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# The most influencer instagramers from Ecuador

## Los instagramers más influyentes de Ecuador

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#### Abstract

Instagramers in the context of media literacy is a booming theme, of which little has been written among the scientific community but gradually is taking greater importance because in a short term Instagram aims to be one of the most used and favorite social networks. Through this research, it is intended to determine which are the most influencer instagramers in Ecuador, as well as to study their profiles according to content analysis (production and technology), analysis of language (language) and feedback / interaction (diffusion) generated since their profiles. The methodology used has been qualitative and quantitative through non-participant observation, Alianzo Ranking tool and a semi-structured interview applied to an expert in the study. The results show that the level of response to the comments of the followers, the publications that generate self-identification and feeling of closeness to the audience, the photographs of pets (dogs) posted by the successful instagramers are accepted by the community of followers and generate more "likes". The analysis of successful instagramers in Ecuador serves to make an evaluation and detect what interests to people in a particular social environment and thus the causes that lead to one instagramer to succeed over another.

#### Keywords

Instagram, instagramers, media literacy, followers, audience, success.

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#### Resumen

Instagramers en un contexto mediático es un tema en pleno auge, del cual poco se ha escrito entre la comunidad científica pero paulatinamente está tomando mayor importancia dado que a corto plazo Instagram apunta a ser una de las redes sociales favoritas y más utilizadas. A través de esta investigación se pretende identificar cuáles son los instagramers más influyentes en Ecuador, así como analizar los perfiles de los mismos en función de un análisis de contenidos (producción y tecnología), análisis de lenguaje (lenguaje) y el feedback / interacción (difusión) generada desde sus perfiles. La metodología empleada ha sido cualitativa y cuantitativa, a través de observación no participante, la herramienta Alianzo Raking y una entrevista semiestructurada a un experto en el tema de estudio. Los resultados muestran que el nivel de respuesta a los comentarios de los seguidores, las publicaciones que generan auto-identificación y sentimiento de cercanía con las audiencias, las fotografías de mascotas (perros) publicados por parte de los Instagramers exitosos son aceptadas por la comunidad seguidores y generan mayor cantidad de "me gusta". El análisis de los instagramers exitosos dentro de Ecuador sirve para realizar una evaluación y detectar qué interesa a la gente en un entorno social determinado, además de las causas que llevan a un instagramer tener mayor éxito sobre otro.

#### Keywords

Instagram, instagramers, competencia mediática, seguidores, audiencia, éxito.

### Introduction and state of the art

Communication, by its nature, has been present with human beings since the beginning of time and has gradually evolved along with the technological advances of such a globalized world in which we live. If we previously communicated through smoke signals, physical contact or guttural sounds now communication has taken a total turn to the point that the distances are just one click away. Now it is possible to visualize people from the other side of the world in real time as well as share moments through images, as is the case with social networks.

Thus, Lacoste (1998) affirms:

(...) The Internet is a source of information resources shared worldwide. It is a means of communication to establish cooperation and collaboration bet-

ween communities and interest groups on specific topics, distributed throughout the world. (p. 182)

In fact, when we enter the World Wide Web we connect with people from all over the globe, regardless of their geographical location, and then through the network connections made, we can establish contacts that may well be useful for forming social relationships, to meet past friendships, to develop projects and even to work and study.

Social networks in recent years have had a boom of great magnitude and now have become part of our daily social life, and are a fundamental pattern of life (Castells, 2009), because every day the number is increasing of global users who create, interact and share their experiences every second through their network of preference. Some perform them for the purpose of visually transmitting unique profiles through the photographic language, others for the fact of wishing to be more popular or make social comparisons (Utz, Tanis, & Vermeulen, 2012) and there are those who, through image-based platforms, such as Snapchat and Instagram manage to reduce their loneliness and increase their levels of happiness and satisfaction with life (Pittman & Reich, 2016).

In this environment emerges Instagram, social network and application to upload photos and videos Frommer (cited by Sheldon & Bryant, 2016), but on the site, additionally, the individual can edit the photographs with different filters, frames, colors, and infinite resources available to the user according to their tastes and more varied preferences. Then, once the photographs are edited, they are uploaded through the same network and are shared with virtual friends who provide some feedback to the published photographs either with comments or by clicking on the "Like" button.

Who is credited with the fact of the creation of Instagram is Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger in 2010, and since then, the gradual success that this network has had is increasingly on a larger scale, and everything suggests that its growth will continue day to day. For example, we can mention the data on the Shareaholic page, where reference is made to the fact that during the period from July to December 2017, the amount of traffic that Instagram contributed to web pages worldwide gained notable importance: from 0.1% to 0.7%.

This social network/application is a clear example of the progress of social networks and 2.0 technologies. because virtual communities have been created that feel the need to share and communicate. Thus, these new networks have brought with them the need to use new languages that involve

much more of the user, who is no longer a passive but active entity, capable of producing content, sharing them and making them known to their virtual environment as can be evidenced later.

Instagram is a social network that as mentioned above allows many forms of participation by users, who can reflect through this network their ways of thinking, acting, skills, abilities, among others.

In this section, some lines will be dedicated to explaining the results of several investigations around this theme, which will allow us to have a clearer picture of what is happening around this social network. It will be explained, for example, the way in which inserting photographs on Instagram can lead to promoting narcissistic behaviors and how it can cause people to feel influenced by how other people perceive and judge them (Jin & Muqaddam, 2018) and in a similar way, it is explained that users of this network use it to monitor, document and learn about others and demonstrate their creativity, travel and leisure activities (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016).

On the other hand, it will be observed how after an investigation carried out among young adults it was possible to determine that with the use of Instagram this group that has been classified as the loneliest of the generation manages to reduce their levels of loneliness and their levels of happiness and satisfaction with life increases gradually (Pittman & Reich, 2016). If instead, we analyze the behaviors of adolescents during their interactions on Instagram, we manage to determine that some of them seek the approval of their peers and share content in order to appear attractive and interesting and prior to the publication of photographs on Instagram they must follow, according to them, what seem like "norms" for which, in certain cases, they are in need of asking for help (Yau & Reich, 2018).

Similarly, we will briefly review the influence that likes have on Instagram at the brain level, in a study through which it was observed that certain brain areas are activated based on the feedback received by the subject with the "likes" given by their virtual peers (Sherman, Greenfield, Hernandez, & Dapretto, 2017). Additionally, it will be observed how the way of presenting the images on Instagram can imply credibility or it is possible that it encourages users to buy (Colliander & Marder, 2018) or even more so how women increase purchase intentions through the viewing of celebrities on Instagram (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

a) Instagram and narcissism: Jin and Muqaddam (2018) in their study demonstrate through two experiments how the fact of inserting photographs

on Instagram, specifically selfies (photographs of themselves) implies that the user wishes to self-promote. It is indicated as well that selfies can reveal narcissistic emotions in the subject, who also shows the need for popularity. On the other hand, the personality of the subjects is taken into account, which is a key factor in narcissism, which is defined according to the number of views of the photographs posted and the number of followers.

- b) Instagram to monitor and document: Sheldon and Bryant (2016) explain in their study that Instagram is the fastest growing global social network and they manage to determine that the main reason for users to use Instagram, which differs from similar social networks, is "surveillance/knowledge" on the others, It was also found that women are more active on Instagram than men, and that they communicate more with their friends than the opposite sex. Additionally, the authors explain that when women comment on their friends' photographs, they are sending a message that they "care". Similar to the study cited above, it was determined that Instagram is very attractive to develop narcissistic attitudes and that different social and psychological circumstances (social satisfaction, social activity, narcissism) can reinforce different behavioral trends that in turn trigger different behaviors (number of hours on the site, photo editing, use of hashtags).
- c) Instagram to reduce loneliness and increase happiness levels: Pittman and Reich (2016) through their research demonstrate how image-based social networks such as Snapchat and Instagram contribute to reducing loneliness in people, in a society where the population of young adults suffers the strongest loneliness of all time. As long as a social platform is more image-based than in the text, users will feel happier, more satisfied with life and he or she will feel less lonely. The images facilitate social presence, the sense that communication is established with a person rather than with an object. The photo of a friend eating or making a funny face or even if it is a video and his voice can be heard it is more likely that this is a signal to the brain that the friend is there, effects that are not caused by social networks based on the text.
- d) Instagram as a mirror of the person. Do I look attractive?: Yau and Reich (2018) sought through their study to determine the rules of presentation that adolescents follow before "posting" through the social networks Facebook and Instagram. The results indicate that the adolescents prior to posting in the networks in question, seek the approval of their peers to be attractive and interesting. Even in the case of adolescent girls, it is

mostly marked that they ask their friends about their criteria about a certain post prior to publication, but it has been observed that what was initially an entertainment activity, in certain cases can be tedious. Teenagers consider that it is of great importance to follow some rules of online behavior prior to posting posts, which requires some social competence.

- e) Instagram and the influence of likes on the brain: Sherman, Greenfield, Hernandez, and Dapretto (2017) indicate in their study that one of the main characteristics of social networks is the possibility of placing "likes" in the content posted by virtual peers, so this group of researchers examined the behavioral and neural responses of individuals (adolescents and young adults) observing their photographs and those of others while undergoing functional magnetic resonance imaging. The participants felt a special attraction for those photographs that had received a greater number of likes, and the most popular photographs caused more activity in multiple brain regions, including the nucleus accumbens, which is attributed an important function in pleasure, including laughter and reward, as well as fear (Schwienbacher, Fendt, Richardson, & Schnitzler, 2004), for which it is involved in the reward circuit. The response level of this brain nucleus was activated mostly according to the age of the participants.
- f) Instagram as a consumption motivator: Colliander and Marder (2018) explain in their study that they used two probabilities a) show individuals photographs without greater aesthetics, which could well have been captured by an average user and b) place photographs worked with greater aesthetics, in both cases related to a fashion brand during the span of a week. As a result, it was obtained that the mostly elaborated images captured the attention of the users to a greater extent, who in turn recommended others to follow the Instagram account in question and in turn increased, by the aesthetics of the image, the credibility in the source. Similarly, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) corroborate with other authors that on Instagram most of their users are young women and, in their study, they determine that celebrities on Instagram are influential in the buying behaviors of this group of women.

All these changes entail new words that are gradually being inserted in our daily communication, such is the case of the term infoxication, which "arises from the union of the words information plus intoxication" and refers to the idea of the overload of information that a user receives, especially from the internet, in all its forms, which in turn can cause the sensation of not being able to cover or manage it, and therefore generate great anguish (Toffler, 1970).

Romero-Rodríguez and Aguaded (2016) define infoxication as "an excess of consumption of unnecessary information for decision making mostly entertainment content - that is, supersaturation of the cognitive capacity of an individual that leads to distraction from the issues of importance and its own rational alienation".

Based on the context of media competence, the question arises, are instagramers prosumers? A prosumer is a person who "creates goods, services or experiences and is simultaneously involved in their production and consumption" (Toffler, 1970). As one can see, the term prosumers has been used for a long time and has taken even more force with the proliferation of the Internet, which highlights "prosumtion", where Web 2.0 is conceived as a new social factory (Ritzer, Dean, & Jurgenson, 2012). If we take the social premise as a point of analysis of prosumism, the basic premise is to create and share, so if the person does not share, the social network does not flow, it makes no sense.

Users carry out the process of consumption and production through new technologies, blogs and social networks where there are dynamics of reading, feedback and content production.Berrocal, Campos-Domínguez, and Redondo (2014) explain that:

Social networks are clearly a means of 'prosumtion' where prosumers become speakers that produce conversations with and for a consumer audience (...) it means that any activity in the off-line world can have transcendence in the online world, forming a 'space of autonomy'. (pp. 65-72)

The arrival of the smartphone completely changed the digital landscape, mention can be made of Wang, Xiang, and Fesenmaier (2016) who, in their research on the subject, determine that smartphones are used for communication purposes (calls, text messages, emails), entertainment (music, books, photographs and games), online social networks (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), information search and acquisitions (news, weather information, restaurants, shopping, travel ideas and searches in general), and with personal organization tools (bank, alarm, calendar and navigation).

In the aforementioned study, it was also determined that smartphone owners used them all day long, that is, they were part of their daily lives to the point that many of the respondents mentioned that they woke up in the morning with phone alarms and they opened their eyes from time to time at night to observe some notifications of social networks and emails, then during the day they used it to find places to eat food, make purchases, among others.

Based on the criteria and bases of study proposed, this research work aims to determine which are the five instagramers with the greatest impact in Ecuador, as well as to study their profiles according to the activity carried out here.

## Materials and methods

The methodology used for this research work will be qualitative and quantitative, through non-participant observation and using a semi-structured interview with the expert in media competencies, Dr. Joan Ferrés, focused on the media competencies that the successful Instagramers possess and that are object of study of the present investigation.

For the quantitative analysis of the instagramers profiles and the selection of the samples of the present investigation, the five successful instagramers of Ecuador were taken as reference. How to determine their success? To achieve this, we chose to use the well-known Alianzo Ranking, which uses a score between 0 and 100 which is the result of combining different measurement parameters for each of the social profiles to which each user belongs. Among the indicators for an instagramer to appear in the ranking of another user are the number of followers and the interaction with users.

The followed criteria for choosing the Alianzo ranking have been the following:

- It allows to select the profiles of successful instagramers by filtering by categories (Country, social network, language, among others).
- It is a weekly updated ranking that provides real data of the person being analyzed and shows progress in terms of followers by lapses from one week, one month, three months, six months, one year and globally.
- This ranking has been used in several scientific investigations, given its reliability in data and its great value. For example, we can cite the works carried out by Santoveña (2011), Moya-Sánchez and Herrera-Damas (2016), Tejedor et al. (2009), among others.

With the help of Alianzo Ranking, a selection of the five most successful instagramers in Ecuador was made taking into account their influence given by the number of followers and the interaction generated with them.

For the analysis of the profiles of the instagramers that are the object of the study, it was carried out based on the established dimensions of the media competence that a successful instagramer possesses through their publications and based on the opinions expressed by the expert. We proceeded to perform data analysis with the following sections: content analysis, language analysis and feedback. Additionally, the content of the semi-structured interview was a fundamental basis both for the theoretical support in the variable of media competencies, as well as for the elaboration of the discussion of this research work.

## Analysis and results

Through the Alianzo Ranking, the five instagramers that generate the greatest impact in Ecuador are determined and through non-participant observation, it is possible to establish their content, language used during publications and the interaction they engage with the followers who participate in their content.

Chart 1 Instagram account María Teresa Guerrero

María Teresa	Number of followers	Followed	Publications
Guerrero	911 000	2753	8247

Source: Alianzo Ranking

Content analysis: According to Alianzo Ranking, María Teresa Guerrero is the one who leads the list of instagramers with the largest number of followers and activity in the social network. She has a total of 911 000 followers, 2753 followed and 8247 publications. The main topic on her Instagram profile is her day to day in the USA.

**Language:** The language used in the publications made by this Instagramer is quite clear, concrete and concise, so that it can be understood by the followers of her social network. The hashtags mostly used by this Instagramer are #Nilos, #Pinchi - the names of her two dogs, # tsxflacaguerrero - her sportswear line.

**Feedback:** One of the positive aspects that was evidenced in the data collection is the great interaction that María Teresa Guerrero maintains with her followers. Thus, in the publications that refer to her line of sportswear, followers get answers from the successful instagramer, but not only when it comes to sells, but also in other types of publications.

Chart 2
Instagram account #ChocoTrip

#ChokoTrip	Number of followers	Followed	Publications
Viajando por Ecuador	26 500	6907	4161

Source: Alianzo Ranking

Content analysis: Christian Echeverría (chokoec) is the one who ranks second in the Alianzo ranking, with a total of 26,500 followers, 6907 followed and 4161 publications. The main topic in his Instagram profile are photographs of his travels and adventures in the places he visits. Thus, for example, he shows his taste for the most varied and even strange landscapes.

**Language:** In the different chokoec publications it can be shown that the language used is quite understandable for the audiences that follow him, especially for travel and adventure lovers. In his publications he uses hashtags in which #ChokoTrip is self-mentioned and also refers to the country he is visiting.

**Feedback:** As in the previous case, it can be said that the interaction that this individual performs towards his followers can be one of the keys to success, given that the user who observes that his comment has a feedback feels satisfied, motivated and with some importance because your message has had an answer and therefore stands out among the group.

Chart 3
Richard Salazar Barona Instagram Account

Richard Salazar Barona	Number of followers	Followed	Publications
	55 800	234	362

Source: Alianzo Ranking

**Content analysis:** The case of Richard Salazar Barona can be seen that his target audience are teenagers and that is why his publications are based on photographs of himself, in many cases selfies in which he appears very attractive with quite youthful clothes. In the publications he shows his day to day and transmits affection, love and empathy to his followers, who are mostly women.

**Language:** In the point of analysis is the language used in the publications of Richard Salazar Barona we realize that it is that of a teenager who seeks to capture the attention of the followers, since he uses phrases such as: "Today I removed my brackets and I cut my hair Do you want me to upload a picture of how I look like now? #RompeElHielo."

**Feedback:** YouTube is another of the means used by Richard Salazar in addition to the Instagram account and through his posts he calls for interaction by the followers, mostly female followers. In the publications the instagramer writes messages like: "We are going to pursue our dream to the end, there is only one life".

Chart 4
Dalo Bucaram Instagram account

Dalo Bucaram	Number of followers	Followed	Publications
	362 000	4071	4099

Source: Alianzo Ranking

Content analysis: Abdalá Jaime Bucaram Pulley is a renowned Ecuadorian politician, a native of Guayaquil, who in the Alianzo ranking ranks fourth because of the number of followers that reaches a total of 362,000, 4071 followed and 4099 publications. In his publications it can be evidenced that they are mostly photographs of his private life, he photographs his children, wife and takes selfies.

**Language:** Through the publications of Dalo Bucaram it is very noticeable to realize that he is a very loving person to his family and a believer in God, this can be evidenced by the hashtags he uses in his publications such as #fuerzayFe, #lafuerzadelamor.

**Feedback:** Unlike the instagramers mentioned above, it can be mentioned that Dalo Bucaram does not maintain interaction with his followers and

in front of the comments written by his followers does not provide any response and although some individuals allude to it with questions or mentions daloxhecho does not respond to the followers; however, a large number of followers is observed.

Chart 5
Guillermo Lasso Instagram account

Dalo Bucaram	Number of followers	Followed	Publications
	362 000	4071	4099

Source: Alianzo Ranking

Content analysis: Guillermo Lasso, Ecuadorian politician and former candidate for the Presidency of Ecuador according to Alianzo Ranking occupies the fifth place of the most successful Ecuadorian instagramers. On the other hand, he demonstrates through images the public appearances he has in the media or when he has meetings with citizens. In previous publications when Ecuador was going through an electoral period, publications with campaign themes, videos, interviews, among others are observed.

Language: Although it is true Guillermo Lasso is a politician who aspired in his time to occupy the Presidency of Ecuador, according to Instagram publications it can be evidenced that the politician in question still aspires for a political position. Thus, for example, the language used in his publications has a tone oriented to this end: "I tell young people to participate in politics, do not leave the chair empty, and if it is full of indecent people, we must take them out with the force of our Ideas and our decency. Long live an #EcuadorLibre!"

**Feedback:** When analyzing the publications of Guillermo Lasso, it is notorious to show that in the comments there is very little interaction compared to other analyzed instagramers. However, despite this fact, the number of followers of Lasso is quite considerable.

Joan Ferrés, a leading doctor and expert in media competency issues states:

I would talk about balances. It has always been said (and I agree) that quality is more important than quantity, but you cannot provide a public service if you are not able to reach as many people as possible. It is repeated with the

new technologies and with the new communicative practices what happened with the classic ones. A high-quality television that interested very few viewers did not provide a public service, because it did like banks, it only gave culture to those who already had it. The same criteria apply to Instagram and social networks (...).

It is possible to coincide with Joan Ferrés in the fact that a balance point must be sought because to have a large number of followers it is necessary to know what that group of followers would be interested in knowing or observe in their news feed of their Instagram account. That is where the importance of an instagramer possessing mastery in media competencies lies. Through this research, each successful instagramer was analyzed under the following criteria, each corresponding to a dimension of media competence: content analysis (production and technology), language analysis (language), photography (aesthetics), transmitted values (ideology and values), feedback / interaction (diffusion).

### Discussion and conclusions

The instagramers, who were subject to analysis, through their posts on Instagram sought to generate closeness with their followers in all cases, by showing photos of their daily lives, trips, family, pets, passions, hobbies, entertainment, advice and even including something in a humorous way, they look for the followers to observe that they are people like them who can fall and get up that despite enjoying fame they also have a home, a hobby and are someone other than what is seen on television or in the media in general.

The language used by the analyzed instagramers in most cases is natural, clear and with short phrases, the use of hashtags # with words that refer to travel, clothing stores or simply their life slogans is observed. In other cases, they make use of humor to accompany their photographs and thus capture the attention of their followers.

If it is about calling for the participation of their followers, the analyzed instagramers know how to do it, because they capture the attention of their audience to like and comment on their photographs in exchange for giving them a response "hello" to their comments. In addition, they raise questions such as: "What do you think of my new look? Do you want my new album to come out now? How do i look today Comment…", "I will like the

last like on this post," among many others. And the followers look for their name to appear among the list of comments of their instagramer of preference. This pleasure of receiving a feedback may be due to the influence of Instagram's likes in the brain as demonstrated by Sherman, Greenfield, Hernandez, and Dapretto (2017) in the study in which participants felt a special attraction for those photographs who had received a greater number of likes, which caused more activity in multiple brain regions.

One of the main problems encountered was determining the most successful instagramers at the Ecuador level because there were some tools used for the acquisition of automated data in social networks; However, the tools were not free, therefore an intense search was carried out on the Internet and data were obtained from some prestigious rankings on social networks and blogs such as Alianzo Ranking, which has been the main data collection tool. It is considered that if the economic limitation had not existed, it would have been of great interest to be able to use some other tool to measure instagramers success in order to determine the possible existence of deviations between them.

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