

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key: Dissecting the Influencer Economy: A Collegiate Social Media Analysis

Parasocial relationships, algorithmic bias, and the monetization of authenticity. Critical analysis for advanced media studies students.

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**1. Which sociological concept best explains the perceived intimacy and one-sided emotional bond a follower develops with a creator like MrBeast or Emma Chamberlain?**

**Answer:** B) Parasocial Interaction

Parasocial interaction refers to the psychological relationship where an audience member perceives a close personal connection with a media persona, despite the lack of reciprocal interaction.

**2. The 'De-influencing' trend primarily functions as a total rejection of consumerism rather than a strategic pivot toward personal brand trust.**

**Answer:** B) False

While it appears anti-consumerist, 'de-influencing' is often a curated strategy to build 'authenticity capital,' allowing the influencer to recommend alternative products more effectively.

**3. In the context of platform governance, the \_\_\_\_\_ refers to the hidden labor performed by individuals who filter and remove policy-violating content to maintain an influencer's community.**

**Answer:** D) Commercial Content Moderation

Commercial Content Moderation (CCM) is the essential but often invisible labor force managing the toxicity of platforms, a critical component of the digital ecosystem.

**4. When an influencer pivots from lifestyle content to promoting decentralized finance (DeFi), they risk losing which form of credibility described by the Ohanian model?**

**Answer:** A) Expertise

The Ohanian Source Credibility Model emphasizes Expertise, Trustworthiness, and Attractiveness. Pivoting to technical fields without background compromises the 'Expertise' dimension.

**5. The 'Echo Chamber' effect on platforms like Bluesky or Mastodon is exacerbated by algorithmic sorting more than user-led curation.**

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**Answer:** B) False

Decentralized or chronological platforms rely more on user selection for curation, meaning echo chambers there are primarily driven by self-selection and homophily rather than a central algorithm.

**6. The concept of \_\_\_\_\_ labor describes how creators must constantly perform their 'authentic' selves and manage their emotional state to maintain follower engagement.**

**Answer:** A) Emotional

Emotional labor, a term popularized by Arlie Hochschild, is the process by which workers manage their feelings to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display.

**7. Platform 'affordances' refer to the functional properties of a site. Which of these is an affordance of LinkedIn that limits influencer culture compared to TikTok?**

**Answer:** B) Professional identity verification

Affordances define what actions are possible. LinkedIn's tie to real-world employment and resumes limits the 'anonymous' or 'rebel' personae common on other apps.

**8. The 'micro-influencer' (1,000–100,000 followers) generally commands a higher engagement rate than 'mega-influencers' with millions of followers.**

**Answer:** A) True

Data consistently shows that as follower counts increase, the intimacy and reciprocity—and thus engagement percentages—tend to decrease.

**9. The shift toward \_\_\_\_\_ content, characterized by unedited videos and messy backgrounds, is a direct reaction to the 'Instagram Aesthetic' of the mid-2010s.**

**Answer:** C) Lo-fi or Casual

The 'Casual' or 'Lo-fi' movement prizes perceived RAWness over the heavily filtered, staged photography that previously dominated social media.

**10. Which term describes the phenomenon where influencers face backlash for participating in social justice movements only when it is 'on-trend'?**

**Answer:** B) Performative Activism

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Performative activism is a form of activism practiced to increase one's social capital rather than because of one's devotion to a cause.