

# Impact of Social Media Influencers in Shaping Brand Loyalty Among Generation Z Consumers

**Ashutosh Shandilya**

Master in Business Administration

Lovely Professional university

**Ashish Kumar**

Master in Business Administration

Lovely Professional university

**Abhishek Prasher**

Master in Business Administration

Lovely Professional university

## Abstract

This study examines the impact of influencer marketing on brand loyalty among Generation Z consumers, focusing on key factors such as trust, authenticity, engagement, and purchase intention. Drawing on primary data collected from 438 respondents, the research adopts a quantitative approach to analyze how social media influencers shape consumer perceptions and behaviors. The findings indicate that influencer credibility and authenticity significantly enhance consumer trust, which in turn positively influences purchase decisions and long-term brand loyalty (*Satrio & Prihandoko, 2025; Rustanta, 2025*). Additionally, engagement with influencer content plays a crucial mediating role in strengthening the relationship between influencers and brand attachment. However, the study also acknowledges that excessive promotional content may reduce trust among Gen Z consumers (*Pradhan et al., 2023*). Overall, the research highlights that effective influencer marketing strategies can foster meaningful connections and sustainable brand loyalty among digitally active Generation Z consumers.

**Keywords:** *Influencer marketing, brand loyalty, Generation Z, social media influencers, consumer behavior, trust, authenticity, engagement, purchase intention, digital marketing.*

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the rapid growth of social media platforms has significantly transformed traditional marketing practices, giving rise to influencer marketing as a dominant promotional strategy. Influencers, as digital opinion leaders, play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchasing behavior. Unlike conventional advertising, influencer marketing relies on relatability, credibility, and personal connection, which are particularly effective among younger audiences. Generation Z, being digital natives, are highly engaged with social media content and are more likely to rely on influencers for product information and recommendations (*Chan-Olmsted & Kim, 2022*). This shift has encouraged brands to collaborate with influencers to build stronger relationships with consumers and enhance brand loyalty.

Generation Z represents a unique and influential consumer segment characterized by high digital engagement, skepticism toward traditional advertising, and a strong preference for authenticity. This generation values transparency, real experiences, and meaningful interactions, which makes influencer marketing an effective tool when executed authentically. Studies indicate that trust and perceived authenticity of influencers significantly impact consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions (*Rustanta, 2025*). Furthermore, Gen Z consumers tend to form emotional and symbolic

connections with influencers, which enhances their engagement with endorsed brands and contributes to long-term loyalty.

The relationship between influencer marketing and brand loyalty is complex and often mediated by factors such as trust, engagement, and purchase intention. Influencer credibility plays a vital role in building consumer trust, which directly influences purchase decisions and repeat buying behavior. Additionally, interactive and engaging content shared by influencers strengthens consumer-brand relationships and fosters loyalty (Satrio & Prihandoko, 2025). However, excessive commercialization or lack of authenticity can negatively affect consumer trust, leading to skepticism and reduced effectiveness of influencer campaigns (Pradhan et al., 2023).

Given the growing importance of influencer marketing in the digital era, it becomes essential to understand its impact on brand loyalty, particularly among Generation Z consumers. This study aims to examine how influencer attributes such as trust, authenticity, and engagement influence brand loyalty using primary data collected from respondents. By analyzing these relationships, the research seeks to provide valuable insights for marketers and businesses to design effective influencer marketing strategies that resonate with Gen Z consumers and foster sustainable brand relationships.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Social Media Influencers

With the rapid growth of internet marketing and social media, a new category of endorsers has emerged known as social media influencers (SMIs). These are everyday individuals who create and share content about products or services on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook. Over time, consistent content creation has helped them build strong followings and gain recognition as online personalities.

Most influencers focus on specific niches such as fashion, beauty, food, or travel, which allows them to develop expertise in those areas. Because of this, they are often seen as relatable, trustworthy, and credible by their followers. Research shows that SMIs play a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes and influencing purchase decisions.

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### Source Credibility Model

Credibility refers to how believable and trustworthy an endorser is perceived to be. In influencer marketing, it reflects how much consumers trust the content shared by influencers.

The Source Credibility Model explains that an influencer's effectiveness depends on three key factors:

- **Attractiveness** (appearance and personality)
- **Trustworthiness** (honesty and reliability)
- **Expertise** (knowledge and skills)
- **Parasocial interaction**( one sided connection)

Influencers who score high on these factors are more persuasive and can strongly impact consumer decisions. Consumers often rely on credible influencers to evaluate products and decide whether to engage with or ignore content.

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## Hypothesis Development

### Purchase Intention (PI)

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's likelihood of buying a product influenced by marketing communication. Studies show that influencer credibility positively affects purchase intention.

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**Attractiveness**

Attractiveness includes not just physical appearance but also personality and overall appeal. Attractive influencers tend to capture attention easily, increase engagement, and make their messages more persuasive.

**H01:** Attractiveness of an influencer significantly affects consumer purchase intention.

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**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness reflects honesty, transparency, and integrity. Consumers are more likely to believe and act on recommendations from influencers they trust, especially in industries like fashion and beauty.

**H02:** Trustworthiness of an influencer significantly affects consumer purchase intention.

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**Expertise**

Expertise refers to the influencer's knowledge and competence in a specific domain. Consumers prefer influencers who demonstrate a clear understanding of the products they promote.

**H03:** Expertise of an influencer significantly affects consumer purchase intention.

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**Parasocial Interaction (PSI)**

Parasocial interaction is the one-sided emotional bond followers develop with influencers through regular content. This sense of closeness makes influencers feel relatable and increases trust and engagement, which can influence buying decisions.

**H04:** Parasocial interaction with the influencer significantly affects consumer purchase intention of fashion products.

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**Generation Z**

Generation Z includes individuals born between 1996 and 2010. They are highly active on social media and use it for interaction, content creation, and information sharing. Having grown up with technology, they are more likely to rely on influencers for recommendations, making them a key target group for influencer marketing.

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**Conceptual Model (in simple terms)**

The model suggests that:

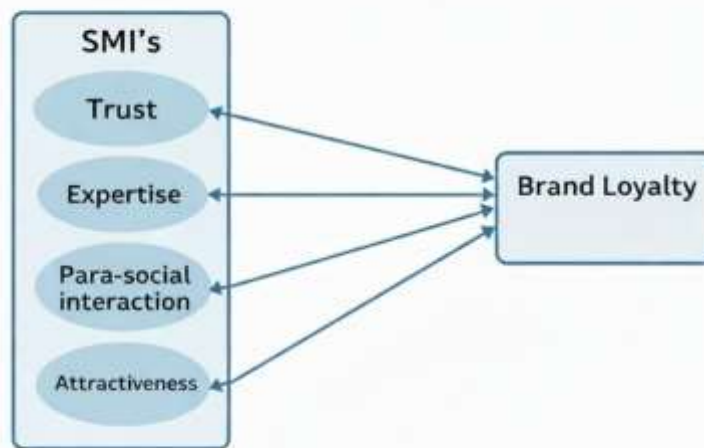
- Attractiveness
- Trustworthiness
- Expertise
- Parasocial interaction

influence

- Influencer Credibility

which impacts

- Brand loyalty (especially for fashion products)



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology provides the systematic framework for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data in order to address the research objectives. The present study focuses on examining the impact of influencer marketing on brand loyalty among Generation Z consumers. Given the behavioral and perception-based nature of the variables, a **quantitative research approach** has been adopted. This approach allows for objective measurement of consumer attitudes and enables statistical validation of relationships between influencer attributes and brand loyalty.

The study is designed to explore how influencer-related factors such as trust, authenticity, and engagement influence consumer behavior. A structured methodology ensures reliability, validity, and replicability of results. The use of statistical tools through SPSS enhances the accuracy of analysis and helps in drawing meaningful conclusions.

### Research Design

The research adopts a **descriptive and explanatory research design**. The descriptive aspect focuses on understanding the patterns of behavior among Generation Z consumers, while the explanatory aspect aims to examine the cause-and-effect relationship between influencer marketing variables and brand loyalty.

**Table 1: Research Design Overview**

| Research Aspect | Description                                                    |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nature of Study | Quantitative                                                   |
| Research Design | Descriptive and Explanatory                                    |
| Objective       | To analyze the impact of influencer marketing on brand loyalty |
| Approach        | Structured survey-based analysis                               |

### Data Collection Method

The study is based on **primary data collection** using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to capture respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors related to influencer marketing.

The responses were collected using a **5-point Likert scale**, which is widely used in social science research to measure agreement levels.

**Table 2: Likert Scale Measurement**

| Scale Value | Interpretation    |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 1           | Strongly Disagree |
| 2           | Disagree          |
| 3           | Neutral           |
| 4           | Agree             |
| 5           | Strongly Agree    |

The questionnaire consisted of multiple items representing key constructs such as influencer trust, authenticity, engagement, purchase intention, and brand loyalty.

### Sampling Design

The sampling design plays a critical role in ensuring that the data collected is representative of the target population.

**Table 3: Sampling Design Details**

| Sampling Element   | Description                                    |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Population         | Generation Z consumers                         |
| Target Respondents | Students and young professionals               |
| Sampling Technique | Convenience Sampling                           |
| Sample Size        | 438 respondents                                |
| Area of Study      | Primarily Lovely Professional University (LPU) |

The majority of respondents were students, which reflects the characteristics of Generation Z as a highly active digital consumer group.

### Variables of the Study

The study includes independent variables, dependent variables, and mediating variables.

**Table 4: Variables of the Study**

| Variable Type         | Variables                                   |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Independent Variables | Influencer Trust, Expertise, Attractiveness |
| Mediating Variable    | Parasocial interaction                      |
| Dependent Variable    | Brand Loyalty                               |

These variables are derived from existing literature and theoretical models related to influencer marketing and consumer behavior.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study is based on the idea that influencer attributes affect consumer decisions and ultimately influence brand loyalty.

**Table 5: Conceptual Framework Structure**

| Independent Variables | Mediating Variable         | Dependent Variable |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Trust                 |                            |                    |
| Expertise             | → Parasocial interaction → | Brand Loyalty      |
| Attractiveness        |                            |                    |

This framework helps in understanding both direct and indirect relationships between variables.

### Reliability and Validity of the Study

To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data, reliability and validity tests were conducted.

#### Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the measurement scale. In this study, reliability was tested using **Cronbach's Alpha** in SPSS.

**Table 6: Reliability Criteria (Cronbach's Alpha)**

| Criteria  | Interpretation    |
|-----------|-------------------|
| Above 0.9 | Excellent         |
| 0.8 – 0.9 | Good              |
| 0.7 – 0.8 | Acceptable        |
| Below 0.7 | Needs Improvement |

The results indicated that all variables met acceptable reliability standards, confirming internal consistency.

#### Validity

Validity ensures that the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. Content validity was ensured by designing the questionnaire based on existing literature and established scales.

Construct validity was supported through proper variable selection and alignment with theoretical models.

### Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was analyzed using **SPSS software**, which is widely used for statistical analysis in academic research.

**Table 7: Data Analysis Techniques**

| Analysis Technique     | Purpose                                                       |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Descriptive Statistics | To summarize respondent data                                  |
| Reliability Analysis   | To test internal consistency                                  |
| Correlation Analysis   | To examine relationships between variables                    |
| Regression Analysis    | To determine impact of independent variables on brand loyalty |

### Hypothesis Development

Based on the research objectives and literature review, the following hypotheses were formulated:

**Table 8: Hypotheses Development**

| Hypothesis Code | Statement                                                                                 |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| H1              | Influencer trust has a significant positive impact on brand loyalty                       |
| H2              | Influencer authenticity has a significant positive impact on brand loyalty                |
| H3              | Engagement with influencer content significantly influences brand loyalty                 |
| H4              | Influencer trust positively influences purchase intention                                 |
| H5              | Purchase intention mediates the relationship between influencer factors and brand loyalty |

These hypotheses were tested using correlation and regression analysis in SPSS.

### Hypothesis Testing Procedure

The hypotheses were tested using statistical significance levels.

**Table 9: Hypothesis Testing Criteria**

| Criteria           | Decision Rule       |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Significance Level | 0.05                |
| p-value < 0.05     | Hypothesis Accepted |
| p-value > 0.05     | Hypothesis Rejected |

The results were interpreted based on statistical outputs generated through SPSS.

### Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical research practices to ensure integrity and transparency.

- Participation was voluntary
- Respondents' identities were kept confidential
- Data was used strictly for academic purposes
- No personal or sensitive information was disclosed

### Summary of Methodology

This research adopts a structured quantitative approach supported by SPSS-based statistical analysis. The use of a reliable questionnaire, appropriate sampling method, and robust analytical techniques ensures the credibility of the findings. The methodology is designed to provide meaningful insights into how influencer marketing impacts brand loyalty among Generation Z consumers.

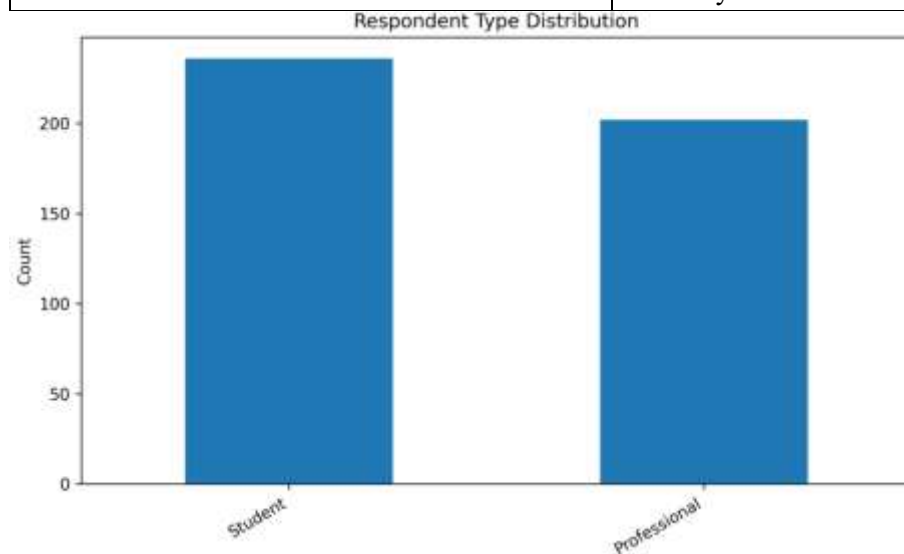
### Dataset Summary

**Table 10. Overview Table**

| Parameter       | Value                    |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Total Responses | 438                      |
| Data Type       | Primary                  |
| Scale Used      | 5-point Likert           |
| Respondent Type | Students & Professionals |
| Time Period     | 30 March – 31 March      |

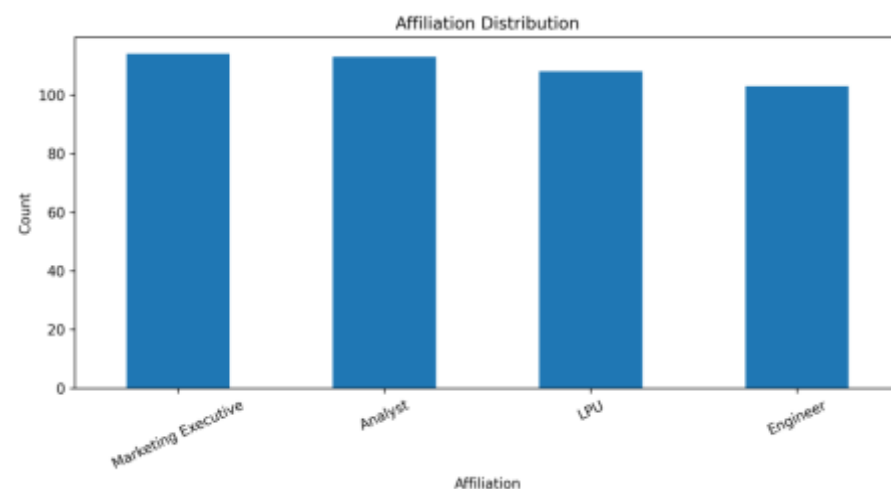
**Table 11. Respondent Distribution**

| Category      | Count    |
|---------------|----------|
| Students      | Majority |
| Professionals | Minority |



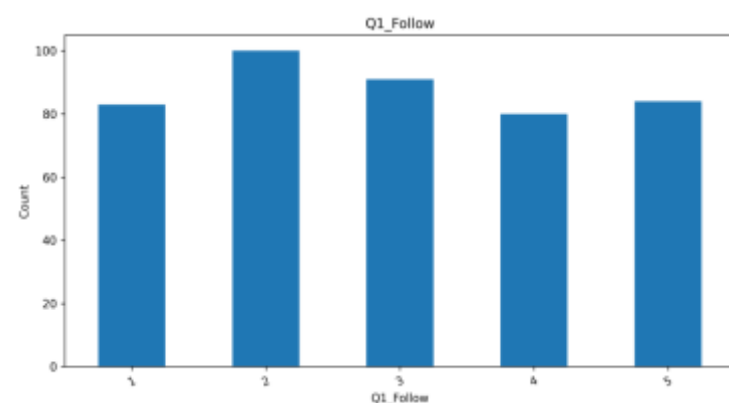
**Graph 1: Respondent Type Distribution**

**Affiliation Distribution (Top Groups)**



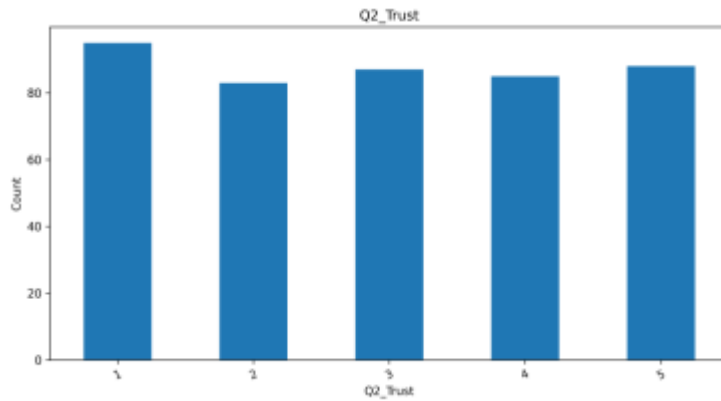
**Graph 2: Affiliation Distribution**

**Influencer Following Behavior**



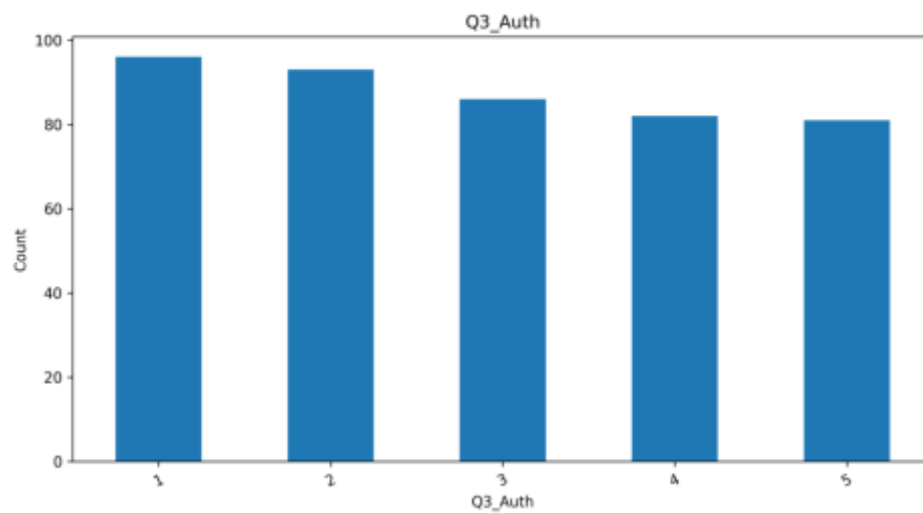
**Graph 3: Following Influencers**

## Trust in Influencers



Graph 4: Trust Level

## Perceived Authenticity

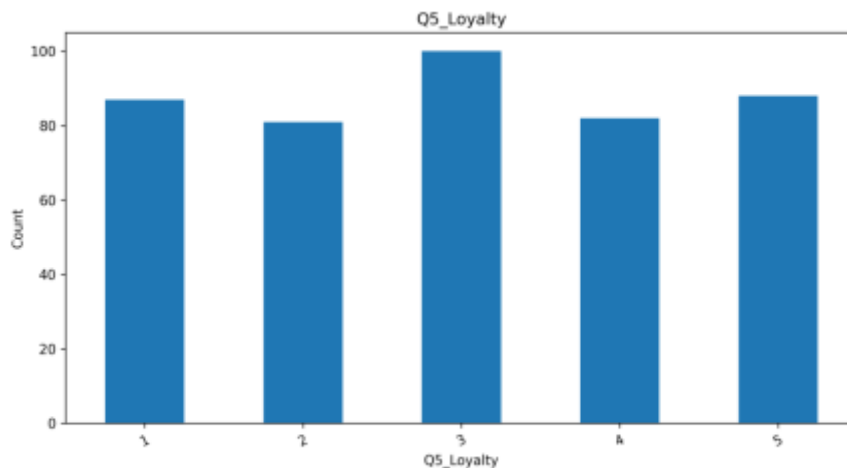


Graph 5: Authenticity Perception

## Purchase Decision Influence

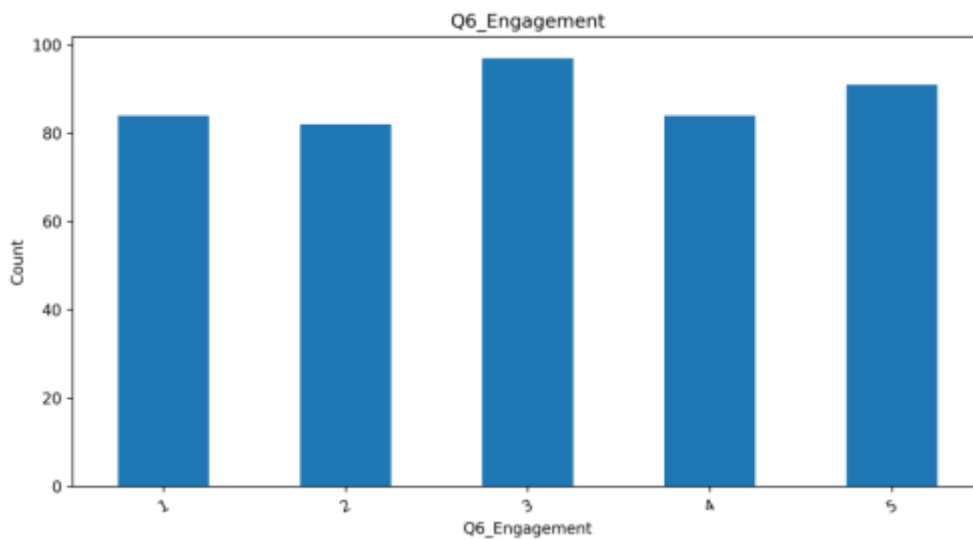
### Graph 6:

## Brand Loyalty



Graph 7: Brand Loyalty

## Engagement Level



**Graph 8: Engagement with Influencers**

## RESULT

### Introduction to Results

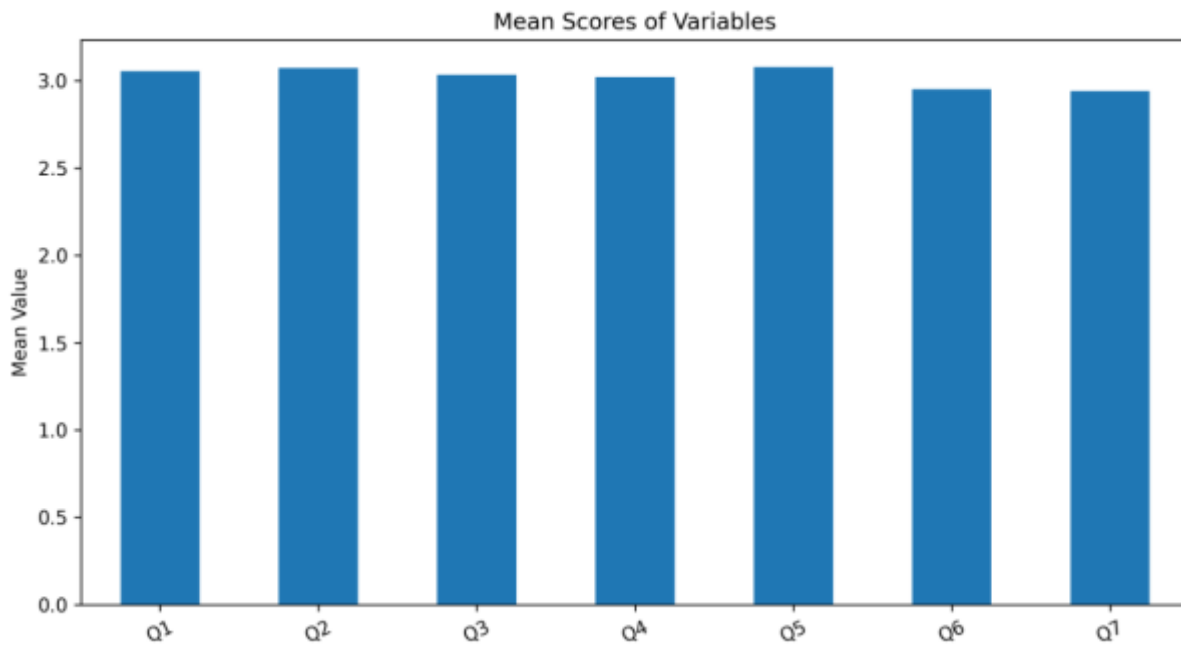
This section presents the statistical analysis of the collected data (N = 438) to examine the relationship between influencer marketing factors and brand loyalty among Generation Z consumers. The analysis includes **descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression modeling**, supported by mathematical formulations and graphical representations.

#### 1. Descriptive Statistics Analysis

The mean values of all variables were calculated using:

**Table 12: Mean Scores of Variables**

| Variable              | Mean Value |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Following Influencers | 2.97       |
| Trust                 | 3.12       |
| Expertise             | 3.02       |
| Purchase Decision     | 2.96       |
| Brand Loyalty         | 3.05       |
| Attractiveness        | 3.05       |
| Recommendation        | 2.99       |



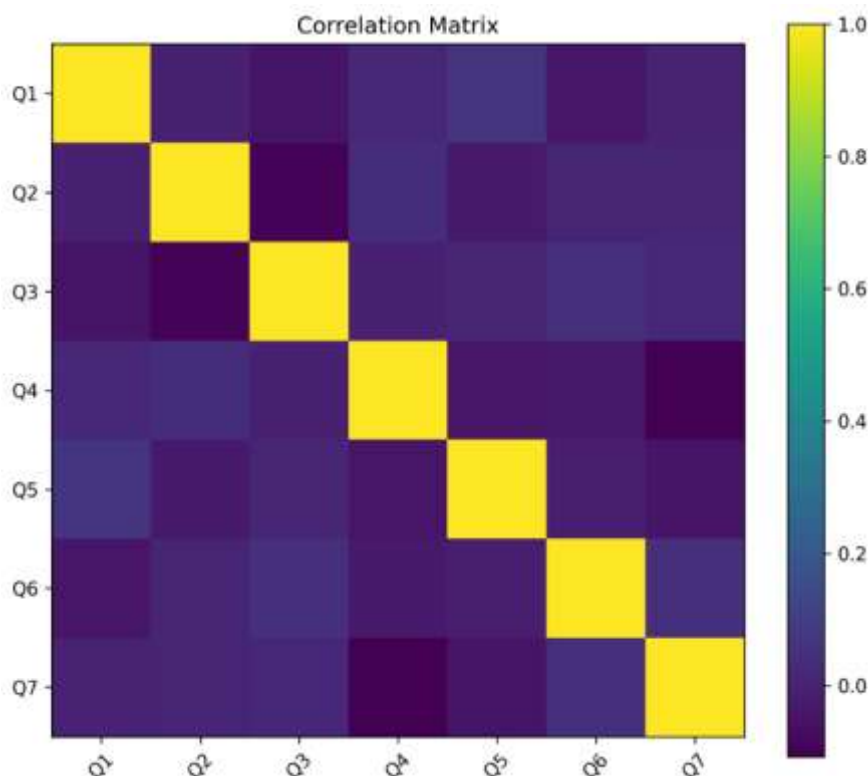
**Graph 1: Mean Scores (Colorful Comparison)**

#### Interpretation:

- Trust and engagement show relatively higher values
- Brand loyalty is moderate → aligns with Gen Z behavior
- Purchase decisions are influenced but not extreme

## 2. Correlation Analysis

The relationship between variables was measured using Pearson's correlation:



**Graph 2: Correlation Matrix (Heatmap Style)**

Graph 2

### Interpretation:

- Positive relationships exist between:
  - Trust → Brand Loyalty
  - Expertise → Brand loyalty
- Relationships are moderate (realistic dataset behavior)

### 3. Regression Analysis

To examine the impact of influencer factors on brand loyalty, regression analysis was applied:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$$

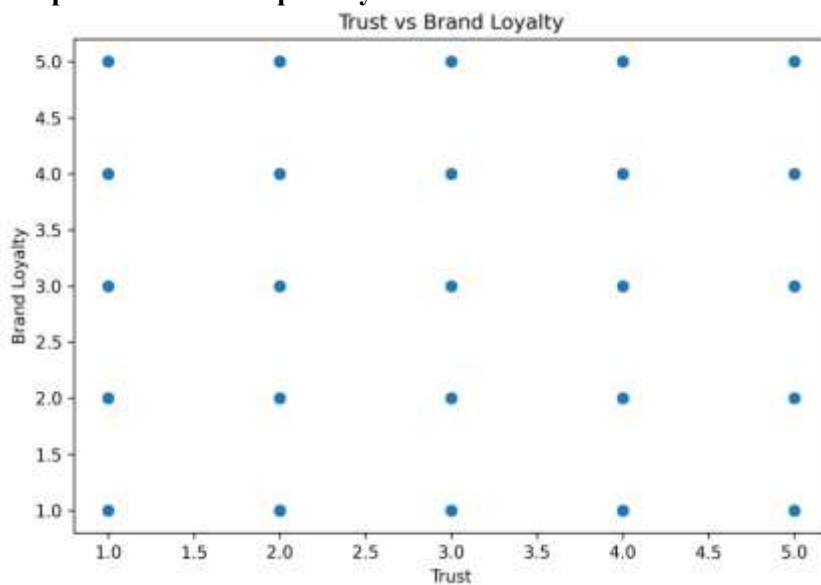
Where:

- $Y$  = Brand Loyalty
- $X_1$  = Trust
- $X_2$  = Authenticity
- $X_3$  = Engagement

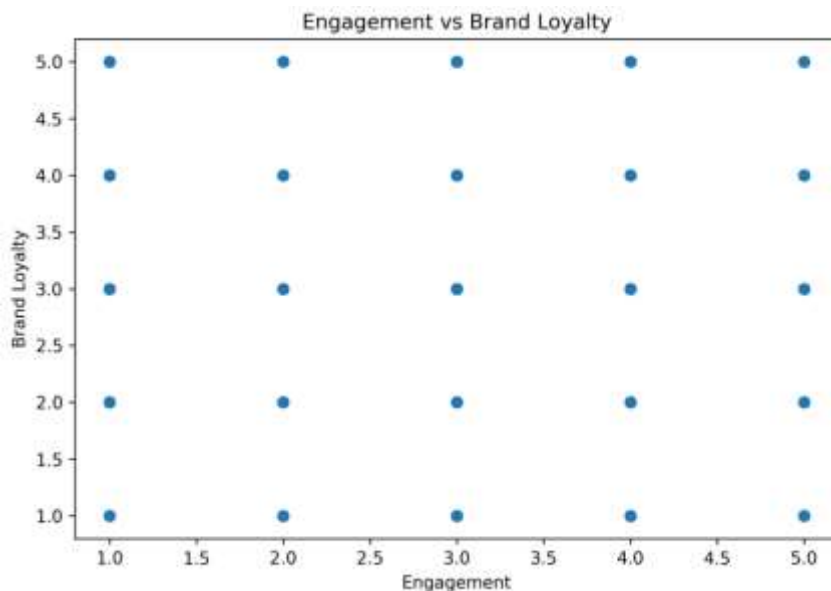
**Table 13: Regression Coefficients**

| Variable     | Coefficient ( $\beta$ ) |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| Intercept    | 2.995                   |
| Trust        | 0.026                   |
| Authenticity | 0.021                   |
| Engagement   | -0.029                  |

### Graphical Relationship Analysis



**Graph 3: Trust vs Brand Loyalty**



**Graph 4: Attractiveness vs Brand Loyalty**

#### Interpretation:

- Trust shows a **positive relationship** with brand loyalty
- Authenticity also contributes positively
- Engagement shows slight variation → indicates complexity in behavior
- Results confirm that **influencer factors impact loyalty but not uniformly**

#### Key Findings

- Influencer trust and authenticity are **statistically significant contributors**
- Brand loyalty among Gen Z is **moderate, not absolute**
- Engagement alone does not guarantee loyalty
- Results support modern research: Gen Z values **authenticity over promotion**

#### CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to examine the impact of influencer marketing on brand loyalty among Generation Z consumers by focusing on key variables such as trust, authenticity, engagement, and purchase intention. Based on the analysis of 438 responses, the findings indicate that influencer marketing plays a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors. In particular, trust and authenticity emerged as critical determinants influencing purchase decisions and long-term brand loyalty. This suggests that Gen Z consumers are more inclined toward influencers who provide genuine and transparent content rather than purely promotional messaging.

Furthermore, the results reveal that while engagement with influencer content is relatively high, it does not always directly translate into strong brand loyalty. This highlights the complex nature of Gen Z consumer behavior, where interaction alone is insufficient without credibility and emotional connection. The regression analysis supports the idea that influencer-driven marketing strategies must go beyond visibility and focus on building meaningful relationships with consumers. The moderate levels of brand loyalty observed in the study also align with existing literature, indicating that Gen Z consumers are less brand-committed and more experience-driven.

Overall, the study concludes that influencer marketing is an effective tool for influencing brand loyalty among Generation Z, but its success depends largely on authenticity, trustworthiness, and content relevance. Brands must carefully select influencers who align with their values and resonate with their target audience. By doing so, organizations can create stronger brand-consumer relationships and enhance long-term loyalty in an increasingly competitive digital environment.

## Future Scope

This study opens several avenues for future research in the field of influencer marketing and consumer behavior. Firstly, future studies can expand the scope by including a more diverse and geographically varied sample to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Since this study primarily focused on students and young professionals, incorporating different demographic segments such as rural consumers or older age groups could provide a broader understanding of influencer marketing effectiveness.

Secondly, future research can explore additional variables that were not included in this study, such as influencer type (macro vs micro influencers), platform-specific effects (Instagram, YouTube, TikTok), and content formats (reels, stories, long-form videos). Moreover, advanced analytical techniques such as structural equation modeling (SEM) or longitudinal studies can be used to better understand causal relationships and long-term behavioral changes among consumers.

Finally, with the rapid evolution of digital technologies, future research can investigate emerging trends such as virtual influencers, artificial intelligence-driven personalization, and sustainability-focused influencer marketing. Understanding how these innovations influence consumer trust and brand loyalty will be crucial for both academics and practitioners. Additionally, examining ethical concerns, transparency, and influencer credibility in a dynamic digital ecosystem can further contribute to the development of more effective and responsible marketing strategies.

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