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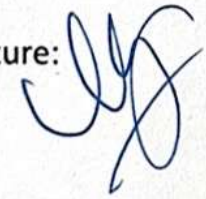

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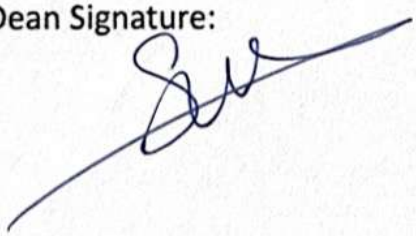

جامعة عفت
EFFAT UNIVERSITY

THE ROLE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING IN SHAPING BRAND PERCEPTION AND LOYALTY

By:

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of _____

Collage of _____

Effat University

Thesis Advisor: Dr. _____

2024-2025

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

We hereby grant the approval of this dissertation report. The student has compiled the dissertation work as per the requirements of the University.

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ABSTRACT

In modern marketing, a significant shift is underway, driven by the increasing importance of digital platforms and social media in consumer behavior. Influencer's marketing strategy holds significant role in brand perception and brand loyalty. The aim of this study is to investigate the role of influencer marketing in shaping consumer brand perception and its subsequent impact on brand loyalty within the modern digital marketplace. Survey based analysis was carried out in this study and 113 participants were involved in the study. Descriptive analysis was carried out and the results suggested that influencers have an impact on the brand perception and brand loyalty as suggested by the participants but the impact of influencers was not uniform and consistent, hence suggesting that brands should not only rely upon the influencers marketing but put efforts in other was as well.

Further studies should be carried out to further investigate this impact.

Keywords: Influencer, Brand perception, Brand loyalty, Marketing

1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

In modern marketing, a significant shift is underway, driven by the increasing importance of digital platforms and social media in consumer behavior. The traditional methods of marketing, which often relied on one-way communication through television, radio, and print, are facing new challenges in reaching and engaging today's consumers (Alghizzawi, 2019). Consumers are now more informed, more connected, and have different expectations of how brands should communicate with them. This change requires marketers to adapt their strategies and explore innovative approaches to build strong brand relationships (Saura et al., 2020).

One marketing strategy that has become increasingly prominent in this digital age is influencer marketing (Santiago and Castelo, 2020). Influencer marketing represents a strategic evolution from classic advertising models. Instead of directly promoting brands through paid advertisements alone, influencer marketing involves collaborating with individuals who have established a dedicated audience on social media (Campbell and Farrell, 2020). These individuals, known as influencers, have built trust and credibility with their followers within specific areas of interest, such as fashion, technology, health, or lifestyle. The power of influencer marketing lies in its ability to tap into the established relationships and perceived authenticity that influencers have cultivated with their audiences (Kapitan et al., 2022). Consumers are often more receptive to recommendations from individuals they follow and trust online compared to traditional advertising. This is because influencer content can feel less like advertising and more like genuine advice or personal endorsements from a trusted source. In a digital environment where consumers

are increasingly skeptical of overt marketing messages, the perceived authenticity of influencer content can be a valuable asset for brands (Okonkwo and Namkoisse, 2023).

Furthermore, influencer marketing offers brands the opportunity to target specific consumer segments with greater precision. Influencers typically specialize in particular niches and attract audiences with shared interests. This allows brands to focus their marketing efforts on reaching consumers who are more likely to be interested in their products or services, leading to more efficient and effective marketing campaigns (Leung et al., 2022). This targeted approach is a key advantage over broader, less focused traditional advertising methods. As influencer marketing gains significance, it is essential to understand its impact on key brand outcomes. Brands are investing substantial resources in influencer collaborations, aiming to enhance how consumers perceive their brand and to foster stronger customer loyalty (Jordas, 2023). The expectation is that positive influencer engagement can lead to improved brand awareness, a more favorable brand image, and ultimately, greater customer commitment and repeat business. However, to effectively leverage influencer marketing and to measure its true value, a deeper and more systematic understanding is needed.

This research therefore aims to investigate the specific role of influencer marketing in shaping brand perception and loyalty. By examining how different influencer marketing strategies and characteristics influence consumer attitudes and behaviors towards brands, this study seeks to provide valuable insights for both marketing theory and practice. Understanding the mechanisms through which influencers impact brand perception and loyalty is crucial for brands seeking to effectively utilize this evolving marketing approach in the dynamic digital marketplace.

1.2 Problem Statement

Influencer marketing has rapidly transitioned from a nascent trend to a central pillar of contemporary marketing strategies across diverse industries (Whig et al., 2024). Its widespread adoption is predicated on the intuitive understanding that recommendations from trusted and relatable online personalities can significantly influence consumer attitudes and behaviors. Brands are increasingly investing substantial resources in collaborations with social media influencers, anticipating enhanced brand visibility, improved brand imagery, and ultimately, stronger customer loyalty (Ibáñez et al., 2022). This strategic shift reflects a recognition that traditional marketing approaches are encountering diminished effectiveness in engaging digitally native and socially interconnected consumer segments. Despite the burgeoning popularity and significant financial investment in influencer marketing, a comprehensive and empirically validated understanding of its precise mechanisms and outcomes remains underdeveloped within academic literature (Leung et al., 2022). While industry reports and practitioner insights often highlight anecdotal successes and perceived benefits, rigorous scholarly investigation into the specific ways influencer marketing shapes consumer responses is notably limited based on the researcher's knowledge and the results of the research that were reached. Specifically, the extent to which influencer marketing effectively molds consumer perception of a brand, encompassing dimensions such as perceived quality, brand image, and trustworthiness, requires more in-depth examination. Current understanding often relies on assumptions about the persuasive power of influencers, rather than detailed empirical evidence demonstrating the specific impact on these crucial facets of brand perception.

Furthermore, the relationship between brand perception, as shaped by influencer marketing, and subsequent consumer loyalty necessitates greater clarity (Pitafi and Awan, 2024). It is generally

assumed that a positive brand perception fostered through influencer engagement will translate into increased brand loyalty, manifested in repeat purchase behavior, positive word-of-mouth referrals, and stronger customer-brand relationships (Vo et al., 2025). However, the nature and strength of this connection, and the potential mediating role of brand perception in driving loyalty outcomes from influencer marketing initiatives, are areas that demand more systematic and rigorous investigation. It is crucial to move beyond correlational observations and to establish a more nuanced understanding of the causal pathways and mediating factors at play. Without a strong, evidence-based understanding of how influencer marketing impacts brand perception and subsequently influences brand loyalty, businesses may be operating under potentially flawed assumptions (Rohde and Mau, 2021). Marketing investments in influencer collaborations may lack strategic optimization, and the return on investment (ROI) may be difficult to accurately measure and maximize (Morillo, 2024). A lack of clear metrics and empirically supported frameworks hinders the ability of marketers to effectively plan, execute, and evaluate influencer marketing campaigns. This gap in knowledge represents a significant challenge for businesses seeking to leverage influencer marketing strategically and responsibly in the increasingly complex and competitive digital marketplace.

1.3 Aims and objectives

Main Aim:

- To comprehensively investigate the role of influencer marketing in shaping consumer brand perception and its subsequent impact on brand loyalty within the modern digital marketplace.

Specific Objectives:

- To determine the extent to which influencer marketing activities influence consumer perception of key brand attributes, specifically:
    - Perceived Brand Quality
    - Brand Image
    - Brand Trustworthiness
- To analyze the relationship between consumer brand perception (as shaped by influencer marketing) and consumer brand loyalty, focusing on:
    - Repeat Purchase Intentions and Behavior
    - Brand Advocacy and Recommendations
- To examine the role of brand perception in the relationship between influencer marketing activities and consumer brand loyalty, elucidating the indirect pathway through which influencer marketing may drive loyalty outcomes.

1.4 Research Importance

This research holds significant importance for both the academic understanding of modern marketing and the practical application of effective marketing strategies in the digital age. From a theoretical standpoint, this research addresses a notable gap in the current academic literature concerning the empirical examination of influencer marketing effectiveness. While the phenomenon of influencer marketing has gained considerable traction in industry practice and popular discourse, scholarly investigation into its underlying mechanisms and measurable outcomes remains relatively limited. This study contributes to marketing theory by providing a rigorous, data-driven analysis of how influencer marketing operates to influence consumer

responses. Specifically, it delves into the psychological processes through which influencer activities shape consumer brand perceptions, encompassing critical dimensions such as perceived brand quality, brand image, and brand trustworthiness. By empirically testing these relationships, the research extends the theoretical understanding of persuasion and communication in a digital context, particularly within the realm of marketing.

Furthermore, this study advances theoretical frameworks related to brand building and consumer loyalty in the digital era. It investigates the mediating role of brand perception as a crucial link between influencer marketing efforts and the ultimate goal of fostering brand loyalty. By exploring this mediating pathway, the research offers a more nuanced and comprehensive theoretical model of how influencer marketing can contribute to long-term brand equity and enduring customer relationships. This deeper theoretical insight is valuable for refining existing marketing models and for developing new frameworks that better account for the unique dynamics of influencer-driven brand communication. Moreover, the research findings will contribute to the ongoing academic discourse on digital marketing, social media marketing, and consumer behavior in online environments, enriching the body of knowledge in these rapidly evolving sub-disciplines.

Beyond its theoretical contributions, this research offers substantial practical value for businesses and marketing practitioners. In an environment where influencer marketing investments are escalating, but clear metrics for success and optimal strategies remain somewhat elusive, this study provides evidence-based insights to guide more effective decision-making. The findings of this research will equip marketers with a more refined understanding of how to strategically leverage influencer marketing to achieve specific brand objectives. By identifying the key elements of influencer marketing that most effectively shape positive brand perceptions and drive customer

loyalty, businesses can optimize their influencer marketing campaigns for improved return on investment.

Specifically, the research will offer practical guidance on influencer selection, content strategy, and campaign design. Understanding which types of influencers are most effective at shaping particular aspects of brand perception (e.g., trustworthiness versus image) can enable marketers to make more informed choices in influencer partnerships. Similarly, insights into how brand perception mediates the relationship with loyalty will allow for the development of more targeted and impactful influencer marketing initiatives aimed at building long-term customer relationships, not just short-term sales boosts. Moreover, the study's findings can inform the development of more solid frameworks for measuring the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns, enabling businesses to better track their performance, demonstrate accountability, and continuously improve their strategies in this dynamic and increasingly competitive marketing landscape. Ultimately, this research empowers businesses to utilize influencer marketing more strategically, efficiently, and ethically, maximizing its potential to build strong brands and foster lasting customer loyalty in the digital age.

1.5 Research Questions

1. To what extent does influencer marketing shape consumer perception of a brand, including its quality, image, and trustworthiness?
2. How does brand perception influence consumer brand loyalty, including repeat purchases and recommendations?
3. To what extent does brand perception mediate the relationship between influencer marketing and brand loyalty, shaping consumer purchasing behavior and engagement?

1.6 Scope of the study

The goal of this study is to explore the effect of influencer marketing on brand image and brand loyalty. It seeks to identify the most effective influencer marketing methods and the manner in which they shape the trust, engagement, and brand loyalty of customers. For this, the research will be supplemented by the employment of a combination of literature review, and questionnaires. Data will be collected both from scholarly sources (such as books and journals) and direct participant responses. Research will be carried out on a selected sample of consumers who are frequent users of influencer content. On the basis of these findings, the research will provide valuable recommendations for optimizing the utilization of influencer marketing to build brand image and customer loyalty.

1.7 Structure of the paper

The study is organized into five chapters, each addressing a vital component in the research process:

Introduction – This chapter introduces the research, presenting the background to the research, the problem, the objectives, the research questions, and the significance.

Literature Review – This section explores the extant literature on the subject matters of brand image, brand loyalty, and influencer advertising. It examines prominent theories, earlier findings, and models to build the theoretical framework for the research.

Methodology – This chapter outlines the research design, data gathering techniques, sample techniques, and analytic techniques employed in the research. It provides the reasoning for the adopted techniques and guarantees the reliability and validity of the study.

Discussion and Data Analysis – This section summarizes the findings derived from the collected data, analyzes the findings, and discusses the implications. It compares the findings with the literature to identify major findings and trends.

Conclusion and Recommendations – Conclusion chapter summarizes the principal findings, addresses the research objectives, and provides realistic recommendations. It also addresses the research limitations and suggests the direction for future research.

2. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore the existing body of academic knowledge that underpins this research endeavor. It aims to provide a comprehensive and critical examination of relevant scholarly literature, thereby establishing a strong theoretical foundation for investigating the role of influencer marketing in shaping brand perception and loyalty.

2.2 Understanding Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing has evolved from a niche tactic to a mainstream marketing strategy with remarkable speed. Its rise reflects a fundamental shift in how consumers seek information, form opinions, and make purchasing decisions in the digital age (Glenister, 2021). Traditional advertising models are increasingly complemented, and in some cases supplanted, by marketing approaches that prioritize authenticity, peer-to-peer recommendations, and engagement-driven content. Influencer marketing, with its focus on leveraging trusted voices within online communities, embodies this evolution. Understanding the academic discourse surrounding this increasingly influential marketing approach is therefore crucial for both researchers and practitioners seeking to navigate the complexities of the modern marketing landscape (Kumar et al., 2021).

2.2.1 Defining Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is a contemporary marketing strategy that leverages the power of individuals who have established a significant following on social media platforms. These individuals, known as influencers, are characterized by their ability to shape the opinions, attitudes, and purchasing

decisions of their followers due to their perceived credibility, expertise, or authenticity in a particular domain (Audrezet et al., 2023). Unlike traditional celebrity endorsements, which often rely on fame from entertainment or sports, influencer marketing frequently involves everyday people who have built a personal brand and trust with their audience through consistent and engaging content. According to Audrezet et al. (2023), social media influencers are defined as "people who develop and maintain a personal brand and following on social media through posts intertwining personality, lifestyle, and promoted products or services, influencing followers' behaviors positively or negatively." This definition underscores the multifaceted role of influencers, who not only promote products but also cultivate a relationship with their audience based on trust and relatability. This relationship is crucial, as it allows brands to reach targeted audiences more effectively than traditional advertising methods, tapping into pre-existing communities of engaged followers to increase brand awareness, drive engagement, and ultimately influence purchase decisions (Lou et al., 2024).

The effectiveness of influencer marketing lies in its ability to create authentic connections between brands and consumers through trusted intermediaries. For instance, influencers often frame their content as testimonial advertising, which, according to the Federal Trade Commission in the United States, must be disclosed as sponsored to maintain transparency (Li and Peng, 2021). This authenticity is particularly appealing to younger demographics, such as millennials and Gen Z, who are skeptical of traditional advertising and value peer recommendations.

2.2.2 Evolution of Influencer Marketing

The concept of influencer marketing has its roots in word-of-mouth marketing and celebrity endorsements, which have long been recognized as powerful tools in shaping consumer behavior. However, the rise of social media platforms in the early 2000s transformed these traditional

methods into a more democratized and measurable form of marketing (Audrezet et al., 2023). Influencers first began to emerge in the early 2000s, with bloggers and early social media users gaining followings by sharing their experiences and opinions on various topics. This period marked the initial phase of influencer marketing, where individuals leveraged platforms like blogs and early social networks to build personal brands. As social media platforms like Instagram (launched in 2010), YouTube (launched in 2005), and TikTok (launched in 2016) grew in popularity, so did the number and influence of these content creators (Freberg et al., 2011). By the mid-2010s, brands began recognizing the potential of collaborating with these influencers to reach younger demographics that were increasingly skeptical of traditional advertising. This recognition led to the mainstream acceptance of influencer marketing, with companies allocating budgets to partnerships that drove engagement and sales.

The evolution of influencer marketing can be divided into several key phases, as outlined below:

1. Early Adoption (Early 2000s): Bloggers and early social media users began building personal brands by sharing content on platforms like blogs and early social networks, laying the groundwork for influencer marketing.

2. Rise of Visual Platforms (Mid-2010s): The launch of Instagram in 2010 provided a fertile ground for visual influencers, while YouTube saw a surge in vloggers and content creators. The introduction of Instagram Stories in 2016 further enhanced the interactive aspect of influencer content, allowing for real-time engagement.

3. Mainstream Acceptance (Late 2015–Early 2020): Brands increasingly allocated budgets to influencer marketing, recognizing its effectiveness in driving engagement and sales. This

period saw the rise of influencer marketing as a standard component of digital marketing strategies.

4. Diversification and Specialization (Early 2020s): With market saturation, influencers began niching down into specific areas such as fashion, beauty, fitness, or technology. Micro-influencers, with smaller but highly engaged audiences, became popular for their authenticity and cost-effectiveness, offering brands a more targeted approach.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 accelerated the growth of influencer marketing as more people spent time online, prompting brands to seek new ways to connect with consumers virtually (Audrezet et al., 2023). The use of live streaming and virtual events became more prevalent, allowing influencers to engage with their audiences in real-time, further expanding the reach and impact of influencer campaigns.

2.2.3 Types of Influencers and Influencer Strategies

Influencers are often classified based on their follower count, which correlates with their reach and engagement potential. This classification is crucial for brands when selecting partners for marketing campaigns. According to Audrezet et al. (2023), the academic literature commonly categorizes influencers as follows:

- Micro-Influencers: Typically have between 10,000 and 100,000 followers. They are known for their high engagement rates and niche audiences, making them ideal for targeted marketing campaigns. Micro-influencers are often seen as more authentic because they tend to have closer relationships with their followers, fostering trust and loyalty.

- Meso-Influencers: Fall between micro- and macro-influencers in terms of follower count, usually around 100,000 to 500,000. This category is less commonly used in academic literature, with some sources merging it into the macro-influencer category for simplicity.
- Macro-Influencers: Have large followings exceeding 500,000 followers. They offer broader reach and are often well-known within their industries, but may have lower engagement rates compared to micro-influencers due to their larger, more diverse audience.

Some sources, such as industry reports, also include nano-influencers (with 1,000 to 10,000 followers) for their highly engaged but smaller audiences and mega-influencers (with over 1 million followers) for large-scale campaigns (Hidayati et al., 2024). However, for academic purposes, the micro-, meso-, macro classification is standard, as it aligns with research on engagement and effectiveness.

Regarding strategies, brands employ various approaches when partnering with influencers, as highlighted by Audrezet et al. (2023) and supplemented by other studies. These strategies include:

1. Content Creation: Commissioning influencers to create specific content featuring the brand's products or services, often tailored to the influencer's style to maintain authenticity.
2. Endorsements: Having influencers publicly endorse or recommend products to their followers, leveraging their credibility to influence purchase decisions.
3. Giveaways and Contests: Collaborating on promotional activities that engage the audience and drive interaction, such as contests or giveaways, to increase brand visibility.
4. Takeovers: Allowing influencers to manage a brand's social media account for a day or a series of posts, providing fresh content and engaging directly with the brand's audience.

5. Ambassador Programs: Establishing long-term relationships where influencers consistently promote the brand over time, building a sustained presence and deeper connection with the audience.

The success of these strategies depends on selecting influencers whose values and audience align with the brand's target market, ensuring authenticity and relevance in the content produced (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Additionally, Audrezet et al. (2023) emphasize that influencers curate posts with information and testimonials to increase information value and product knowledge, while leveraging attractiveness and aesthetic value to enhance content appeal. Building relationships with followers through personal branding is crucial for maintaining authenticity and influence, as it fosters trust and engagement.To illustrate the classification and strategies, the following table summarizes the types of influencers and their typical applications

Table 1: Table represents the types of influencers and their typical applications

Type	Follower Range	Typical Applications
Micro-Influencers	10,000–100,000	Niche marketing, high engagement, cost-effective campaigns
Meso-Influencers	100,000–500,000	Mid-range reach, industry thought leadership
Macro-Influencers	Over 500,000	Broad visibility, large-scale brand awareness campaigns

This table highlights the strategic considerations for brands when selecting influencers, balancing reach, engagement, and cost.

2.3 Brand Perception

2.3.1 Defining Brand Perception

Brand perception refers to how consumers view or perceive a brand, encompassing their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about the brand's products and services. According to Koll and von Wallpach (2009), brand perception is "the sum of all experiences consumers have with the brand", emphasizing that it is built through cumulative interactions and encounters with the brand over time. This definition highlights the dynamic nature of brand perception, which evolves as consumers engage with the brand through various touchpoints, such as product usage, customer service interactions, marketing campaigns, and social media. Furthermore, Strano, (2023) describes brand perception as "the added value given by current and potential consumers to the brand name, symbols, and personality", underscoring the intangible aspects that consumers associate with a brand. This added value includes emotional and symbolic connections, such as trust, loyalty, and prestige, which enhance the brand's market position. These definitions collectively suggest that brand perception is not solely determined by a company's communications but is largely influenced by consumer experiences and interpretations, making it a critical construct in marketing strategy.

2.3.2 Key Dimensions of Brand Perception

Brand perception is multifaceted, comprising several key dimensions that collectively form how consumers perceive a brand. A comprehensive study published in the Journal of Business Research

by (Alvarez et al.,) in 2023 identified six primary dimensions of brand perception, providing a robust framework for understanding consumer-brand relationships. These dimensions are:

Table 2: Table represents the six primary brand perception

Dimension	Description
Brand Awareness	The extent to which consumers are familiar with the brand and can recall it easily
Perceived Quality	Consumers' judgments about the overall excellence or superiority of the brand
Brand Association	The unique thoughts, feelings, attributes, and benefits that consumers link to the brand
Brand Fondness	The emotional attachment or affection consumers have towards the brand
Brand Image	The overall impression or mental picture that consumers have of the brand
Product Country Image	The perception of the country where the product is made, which can influence the brand's perception

These dimensions are interlinked and collectively contribute to the formation of brand perception. For instance, brand awareness ensures that consumers recognize the brand in a crowded marketplace, while perceived quality influences their confidence in the brand's offerings (Freberg

et al., 2011). Brand association and fondness add emotional depth, making the brand more relatable and memorable, while brand image and product country image provide contextual and cultural layers to the perception. This multidimensional approach is particularly relevant in retail settings, as evidenced by the study's focus on Latin America, particularly Mexico, where cultural factors play a significant role.

2.3.3 Factors Influencing Brand Perception

Several factors influence how consumers perceive a brand, and these can be categorized into internal and external elements. Internal factors include product attributes, marketing and advertising efforts, and brand communication, while external factors encompass word-of-mouth, social proof, cultural and social trends, and competitor actions (Strano, 2023).

- Internal Factors:
    - Product Attributes: Quality, price, packaging, and functionality directly affect how consumers view the brand. For example, high-quality products can enhance perceived quality, a key dimension of brand perception.
    - Marketing and Advertising: How a brand presents itself through advertising, promotions, and other marketing activities shapes consumer perceptions. Effective campaigns can boost brand awareness and image.
    - Brand Communication: Consistent and authentic communication helps in building a positive brand image, fostering trust and loyalty among consumers.
- External Factors:

- Word-of-Mouth and Social Proof: Recommendations, reviews, and social media discussions significantly impact brand perception. Positive reviews can enhance brand trust, while negative feedback can erode it.
- Cultural and Social Trends: Broader societal values and trends can influence how a brand is perceived, especially in global markets where cultural differences are pronounced.
- Competitor Actions: The performance and positioning of competing brands can affect relative perceptions, pushing brands to differentiate themselves through unique value propositions.

Additionally, specific contextual factors play crucial roles in shaping brand perception. For instance, a study on online apparel shopping in 2018 by Aslam et al., identified brand experience, brand image-congruence (alignment between self-image and brand image), brand affect (emotional connection), and brand trust as significant factors influencing consumer perceptions. These findings, based on 396 responses from online consumers in Karachi, used Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to demonstrate that brand image-congruence has a stronger impact on brand affect and repurchase intention compared to other factors.

2.4 The Impact of Influencer Marketing on Brand Perception

2.4.1 Empirical Evidence Linking Influencer Marketing to Brand Perception:

Research has consistently demonstrated that influencer marketing significantly influences brand perception through various empirical studies. For instance, a study published in Humanities and Social Sciences Communications. analyzed data from 216 valid Chinese respondents and found

that influencers' content attributes—such as informative value, authenticity, and homophily—positively affect parasocial relationships (PSR) with followers. These PSRs, in turn, enhance followers' perceived brand credibility and purchase intentions, explaining 57.3% of brand credibility variance ($R^2 = 0.573$) and 40.5% of purchase intention variance ($R^2 = 0.405$). The study used the PLS-SEM method with SmartPLS 3.3.9, confirming model fit with SRMR = 0.053 and NFI = 0.803, and predictive relevance with Q^2 values of 0.470 for brand credibility and 0.339 for purchase intention.

Similarly, Wilkie et al. (2022) in their article "Influencer marketing effectiveness: the mechanisms that matter," published in European Journal of Marketing, conducted a study with 281 followers using partial least squares analysis. The results revealed that influencer characteristics like popularity and attractiveness serve as heuristic cues that influence judgments of influencer efficacy. This efficacy judgment leads to enhanced perceptions of brand authenticity, increased brand engagement, and positive attitudes toward influencer posts—all of which are integral to brand perception. The study establishes a sequential mediating effect, demonstrating the critical roles of both influencers and partner brands in these outcomes.

Furthermore, Belanche et al. (2021) in "Understanding influencer marketing: The role of congruence between influencers, products and consumers," published in Journal of Business Research, examined 372 followers of a famous fashion influencer on Instagram. The study found that high congruence between the influencer, product, and consumer leads to favorable attitudes toward the product and higher purchase intentions. This congruence also enhances consumer-product congruence, which positively impacts brand perception by creating a sense of psychological comfort and alignment, grounded in balance theory, cognitive dissonance theory, and congruity theory. The previous studies collectively provide robust empirical evidence that

influencer marketing positively influences brand perception by enhancing credibility, authenticity, engagement, and consumer attitudes toward brands, with specific statistical validations and sample sizes ensuring reliability.

2.4.*2 Mechanisms Through Which Influencer Marketing Shapes Brand Perception*

The mechanisms through which influencer marketing influences brand perception are multifaceted and rooted in psychological and social theories. According to Wilkie et al. (2022), influencer characteristics such as popularity and attractiveness act as heuristic cues that help followers quickly assess an influencer's credibility. This credibility judgment then translates into perceptions of brand authenticity and engagement. The study highlights a sequential mediating effect where the influencer's credibility enhances the brand's authenticity, which in turn increases engagement and positive attitudes toward the brand, analyzed using the source credibility model and signaling theory.

In addition, the study from Humanities and Social Sciences Communications (DOI: 10.1057/s41599-023-02512-1) identifies parasocial relationships (PSR) as a key mechanism. Informative content, authenticity, and homophily foster stronger PSRs between followers and influencers, with effect sizes (f^2) of 0.03 for informative value, 0.09 for authenticity, and 0.05 for homophily, all statistically significant ($p < 0.05$ or $p < 0.01$). These relationships lead to higher perceived brand credibility ($\beta = 0.550$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.52$, large effect) and purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.490$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.30$, medium effect), suggesting that emotional connections play a crucial role in transferring positive perceptions to the brand.

Belanche et al. (2021) emphasize the role of congruence as another mechanism. When there is a match between the influencer, product, and consumer, it creates a psychological comfort zone that

enhances consumer attitudes toward the product and strengthens brand perception. Specifically, high influencer-product congruence prompts high consumer-product congruence when influencer-consumer congruence is already high, with results confirming that strong consumer-product congruence generates favorable attitudes, higher purchase intentions, and recommendation intentions.

Thus, the primary mechanisms through which influencer marketing shapes brand perception include:

- Heuristic cues from influencer characteristics (e.g., popularity and attractiveness).
- Parasocial relationships fostered by content attributes like informativeness, authenticity, and homophily.
- Congruence between the influencer, product, and consumer, as detailed in the following table:

2.4.3 Contingency Factors Moderating the Impact of Influencer Marketing on Brand Perception

Several contingency factors moderate the impact of influencer marketing on brand perception, influencing how effective these strategies are in different contexts. Wilkie et al. (2022) found that category involvement and altruistic motives for collaboration moderate how followers rely on heuristic cues from influencers. Higher category involvement may make followers more discerning about influencer credibility, while altruistic motives can enhance the perceived authenticity of the influencer-brand partnership, as analyzed through the moderating effects on follower judgments.

The study from Humanities and Social Sciences Communications (DOI: 10.1057/s41599-023-02512-1) highlights persuasion knowledge as a significant moderator. Followers' awareness of the persuasive intent behind influencer posts negatively moderates the relationship between PSR and perceived brand credibility ($\beta = -0.077$, $p < 0.05$), with no significant moderation on PSR and purchase intention ($p = 0.334$). This suggests that while awareness of marketing tactics can reduce trust in brand credibility, it does not necessarily deter consumers from making purchases.

Belanche et al. (2021) emphasize congruence levels as a key moderator. High congruence between influencer, product, and consumer amplifies the positive effects of influencer marketing on brand perception. Conversely, low congruence can weaken or even reverse these effects, as it disrupts the psychological alignment necessary for positive consumer attitudes, with empirical results showing fixed high influencer-consumer congruence leading to varying consumer-product congruence based on influencer-product congruence.

Table 3: Table represents the contingency factor and its impact

Contingency Factor	Description	Effect on Impact
Category Involvement	Higher involvement increases scrutiny of influencer credibility	May reduce reliance on heuristic cues. (*Hugh et al., 2022*)
Altruistic Motives	Enhances perceived authenticity of influencer-brand partnerships	Strengthens positive impact (*Hugh et al., 2022*)
Persuasion Knowledge	Awareness of persuasive	Negatively moderates PSR-

	intent reduces trust in brand credibility	brand credibility link (*Dwivedi et al., 2021*)
Congruence Levels	High congruence amplifies positive effects; low congruence weakens them	Moderates' consumer-product congruence (*Dwivedi et al., 2021*)

2.5 Brand Perception and Brand Loyalty

The preceding sections have explored the nature of influencer marketing and the multifaceted concept of brand perception. It is now crucial to examine the subsequent stage in the consumer journey: brand loyalty. This section will focus on establishing the vital link between brand perception, as potentially shaped by influencer marketing, and the development of brand loyalty. Understanding this relationship is essential to comprehending the full strategic value of influencer marketing for long-term brand success.

2.5.1 Defining and Conceptualizing Brand Loyalty:

Brand loyalty is a central concept in marketing, representing the deep-seated commitment a consumer has towards a particular brand, product, or service (Oliver, 1999). It extends beyond mere repeat purchasing behavior and encompasses a psychological attachment and preferential attitude towards a brand. Academically, brand loyalty is often conceptualized as having both attitudinal and behavioral dimensions (Dick & Basu, 1994). Behavioral loyalty refers to the observable actions of a consumer, such as consistently repurchasing a brand's products or services over time. This dimension is quantifiable and easily tracked through purchase history and

frequency. However, behavioral loyalty alone may not fully capture the depth of the consumer-brand relationship, as repeat purchases could be driven by factors such as convenience, habit, or lack of alternatives, rather than genuine commitment (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978).

In contrast, attitudinal loyalty reflects the psychological and emotional connection a consumer has with a brand. It encompasses positive feelings, beliefs, and evaluations of the brand, including trust, satisfaction, and a sense of identification (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Attitudinal loyalty is characterized by a conscious preference for a brand and a willingness to actively support and recommend it to others. This dimension is more subjective and reflects a deeper level of engagement beyond simple transactional behavior. For a comprehensive understanding of brand loyalty, it is essential to consider both the behavioral and attitudinal aspects, recognizing that true brand loyalty involves both consistent patronage and a strong positive disposition towards the brand (Day, 1969).

2.5.2 Dimensions and Manifestations of Brand Loyalty:

Brand loyalty manifests itself in various observable and measurable ways, reflecting the multifaceted nature of this construct. One of the most fundamental dimensions of brand loyalty is repeat purchase behavior. Loyal customers are characterized by their consistent and frequent purchases of a brand's offerings over time (East et al., 2005). This repeat patronage is a direct indicator of customer preference and a key driver of brand revenue and stability. For example, a customer who consistently chooses the same coffee brand every morning or regularly upgrades to the latest model of a specific smartphone brand demonstrates behavioral loyalty through repeat purchase. Beyond simply buying again, brand loyalty also manifests in positive word-of-mouth and brand advocacy. Truly loyal customers become advocates for the brand, actively recommending it to friends, family, and colleagues (Reichheld, 2003). This organic, peer-to-peer

endorsement is highly valuable, as it carries greater credibility and persuasiveness than traditional advertising. Brand advocacy can take various forms, from verbal recommendations in personal conversations to online reviews, social media mentions, and participation in brand communities. For instance, a loyal customer might enthusiastically share their positive experiences with a particular car brand online or recommend a specific clothing brand to a friend seeking fashion advice.

Furthermore, brand loyalty often involves a deeper level of brand commitment and emotional connection. This dimension goes beyond transactional loyalty and reflects a stronger emotional bond and sense of identification with the brand (Thomson et al., 2005). Brand-committed customers feel a sense of attachment to the brand, often aligning their self-concept with the brand's values and image. This emotional connection can lead to increased brand resilience, as loyal customers are more forgiving of occasional brand missteps and less likely to switch brands due to minor inconveniences or competitor offers. For example, a customer who feels a strong emotional connection to a particular outdoor gear brand may identify with its values of adventure and sustainability, fostering a loyalty that extends beyond just product features and price.

2.5.3 The Established Relationship Between Brand Perception and Brand Loyalty:

Marketing literature consistently demonstrates a strong and positive relationship between favorable brand perception and the development of brand loyalty (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996). A positive brand perception, characterized by consumer beliefs that a brand offers high quality, possesses a desirable image, and is trustworthy, is a crucial precursor to fostering brand loyalty. Consumers who hold positive perceptions of a brand are more likely to develop satisfaction, trust, and commitment, which in turn drive repeat purchase behavior and brand advocacy (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003). Specifically, perceived brand quality plays a significant role in building loyalty.

Consumers who perceive a brand's products or services as high quality are more likely to be satisfied with their purchases and to continue choosing that brand in the future (Zeithaml, 1988). Similarly, a strong and positive brand image contributes to brand loyalty by creating emotional appeal and brand preference. Consumers are drawn to brands that align with their self-image and aspirations, fostering a deeper connection that goes beyond functional benefits (Park et al., 1986). Finally, brand trustworthiness is paramount for building long-term loyalty. Consumers are more likely to remain loyal to brands they perceive as reliable, honest, and ethical (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002). Trust reduces perceived risk and fosters confidence in the brand relationship, encouraging continued patronage.

The relationship between brand perception and brand loyalty is often sequential, with positive brand perceptions acting as a foundation upon which loyalty is built and nurtured (Oliver, 1999). Consumers typically form initial perceptions of a brand based on various cues, including marketing communications, product experiences, and word-of-mouth. If these perceptions are positive and align with consumer needs and values, they can lead to initial satisfaction and repeat purchases. Over time, consistently positive brand experiences and reinforced positive perceptions strengthen attitudinal loyalty, transforming a transactional relationship into a more enduring and committed customer-brand bond. Therefore, understanding and strategically managing brand perception is a critical step in the process of cultivating and sustaining brand loyalty in the long term.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has systematically reviewed the literature to build a theoretical foundation for examining influencer marketing's role in shaping brand perception and loyalty. It defined influencer marketing as a strategy leveraging authentic, peer-like voices on social media and traced its evolution and diverse forms. The review then explored brand perception, outlining its key

dimensions—awareness, quality, image, and trustworthiness—and the factors influencing its formation. Crucially, it established empirical evidence demonstrating influencer marketing's positive impact on brand perception through mechanisms like source credibility, parasocial relationships, and congruence. Furthermore, the chapter highlighted the well-established link between positive brand perception and the development of brand loyalty, encompassing repeat purchase and brand advocacy.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The aim of the study is to investigate the the role of influencer marketing in shaping consumer brand perception and its subsequent impact on brand loyalty within the modern digital marketplace. To carry out the study, primary data collection will be done through survey conduction and analysis will be done to investigate the relationship. This chapter covers the strategy behind the study, the data analysis strategy and the techniques employed.

3.2. Research Philosophy

This study is based on the marketing theory and aims at providing thorough data-based insight into the impact of influencer market on the consumer response. The theory focuses on the physiological aspect of human nature based on which the influencers tend to mold the perception of consumer about the brand by targeting specific aspects such as perceived quality, image and input of trust towards the brand. By carefully analyzing these aspects, the research will extract the theoretical understanding of the influencers impact into the digital format with respect to the marketing strategy.

Additionally, the study is targeted at extracting the theoretical concepts of impact of influencer on the brand reputation and customer loyalty in this digital era. It focuses on the theory that in fact the brand reputation is the main thing that effects the influencer role in marketing and manifesting the brand loyalty with respect to the consumers.

3.3. Research Strategy

Research strategy is referred to the technique and steps used to investigate the aims of the study and find out the meaningful output for the objectives. Different types of research strategies are adopted

depending upon the objectives to find meaningful conclusion such as case study, systematic analysis, experimental analysis as well as survey-based studies. In the current study, the research design employed is the survey design as this study is based on data collection at one single point (Wang, 2020). This study design shows an association between current state and its correlation between the several factors such as brand perception and loyalty. So surveys will be based on questionnaire will be designed and distributed among the study population.

3.4. Research method

Research methodology is defined as the series of steps and processes employed for the purpose of analyzing the research data. Data is usually entailed into two types. Qualitative and quantitative data study approach. In the current study, quantitative study is approach is being employed. Survey based data collection process is under process. The survey collected the data for study, and it is comprised of 7 demographic related questions and 16 questions related to the survey. Questions are directed towards accessing the impact of influencers on customer loyalty and trust.

3.5: Sampling Strategy

For data collection process, a total of 131 respondents were involved in the study. Online google forms were designed and were carefully distributed to the respondents. Sampling strategy used in this approach is convenience sampling as in this study, the respondents will be selected at random to minimize the chances of biasness (Rahman, 2022).

3.6: Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration is an important aspect of research process. In any study, ethical guidelines are strictly to be followed. This study is based on surveys and since participants are involved, hence it

is essential to consider the privacy and rightfulness of the people. Participants are provided with the confidence that their identity is secure, and data collection is purely for the research purpose and they have all the rights to withdraw from the study at any moment.

3.7: Informed consent and anonymity

In order to ensure the integrity of the study, participants are completely informed about the aim and objective of the study to clear any ambiguity. Participation in the study is entirely based on the participants will. Theya re not forced to participate and are free to withdraw from the study at any moment. Any data that can share person's personal information will not be collected.

3.8: Likert scale

Likert scale is widely used in the quantitative studies based on surveys and questionaries. In this scale, respondents are asked a particular question, and they can respond in a series of close-ended options. In the current study, a 5-point Likert scale was being employed, and participants are guided to select any one most appropriate option out of 5. The scale used in this study is mentioned in the table # along with research questions.

Table 4: Table represents the questions related to influencer marketing

Sr. No.	Influencer marketing	Linkert scale
1	Influencers I follow give honest opinions about products.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly agree
2	Influencers know a lot about the products they talk	• Strongly disagree

	about.	• Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly agree
3	Influencer posts feel more real than normal ads.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly agree
4	I trust the influencers I follow.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly agree
5	Influencers change how I think about brands.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly agree
6	I usually pay attention to influencer posts.	• Strongly disagree

		• Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly agree

Table 5: Table represents the questions related to brand perception

Sr. No.	Brand perception	Linkert scale
1	I trust a brand more when it's recommended by an influencer.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly agree
2	Influencers help me discover new brands.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly agree
3	I believe influencer-promoted brands are high quality.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral

		• Agree • Strongly agree
4	Influencers help me have a better image of the brand.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly agree
5	I remember brands better after seeing them on influencer pages.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly agree

Table 6: Table represents the questions related to brand loyalty

Sr. No.	Brand loyalty	Linkert scale
1	I have bought products because an influencer talked about them.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral • Agree

		• Strongly agree
2	I have told others about a brand I saw from an influencer.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly agree
3	I want to buy again from brands promoted by influencers.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly agree
4	I feel connected to some brands because of the influencers I follow.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly agree
5	I follow a brand's social media after seeing it with an influencer.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly agree

3.9: Data collection

The data collection method used in this research is questionaries based. Close ended questions based on multiple choice questions are designed which represent the study objectives. Demographic information of the participants will be collected and then questions related to impact of influencers marketing, brand perception and brand loyalty will be discussed. Data collection is further divided into two processes.

Primary data collection: it will be based on the data collection through structured questionaries.

Secondary data collection: it will be based on the data collection through previously available data in the form of magazines, literature, research and books.

3.7. Data analysis

Frequency of the answers to the questions were accessed in the form of graphs and tables in order to draw the useful conclusions from them.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

In this section, data is being collected and analyzed and represented in the form of graphs. Information acquired from the questionaries was analyzed to get the estimate of the frequency of the questions to derive meaningful conclusions.

4.2. Data Analysis

Section A: Demographic parameters

Gender

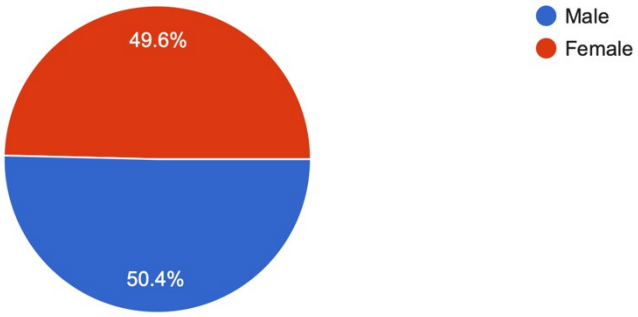


Figure 1: Figure represents the gender distribution in the study

The results suggested that out of the 113 participants, 65 participants were female while 66 participants were male, suggesting an almost equal contribution of both the genders.

Age

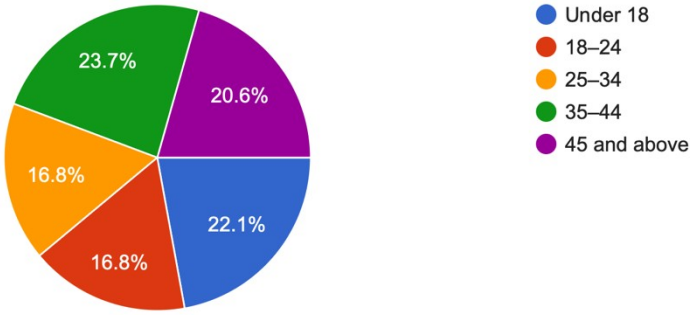


Figure 2: Figure represents the age distribution in the study

The results suggested that out of the 113 participants, 23.7% participants were ranging from 35-44 years. 22.1% participants were ranging between the age under 18 years. 20.6 % pf the participants ranged the age above 45 years and above. And participants with age 18 to 34% were representing 16.8% of the total participants.

Level of education

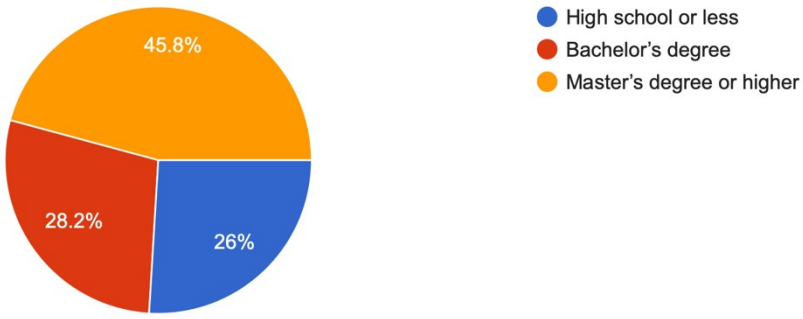


Figure 3: Figure represents the level of education of participants.

The results indicated that more than half of the participants were qualified and possessed a degree of master's with a ratio of 45.8%. 28.3 % pf the participants had a degree of Bachelors while 26 % of them gained high school education.***Usage of social media***

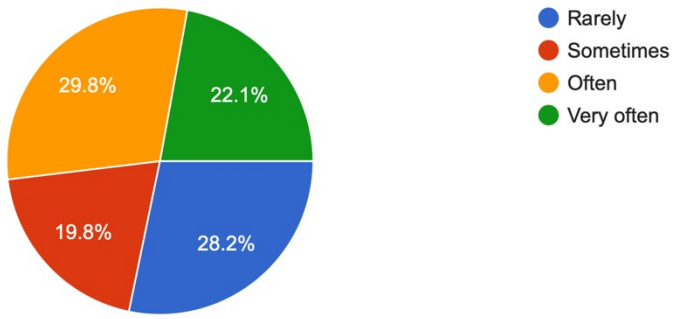


Figure 4: Figure represents the extent of usage of social media.

Demographic data with respect to the usage of social media suggested that 29.8 % of the participants uses social media "often", while 28.2% of the participants rarely, 22.1% of then tend to use it very often and 19.8% uses it sometimes.

Following of influencer on social media

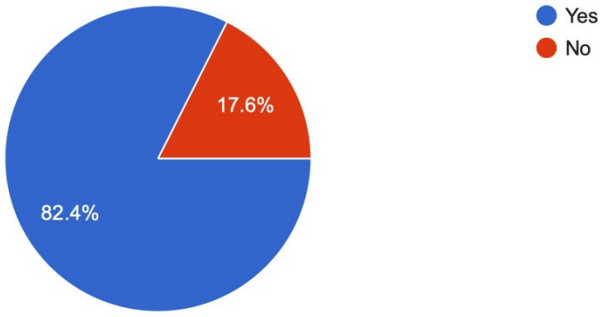


Figure 5: Figure represents the data about the participants with respect to follow any social media influencer

Demographic data suggested that out of the 113 participants, 108 participants said yes while only 23 said No.

How often do participants see influencer posts promoting products or brands

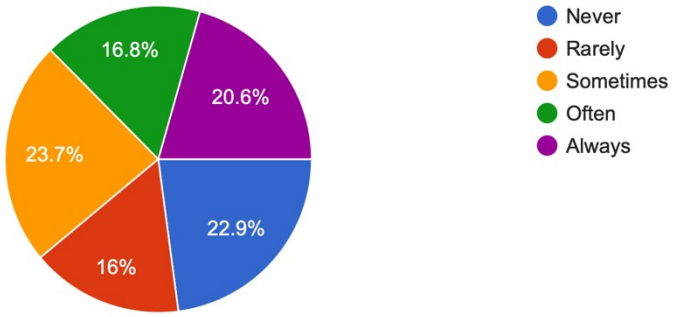


Figure 6: Figure represents the data about how often the participants see influencer posts promoting products or brands

Results suggested that majority of the participants said that they sometimes saw the influencer online to a ratio of 23.7 %, while 22.9 % said they have never seen it. 20.6 % of the participants agreed that they always have seen this trend, while 16.8 % suggested that they have often seen them and 16 % said they rarely see them.

Do participants buy products when influencers promote them

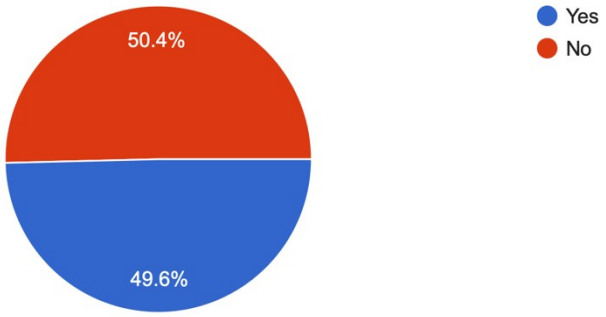


Figure 7: Do you buy products when influencers promote them

The results suggested that 66 participants out of 113 suggested that they do not tend to buy products promoted by influencers while 65 said yes to the situation suggesting the ratio to be almost equal and hence tends to get more results about investigating the impact of influencers on the brand perception and loyalty.

Section B: Influencer Marketing

i)

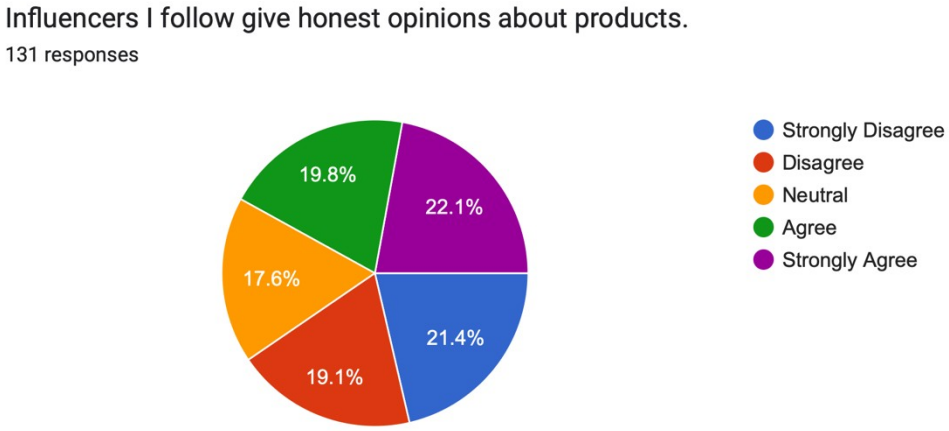


Figure 8: Figure represents the distribution of responses for question" Influencers I follow give honest opinion about products.

The results indicate that 22.1% of the participants strongly agree with the statement, while 21.4% strongly disagreed. 19.8% of participants agreed and 19.1% of then disagreed while 17.6 of them gave neutral answer.

ii)

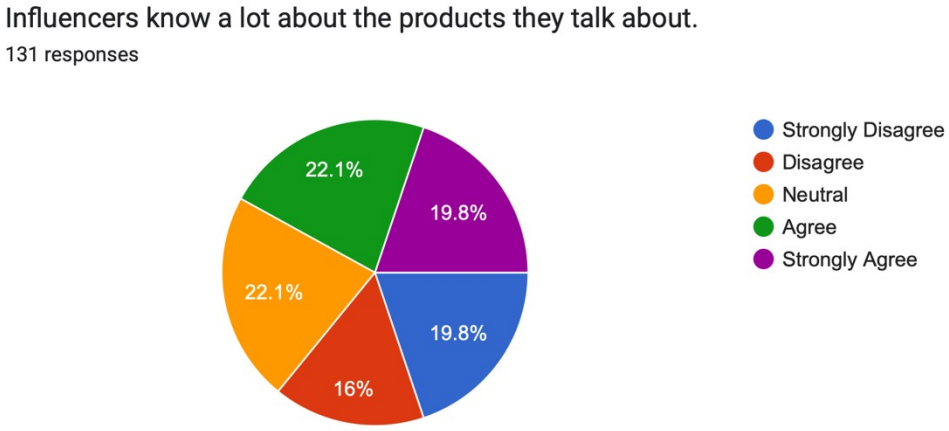


Figure 9: Figure represents the distribution of responses for question “Influencers know a lot about the products they talk about.

The results indicated that 22.1% of participants responded in the favor of agree and neutral, while 19.8% of participants responded for both agreed and disagreed.

iii)

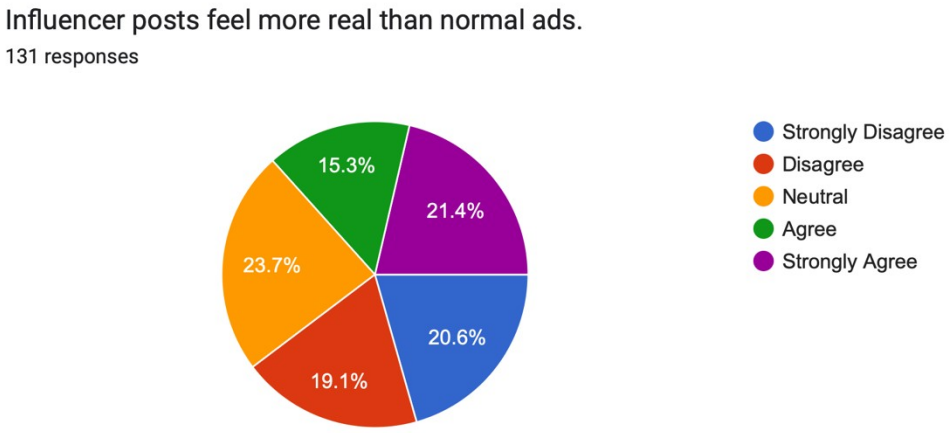


Figure 10: Figure represents the distribution of responses for question "Influencer posts feel more real than normal ads."

The results indicated that 23.7% of the participants gave neutral answers, while 21.4% strongly agreed and 20.6 % strongly disagreed. 19.1% of them disagree while 15.3 % agreed to the statement.

iv)

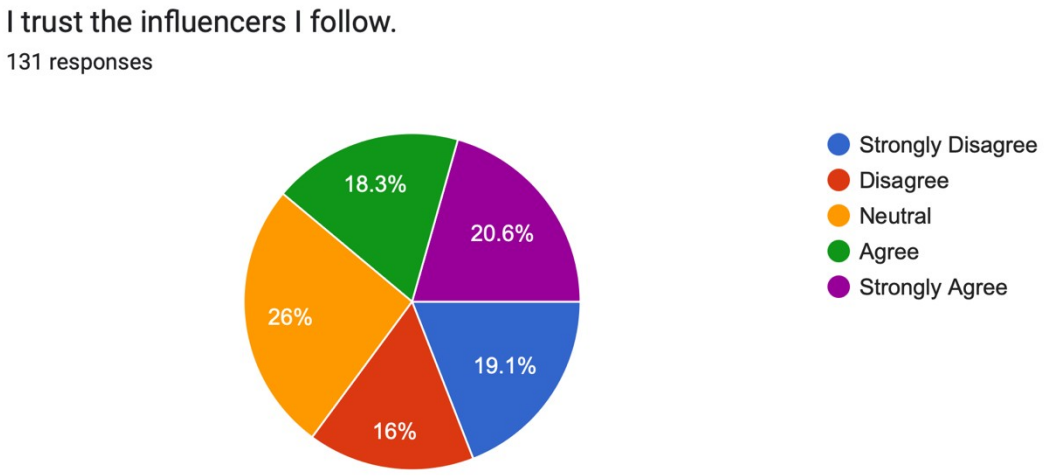


Figure 11: Figure represents the distribution of responses for question " I trust the influencers I follow".

The results indicated that 26% of the participants said neutral and 20.6 % of them strongly agreed. 19.1% of them strongly disagreed and 18.3 percent of them agreed while 16 % of the participants disagreed.

v)

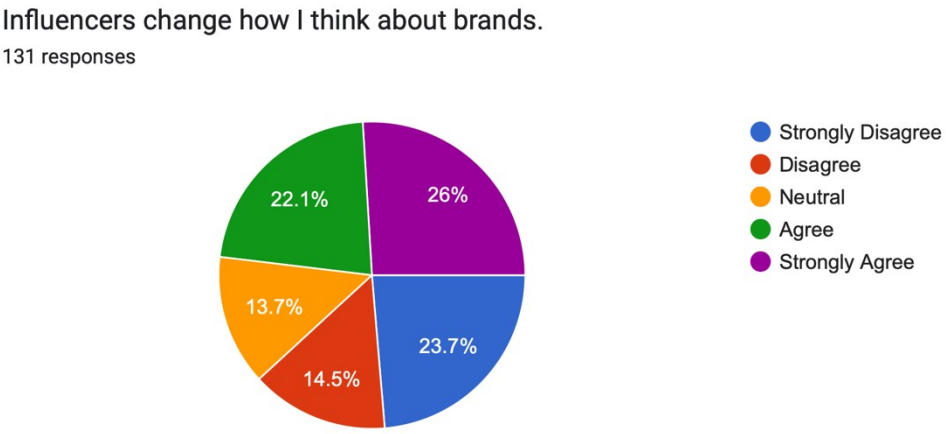


Figure 12: Figure represents the distribution of responses for question " Influencers change how I think about brands".

The results indicated that 26% of the participants strongly agreed to the statement while 23.7 % of them strongly disagreed. 22.1 % of them agreed. 14.5 % of them disagreed and 13.7 % of them gave neutral response.

vi)

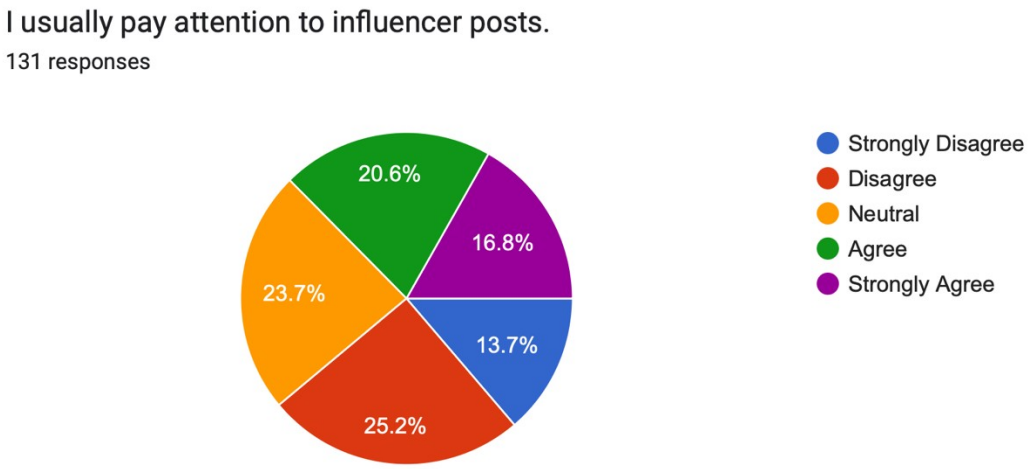


Figure 13: Figure represents the distribution of responses for question " I usually pay attention to influencers posts".

The results indicated that 25.2% of the participants disagreed to the statement while 23.7 % of them gave neutral response. 20.6 % of them agreed. 16.8 % of them strongly agreed, and 13.7 % of them gave strongly disagree response.

Section C: Brand perception

i)

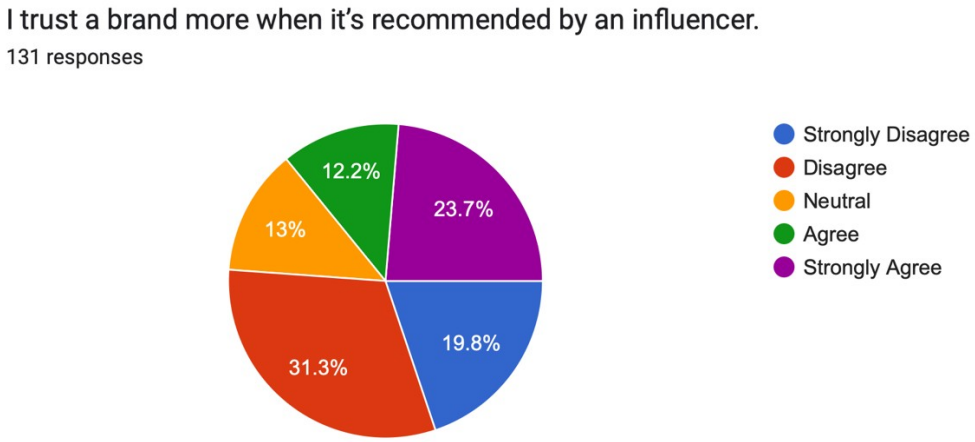


Figure 14: Figure represents the distribution of responses for question "I trust a brand more when it's recommended by an influencer."

The results indicated that 31.3% of the participants disagreed to the statement while 23.7 % of them gave strongly agree response. 19.8 % of them gave strongly disagree response. 12.2 % of them agreed, and 13 % of them gave neutral response.

ii)

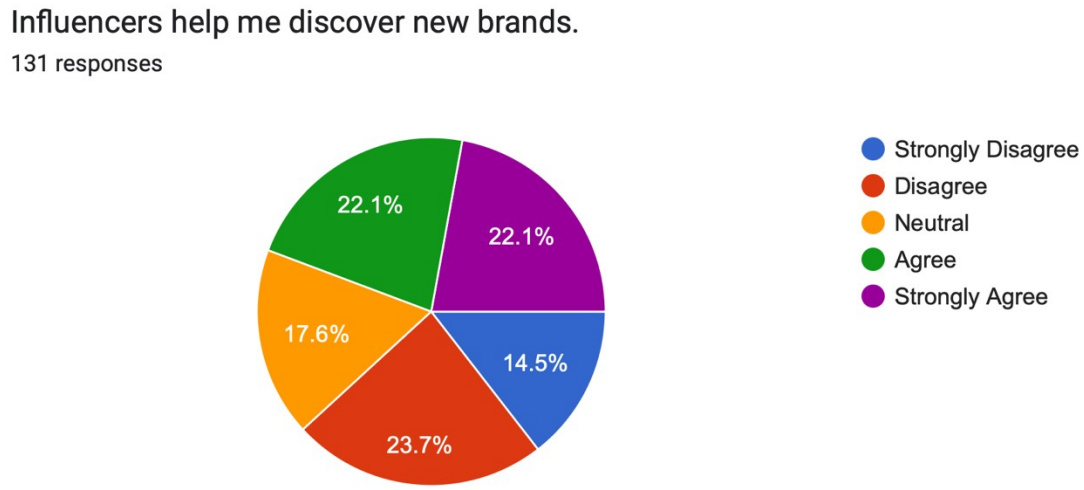


Figure 15: Figure represents the distribution of responses for questions "Influencers help me discover new brands."

The results indicated that 23.7% of the participants disagreed to the statement while 22.1 % of them gave both agree and strongly agree. 17.6 % of them gave neutral response. 14.5 % of them strongly disagreed.

iii)

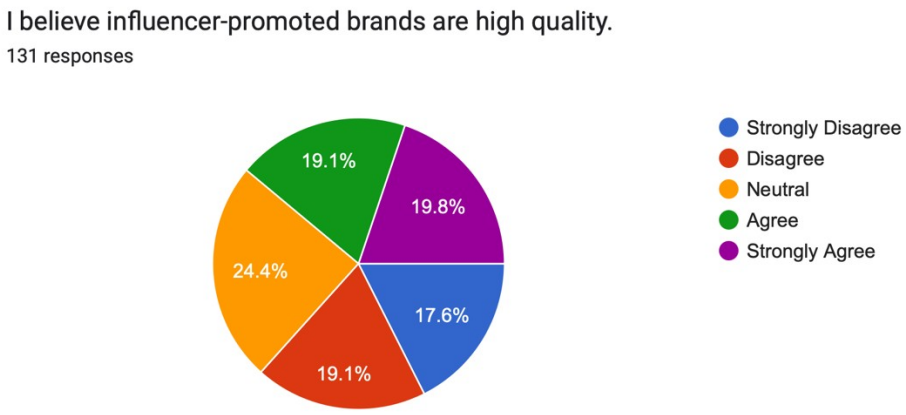


Figure 16: Figure represents the distribution of responses for questions "I believe influencer-promoted brands are high quality.

The results indicated that 24.4 % of the participants gave neutral to the statement while 19.8 % of them gave strongly agree response. 19.1 % of them gave agree and disagree response. 17.6 % of them strongly disagreed.

iv)

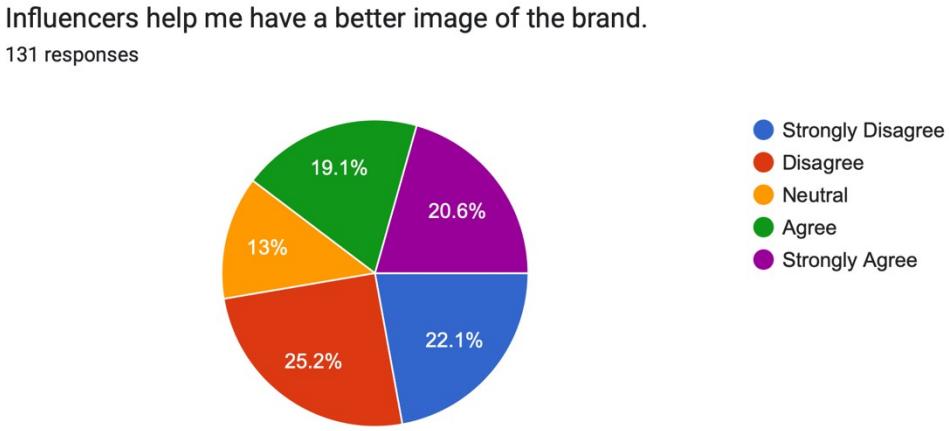


Figure 17: Figure represents the distribution of responses for questions " Influencers help me have a better image of the brand."

The results indicated that 25.2 % of the participants gave disagree response to the statement while 22.1 % of them gave strongly disagree response. 20.6 % of them gave strongly agree response. 19.1 % of them agreed.

V)

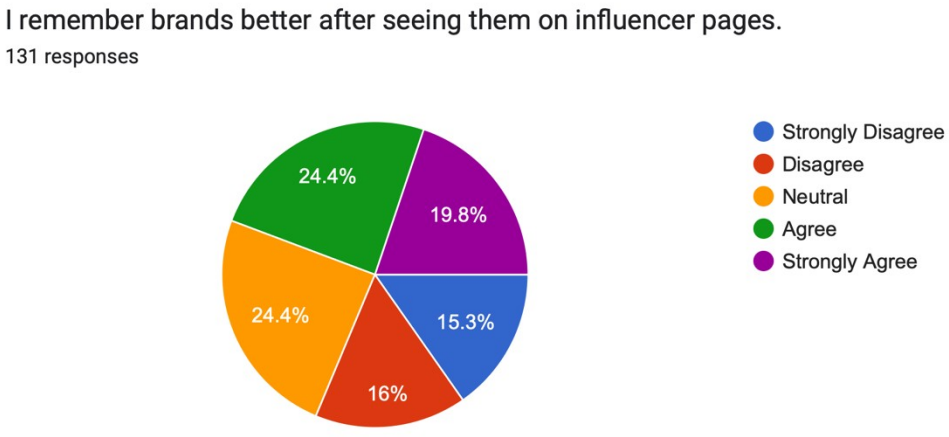


Figure 18: Figure represents the distribution of responses for questions "I remember brands better after seeing them on influencer pages."

The results indicated that 24.4 % of the participants gave disagree and neutral response to the statement while 19.8 % of them gave strongly agree response. 16 % of them gave disagree response. 15.3 % of them gave strongly disagree response.

Section D: Brand loyalty

i)

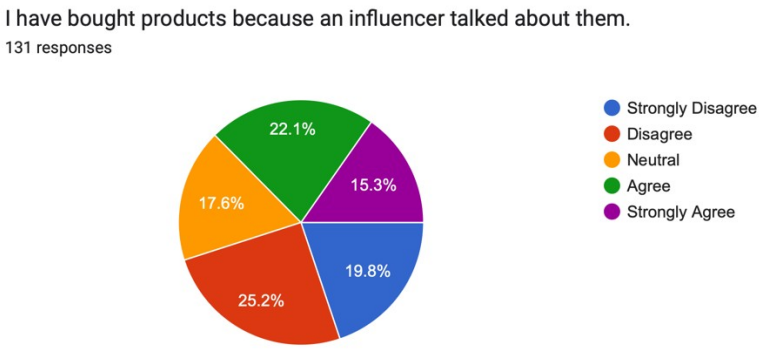


Figure 19: Figure represents the distribution of responses for questions " I have bought products because an influencer talked about them."

The results indicated that 25.2 % of the participants gave disagree response to the statement while 22.1 % of them agree response. 19.8 % of them gave strongly disagree response. 17.6 % of them gave neutral and 15.3 % gave strongly agree response.

ii)

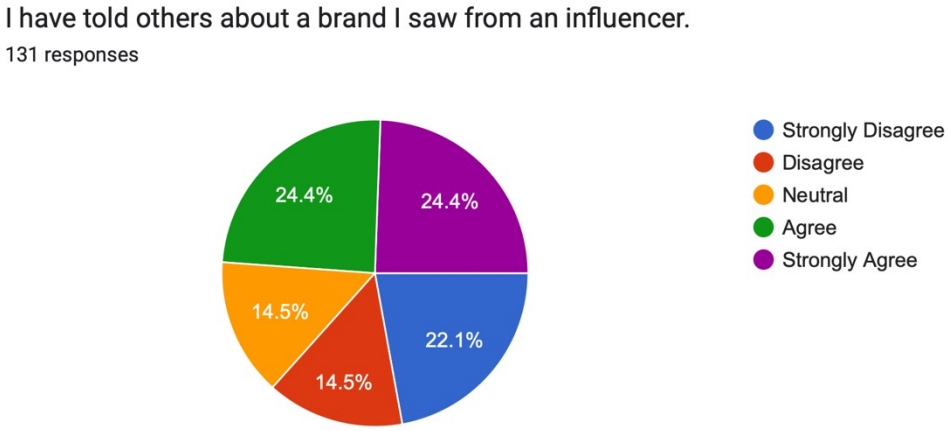


Figure 20: Figure represents the distribution of responses for questions "I have told others about a brand I saw from an influencer."

The results indicated that 24.4 % of the participants gave agree and strongly agree response to the statement while 22.1 % of them gave strongly disagree response. 14.5 % of them gave neutral and disagree response.

iii)

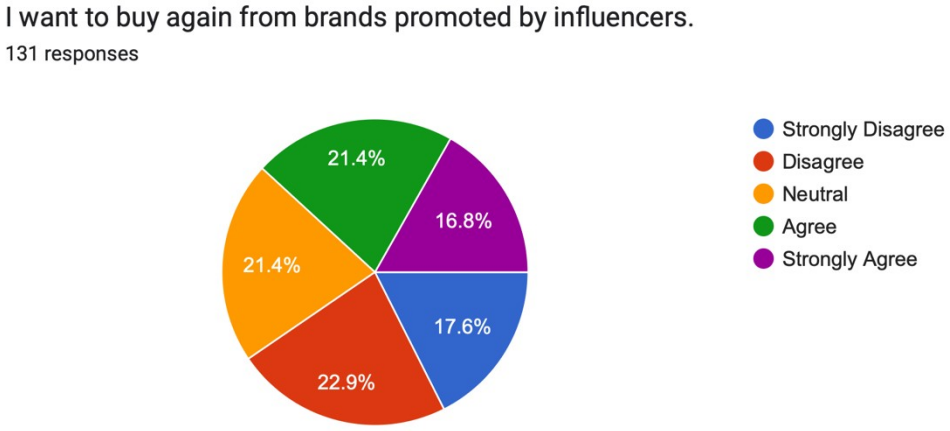
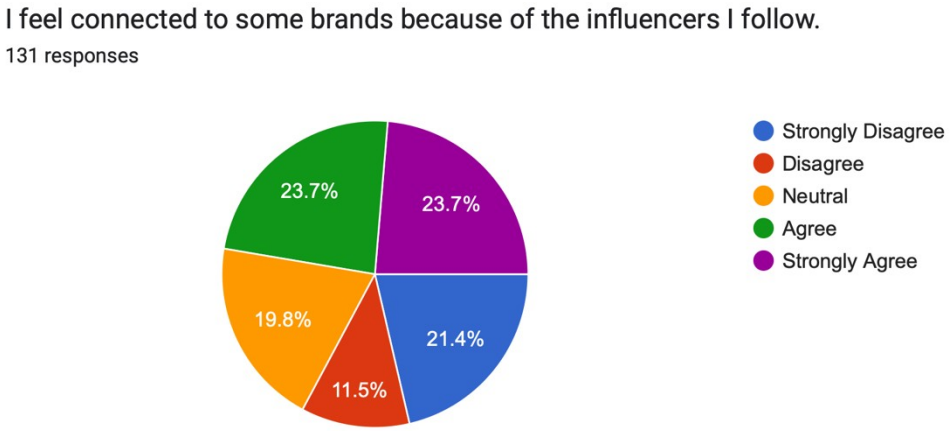


Figure 21: Figure represents the distribution of responses for questions "I want to buy again from brands promoted by influencers."

The results indicated that 22.9 % of the participants gave disagree response to the statement while 21.4 % of them gave both agree and neutral response. 17.6 % of them gave strongly disagree response. 16.8 % of them gave strongly agree response.

iv)



The results indicated that 23.7 % of the participants gave agree and strongly agree response to the statement while 21.4 % of them gave strongly disagree response. 19.8 % of them gave neutral response. 11.5 % of them gave disagree response.

Figure 22: Figure represents the distribution of responses for questions "I feel connected to some brands because of the influencers I follow."

v)

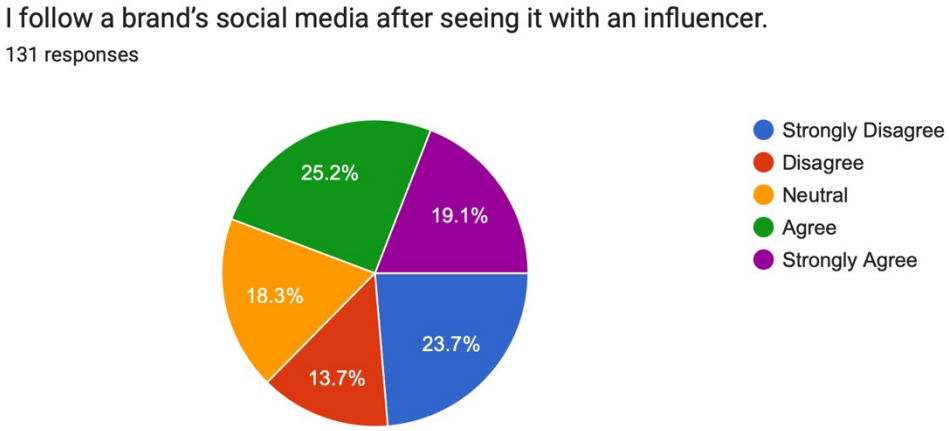


Figure 23: Figure represents the distribution of responses for questions " I follow a brand's social media after seeing it with an influencer."

The results indicated that 25.2 % of the participants gave agree response to the statement while 23.7 % of them gave strongly disagree response. 19.1 % of them gave strongly agree response. 18.3 % of them gave neutral and 13.7% gave disagree response.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The aim of the current study was to investigate the influence of the influencer market on the brand perception and brand loyalty in the city of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The target of the study is the consumer behavior as how they are being perceived by this strategy. The study provides great insight into the behavior and psychology of the consumer and how digital marketing has influenced the perception of brands via influencers.

The study focused on three key factors and are concluded in the below section.

5.1.1 Influencer marketing

First research question was related to the influencers marketing. According to the research although influencers does have an impact on the marketing of brands but as per research, these results are not uniform or consistent but in fact mixed. For instance, for 1 question 26 % of participants agreed that influencer change their perspective of brand but at the same time for same question 23.7 percent disagreed, and hence a lack of consistency and uniformity. Similarly in many other questions, the same trend was observed. Concluding it can be said that although influencers does have an impact on the brands perception for customers, but it also depends upon many other factors as well such as influencers followers on social media, type of content offered by the influencer as well as the relevance of content by the influencer. Also, it was observed in other questions that consumers tend to not fully rely upon the influencer's marketing strategies instead rely on personal experience and experience by the peers. So. Although influencers play a role in brand marketing, a lot more effort and progress is required

5.1.2 Brands perception

Second research question is targeted at the impact of brand perception in the country and its effect on the brand loyalty from the customers. for the current study, it was observed that the participants who tend to believe influencers have a strong impact on the brand marketing also tend to have a strong association with brand loyalty. intent to purchase, repetitive buying and good reviews all refer to the brand loyalty. for instance, in one question about 24.4 % of the participants agree that they have referred the brand to peers while being advertised by the influencers, hence it put emphasis on the importance of brand perception and its impact on brand loyalty. The study also suggested that participants answered in favor of the fact that they feel more connection for the brand when it is being published by the influencers. Hence, it can be concluded that although, influencer brand perception might not have immediate effect, but it can provide positive results in the long run.

5.1.3: Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty research question has a strong association with the brand perception which in turn is influenced in some way by the influencers marketing. So, results of the participants suggested that although they tend to be loyal with the brand through influencers marketing but it needs more effort in the form of improved brand perception by the influencer and once the brand perception is improved, brand loyalty can be expected form the customers.

5.2. Recommendations

Based upon the study findings and conclusion, few of the recommendations that can be suggested are as follows:

1. more focus should be put on the association of influencer and brand. The influencer who is promoting a certain brand should adopt it in daily life as well in some way to show authenticity and reliability towards customers.

2. Although influencers have a very strong impact on brand perception in the market, yet the brand should not solely rely on influencer marketing for brand enhancement, so more marketing strategies should also be adopted side by side.

3. Further studies are suggested to further investigate the impact of influencer marketing and should suggest other ways of marketing as well.

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