be influencers since this job and work model fit into their personalities. Most of the participants claimed that they have always loved taking pictures and videos of themselves. They always enjoyed sharing things about themselves and their lives. Also, participants over 30 years of age stated that they had used other platforms such as blogging sites to share their thoughts, beliefs, interests, and experiences before Instagram was even launched. So, they suggested that they had been doing this as a hobby for a long time and now it turned out to be a career path.

Wallman (1979) suggests resource management and giving value to each of the resources are necessary for work to be valuable. Thus, work can have a personal, social, or financial value that could be measured by ethical or material standards. Being an influencer also requires managing multiple resources and assigning value to each of them. The participants of this study mentioned that they value their job, and they believe that what makes it valuable is the fact that it paves the way for influencing people for the better and allows them to display their thoughts, beliefs, interests, and experiences. Hence, when these elements are considered, being an influencer sounds good as a career choice because it offers non-economic benefits such as social recognition, personal fulfillment, and the ability to promote certain values. However, it should be noted that in case of inability to carry out this job as well as desired, those non-economic benefits may disappear as well. This can lead influencers to question their thoughts, beliefs, interests, and lifestyles. Since they display a part of their lives on social media when they start to feel that their social recognition is in danger and the values they promote result in negative outcomes, they may go through distressing processes.

3.2. Planning & Collaboration

I would like to address the planning and collaboration processes of influencer work. To better understand the job, it is very important to know the work model and how influencers do what they do. So, by investigating how influencers organize their work, make plans about their new content, arrange their days, and coordinate with the brands and other influencers I want to display the influencer work in detail.

As in any job, planning and collaboration-making processes are two very important parts of the influencer work. These processes are essential for every job because they promote productivity, goal achievement, problem resolution, resource optimization, communication, risk management, and innovation. For influencers, planning is crucial since it assures consistency and strategic content creation. Influencers may maintain a regular presence, which is essential for attracting and sustaining an engaged audience, by planning out a content calendar and scheduling their posts in advance.

Influencers work independently, with a team, or with influencer marketing agencies. In this study, each of the work models is displayed since one of the participants works with a team, one of them works with an influencer marketing agency, and one of them stated that she used to work with an influencer marketing agency, and the remaining seven participants said they work independently. By interviewing participants who work with different work models, I wanted to provide a more comprehensive look at influencer work.

Participant 1 works with a team that organizes his technical issues. In addition to his career as an influencer, he provides online training and nutrition programs. He works with a

team that takes photos and videos of him, edits video content, guides the preparation of content suitable for algorithms, manages advertising processes, etc. He indicated that *"These are the people I get help from because I can't keep up with everything, so I get help at a certain point. But I manage my social media accounts in terms of deciding which content I want to post."*

Participant 5 works with an influencer marketing agency. She is working as an intern lawyer and influencer at the same time. She expressed why she works with an influencer marketing agency by saying *"I think it is difficult to work independently these days because we also have to pay taxes, issue invoices, etc. The agency does the work I request, that is, it provides invoicing and maintains the relationship with brands. The agency can make suggestions to me about social media management, for example, they give guidance related to what trending topics I should post about. They make suggestions like this so that I can have more interaction, or I can attract more attention. But 90% of the time I do all the planning myself. I usually spend most of the day or most of the time shooting."* Influencers can concentrate on building their brands and creating content by working with an influencer marketing agency, which will take care of the business and administrative details. The complexities of influencer marketing, such as contract negotiations, campaign management, and financial transactions, may be navigated by agencies because they have the knowledge and experience to do so. They serve as intermediaries between influencers and brands, assuring fair compensation and productive partnerships. Influencers who use this professional representation not only save time and effort but also improve their credibility and reputation in the market because they are linked to a reputable agency, which gives their collaborations and endorsements more weight.

Participant 6 mentioned that she used to work with an influencer marketing agency to create content for her YouTube account, *"Actually, last year I worked with an agency for*

YouTube for a year. But I realized that I wanted to do everything myself, I didn't like the work I did with the guidance of others. I didn't like the content I created. So, I figured it wasn't going to work out for me." Looking at Participant 6's statements, it can be said that while there are benefits to collaborating with an influencer marketing agency, influencers should be aware of any potential drawbacks. The loss of control over creative choices and brand collaborations is one of the key potential disadvantages. Influencers may feel like they are forced to make content compromises or partner with companies that don't exactly share their goals or values. Besides, it shouldn't be forgotten that agencies charge a commission or fee for their services, which means that because of the agency's cut, influencers may not make as much money from their collaborations. Inconsistencies between the influencer's true voice and the agency's recommendations run the danger of weakening the influencer's brand and losing the audience's confidence. The influencer's personal growth may also be constrained if they rely solely on an agency for representation because they won't have as much direct input into negotiations and brand connections. Therefore, influencers should carefully consider the advantages and disadvantages before choosing to collaborate with an influencer marketing agency.

The remaining 7 participants indicated that they work independently. One of the participants stated that he does not think influencers should work with influencer marketing agencies or production teams. He said *"I think that working with a team for this profession is against the nature of influencer work because the most prominent feature that distinguishes the promotion of influencer work from traditional advertising is that it is natural and in its flow. When production is involved, these two features disappear. Unfortunately, the sector has started to change in this way. Because it has become a profession that is constantly growing, and demand is always increasing. As the competition for quality images among content producers increased, production started to come into play."*

Some of the participants mentioned that they like working on their own because it gives them the freedom to choose who to work with, what and when to post, etc. Independent influencers have the freedom to produce content that appeals to their audience and complements their brand. Working independently enables influencers to build direct connections with brands. Influencers are better able to negotiate partnerships and collaborations on their terms. This direct engagement also develops a better level of authenticity. Additionally, independent influencers can make more money because they don't have to split commissions with an agency and instead keep all of the money, they receive from brand deals.

However, there are drawbacks to being an influencer who works alone, too. Influencers are required to perform numerous tasks, including contract managing, brand management, negotiation, and content creation. This could potentially take away from the time and energy available for creative endeavors because it can be time-consuming and overwhelming. Participant 6 explained this as *"Brands contact me via e-mail or Instagram. They usually prefer contacting by e-mail. That's why I'm addicted to checking e-mails constantly. I check my e-mails every minute of every day. I check them very often because we coordinate our business with the brands from there. Sometimes we switch to WhatsApp, but it depends on the brand. I don't share my number with every brand. Especially if it's a brand I don't like or I'm not sure about, I prefer not to share it because when they have my number, they constantly send messages or even call me about their requests. I'm not in favor of sharing my number that much."*

It should be noted that influencers not having any guidance from an influencer marketing agency need to deal with all the paperwork and communication processes with brands on their own. They also spend more time searching social media platforms for trending

songs, popular locations, new videos or post ideas since they do not get any assistance about these topics either. Such processes take a good amount of time. After deciding on the content, they will create, influencers have to consider all the shooting and decorating processes as well. So, both the planning, collaboration, and content-creation processes take time and consideration when they work on their own.

3.3. Content Creation & Marketing

The establishment and maintenance of influencers' online presence and interactions with their audiences depend on their processes for creating content. Hence, in this research, I wanted to focus on the content production and marketing processes of influencers. In this section, I gathered the highlights from the interviews related to content creation and marketing processes mentioned by the participants. Producing high-quality, attractive material that supports brands and engages with followers is a demanding process for influencers. To produce such material on social media to attract more engagement and followers, influencers need to keep up with the new trends. All of the participants of this study stated that they spare a good amount of time and consideration for their content creation processes.

Participant 5 indicated that she finds these processes time-consuming and sometimes very tiring since the platforms and algorithms change constantly. She expressed her thoughts on this by saying *"It is very difficult to adapt to and navigate changes in social media platforms and algorithms. You need to stay relevant in a constantly evolving industry. There is a new trend, or a new feature is added to all platforms every day. So, it is really necessary to always stay on track. When an average person picks up his/her phone, he/she surfs on social media to have fun and have a good time. When I'm on social media, I'm looking for what kind of content*

I can produce or get inspired by. I am always on the hunt for what to film for my account. I check the videos for their music to know which ones are trending. That's why the time we spend on social media is not so enjoyable for us, after a certain point it starts to feel like work. That's why we need to monitor constantly and continuously what the new trends are, what people are attracted to, what's happening in the world." So, it can be said that being an influencer requires following the trends and agenda constantly.

Algorithms affect influencers' reach in every way, that's why they need to adapt their content and posting schedules according to algorithmic changes. The agenda and algorithms alter continually. So, it can be said that influencers get affected by various factors such as the organization of the market, competition ratios, and technical advancements. The algorithmic changes have an impact on influencers' ability to reach their target audience and generate earnings. Therefore, influencers have to follow what's going on around the world all the time. They have to watch new content on social media to keep up with the trends, popular locations/events, trending songs, etc. As Participant 5 indicated, it is challenging to be on track all the time. For influencers, being on social media and surfing on explore pages is more like working rather than having some time off.

Another very important thing about social media platforms is that their algorithms differ greatly. Most influencers need to use more than just one platform to enlarge their audience. This means that they have to follow more content in order not to fall behind the trends. And they need to create content for more than one platform. Participant 9 explains this *"I pay great attention to the content shared on social media. While creating content, I ask myself what people would like to see. The content I create for social media is not the same for every platform. For example, YouTube's audience and Instagram's audience are not the same. On Instagram, the target audience is more likely to get bored of long video content. But on YouTube, you need to*

post vlogs that are much longer than reels. There is also TikTok. But I'm not producing content for TikTok right now. Since producing content for TikTok would make me very tired because I work on my own, I am not producing content for it right now."

Moreover, participants suggested that trying to present a consistently happy and positive image on social media is one of the difficulties influencers frequently encounter. There may be an expectation that they will present a picture-perfect life full of happiness and fulfillment because their success frequently depends on captivating and appealing to their audience. For example, Participant 5 stated that *"...Sometimes we can be very unhappy, we can be sad. Some days I'm not in a good mood at all. But you have to look good on social media, you have to look happy. Maybe I can show my sadness too, but people want to see you more energetic and positive. Looking sad doesn't sell much on social media. That's why this is seriously the most difficult thing for me to balance. Especially on those days when I feel bad like I can't get up and produce anything, I struggle. So, I try to set aside 1-2 days a week for content creation. If I feel unhappy one day, for example, or if I don't have energy or motivation that day, I share the content I produced the day before."* Other participants also stated that they suffer from this kind of pressure. Their experiences suggest that social media puts pressure on influencers to look happy all the time. The constant pressure to maintain an impeccable online image can be emotionally draining and lead to a sense of alienation from one's true self.

Also, participants mentioned the importance of following the agenda by highlighting the significance of the place. One of the participants said that as a Turkish influencer, she feels like she has to follow social and political happenings in Turkey. She said *"So if you live in Turkey, you need to get used to the constant change of the algorithms because the agenda affects you here. We change faster than algorithms here."* According to her, if you do not follow the

agenda and post whatever you want, your engagement rates drop. Also, she indicated that creating relevant content about the agenda keeps you in the spotlight. I am going to talk about this in more detail in the "Impact of Place" section.

3.4. Ethics

Every work requires codes of ethics, but those with positions of authority, major decision-making, or those with a direct social influence on others require it even more. Thus, I wanted to have a look at how influencers approach ethical considerations in their work. Whether they prioritize honesty and transparency is an important topic to be considered. Also, I wanted to know whether they think about the potential impacts of their content on their audience and society.

For several reasons, influencers must be cautious when it comes to ethics. First things first, it is crucial for keeping their audience's trustworthiness and confidence. Their followers respect them as influencers and depend on their advice. Engaging in unethical behavior damages credibility and erodes confidence. Participant 9 explained this as *"You have to be careful about ethical issues because followers give great importance to this. Followers are constantly watching you and you are making almost everything you do public. I think influencers who do not pay attention to this cannot stay successful for a long time. I ensure that I do not advise anything wrong by not recommending products that I do not use and giving specific information about the products I advocate."* Also, Participant 2 said, *"If we make a suggestion that will not benefit our followers at the end of the day, we will be the losers in this case."* So, it can be said that ethical issues have an important impact on influencers' job assurance.

Also, acting ethically guarantees that an influencer puts his/her audience's well-being first and encourages ethical behavior. Influencers can sway people's beliefs and actions; therefore, they should take this into account while planning their content strategy. Every one of the participants indicated that they do not recommend any products that they do not use or have not tried before. Influencers are subject to regulatory constraints, such as disclosure rules for sponsored content as well. Failure to follow these rules may result in legal repercussions and harm to their reputation. Participants 1 and 5 stated that they are aware of their legal responsibilities, so they pay extra attention to honesty and transparency. Participant 5 stated that *"Ethical issues may be less important to other influencers. But I graduated from law school, and I am thinking of becoming a lawyer. So, for example, public identity is also very important to me. A wrong post I make on social media may negatively affect my professional life. Therefore, I try to attach importance to this. In terms of honesty and transparency, I never share anything other than the product I use myself."* So, it should be noted that the content influencers share on social media not only affects their online persona but also impacts their public identity and professional life.

Additionally, keeping favorable connections with their audience, businesses, and industry stakeholders promotes long-term success. It also enables them to carry out their social responsibility by bringing attention to significant issues and motivating constructive change. Participant 6 shared her thoughts on this by saying *"For example, let me give an example of what I experienced during the earthquake (6th of February 2023), I didn't want to share anything irrelevant to the disaster anyways. I had already helped many people. My family lives here in Anamur, so we were there, running around to help people all day long. As I shared these things on social media, people were very pleased to see them. I generally share my posts more carefully on sensitive issues. I talk about how I feel about social and political issues on social*

media too because I am not a person who can be quiet. But some influencers prefer to keep quiet. However, I think we shouldn't be silent about such topics because we are the 'influencers'." In other words, I think we should talk out loud without virtue signaling." This expression indicates that influencers should include social and political issues in their content because they are seen and heard more than other people. They can "influence" people for the better by emphasizing the importance of understanding, tolerance, cooperation, and unity. That's why influencers have the responsibility to be sensitive about ethical issues and guide people.

To conclude, it can be said that respecting ethical standards fosters a more credible and trustworthy environment for influencers and their audience. This enhances the reputation of the influencer industry as a whole.

3.5. Influencer Economy

This section focuses on the description and the characteristics of the influencer economy. Because understanding the characteristics and complexities of the influencer economy is fundamental for determining whether or not working as an influencer is viable and long-lasting. Also, it offers useful insights into the industry's financial, competitive, ethical, and strategic environments, empowering people to take well-informed decisions and increase their chances of success.

The influencer economy can be described as a dynamic and quickly expanding sector of the economy that revolves around influencers with sizable online fan bases. Influencers mostly depend on brand sponsorships and partnerships to make money because they are

typically self-employed and operate on project-based work. The amount of money influencers gain from social media mostly depends on their followings and engagement rates. With brands realizing the value of influencer marketing as a powerful tool for connecting with and engaging target groups, the influencer economy has grown to be an industry worth many billions of dollars. Although this is true for influencers with thousands and millions of followers, with the rising number of influencers every day, not every influencer ends up earning that much money due to reasons like high competition levels.

Each of the participants in this study has another job in addition to their work as an influencer. Although some of them can earn a good amount of money from partnerships, collaborations, and sponsorships; some of them just end up getting just a few free products or a very little amount of money. Also, the participants said that working with brands can be very challenging from time to time. Participant 6 explained this as *"It's very difficult to work with brands. They sometimes have very strange requests. For example, most of the time they want their brand name to be seen very explicitly. So explicitly that it does not look natural at all. I know that my job is to highlight the brand name or the product. But making the advert this way will not achieve the goal they want. Also, brands can be very stingy. For example, some brands think my budget is too much. Yet, my budget is not too much. When they make another offer for the budget, I kindly decline it. However, given the circumstances, I don't know how long I can continue to live in Istanbul in these economic conditions."*

Participant 10 explained her own experiences with some brands by saying *"The brands I work with usually send me free products and ask me to share my experiences on social media. They usually want me to share products that suit my style and content. But sometimes I also get offers to work with products that I think are not suitable for me or that I am not sure of their*

reliability. At that point, I reject their offers. But also, the number of influencers is rising every day. Everyone with a phone has the chance to do or at least try to do this job in their way. So, due to the high level of competition in the industry, I feel like they can immediately give a job that I think is not suitable for me to someone else instead. In other words, there are many other influencers in the industry that brands can get the work they want done." Without a variety of income resources, gaining authority can be difficult, especially when negotiating a reasonable budget with brands. In other cases, it might be difficult to come to a mutually beneficial agreement since brands may be reluctant to settle on reasonable rates and instead choose to offer free products as recompense.

Participant 1 owns an online training and nutrition program which he promotes on social media. When talking about his earnings from social media, he stated that he does not think about that so much since he already has a job from which he earns a good amount of money. He suggested that he does not face any financial problems. He also mentioned the brands' attitudes towards the influencers change according to their followers and whether or not influencers make them feel like they need the money or products coming from the partnerships, collaborations, and sponsorships. He explained this as *"If money is not very important for you, you can show a very good stance. You can negotiate accordingly and change your conditions. When they see a person who is weak and does everything, he/she is told, their approach starts to differ. Almost every brand is like this. For example, while working with a big brand, they asked for so many revisions that I stopped working with them. Some influencers do what they want just to work with that brand."* So, it can be said that influencers with higher followings and no financial issues tend to have more say in their work than influencers with lower followings.

Whilst interviewing the participants, I found out that none of the participants with a higher number of followers complained about brands' attitudes and the budgets they gave them. Participant 2 is the one who has the biggest number of followers (1M). He mentioned that *"Brands usually give me freedom about what/how to post. I produce content according to my image."* While participants with lower numbers of followers complained about how brands interfere in their affairs, the ones with higher numbers of followers did not make any comments on this matter. So, I figured that they do not face as many problems as the participants with lower followings. Taking this into account, it can be said that the number of followers on Instagram is a determinant feature related to the attitudes of brands.

Therefore, it can be said that being an influencer without any additional income may be challenging since the brands sometimes make it difficult to agree on the price, and sometimes they only send free products instead of paying. Working with brands can be very challenging, thus influencers or people considering becoming influencers should take that into account. Also, the rising competition level in this industry should be acknowledged since it is not going down any time soon.

Participant 5 suggested that communicating with brands is a delicate issue by stating *"It is not right to reject some brands' collaboration offers. I know this from the experiences of my friends and my environment. I mean, when you reject a brand frequently, you are in their black books. Therefore, in order not to damage that bond and communication, I either give an excessively high price or say that I am not available. Then I say let's do another project with you another time. Because seriously, when your communication with brands is damaged, some of them don't want to come to you again. Fortunately, the influencer marketing agency helps me a ton about these matters, so I do not have to communicate with the brands."*

Also, Participant 7 stated that brands tend to change their attitudes in a positive way when there is an agency in between. She said *"If there is an agency in between, communication becomes much easier. The budget changes and probably decreases, but if the agency sees it, brands lessen the revisions. The agency also knows how to talk to you, then it is comfortable, but when you do it one-on-one with the customer, you sometimes compromise a little bit."* Thus, it can be said that communicating with brands is as important as working with them. Influencers need to be careful about not damaging their dialogue with the brands because this could undermine their future partnerships and collaborations. And working with an influencer marketing agency can help influencers by providing a basis for healthy communication in between although the profit influencers make decreases at a certain rate.

Another issue mentioned by the participants was that they are careful about the expectations of their followers. Participant 4 stated that *"I don't work with every brand. I recommend the brands whose products are good quality. If the brand that wants to work with me is luxurious, I decline their offers because I know that it is not a brand that will appeal to everyone. So, I choose products that everyone can buy and make agreements accordingly."* Participant 3 also suggested that he tries to keep the brands and products he works with diverse to provide a better service to his followers *"because their purchasing habits are a part of"* his job. Therefore, it could be said that for influencers, it is significant to consider the expectations of their followers since their purchasing habits affect influencers' jobs.

Furthermore, the influencer economy is characterized by flexible, yet precarious forms of work. Since most influencers are self-employed and gain money from project-based collaborations and partnerships, the future of their job is almost always uncertain. Participants

suggested that almost everything related to their career path is bound to change. When the participants were asked whether they see themselves continuing in this career path in the future, most of them indicated that they do regardless of how uncertain this job is since they love their job. A few of the participants were uncertain about their future due to the doubtful economic situation in Turkey and the uncertain state of this form of work. For example, Participant 8 said *"This is a job that is very quickly used up. Considering the changing platforms, algorithms, and popularity of the platforms, maybe 5 years from now, the platforms we use will become outdated. Maybe completely different ones will come, like TikTok. That's why even 5 years seems like a very advanced period in this kind of work, frankly, so I can't predict much."* Also, Participant 6 stated that *"At the moment, I can say that I will continue to do this job in the future, but I don't know how long it will continue in Istanbul conditions, or in this economy, I don't know how long it will last this way."* So, it can be said that although most of the influencers indicate that they want to continue doing this job, the future of the job and the conditions under which this job will continue to be carried out remain uncertain.

3.6. Follower Communication

In this section, I discuss the communication processes between influencers and their followers. Explaining follower communication is significant when evaluating being an influencer because it sheds light on ethical issues, credibility, impact, and audience engagement. For influencers, to build and maintain a deep connection with their audience, effective communication is essential. Influencers can develop credibility and trust with their audience by communicating with them in an open, transparent, and meaningful way. Influencers can produce content that resonates with their audience by actively listening to and understanding their followers' needs and preferences. This fosters a feeling of community and promotes active

interaction. Participant 3 explained how he communicates with his followers by saying *"I manage the expectation of my followers with them. I am in constant communication with them, I read my DMs, and I ask them what they expect and what they want by using the Q&A feature on Instagram. When I blend their requests with my wishes, some beautiful works come out."* Also, Participant 8 suggested that the followers and their expectations mean a lot to an influencer by stating *"Making followers feel valuable and considering their thoughts is the most important thing in my work. I often post stories to learn their opinions, I try to respond to their comments, and I try to interact in some way. I mean, I don't want to make them feel like I do not care about their opinion. I need to make them feel valued so that they make me feel the same way."* Considering the way most of the participants explained their thoughts on the importance of follower communication, it can be said that keeping the audience engaged and paying attention to their opinion, and showing them that their thoughts are valued is essential.

One of the participants mentioned that *"My followers take what I give them. In my opinion, shaping your content according to the followers' requests is not the right thing to do. Doing this would change you and make you something other than who you are. I have never done this, and since I haven't done this for 3 years, I still have a follower base, that is more like a skeleton crew."* So, as Participant 3 suggested as well, the key to managing the expectations of the followers without compromising is paying attention to their requests and blending their requests into the content. Giving them complete control of the steering wheel could throw things off the rails. Therefore, influencers should be careful in this regard.

Participants 1 and 2 mentioned that one thing that followers pay attention to is the relevance of content. Participant 1 stated that *"For example, I share science-based posts. The fact that my posts touch on scientific topics attracts people's attention and appreciation."* He

suggested that since this is seen as a more niche kind of content, people like his posts. He also stated that many influencers share some banal content just to enhance their engagement rates, however, posting such content is not okay for him because he provides science-based content. He suggested that *"For example, if I go out on the street and shoot videos where I ask girls to go out with me, my number of followers will increase immediately, but that's not the audience I want to reach. So, the human quality of the audience is more important than the number of followers. Also, my audience would not expect such content from me anyway."* Participant 2 indicated that *"My followers see me as a model family father, and I regularly share my fatherhood experiences with them to ensure the continuity of our mutual relationship. In other words, I don't jump from topic to topic."* So, it can be said that sticking to similar content topics and not wandering off is another important thing about successfully managing the expectations of the followers.

Besides, Participant 6 stated that she would stress about not being able to meet the needs or expectations of her followers. She said *"I used to stress a lot when I couldn't produce videos or when I couldn't produce the content I wanted. Even the technical problem I was experiencing was affecting me a lot. Then I realized that I couldn't create any content as long as I stressed myself. Then, I tried to calm down a little. For example, last year I couldn't create much content for YouTube due to this pressure. Recently, it's going very well. If I cannot finish filming or editing a video, I try to please my followers in some way and focus on finalizing the content I am working on. Otherwise, it is very difficult to handle the stress. I managed to overcome this with the content I create for YouTube. Now, if I can do it on Instagram too, it would be great."* Participant 5 also mentioned that she makes a schedule for her posts in order not to go through such a stressful period. Thus, by looking at the statements of Participants 6 and 5, it can be said

that content creation and meeting the expectations of followers can be a stressful process for influencers from time to time.

In *Social Anthropology of Work*, Wallman (1979) suggests that some types of work entail non-economic benefits/motivations such as social recognition and personal fulfillment. Being an influencer can be viewed as a type of employment that entails using intangible assets like social capital and communication abilities to realize individual, monetary, or social objectives. The traditional notions of work that link it to a career in the mainstream economy may not apply to influencers, but the symbolic, social, and interpersonal variables that influence work incentives still apply to their employment. All of the participants of this study indicated that they enjoy communicating with their followers. Participants try to keep in touch with their followers through Q&As, direct messages, and comments. For example, Participant 7 said *"I am one of those crazy influencers who usually respond to all the DMs. I probably read a thousand DMs a day, because this is my job. I mean, even if I don't answer hundreds of e-mails every day, I answer as much as possible. At least I give a like to the comments and messages, even 2 clicks matter for the followers. At first, I used to text 'Welcome to my account!' to those who followed me. It was also during the pandemic, I was at home, and my baby was very young. I had time, I don't have time like that anymore. But I think I still manage it well; I respond to comments either with a short response or with a heart emoji. And we do Q&As to interact with one another, which is great."* So, it can be said that it is significant for influencers to stay in contact with their audience.

3.7. Time Management

In this section, I mention the importance of time management for working as an influencer. This should be indicated in this research because time management is essential when analyzing influencer work for it affects the capacity to manage growth, achieve work-life balance, maintain consistency in content creation, and balance different duties. Influencers should have effective time management abilities to succeed in their occupations, uphold their well-being, and achieve long-term success.

Wallman (1979) suggests that six resources including identity, information, time, labor, and money are accepted to be fundamental for work. Time is one of the most important elements of any type of work. In today's fast-paced digital environment, influencers must manage their time effectively. Influencers' success is mostly dependent on their capacity to produce compelling material, form connections with their audience, work with companies, and keep up with the most recent trends and advancements in their specialized field. Influencers should carefully organize their limited time and energy through effective time management, ensuring they get the most out of every day. However, most of the participants indicated that they find it very hard to manage their time as desired.

Participant 1 suggested that he cannot balance his work with leisure activities and personal time by stating *"I can't balance it much. Because my job is exercising and creating content about it, and I've been working out for 12 years now. So, I'm at the gym five days a week. Apart from that, I'm on the computer all the time because I run an online training and nutrition program. I've been working seven days a week for a very long time. You know, from the outside, it seems to people that this is an online business, so I can do what I want. But that's*

not the case. I don't have much free time, and if I do, I spend time with my dog. I don't even have time for myself, so I rarely go out."

Most of the participants of this study complained about how time-consuming this job can be. Participant 2 stated that he cannot leave his phone unattended because his job is to share parts of his daily life: *"Since my job requires me to share snippets from every moment of life, I can't say that I've been switching off the phone and doing my activity for a long time. Because that is also content at the end of the day. For things like holidays, sports, food, etc., you can't put work aside and relax."*

Participant 7 also made similar statements about being very occupied by influencer work, she said: *"I don't have any free and personal time. For example, when I was working at the agency, I didn't work this much, I was working hard, but when I came home, I did not need to work. But now I am constantly producing content, I am always looking for content in everything. When I go abroad, I don't have a holiday, I always look for ways to create content there too. I travel with a camera, I mean, I just came back from Berlin 2 days ago, and I got tired of working there. So, you're always traveling with a camera to catch something. It is also very difficult for the people who are with you. It's a very difficult life for your friends, your mates, your spouse, your lover, everyone. I mean, I think being with an influencer is a very difficult thing, it's something that requires patience. So, no I do not have any personal time, I don't know if I've ever turned off my phone for 3 years."*

According to Wallman (1979), a change in the technology used at/for work could indicate a change in one's identity, which may also pose a risk. It was suggested in the book that when a person becomes an extension of technology, he/she is in danger of being alienated.

Participant 8 suggested that when working, it is possible to become alienated from the work and place because influencer work requires using technology most of the time. She stated that *"Let's say, a brand sent me a product and I need to take a photo of it. I get ready and leave the house with a mindset as if I was going to work that day or going to the office. To create the content I want, I have to manage my time well, choose the right place and finish shooting, etc. When you look from the outside, it looks like the easiest and most enjoyable job in the world. But I need to take what I do very seriously. In my time, I try not to use the camera. I mean, I have to clearly define and apply this to my life so that I can continue to do things in a coordinated way. Because I can edit a post on the phone, I can write a caption while sitting in a cafe, but at that time I am working and not resting. It is very important to allocate the time I use for myself and work time. Because work is always with me, it's always on the phone."* So, by looking at the statements of Participants 7 and 8, it can be said that working as an influencer has the potential to cause alienation from the moment. It can be challenging to separate free time and work when work is always one click away. Most of the participants mentioned that they cannot spare some time for themselves.

Influencers need to have a good command of time management. They should be able to balance their work-leisure time because effective time management enables influencers to maintain a positive work-life balance, avoiding burnout, and enhancing their general well-being. The importance of good planning for influencers was discussed in detail in the "Planning and Collaboration" section. With effective time, management, influencers can ultimately improve their performance, keep up their online presence, and prosper in the cutthroat digital environment by realizing the value of time management.

3.8. Impact of Place

This section talks about the impact of place and culture on working as an influencer. It is important for this study to analyze how the place where influencers conduct their work is related to the value placed on their work. Also, the target audience and market dynamics are highly impacted by the region in which influencers operate their work, so the effect of region, social structure, and culture should not be neglected. The findings also mention the links between influencers and the importance of cultural sensitivity.

Influencer work can be seen as a form of digital labor. Influencers mostly take videos and photos of the things they want to promote on social media and create content out of the material they produce. Also, influencers have to be familiar with the agenda, the trending content, and pieces of music to inspire from. This way they can produce popular content and increase their engagement and following. So, influencers spend a lot of time on social media to follow the agenda and trends. It can be said that influencer work is very dependent on the digital. The searching, shooting, editing, and posting processes are also done with technological devices such as cameras, laptops, and most phones; and influencers are frequently on social media swiping for some inspiration. Hence, their work is sometimes underestimated by other people because they look like they are just surfing on social media or posting. Influencers may look like people enjoying themselves all the time because they go to good-looking places for shooting, take pictures of appealing food and beverages, and even when they are searching for new ideas, they are on their phones watching reels or TikTok content. However, the participants of the study said that they feel like working when they look like having fun.

Participant 8 suggested that *"The work I do includes my daily routines as well. Since my job is sharing parts of my life, I need to take time out of my routine to do it professionally and take it seriously. For example, when a brand sends a product to me and I need to take photos of it, I get ready and go outside with an attitude as if I was going to work that day. When you look from the outside, it looks like the easiest and most enjoyable job in the world. I go somewhere, maybe to a beautiful street, or a café, and I take videos and photos. It seems so enjoyable, but people forget that I'm doing this to make money."* Also, Participant 1 indicated that *"You know, it seems to people from the outside that this is somehow an online business, so I can do whatever I want. But when you manage your social media like managing a company, it takes a lot of time and effort. Apart from that shooting, editing, and selecting a few posts and stories every day means a lot of work."* By looking at these statements, it can be said that influencers complain that their work is underestimated by other people. They suggest that their work is still work although it looks entertaining when compared to other types of work.

Wallman (1979) also suggested that if the work is done inside or outside of the home, the value of the work may differ. Most of the influencers work from home and they go outside for shootings. Considering the participants' complaints, it can be inferred that their work is underrated because is a relatively new form of digital labor and a flexible work model that can be performed independently and without any location limitations.

The value given to work is the influence of the social structure and culture where work is done (Wallman,1979). Some people may perceive it as a break from more traditional career paths. Participant 8 explained this as *"In Turkey, it takes a while for such new branches of profession to settle in people's minds because we generally trail such new branches of profession after compared to abroad. Honestly, I don't think being an influencer is still a fully*

established concept of work in Turkey. Unfortunately, there are still some things about being a good influencer that is still not settled in people's minds. I mean, we also work hard when evaluated in terms of labor or performance. But, for example, the work I do is not the same as doctors. I don't save lives; I don't save the world. But in the end, I feel happy since I am able to create a space for myself to earn money in this industry and this somehow benefits other people as well. But as I said, since influencer work is taken more seriously abroad, I believe that the work is of better quality there." Also, Participant 1 believes that providing service and labor is worth very little in Turkey. By looking at the statements and thoughts of the participants, it may be suggested that in Turkey emerging branches of modern working models could take some time to be fully understood and valued.

Also, some participants believe that their work would be easier if they were working abroad. Participant 1 exemplified this *"If I was doing this service globally, it would be much better financially and morally, and I would be more comfortable. For example, America has everything, those people have everything. Influencers can give the links they want, and they can try good quality products right after the launch. Here, we have issues with the customs, there is a tax, the product is expensive for the people here, etc. I think geography makes a big difference in this regard."* Just like Participant 1, Participants 3 and 4 mentioned that they think about the socio-economic status of their followers while promoting a product or collaborating with a brand. Influencers in Turkey state that their access to brands and products is limited when compared to the influencers abroad. And they consider the economic situation in Turkey which can be challenging and restrictive for them.

Additionally, some participants stated that they receive criticism about their lifestyles from time to time. The participants indicated that they feel the need to pay attention to religious

and cultural values in Turkey, especially during times like Ramadan. For example, Participant 6 stated that *"When produced content with food during Ramadan, or shared a photo even having dinner, I received comments criticizing me for not fasting. Now I'm very transparent. For example, I posted a video last time. I wrote on the post that I was not fasting, but I wished happy Ramadan to all because it's a very important month, etc. Frankly, I think it's a spiritually high month. I mentioned that too. But I said although I'm not fasting, I will pay attention to this while sharing my posts. Then, I continued sharing my content."* Participant 7 shared her experience by saying *"For example, I went to Berlin during Ramadan. My followers didn't like it. I didn't drink alcohol or post anything like that, I'm not a fan of drinking anyway. But the fact that I went to Berlin during the Ramadan, made them think I consumed alcohol or partied there, so they criticized me."* Therefore, it can be inferred that influencers need to be aware of Turkey's religious and cultural sensitivities, particularly at special times like Ramadan. This implies that influencers should take into account the possible backlash they may experience for their Instagram posts made during Ramadan and be mindful of the expectations and opinions of their audience.

The participants of this study also complained about how their work is affected by the social and political incidents in Turkey. For example, Participant 2 stated that *"There are political incidents, natural disasters, and many other kinds of incidents in our country every year. As a result of these, our work stops because if we continue to share posts, we get reactions as if we are responsible for the happenings."* Also, Participant 6 stated that she did not post at the time of the earthquake (6th of February 2023) and that she did not want to do so anyway. However, she stated that this situation also meant that influencers living in Turkey, like her, had to stop their work and jeopardize their earnings. Thus, it can be claimed that being an influencer

in Turkey brings with it the possibility of being affected by the agenda both financially and morally.

Another important outcome of the interviews was about the way female influencers are affected by the social structure and culture in Turkey. Participant 6 mentioned her experiences by saying *"It is very difficult to be an influencer in Turkey. It is also difficult financially. You are exposed to all kinds of criticism in Turkey. Because of the work you do, the content you produce, the clothes you wear, etc. I think it is much more difficult to be a female influencer, especially in such a period when it is difficult to be a woman in Turkey. Because, for example, when I started this, I turned a deaf ear to the reactions I received. I mean people were not supportive. In their attitudes, I sensed that they were questioning whether being an influencer was a job or not. For example, when I first produced content for YouTube, I was still at university. It was not clear that this would be a business for me in the future. But some people criticized what I was doing. Even the people I was close with did this to me."* Participant 5 also stated that she goes through similar things by saying *"When I first started producing content 2-3 years ago, I would get a lot of criticism. People would say things like why are you doing this and so on. But now, the same people who criticized me before support what I do because it has become very widespread. I know that if I lived abroad, I would be able to produce content more easily about certain topics because the things I post here can be attracted to the wrong place. It is necessary to produce content according to Turkey's socio-cultural structure. I don't only mean this in the sense of dressing low-cut. Even something you write on social media can sometimes be taken to a very different place, even though I never wrote it for that purpose, and this is actually due to the structure of our society. So, I don't know if I would be more successful abroad, but I'm sure I would produce content more easily."* Thus, it is clear that while most of the participants complain about facing unsupportive attitudes and being criticized by other

people when they started working as an influencer, especially female participants suggest that they are being judged due to the way they express themselves. Considering the fact that dressing is a form of self-expression, it can be said that female influencers in Turkey are at risk of receiving criticism about their online self especially if they have an online persona that is beyond the accepted norms of society.

Despite the challenging aspects of being an influencer in Turkey, participants suggested that there is also a good side to it. They stated that being an influencer in Turkey can be less difficult compared to being an influencer abroad due to the level at which people are prone to be affected by things. Participant 3 stated that *"In my opinion, Turkey is a golden country for those who do this job because we have a society that is immediately affected by many things, this applies to many areas."* while Participant 7 indicated that *"Honestly, I think it's easier to be an influencer here. Because Turkish people are more tolerant at first, but if you can't hook people in the first moment, your chance is over in 2 seconds. The people there don't buy it that easily, so it's easier for us to be influencers here."* Therefore, it can be claimed that participants believe that being an influencer in Turkey can be easier when the power of their influence is considered as well.

3.9. Cyberbullying and Haters

This section focuses on the influencers' experiences with cyberbullying and haters. However sensitive a subject it is, I wanted to talk about this topic during the interviews to better demonstrate working as an influencer. An influencer's mental health and well-being can be significantly impacted by cyberbullying and dealing with haters. It should be noted that online communities can serve as a breeding ground for negativity, criticism, and slander. Influencers

should prepare themselves psychologically and emotionally, create coping mechanisms, and seek out support networks to safeguard their mental health by being aware of potential dangers and difficulties.

In the current digital era, there are risks and difficulties associated with being an influencer, and cyberbullying is one of them. Influencers are becoming increasingly vulnerable to online harassment and critical remarks as they become more well-known and have a sizable following. Every participant in this study indicated their discontent about haters and cyberbullies. Participant 9 stated that *"One of the most psychologically challenging parts of this job is haters and cyberbullying. There is no control on social media, and hate speech is very common. Although there will always be people who like me and some who don't, cyberbullying can never be accepted. When I see the comments on my photos, it somehow demoralizes me, but I try not to take it seriously."* Just like Participant 9, most of the participants indicated that they try not to take hate speech or haters seriously. They also stated that when they take the bad comments, hate messages, and the people who wrote them seriously and respond to them, these people take the issue further and enjoy it even more. For example, Participant 2 said that *"It is best to ignore it. Because there are too many people who feed on such things, and they are not worth answering or paying attention to. In addition, answering is more provocative for them and they increase the dose of their disrespect even more."* Participants suggest that it is best not to get into arguments with people who make such comments or send messages and to ignore them. So, it can be said that being an influencer requires a lot of patience and tolerance, and people who do this job should be thick-skinned. However, some participants also stated that responding the criticisms with kind messages or emojis can change people's behavior in an instant. For example, Participant 6 said that *"I once received constant comments on some of my reels about my laugh. The comments said, "You are constantly laughing, like CZN Burak. Why*

do you do that? etc.". Then I responded by saying "What should I do, should I sulk?" and put a cute emoji. Then there was something like a U-turn immediately. The person said she did not mean to hurt me and so on." Influencers can make people realize their mistakes by responding to them politely without arguing with them. However, this also requires changing their tune.

Participants with a higher number of followers stated that they have many haters on Instagram and although they do not follow the participants, they comment on their posts or send them direct messages that show hate, criticizing, or belittling. Participant 7 shared her experience on this issue by saying "*...They don't even follow me on Instagram, but they are on my page every day, every day they are out to get me. They pay attention to my words, looks, etc. I don't block anyone easily. But I'm a single mother, I'm newly divorced, I'm traveling as I want, I have a boyfriend, etc. So, I can say that I have a few good haters in Turkey, but I try not to make it too much of a problem. As long as I don't experience anything physical...*" This may indicate that influencers with bigger followings on social media tend to experience more cyberbullying than the ones with lower followings.

Internet anonymity frequently gives people the confidence to promote hatred and carry out harmful actions. Influencers also have to deal with the persistent presence of haters and critics who are ready to express their disdain and dissatisfaction. Another outstanding finding was that female participants receive a lot of criticism about their physical appearances. "*I can say that this is the worst side of social media. Because there are constant and continuous attacks of this kind. I was just reading bad comments even before this interview. Sometimes this can psychologically damage us a lot. At first, you don't care much about what's written there, but after a certain point, especially when the same thing comes up, and especially if it is a physical criticism, you start to question yourself in front of the mirror. You start questioning your body*

and not liking it. Even if there is 1 bad comment against 10 good comments, you tend to focus on or get affected by the bad one. So, you need to stop yourself, otherwise, you can't do well on social media if you are already a person who cares a lot about bad comments. Because you receive such comments very often." Influencers' mental health and general well-being may suffer as a result of dealing with this type of cyberbullying. So, it can be said that being an influencer ultimately requires resiliency and the capacity to overcome these difficulties while remaining true to oneself.

3.10. Good Aspects

This section discusses the benefits and good aspects of working as an influencer. Being an influencer offers a range of benefits. Participants of this research indicated that they love their job and wish to continue in this career path for various reasons. Participant 1 stated that she loves doing this job because "...as you gain experience in this field, you can create your audience and grow your business." Other participants also suggested that they love being an influencer because it provides them the chance to connect with a lot of people easily. This also benefits their lives in general because their network becomes strong, and their access widens; so, in this way, they pave the way for new opportunities.

Participants also stated that they love being in touch with their followers. Participant 5 said that *"The good thing is that you can meet and keep in touch with people you don't normally know. They become like your family. And I already like to be an inspiration for people."* So, it can be said that influencers find their job to be pleasant because of the rewarding aspect of being able to interact with and inspire people, creating a sense of extended family.

Being an influencer offers the thrilling chance to explore a variety of items and work with many different brands. This enables influencers to continuously investigate cutting-edge products in a variety of sectors, including fashion, cosmetics, technology, and lifestyle. Participant 8 explained this as *"You get the chance to try many products and work with a lot of different brands. You get free products from brands. This was one of the things that attracted me the most when I first started working as an influencer."* Also, influencers can give their followers sincere advice and insights because of the firsthand exposure they receive from working with various brands. They can establish credibility as reliable sources of information thanks to this, which also maintains their content interesting and engaging. Additionally, working with several brands gives them access to special collaborations, invitation-only events, and industry networking possibilities. These opportunities help influencers advance personally and professionally by increasing their knowledge and horizons as they negotiate the complex world of influencer marketing.

Scott (2011) suggests that the location of service work becomes less important every day with the emergence of digital work. Participants also indicated that they are happy to do what they love and have a relatively free work environment. Participant 2 stated that *"You have no set working hours or places, which I think is my favorite part of my job."* So not being bound to any strict working hours or offices gives influencers the freedom of choice, which they like.

Influencers have the chance to make a living out of their passions and produce material on topics that interest them. Influencers can wake up every day thrilled about the tasks ahead thanks to the connection between their interests and their profession, which leads to a higher level of job satisfaction. Influencers frequently appreciate a reasonably unrestricted work environment where they have the freedom to choose their hours and locations. Thus, it can be

said that influencers' general contentment and fulfillment as influencers are influenced by working in an environment that accommodates their way of life and gives them a sense of autonomy.

CONCLUSION

In this study, I aimed to demonstrate being an influencer by offering insightful information on the multifaceted world of influencers. By giving a comprehensive overview of this emerging career path, I intended to demonstrate the nature of this profession. I thought an evaluation from an academic point of view was necessary due to the novelty of this job. Another reason why I decided to work on this subject is that people are getting interested in this job day by day. When I realized that people see this profession as very easy and fun in many ways, I decided to do research in this field and investigate whether it is a profession like it sounds and looks. Also, by conducting a study on this new career path, I aimed to provide a guide to prospective influencers. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 influencers who create content on varying topics and have varying numbers of followers on Instagram. The reason for the diversity of the participant profile was to provide a broader perspective on being an influencer. Several major themes arose from the interviews with influencers, shedding light on the varied elements of their work model and the difficulties they encounter.

First of all, participants described being an influencer as having the ability to inspire and influence others through the social media sharing of ideas, ideologies, and lifestyles. Influencers are aware of the significance and responsibility of their position. They must be aware of their content's implications. Influencers share their views, interests, and experiences when they are influencers, but they should be aware of the potential repercussions of their words and actions. Because it allows individuals to follow their hobbies, make money, and have a positive impact on others, participants love their work as influencers. Distress may develop, however, when they are unable to carry out their responsibilities or encounter unfavorable outcomes. To continue having an effective impact

on their audience, influencers should appropriately navigate their roles and be aware of their messages.

The findings suggested that influencers have three major work models which are working independently, working with a team, or working with an influencer marketing agency. Working independently offers creative freedom and close ties to brands, but it also necessitates handling numerous chores and devoting time to administrative and creative procedures. Working with a team offers less workload in terms of production, yet the content produced with a team is considered less organic. Working with an agency provides knowledge, efficiency, and increased reputation, but it may reduce creative autonomy and financial rewards. Before choosing their work model, influencers should carefully analyze the benefits and drawbacks of each strategy.

Based on the interviews with influencers, several important results about influencers' work models were discovered. Being an influencer necessitates constant adaption to evolving platforms and algorithms, which takes time and is challenging. To be relevant and reach the target demographic, it's important to stay current with trends, hot spots, events, and music. Algorithms have a big impact on revenue and audience reach; thus, content needs to be constantly monitored and adjusted. Additionally, influencers are under pressure to always present a cheerful attitude, which may be emotionally challenging and alienating. They frequently need to be active across several platforms, adapting content to each and keeping up with platform-specific trends. As a result, being an influencer means navigating the always-changing social media landscape while juggling platform requirements with one's own needs and authenticity.

Interviews suggested that influencers' work models heavily incorporate ethical issues. Influencers place a strong emphasis on truthfulness and transparency in their content and are aware of their legal obligations. They are also aware that their online persona influences both their professional and public identities, and as a result, they realize the importance of addressing social and political concerns to foster understanding and unity. Besides, the study found that respecting moral principles creates credibility and trustworthiness, which is advantageous to influencers. Influencers can build a reputable industry that places a high value on responsible and ethical content creation by pointing people in the right way and making a beneficial impact on society.

The findings also suggested that prospective influencers need to understand the influencer economy because it offers insights into the financial, competitive, moral, and strategic elements of the job. Brands now understand the value of influencer marketing, which has led to tremendous growth in the influencer economy. To earn a good living, however, is difficult for all influencers due to the intense competition. Influencers with larger audiences are more powerful in negotiations and encounter fewer obstacles. Due to the challenges in negotiating budgets with companies, it is imperative to have a variety of income sources. Success depends on keeping open lines of communication with companies and taking followers' expectations into account. Despite difficulties, most influencers say they want to pursue this professional path since it is their passion. Although the industry's future is still unclear, overcoming obstacles and developing strong brand partnerships can lead to long-term success.

It should also be noted that influencers must keep in touch with their audience effectively. They should maintain their vision while managing follower expectations. The

findings suggest that maintaining consistency in content subjects is important since this is also part of the expectations of the followers. It should be noted that stress can be brought on by producing content and meeting followers' expectations. Also, building a devoted community is built when influencers take pleasure in connecting with followers and participate in worthwhile exchanges with them. As a result of these elements, influencers can maintain effective communication, which promotes long-term engagement, professional advancement, and influencer success.

The results indicated that time management is a key difficulty for influencers since working as an influencer blurs the lines between work and personal life. Finding time for oneself was a challenge for many participants. To maintain a healthy work-life balance, avoid burnout, and advance general well-being, effective time management is essential. Influencers may maximize production while still making time for personal relaxation a priority by prioritizing time management. Maintaining a healthy work-life balance improves happiness in general, job satisfaction, and the long-term viability of an industry.

The results emphasized how the influencers' geographic location affects their productivity. Due to the industry's novelty and the flexible work model that allows them to work anywhere they like; the participants expressed their concerns about their job being undervalued and neglected. Another result was that influencers in Turkey need to respect ideals and consider social and political contexts because of the country's sensitive religious and cultural issues. Female influencers encounter additional difficulties because of cultural expectations and issues with self-expression. Thus, being a successful influencer in Turkey requires a thorough understanding of these dynamics.

The results revealed the significant impact of cyberbullying and dealing with haters on an influencer's mental health. Participants expressed frustration with negative comments and emphasized the need for psychological preparation and coping mechanisms. Participants suggested that to protect their mental health, they resorted to such means as ignoring hateful messages and seeking support networks. The findings suggested that resilience is crucial, especially for influencers with larger followings since they are more likely to be cyberbullied. Also, female participants reported criticism about their appearances, affecting their mental and physical well-being. Thus, it can be said that prioritizing mental health and staying authentic is important for influencers in navigating these challenges.

Despite the difficulties, there are many advantages to becoming an influencer. Participants indicated that influencers appreciate the opportunity to connect with a wide range of people, which strengthens their network and opens doors to new opportunities. The results suggested that they find joy in inspiring and interacting with others, creating a sense of extended family. Also, working with multiple brands provides them with exclusive collaborations and industry networking possibilities, contributing to their personal and professional growth. The freedom to choose working hours and the absence of strict office environments are valued, providing a sense of autonomy. The results indicated that for influencers, turning passions into a livelihood and producing content on interesting topics aligns with their interests, and it leads to satisfaction and fulfillment. Overall, influencers derive contentment from an environment that accommodates their lifestyle and grants them autonomy.

Along with the challenges and opportunities it presents, the influencer industry has been thoroughly explored in this study. By putting their well-being first, accepting their responsibilities, and conquering challenges, influencers can work toward success and have a positive impact on their audience. This study's conclusions advance our understanding of influencers and provide practical knowledge for academics, industry professionals, and prospective influencers. More research should be conducted to examine and address the shifting dynamics of the influencer industry. Wallman (1979) suggests that it is almost impossible to evaluate, control, or organize any component of work without considering all of its other components and what is going on in other spheres of livelihood. Considering this approach, further studies can be conducted to investigate whether the value given to the work of influencers having different socioeconomic statuses, coming from marginalized communities, or not fitting traditional beauty standards differ from the other influencers. I hypothesize that influencers coming from lower socioeconomic statuses, and marginalized communities go through different processes and experience challenges compared to influencers who have relatively better conditions. Thus, a study on this topic can be conducted in the future to better understand how this profession is experienced by other groups.

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APPENDIX

Participant 1:

Participant 1 is 35 years old. He is a fitness influencer, but he also works as a fitness instructor and nutritionist. His posts are related to exercising, healthy diets, and scientific information about how human body. He owns an online training and nutrition program where he provides sports and nutrition coaching. He has 293K followers on Instagram.

Participant 2:

Participant 2 is 34 years old. He is a lifestyle influencer and also a product designer. He is married to a famous influencer who has 4,8M followers on Instagram. He makes his Instagram posts in cooperation with his wife. He creates fun content about his life and especially his fatherhood. He has 1M followers on Instagram.

Participant 3:

Participant 3 is 28 years old. He is a lifestyle influencer and a communication consultant. He works at a communication agency. His posts are about fashion and restaurant recommendations. He has 15K followers on Instagram.

Participant 4:

Participant 4 is 29 years old. He is a digital content creator and a photographer. He also owns car showrooms. He is specialized in taking photos of luxurious cars. He creates content about luxurious cars, car accessories, and vehicle spare parts. He has 73,2K followers on Instagram.

Participant 5:

Participant 5 is 24 years old. She is a lifestyle, fashion, and skin-care influencer. In addition to being an influencer, she works as an intern lawyer. Her posts are about her life, products she likes to use, and outfit tips. She shares product reviews and posts videos about her shopping experiences to provide styling tips and tricks on Instagram. She has 100K followers on Instagram.

Participant 6:

Participant 6 is 26 years old. She is a lifestyle and fashion influencer. She also works as a mathematics tutor. Her posts are about travel tips and styling outfits and accessories. She is also a YouTuber. She has 37,1K followers on Instagram.

Participant 7:

Participant 7 is 32 years old. She is a lifestyle influencer and social media activist. She also owns a digital marketing agency. She is a divorced mom who has a 4-year-old son. Her

posts are about parenting, skincare, outfit tips, and social activism. She has 153 K followers on Instagram.

Participant 8:

Participant 8 is 24 years old. She is a fashion influencer, model, and photographer. She works as a model for a clothing brand. She also does freelance work where she does her shootings for the brands she works with. Her posts are about fashion tips and tricks. She has 13,3K followers on Instagram.

Participant 9:

Participant 9 is 26 years old. She is a fashion influencer and designer. She also owns a bag brand. Her posts are about styling outfits and accessories. She has 22,5K followers on Instagram.

Participant 10:

Participant 10 is 23 years old. She is a lifestyle influencer and student. Her posts are about café and restaurant recommendations, and her daily routines. She has 40K followers on Instagram.