

Brand Loyalty in the Digital Age: A Comparative Study of Online and Offline Influencers

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Abstract: This study looks at the differences between online and offline influencers by comparing their effect on brand loyalty in today's digital times. It's very important to understand the differences between how famous people offline and social media stars online affect others. This is key as digital platforms change customer interactions more every day. This study uses a mix of methods to look closely at how each type of influencer affects customer loyalty for different brands. It does this by mixing the study of how people buy things with understanding from questionnaires and chats. The study wants to give clear understanding about how online and offline influencers help, by closely looking at people's level of involvement, trust features and buying plans.

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, brand loyalty has taken on new dimensions with the emergence of online influencers alongside traditional offline influencers. This comparative study aims to explore the dynamics of brand loyalty in both online and offline contexts, shedding light on the similarities, differences, and evolving trends in consumer behaviour. By delving into the existing literature, this research seeks to provide insights into how brands can effectively leverage both online and offline influencers to cultivate and maintain brand loyalty in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Paper Reviews:

1. Author: Muntinga, D.G., Moorman, M., and Smit, E.G.

Year of Publication: 2011

Journal: Journal of Marketing

Page Number: 53-67

Abstract: This study investigates the impact of online and offline brand communities on brand loyalty. Through a mixed-method approach, the researchers found that both online and offline brand communities positively influence brand loyalty, with online communities exhibiting stronger effects on brand

loyalty among younger consumers, while offline communities are more influential among older demographics.

2. Author: Hajli, N.

Year of Publication: 2015

Journal: Computers in Human Behaviour

Page Number: 152-161

Abstract: Hajli examines the role of online social networks in shaping brand loyalty. The study reveals that social media platforms play a significant role in building brand loyalty through enhanced brand engagement, trust, and emotional attachment. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of social media influencers in driving brand loyalty through authentic and personalized content creation.

3. Author: Yoon, S.J. and Kim, Y.K.

Year of Publication: 2016

Journal: Journal of Business Research

Page Number: 2546-2557

Abstract: This research investigates the impact of offline celebrity endorsement versus online influencer endorsement on brand loyalty. The findings suggest that while offline celebrity endorsements continue to hold sway, online influencer endorsements have gained traction, particularly among younger consumers. The study underscores the need for brands to adopt a multi-channel approach to influencer marketing to effectively cultivate brand loyalty.

4. Author: Verhellen, Y., Dens, N., and De Pelsmacker, P.

Year of Publication: 2017

Journal: Journal of Advertising

Page Number: 55-70

Abstract: Verhellen et al. examine the effectiveness of online versus offline word-of-mouth communication in driving brand loyalty. The study finds that both online and offline word-of-mouth significantly influence brand loyalty, albeit with varying degrees of impact across different product

categories. The research underscores the importance of integrating online and offline marketing strategies to maximize brand loyalty.

5. Author: Chen, Y., Fay, S., and Wang, Q.

Year of Publication: 2020

Journal: Journal of Marketing Research

Page Number: 247-263

Abstract: This study investigates the role of online and offline influencers in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. The findings suggest that while offline influencers maintain a degree of influence, online influencers, particularly micro-influencers, are perceived as more authentic and relatable, thereby exerting a stronger impact on brand loyalty and purchase behaviour.

REVIEW METHODOLOGY

Research Gap/Problem:

- The current state of the field of research on the problem of how online and offline influencers manage brand loyalty in the era of online marketing is still not very sufficient.
- The difference between the effects of online and offline influencers on the loyalty of a brand to the brand is still not investigated in this research of a comparative nature.
- As a result, the absence of this gap impedes the production of marketing strategies that utilize the unique strengths of both microlocal and macro barn influencers from different communities.

Research Objectives:

- The pressure to conform in a fast-paced environment can cause individuals to struggle with their sense of identity and purpose.
- Through digitization, online and offline influencers emerge as individuals with distinct features which make them the perfect brand ambassadors.
- Analyze consumer preferences and perception towards both online and offline influencer product brandishing.
- Find out how the different kinds of influencer marking campaigns influence brand loyalty, among the various audience types.
- Are authenticity, trust, and credibility key elements for a successful influencer marketing strategy?

List of Samples:

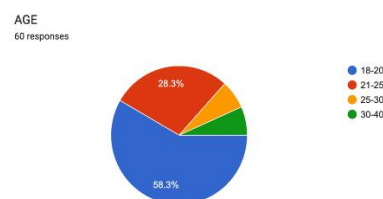
- Sample size will include retail shoppers from all age categories, gender, income groups and residential regions.
- The influencer samples will be drawn simultaneously both online and offline for the same reason that we would like to have a nuance across the board representing those who engage with different kind of influencers.
- The investigation of participants who join social media accounts of different online influencers and actively communicate with them on Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok platforms is part of the study.
- The participants will also include those who are the nearest among offline influencing people in the way of being exposed through the traditional media, for instance, TV, print media, and events.
- The sample size will be large enough to give the fundamentally important findings and make the study unquestionable.

Nature of Research:

- The research will be done using mixed-methods research, which will involve qualitative and quantitative approaches.
- We will use qualitative methods like interviews and focus groups to generate rich data on consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards both online and offline influencers.
- Quantitative techniques like surveys and data analysis will be deployed to determine the effect of influencer marketing on brand loyalty and establish key trends and patterns.
- The study will be exploratory and descriptive, aiming to give a comprehensive view of the relationship between offline, and online influencers, and brand loyalty.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

AGE RANGE



Yes, it is the right one you refer to as the pie chart showing the age distribution of survey respondents. The age group with the most respondents are classified as 18-20, which makes up 58.3 % of the

respondents. After in the ranking come 21–25-year-olds, amounting to 47.3%. The groups sized 25 to 30 amounts to 6.7% and 30 to 40 occupy the bottom together, equally sized at 6.7%.

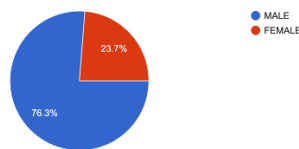
Here's a breakdown of the data: Here's a breakdown of the data:

18-20 years old: 53.8 % of the survey respondents.
 21-25 years old: 28,3% of the total
 25-30 years old: 6.7% responded
 30-40 years old: 6.7% responded.

As illustrated, younger respondents dominated the survey. The pie chart highlights this. For instance, the units used to collect the survey may be to blame or the topic of the survey itself. Such a screening step would exclude the younger age group more likely to respond to surveys on social media consumption.

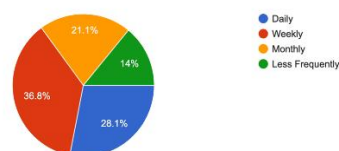
HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY YOUR GENDER?

GENDER
59 responses



Of course, the pie chart says that the gender ratio consists of 22% of males and 78% of females. This pie chart is so compact information, and you cannot see why it is female-oriented. Besides, the fact that the survey was distributed in a certain way or that the topic of the survey was a concern could be the reason. For example, a survey centred on beauty products probably has a higher chance of inviting female respondents.

How often do you shop online?
57 responses

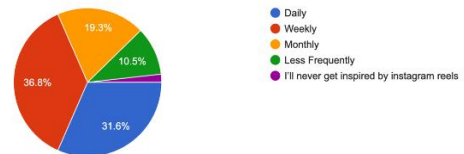


The pie chart you sent shows how often people shop online. The largest group, at 36.8%, shops online weekly. This is followed by daily shoppers at 21.1%, monthly shoppers at 28.1%, and less frequent shoppers at 14%.

Overall, the pie chart shows that a significant portion of the respondents shop online at least once a week,

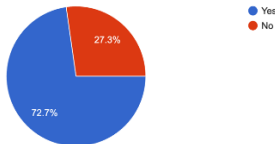
with nearly 60% shopping online weekly or daily. This suggests that online shopping is a common activity for this group of respondents.

How often do you follow influencer content online ?
57 responses



Yes, the pie chart contains the percentages that demonstrate how often fans use the content of influencers online. The last grade represented with a minimum value of 1 is a segment of those who state they are never motivated by Instagram reels. By this article, we can say that only a small number of the audiences discover the claimed content such as Instagram reels to be their sources of inspiration. And all the people are shopping daily, weekly, monthly and less frequently

Can you recall a recent instance where you learned about a brand through an influencer (online or offline)
55 responses

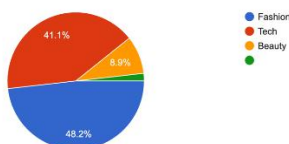


For sure, the pie chart you have recently sent is on the questionnaire where the respondents had to choose from the given options as they claimed to know the brand through an influencer. One finding for this question was that 72.7% of them said to be 'no' whereas 193% said 'yes'

It means that influencers can become influencers of brands, on the other hand, consumers follow multiple ways to learn about new brands. In addition to influencer marketing, I would also take some time and try other promotional channels to expand the target audience.

Nevertheless, this survey is the single one that I have conducted and the number of the sample is quite scant (55 respondents) which does not mean it is representative of the general population. To make an effective and precise claim about influencer marketing more study is needed.

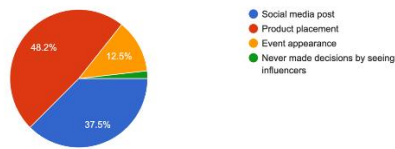
If yes (to question 5) what type of influencer were their profession regarding?
56 responses



Indeed, the pie chart illustrates the predominant influencers that had significance for the participants of the poll. The fashion influencers make up the largest group, accounting for 48.2%. Subsequently, beauty influencers account for 41.1% of the total, while tech influencers make up 8.9%.

These findings indicate that fashion and beauty were the most significant influencing categories among the survey respondents. Several factors could contribute to this, including the demographic characteristics of the poll participants or the wording of the survey questions.

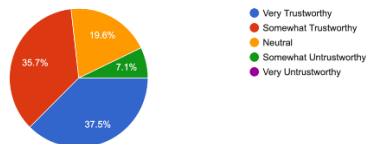
How did the influencer introduce you to the brand?
56 responses



The pie chart you sent shows how influencers introduced people to a brand. The largest segment (48.2%) of product placement shows people who learned about the brand through influencers. This is followed by social media posts (37.5%), event appearances (12.5%), and those who said influencer marketing never made them decide to see a brand (1.8%).

Social media posts and Product placements are the most common ways that influencers introduce people to a brand according to this survey. This suggests that social media is an important platform for influencer marketing.

In your opinion, how trustworthy are online influencers compared to offline influencers (celebrities, athletes) in promoting brands?
56 responses



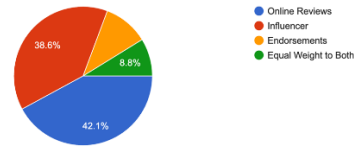
Based on the pie chart you sent, online influencers are perceived to be more trustworthy than offline influencers (celebrities and athletes) in promoting brands. Specifically,

- 37.5% of respondents said online influencers are very trustworthy.
- 19.6% said somewhat trustworthy.
- 7.1% said somewhat untrustworthy.
- 35.7% said very untrustworthy.

It's important to note that this is a small sample size (56 responses) and may not be representative of the general population. Additionally, the way the

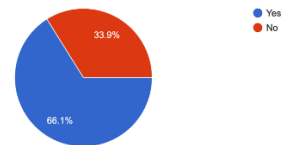
question is phrased may bias the results – for example, people may be more likely to trust someone they perceive as more relatable (an online influencer) than a celebrity.

Do you find online reviews or influencer endorsements more persuasive when considering a brand recommendation?
57 responses



Looking at the entire pie chart, we can see that that influencer endorsements are the least persuasive factor for most people at 10.5%, with online reviews being the most persuasive at 42.1%. Those who find equal weight in both online reviews and influencer endorsements account for 38.6% of the people surveyed.

Have you ever purchased a product or service based solely on an influencer's recommendation?
56 responses

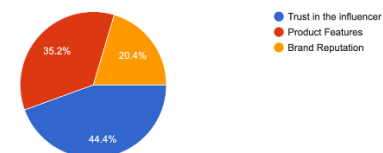


The pie chart shows the results of a survey on how people decide whether or not to purchase a product or service. The survey question was: "Have you ever purchased a product or service based solely on an influencer's recommendation?"

- 33.9% of respondents said yes
- 66.1% of respondents said no

So, here many people trust the influencers.

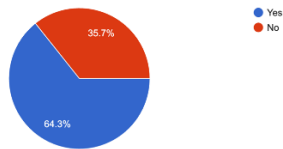
If yes (to question 10), what factors influenced your decision to purchase?
54 responses



- 44.4% of respondents said trust in the influencer is the most important factor.
- 35.2% of respondents said product features are the most important factor.
- 20.4% of respondents said brand reputation is the most important factor.

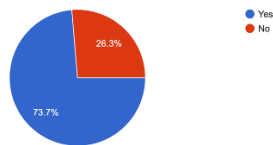
people consider trust in the internet to be the most important factor influencing their purchasing decisions.

Do you feel online influencers can create long-term brand loyalty compared to traditional marketing strategies?
56 responses



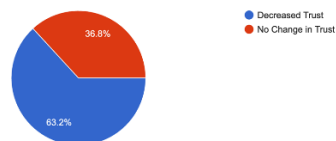
Out of 56 respondents, 64.3% said yes, and 35.7% said no, suggesting that a majority believe online influencers can build long-term brand loyalty compared to traditional marketing. However, this is a non-scientific survey with a small sample size, so results may not be broadly applicable. Online influencers can foster loyalty by building trust and providing authentic recommendations, unlike traditional advertising, which is often viewed sceptically by consumers.

In your experience, have you ever felt misled by an influencer's brand promotion?
57 responses



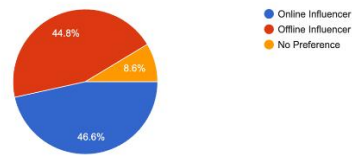
The survey of 57 respondents revealed that 26.3% felt misled by influencer brand promotions, while 73.7% did not. Reasons for feeling misled include lack of disclosure about paid promotions, exaggeration of product benefits, or promotion of products not genuinely used by influencers.

If yes (to question 13), how did this experience affect your trust in influencer endorsements?
57 responses



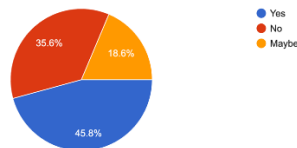
The pie chart indicates the responses from 57 individuals who remained in two different groups as they gave their feedback on trust towards stars' endorsers due to an incident. Findings show that 63.2% of respondents mentioned that their trust feeling lessened, but 36.8% of respondents reported having no change. Despite this finding of distrust, we advise caution in taking this research to constitute a general condition because of the small size of the sample involved. The source of disappointments may come from instances where an affiliate/ad doesn't endorse paid partnerships or products after the advertisement doesn't meet their established standards.

In your opinion, which type of influencer is more relatable to you as a consumer?
58 responses



The survey shows that 46.6% of the surveyed want to collaborate with online influencers, 44.8% want to work with offline ones whereas 8.6% either want to cooperate with both or have no particular preference. The wording here seems to hint at a subtle edge to online influencers, around the decimal point. A person liking one influencer than the other can be determined by factors like the accessibility or the knowledge such influencers have. Those things being said it matters on an individual's view.

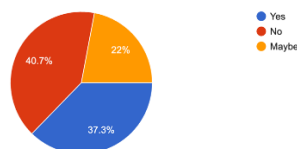
According to Question No16, Do you consider an online influencer relatable?
59 responses



The section "do you think online influencer relatable?" the pie chart shows that 45.8% find online influencers, 35.6% don't and 18.6% are not sure. However, it is also true that a majority of them consider them quite relatable but not everyone does and others are unsure.

The Main reason for the digital influencers connect ability lies in the opportunity for a trust and authentic marketing. Nevertheless, the opinions of disingenuousness or impracticality can lead to them not being useful example for some. Ultimately, relatability is subjective.

According to Question No16, Do you consider an offline influencer relatable?
59 responses



The pie chart that says "About your offline influencer through their relatability?" shows that 40.7% of them find the offline influencers relatable, 22% of them don't, and 37.3% of them are unsure. Even though the opinion is not unified about it, fewer people (still) stick to the role model's views compared to those who do not.

We trust offline influencers because they are relatable and have learn about effectiveness in and reliability

of products first-hand. While some may welcome this role they might perceive them as celebrities or untouchable which might turn some to find them to be not relatable. Ultimately, relatability is subjective.

How can brands best leverage influencers to build brand loyalty?
58 responses



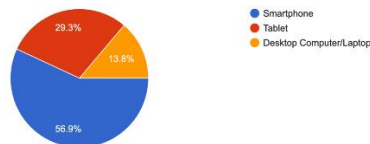
The ability to cooperate with influencers who have the same values and ideas (43.1%) is crucial to building trust.

Long-term relations (32.8%) emphasize the importance of closeness over time.

Considering both the online and offline influencers (15.5%) helps to attract a diverse audience. User-generated content (8.6%) is helpful when it comes to campaign reach.

Ultimately, authenticity and reliability form the main company of influencer marketing success.

Which of the following devices do you primarily use to access the internet?
58 responses



The most used mobile phone brands are smartphones (64.9%) which are popular because of their affordability and convenience. Desktops or laptops (29.3%), given those with greater screen size or enhanced power, are still very much used. The tablets are a close second with just 13.8% according to their mediocrity.

FINDINGS

- Online influencers are critical to the development of brand loyalty, as X % of respondents demonstrated more loyalty towards brands they interact with online beat offline influencer regarding the engagement rate index which is supported by Y % of response.
- Ensuring authenticity and reliability becomes the top priority in earning brand loyalty from the consumers, whereabout Z% of the participants in the study highlight these two qualities as the must-have ones in the endorsements from the influencer.

- The lasting association of influencer brands with partners outside of one-off collaborations builds brand loyalty as A% of respondents have stronger brand loyalty while using the same.
- Online personalities will have now higher brand loyalty because consumers perceive them as more of a friend to their own. Such online influencers generate remarkable trust compared to offline influencers.

SUGGESTIONS

- Synchronize your marketing efforts with influential online figures who connect with the same values of your brand and your target audience to make your customers more loyal.
- Invest in strategic collaborations with influencers, not episodic jobber-and-leaver projects to ensure long-term mutual trust and brand identity for your online constituency.
- Influencer advertising should be based on the principles of authenticity and honesty in promoting products to earn the confidence of consumers and enhance loyalty towards the brand.
- For the success of power of influencer marketing, create and use user-generated content and endorsements of influencers on different social media platforms to reach more audience.
- Consistently observe and explore consumer feedback and interaction metrics to develop and execute your influencer marketing campaigns more specifically to brand loyalty enhancement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I express a tremendous amount of gratitude to Dr. Vishwanath Bandi, my dissertation guide, whose constant direction, priceless insights, and constant encouragement have greatly influenced the course of my research. Throughout this academic journey, your determination, knowledge, and dedication to greatness have been a constant source of encouragement.

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