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# Intellectual Influencer as a New Ambassador in Digital Marketing Communication

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**Abstract:** This conceptual paper focuses on intellectual influencer concept to offer a differentiation tool for influencer marketing activities. First, influencer marketing is explained from the traditional point of view. Secondly, the historical development process of the public intellectual concept which was formerly a subject of non-marketing disciplines such as journalism, sociology, and philosophy is discussed. Subsequently, the relationship between these two concepts together with influencer marketing and related marketing communication activities are evaluated. Finally, marketing-related areas where intellectual influencers can produce content are elaborated. This study could open a fresh field in academic research by bringing a new dimension to influencer marketing. Also, it can offer a noteworthy alternative for businesses in terms of differentiation, attracting attention and reaching target markets.

**Keywords:** digital marketing, influencer marketing, advertising, public relations, marketing communications.

## A NEW FORM OF INFLUENCER: INTELLECTUAL

The word influencer, derived from Latin word ‘influere’ (flow in) means the ability to create change without forcing (McMullan et al., 2022). Like Campbell and Farrell’s (2020) microinfluencers, intellectual influencers also have a profession other than being an influencer. Hence, intellectual influencers who can be compared to intellectuals (especially public intellectuals), can be explained as individuals having knowledge and authority on certain issues regardless of their profession (based on the definitions of Danowski and Park (2009) and Dahlgren (2013a)). As they have different professions such as journalism, publishing, and academic (Posner, 2001); monetary motivation (unlike traditional influencers) remains in second plan for this type of influencer. Intellectual influencers can be considered as an extension of public intellectuals defined by Posner (2001).

With diversification of media tools and proliferation of information sources, consumers began to encounter many messages and distractions in daily life (Skains, 2019). Digital technologies have made our attention more limited although it facilitates access to information sources (Williams, 2018). In this ecosystem, the roles of social media and mobile devices are increasing (Pwc, 2018). Social media offers a platform where users can share ideas and produce content on their fields of expertise or interests (Audrezet et al., 2020). Research reveals as of 2020, an adult spends an average of three hours per day consuming social media content (Hiley, 2022). With the pandemic, social media has become an even more important player in meeting “entertainment, information and social connection” needs of consumers (Deloitte, 2021, p. 10). The global decrease in F2F social interaction combined with an increase in the time spent at home with the internet, changed the media consumption patterns of young people, which fed influencer marketing (Taylor, 2020).

With digital platforms becoming a part of our daily life, advertising and public relations activities also went digital, influencer marketing stood out for creating brand awareness and word of mouth (Tsen & Cheng, 2021). Although influencer marketing is associated with millennials, it appeals to a wide age group (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). Relatives and influencers are the most prominent factors affecting consumer decision-making (Marketing Charts, 2019). So today, who the influencers are and how they shape consumer taste are prominent research topics (Vrontis et al., 2021). We see research about influencers in marketing communications, public relations, social marketing, health communication, and public opinion-making fields (Hudders et al., 2021). Although influencer marketing is an option often used in practice, strategic issues such as finding the most suitable influencers for target markets are still understudied areas (Ye et al., 2021).

This study elaborates the ‘intellectual influencer’ concept to bring a new perspective to influencer marketing in the axis of marketing and communication activities. The limited content in academic and/or internet sources regarding this concept proves the novelty of the subject.

From the academic point of view, this study follows Novoselova and Jenson’s (2019) definition of intellectual influencers, which extended the concept to feminist bloggers. The authors stated that the people in question become an actor in the neo-liberal market environment by combining their activist, creative, intellectual, and professional sides. It is possible to see the reflections of this concept in non-academic sources (blogs and mobile applications). Schwartz-Horney (2021) makes a dual definition of ‘influencer-intellectual’. On one side, well-known people who already produce for cultural consumption in their professional life by sharing their lifestyle and thoughts on social media. On the other side, less popular young consumers who have a certain follower segment on social media, sharing cultural-related content such as books and politics.

Other than social media-based content, production platforms have emerged where users can create and follow creative, informative, and cultural consumption-based content (Armitage, 2021). Such platforms allow users to ‘bond’ and make discoveries with content such as podcasts and articles according to their interests (Wiser Media, 2021). Like curating an art gallery ‘content curation’ (which refers to searching and sharing content) can be an important marketing strategy (Armitage, 2021). These people’s potential to influence purchasing behavior was pointed out with the statement “famous people like academics, authors, musicians, actors, politicians, they’re all good salesman” (Globe Hackers Multimedia (Buliamti), 2021).

Research and industry experiences reveal that influencer marketing is often more effective than traditional advertising (Rosengren & Campbell, 2021). Although influencers or word-of-mouth creators who produce engaging consumer content for a fee (Rosengren & Campbell, 2021) are an important longstanding marketing strategy, related research is limited (Ye et al., 2021). Intellectual influencers, whom we consider to be an extension of public intellectuals, differ from the traditional notion in terms of background, main profession (Posner, 2001) and financial expectations. This study aims to present intellectual influencers as a new form of influencer marketing. As far as we know, there is no academic study who adopted this perspective. While doing so, the concept of public intellectual, which has been the subject of studies in fields such as journalism (Posner, 2001; Dahlgren, 2013a), sociology (Posner, 2001), philosophy (Danowski & Park, 2009), was taken as a theoretical framework.

Our study presents the intellectual influencer as a structure transformed from the public intellectual with digitalization. We aim to introduce a concept that was previously the subject of disciplines other than marketing with its potential for marketing and communication disciplines.

In this context, we realized a conceptual study in parallel with Gilson and Goldberg’s (2015)’ approach. Suitably, by focusing on the “*what’s new*” question (p. 128), existing issues are evaluated from an interdisciplinary perspective (intellectual influencers, which we will consider here as an extension of public intellectual). Our approach aims to treat the subject in a brand-new area (marketing and influencer marketing). Herewith, we hope to bring a different perspective, fresh application, and research field to the subject.

Accordingly, the traditional definition of an influencer and its relationship with marketing activities is explained. The public intellectual concept, which is an important notion for ‘intellectual influencer’ is discussed. Then, the intersection of these two concepts is elaborated. Finally, marketing areas where intellectual influencers can be more effective, and their content production areas are discussed. Intellectual influencers have potential to both breathe new life into academic studies and offer businesses a new means of differentiation.

## TRADITIONAL INFLUENCER DEFINITION

Influencing is one of the main purposes of marketing and social proof (with celebrities or ordinary people like ‘consumers’) is an important tool for creating this (McMullan et al., 2022). Lazarsfeld, Bavelson, and Gaudet talked about influencer concept in their study about the American Presidential Election in 1940 and acknowledged mass media’s indirect effect through opinion leaders (cited in Vrontis et al., 2021). Opinion leaders are defined as interesting and persuasive people whose words are valued and trusted by their followers (Casalò et al., 2020). For all these reasons, opinion leaders are prominent in consumer decision process and market information (Gnambs & Batinic, 2012).

While digital marketing emerged in the 1990s was primarily related to advertising, its scope expanded with the emergence of mobile marketing and social media in the 2000s (Fierro et al., 2017). Digital marketing opens new doors in interacting with consumers (Ghorbani et al., 2021). Although the words opinion leader and influencer are used interchangeably sometimes, an influencer is an opinion leader emerging with social media (Belanche et al., 2021). Social media offers self-branding opportunities to its users having entrepreneurial abilities and producing interesting or informative content (Marvick, 2013). Influencers manage their names on social media platforms like a manager handles a brand (Gómez, 2019).

Influencers are social media users gaining a broader public and visibility by sharing their interests or ideas with the potential to influence decision-making processes of their followers (Hudders et al., 2021). Kadekova and Holienčinova (2018) emphasized the importance of influencers who know their followers well and produce interesting, informative, or entertaining content for targeted marketing activities (especially for reaching young people). Influencers’ content in one or more niches create viral communication (De Veirman et al., 2017).

With increasing privacy and security concerns, it becomes difficult to collect consumer information in today’s market and influencers offer the opportunity to target niche market segments by bypassing this situation (e.g., consumers who are interested in a specific wine type) (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). Consumers who follow influencers according to their interests also create sub-cultures (Schwartz-Horney, 2021).

There are many different influencer classifications in literature (e.g., Kadekova and Holienčinova, 2018; Ouvrein et. al., 2021; Gómez, 2019). Since Campbell and Farrell’s (2020) study is a recent and comprehensive one (Park et al., 2021), we briefly mention this study below to show these classifications in question.

Based on existing studies, Campbell and Farrell (2020) divided traditional influencers into five categories:

- **Celebrity influencers:** They are famous regardless of the social media platform and they use this reputation when advertising.
- **Mega-influencers:** People with one million or more followers who are famous for being market mavens on social media.
- **Macro-influencers:** People who are less famous than mega-influencers, have between 100,000 and 1 million followers, and focus on a subject such as travel, food and drink, and music.
- **Micro-influencers:** People who have a career other than being an influencer and have fewer followers than macro-influencers.
- **Nano-influencers:** People whose follower networks are just starting to grow (sometimes spontaneously) without the purpose of being an influencer. They can proactively engage with brands and are open to free promotion.

However, to the best of our knowledge, no study directly included the ‘intellectual influencer’ discussed within the scope of our study in these classifications.

## **THE PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS. THE CONCEPT THAT PAVED THE WAY FOR THE INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCER.**

The concept of ‘public intellectual’, which was first used by C. Wright Mills to refer to intellectuals who played an active role during the Cold War years, was defined as authorities knowledgeable in political and social issues, regardless of their profession (Danowski & Park, 2009). There is a transition from the concept of public intellectual to concept of civil intellectual with digitalization (Dahlgren, 2013a). According to this approach, while the public intellectual consists of journalists, academics, or ‘experts in a special area’, the ‘civic’ intellectual refer to a broader audience defined as ‘small’, well-known, politically engaged citizens.

The term intellectual notates people who stand out with their rational, analytical, and other cognitive abilities (rather than their physical strength or charisma) (Bashevkin, 2017). The intellectual’s technical and non-instrumental knowledge spans cultural and political spheres, it is secular, and narrowly specialized (Melzer et al., 2003). According to the postmodern perspective, “authentic culture is a product not of cultural specialists but the street” (Holt, 2002:84). In the same study, Holt (2002) states that brand equity is the product of events occurring in daily life rather than commercial activities.

Dahlgren (2013a) defines intellectuals as individuals with high communication skills and knowledge preserving democracy regardless of their profession. Still, public intellectuals were associated with journalists, academics, pundits, public relations specialists, spin doctors, image managers, advertisers, and experts in a specific area (Dahlgren, 2013a). Posner (2001) identifies American public

intellectuals' workspaces, on which argument Danowski and Park (2009) expanded theirs. Public intellectuals can perform many different professions from literature to economics, from history to law, from journalism to publishing (Posner, 2001).

Although Russell Jacoby (1987) states the last intellectuals did survive into the mid-20th century, blog-like social media platforms paved the way for the birth of a new and younger public intellectual group (Danowski & Park, 2009). Web intellectuals are people with political identities coming from very different socio-demographic characteristics, sharing content on issues such as journalism, activism, culture (Dahlgren, 2013b). Novoselova and Jenson (2019) underline that feminist bloggers, who produce content for cultural consumption in social media, play the role of both influencer and public intellectual. Danowski and Park (2013) note that public intellectuals can create a more interactive network in social media compared to celebrities. Public intellectuals mostly dealt with non-marketing disciplines such as journalism (Posner, 2001; Dahlgren, 2013a), sociology (Posner, 2001), philosophy (Danowski & Park, 2009).

On the other hand, Hartley (2015) discusses the transformation of intellectuals over time in three stages as 'Parisian myth', 'public intellectual' and intellectuals affiliated with 'knowledge clubs'. The author states that the intellectual met with concepts such as pop culture, internet, and digitalization over time. Thus, the intellectual influencer considered within the scope of our study can be elaborated as Hartley's (2005) 'knowledge clubs' period type of intellectual.

## INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCERS IN MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Cultural consumption covers "arts, culture and leisure" fields and includes activities such as "visiting cultural events (theater, concert, cinema, etc.), watching tv, reading books, eating" (Rössel et al., 2017, p.1). Today, cultural consumption covers many different media platforms (Dahlgren, 2013a) and the pandemic has accelerated its scope and digitalization process (Deloitte, 2021). Although the rudimentary value proposition of public intellectuals is information sharing, a 'celebrity phenomenon' public intellectual also offers entertainment, symbolic and belonging to the community values (Posner, 2001). Online opinion leaders create hedonic and utilitarian value by providing beneficial information about products or brands (Lin et al., 2018).

In the middle of the 21st century, the phrase 'public relations' was replaced with 'strategic communication', which better expresses both media and internal communication (Zerfass et al., 2018). 'Strategic influencer communication' is one of the prominent current issues for marketing and public relations (Sundermann and Raabe, 2019). The crucial benefit of influencer marketing for marketing communication is its ability to render ad blocking mechanisms idle (Kadekova & Holienčinova,

2018). Influencers are important for persuasive media communication (Pang et al., 2016). With narrative strategies, traditional influencers balance personal details and information about the product advertised in their content (Zhou et al., 2021).

Attractiveness and trustworthiness are prominent parameters in creating brand image and purchase intention in influencer marketing (Wiedman & Mettenheim, 2020). Quality content is more important than quantity and specializing in posts increases identification and engagement (Tafesse & Wood, 2021). Audrezet et al. (2020) show authenticity as the most effective issue for influencer marketing and define two types of authenticity strategies (passionate and transparent). Passionate authenticity refers to dealing with an issue intrinsically motivated (Moulard et al., 2014, 2015, 2016). The reflection of this approach on influencers is ‘enjoyable’ and ‘intrinsically gratifying’ content (Audrezet et al., 2020). The concept the authors call transparent authenticity refers to providing fact-based and unadorned information. Influencers do have specific communication strategies (Kozinets et al., 2010).

## POINTS WHERE TRADITIONAL AND INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCER MEET

In this section, various situations related to influencers detected in the literature are interpreted within the scope of this study.

Table 1. Adaptation of some traditional influencer topics to intellectual influencers

Traditional influencer literature	Interpretation/adaptation for intellectual influencers
According to the classification devised by Campbell and Farrell (2020), micro influencers have other professions, while nanoinfluencers are people whose followers increase because of ordinary social media behavior.	<i>Intellectual influencers can be compared to micro influencers in terms of having another profession, and nano-influencers in terms of increasing the number of followers as a result of 'ordinary social media behavior'.</i>
For influencer marketing’s success, interacting from different channels such as blog and posts (Campbell & Farrell, 2020) and addressing both the positive and negative aspects of the subject (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010) are important.	<i>This situation can be evaluated by the nature of the concept of the intellectual influencer who does not have a title like a brand ambassador and has limited (if any) financial expectations from the brand.</i>
Quality and authenticity in content are important for influencer marketing (Association of National Advertisers, 2018)	<i>This situation arises organically for intellectual influencers who have specific expertise for the content and low financial expectation and who make objective comments.</i>
The public relations budget is normally the third unit associated with influencer marketing (after marketing and brand management) (Association of National Advertisers, 2018).	<i>It is possible that intellectual influencers can transform this ranking.</i>



Traditional influencer literature	Interpretation/adaptation for intellectual influencers
Cultural capital is an important issue for influencers (Campbell & Farrell, 2020).	<i>This situation can be evaluated as a point that brings the traditional influencer closer to the intellectual influencer. Cultural capital is a natural outcome of intellectual influencers' professions or interests.</i>
McQuarrie et al. (2013) argue that influencers have risk reduction, 'aesthetic inspiration' and 'exemplary taste' influence in the eyes of consumers.	<i>This situation is suitable for intellectual influencers whose content is directly in fields such as culture, art, popular science, and literature.</i>
McQuarrie et al. (2013), interpret Bordieu's cultural capital approach in terms of fashion bloggers, state that these bloggers transformed their cultural capital into social capital and economic resources through their aesthetic content production. The authors underline that the cultural capital transformation process can be adapted to different fields besides fashion.	<i>Intellectual influencers can also be considered as a different interpretation of this approach.</i>
Being an expert in one or more subjects is an unreconciled issue (Gnambs & Batinic, 2012).	<i>It can be investigated whether the same issue remains uncertain for intellectual influencers.</i>
Trustworthiness (Wiedman & Mettenheim, 2020), specialization in quality posts (Tafesse & Wood, 2021), authenticity (Audrezet et al., 2020), and being intrinsically motivated (Moulard et al., 2014, 2015, 2016; Audrezet et al., 2020) are issues emphasized in the literature in terms of traditional influencers.	<i>These features can be considered as an innate situation for intellectual influencers who have maximum expertise in the subject they share (they research, experience, and share information.) and where financial concerns are secondary.</i>

Source: The left column of this Table was created based on the sources available in the literature about traditional influencers (shown in the first column with their references), the right column was created by the author by adapting these situations to intellectual influencers

As stated in detail in Table 1, we can include intellectual influencers in some influencer classifications (e.g., partial inclusion of micro influencers and nano influencers [see Campbell & Farrell, 2020]). There is evidence for the relationship between cultural capital and influencer (Campbell & Farrell, 2020; McQuarrie et al., 2013) and this seems to be naturally compatible with the nature of intellectual influencers. Content quality (Association of National Advertisers, 2018) is another prominent issue for influencers. It can be said that intellectual influencers discussed in our study are in an advantageous position because they are people who have suitable resources and infrastructure, i.e., they are journalists etc. (Dahlgren, 2013a).

Just like traditional influencers who communicate with consumers through various media channels (Campbell & Farrell, 2020), intellectual influencers can also diversify their communication channels. The advantage of intellectual influencers is to express their honest opinions as they do not receive payment. So, intellectual influencers can respond more easily to the advice (criticisms in comments) of Mudambi and Schuff (2010).

As underlined in Table 1, an influencer's content is expected to offer 'aesthetic inspiration' and 'exemplary taste' (McQuarrie et al., 2013). Trustworthiness (Wiedman & Mettenheim, 2020), specialization in quality posts (Tafesse & Wood, 2021), authenticity (Audrezet et al., 2020), and being intrinsically motivated (Moulard



et. al., 2014, 2015, 2016; Audrezet et al., 2020) are other expected elements. These issues can be seen as naturally compatible with intellectual influencers' content.

The question of whether specialization is necessary (Gnambs & Batinic, 2012) is another worth researching area for intellectual influencers whose relationship with public relations budget (Association of National Advertisers, 2018) can also constitute another significant research stream.

## **A GRAY AREA IN INFLUENCER MARKETING: COMPENSATION AND ITS REFLECTION ON INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCER**

In the classical definition, influencers receive incentives for advertising (Association of National Advertisers, 2018; Campbell & Grimm, 2019; Campbell & Farrell, 2020). Like influencer marketing, PR events have also started to use advertising-led models for establishing relationships and creating goodwill (Wolf & Archer, 2018). Blogging, which can be considered the first stage of content production in social media, is a relatively unprofessionalized field with limited financial incentives (Novoselova & Jenson, 2019).

Monetary compensation previously seen as unethical for public relations began to transform with digitalization (and bloggers, influencers, and journalists adapted to this situation) (Archer & Harrigan, 2016). Wage incentives, the main distinction between advertising and public relations, is obscured by these new dynamics (Archer & Harrigan, 2016). Still, being subject to compensation for the content produced by intellectual influencers that outweighs cultural consumption is a precarious issue as it can damage the impartiality and honesty of informative content (Schwartz-Horney, 2021).

Although profitability is not the primary goal of all influencers, they generally expect to receive a monetary or similar return (Pang et. al., 2016) as they identify their activities with “work”, “writing”, “journalism”, “a project”, “a career” (p.263) and spend a significant amount of time and effort to create these contents (Novoselova & Jenson, 2019).

According to the classification of Zhou et. al. (2021), people who talk about the brand in the ‘low-level marketer controlled earned influencer marketing’ option do not receive compensation and their content develops beyond the marketing effort. Stoldt et al. (2019) note a transition from travel journalist to travel influencer in the tourism sector, where influencers create more ‘genuine’ content. The authors add that comparing journalists and influencers on content independence is complicated because journalists are sponsored by destination marketing organizations and influencers are similarly sponsored by brands. Zhou et. al. (2021)’s ‘low-level marketer controlled earned influencer marketing’ can provide a perspective on this subject.

## MARKETING ACTIVITIES AND INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCERS

Intellectual influencers have the power to promote specific topics or institutions with the content they create (Novoselova & Jenson, 2019). Well-known people in society influencing large masses on social, economic, and cultural issues (Han & Ki, 2010) is one of the main marketing research fields. Hudders et al. (2021) pointed out that a limited number of recent studies handle influencers in nonprofit marketing settings such as ‘raising awareness (e.g., health communication)’ or ‘changing public opinion (e.g., feminism)’. Young consumers care about the political stance of influencers (Tsen & Cheng, 2021).

Except in academic databases, we see that young people and blogs mention this concept. Retta (2020) states that intellectual influence cannot be considered independent of political stance and the difference between ‘regular’ and ‘intellectual’ influencers is being “not only beautiful and relatable but also smart and politically engaged”. Lopez (2017) emphasizes the need for more intellectual influencers who talk about politics, culture, literature, and nature on social media to help society transform for the better. The media consumption of the millennial and Generation Z differ (e.g., social media accounts instead of printed newspapers or traditional media, opinion pieces, podcasts, and non-mainstream publications) also, entertaining, and informative social media on these new platforms create a ‘revolution of information’ (Schwartz-Horney, 2021).

## CONTENT PRODUCTION AREAS OF INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCERS

The content produced by intellectual influencers on social media was examined and the exemplary content subjects are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Intellectual influencer’s content topics**

‘Gourmandise’ (e.g., drinking culture, cocktails, healthy food, word cuisines)	Architecture/buildings (e.g., cultural heritage, architectural movements, cultural assets)	Visual or fine arts (e.g., painting, sculpture)
Book/literature	Current-popular political issues (e.g., feminism, veganism)	Travels or trips (e.g., cities’ cultural and artistic venues, eating and drinking places)
Nature (e.g., wildlife, mushrooms, birdwatching)	Design (e.g., architecture or arts)	Hobbies or other niche topics (e.g., cycling, fish culture)

Source: This table was created by the author by scanning the post of intellectual influencers on social media platforms

We observed that the content producers are usually journalists, writers, or academics. In addition, some of those people prefer to use their own identities, while others prefer pseudonyms. Intellectual influencers' content creation areas are not limited to the above topics. The Table 2 is only exemplary.

Influencers have the potential to create social impact (Ouvrein et al., 2021). Using influencers under social marketing umbrella is an important area for future studies (Hudders et al., 2021). Byrne et al. (2017) stated that influencers can play a role in the allocation of public health through their post about food consumption.

Although celebrities as endorsers in destination marketing is an old practice, influencers' presence (Bokunewicz & Shulmman, 2017) and effect (Han & Chen, 2021) in this field are relatively new. Influencers started the trend of reinterpreting the relationship between brands, travel, and the tourism industry, and content production in this field moved from travel journalists to travel influencers over time (Stoldt et al., 2019). The potential of influencers for the tourism and hospitality sector (Yetimoğlu & Uğurlu, 2020), promoting event marketing activities through influencers (e.g., Sun et al., 2021; Jílková, 2018) are research and application areas.

Traditional influencers also create contents about travel, food (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Campbell and Farrell, 2020) or current political or social issues (e.g., Duguay, 2019; Yang et al., 2021; Hudders et al., 2021; Tsen & Cheng, 2021). However, issues related to food or travel are a leisure-time (Rössel et al., 2017) or cultural consumption activity (Dahlgren, 2013a). Accordingly, intellectual influencers who are strong in terms of background – just like public intellectuals (Dahlgren, 2013a) – can create a differentiation point. Novoselova and Jenson (2019) also point to this issue.

Considering the above situations and the topics determined within the scope of our study (see Table 2) we conclude that intellectual influencers can be more effective in social marketing, destination marketing, event marketing, and art marketing fields. Although traditional influencers exist in these areas, intellectual influencers can provide more successful targeted marketing results.

## CONCLUSION

This study presents 'intellectual influencers' as a new and promising influencer marketing option. Herein, the difference of the subject from the traditional and how it can be used in marketing communication activities are discussed. As we explained in detail, we can consider intellectual influencers as an extension of public intellectuals. Although public intellectuals are a field of study

for journalism (Posner, 2001; Dahlgren, 2013a), sociology (Posner, 2001), and philosophy (Danowski & Park, 2009), it can be a new and promising subject for marketing.

The role and potential of influencers in media communication are known (Sundermann & Raabe, 2019; Kadekova & Holienčinova, 2018; Pang et al., 2016; Zhou et al., 2021) but the intellectual influencers can bring a new breath to this subject. Creating ‘quality content’ (Tafesse & Wood, 2021) and ‘passionate transparent authenticity’ (Audrezet. et. al., 2020; Moulard et al., 2014, 2015, 2016) which are important issues for influencers can be considered innate and natural in intellectual influencers due to their backgrounds.

We see influencer marketing in tourism, hospitality or event marketing, (e.g., Yetimoğlu & Uğurlu, 2020; Sun et al., 2021; Jílková, 2018) areas. These are activities of leisure time (Rössel et al., 2017) or cultural consumption (Dahlgren, 2013a). So, we concluded that intellectual influencers with their strong background (like public intellectuals (Dahlgren, 2013a)) can create a differentiation point for these areas, which Novoselova and Jenson (2019) note. Based on the Table 2 and the situation above, intellectual influencers can be evaluated as more successful in areas such as destination, event, and art marketing.

In their bibliometric analysis of traditional influencers, Ye et al. (2021) state that businesses must bear many costs to find suitable influencers for their target markets and then work with them. Hence, working model of intellectual influencers – based on non-direct monetary incentives – can offer a cost-effective option to businesses.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper is a conceptual study and a result of non-systematic literature analysis. The newness of the subject in terms of marketing and communication activities constitutes the reason for this choice. However, elaborating on this subject with systematic and discipline-oriented reviews with different techniques may reveal remarkable findings.

Table 2 presents exemplary production areas of intellectual influencers, but is not the result of systematic research. So, qualitative research on the content production areas of intellectual influencers may offer important information. King et al. (2015) draw attention to the relationship between consumer wellness and food. Food and other topics can be seen among the intellectual influencer’s content topics (see Table 2). All these issues can serve consumer wellness. Accordingly, the relationship between intellectual influencers and consumer wellness can be another new research area.

Research reveals that consumers are more affected by influencers with whom they can establish a 'personal connection (or parasocial relationship). It may be possible with the right target market selection to reach consumers 'in search of uniqueness' who are more distant to media consumption and trends (such as 'geek' consumers) through intellectual influencers. Consequently, it is recommended to investigate the subject with different personality traits, especially with 'need for uniqueness'.

Intellectual influencers can appeal intellectually concerned consumers and cultural consumption. Cultural consumption covers many different media platforms (Dahlgren, 2013a). So, this point of view presents a wide field of research and application. The contribution of intellectual influencers to social responsibility studies (e.g., Yang et al., 2021; Li, 2022) can be discussed. As Brooks et al. (2021) point out 'celebrity capital' emerges differently in terms of celebrities (who are already famous) and social media influencers. The relationship intellectual influencers with celebrity capital can be investigated (as public intellectual is already a 'celebrity phenomenon' (Posner, 2001)). Again, the subject of cultural capital – previously mentioned in terms of traditional influencers (Campbell & Farrell, 2020; McQuarrie et al., 2013), can be researched for intellectual influencers whose professions are directly related to this subject (Dahlgren, 2013a). Lopez (2017) emphasizes the need for an increase in intellectual influencers speaking about politics, culture, and literature.

The effect of influencer marketing differs according to influencer (e.g., Park et al., 2021; Britt et al., 2020) or product type (e.g., Lee & Eastin, 2020; Lin et al., 2018). These issues are open to elaboration in terms of intellectual influencers. Public intellectuals have the potential to create entertainment, symbolism and belonging to the community (Posner, 2001), hedonic and utilitarian values (Lin et al., 2018). So, intellectual influencers can be considered together with consumption values. The Persuasion Knowledge Model developed by Friestad and Wright in 1994 is a topic related to influencers in terms of disclosures and endorsements (cited by Castonguay, 2021). Considering this model together with intellectual influencers can also reveal important results.

Rosengren and Campbell (2021) point out that except for sales related outputs, influencer marketing can focus on non-sales related outputs such as cause-related marketing. The intellectual influencers who have lower monetary concerns can also stand out in this regard. As Eisend et al. (2020) emphasize, transparency and disclosing content are important research areas with research gaps. The fact that intellectual influencers have a different relationship with monetary incentives offer another research area. Intellectual influencers' relationship with public relations budget (Association of National Advertisers, 2018) can also constitute a significant research area and offer new opportunities to businesses. Intellectual products circulate through people such as journalists or academics, and this

content is sometimes funded by their readers (consumers) (Johansen, 2021). How these people can be funded by staying away from the advertising logic, and how to reach an agreement with brands at this point is another debatable issue.

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