

Influencer Marketing Impact on Brand Loyalty and Purchase Intention among Gen Z in Idukki District

Dr. Asha T Jacob¹, Aksa Maria Babu²

¹Associate Professor, P G Department of Commerce, Govt. Arts and Science College, Santhanpara

²Govt. Arts and Science College, Santhanpara

Abstract—Influencer marketing is a strategy where brands partner with individuals who have built trust and large followings on digital platforms to promote products, services, or brand messages. This study aims to examine the extent to which social media influencers impact brand loyalty and to identify the key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of influencer marketing along with the relationship between influencer marketing and customer retention among Gen Z in Idukki district. The population of the study includes all members of Generation Z in Idukki district who use social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and other digital channels, and who are influenced by online influencers in their brand-related decisions, loyalty, and purchase intentions. A sample size of 50 respondents was selected for the research were chosen using a convenience sampling method. Both primary and secondary data were used for study where the primary data were collected through questionnaire and secondary data was collected from different books, journals, websites, and other publications etc. The data have been analyzed using mathematical and statistical tools like Percentage, and inferential tools like T-test and ANOVA. More than half of the Gen Z respondents prefer Instagram as the most used social media platform and preferred Fashion/Lifestyle and Travel influencers, depicting a higher interest in style-related and aspirational content. Majority of the Gen Z respondents often follow social media influencers, pointing to active and regular engagement rather than occasional following agreed that influencer recommendations increase trust in a brand, expressing confidence in their impact. Most of the Gen Z respondents agreed that influencer marketing influences their brand perception and having an emotional connection with brands endorsed by influencers, marking strong emotional attachment too. Majority of the Gen Z respondents accorded about the influence of influencer promotion on repeat purchase, implying a positive impact on repeat buying behaviour and believed that authentic and honest content improves the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Majority of the

Gen Z respondents agreed about influencers' expertise, pointing out its positive impact on effectiveness and the trustworthiness of sponsored content, depicting confidence about its credibility. Majority of the Gen Z respondents agree that influencer marketing and influencer-provided discounts encourages repeat purchases, marking its positive role in driving loyalty. More than two-fifth of the respondents believe that influencer marketing plays a role in building brand loyalty while gender, age and educational qualification have no significant influence on brand loyalty and purchase intention.

Index Terms—Brand Loyalty, Customer Retention, Influencer Marketing, Purchase Intention

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Influencer marketing is a strategy where brands partner with individuals who have built trust and large followings on digital platforms to promote products, services, or brand messages. This approach has evolved from a minor experimental tactic to a key element of brand communication strategies, especially for engaging younger consumers who have largely turned away from traditional media. Generation Z, generally defined as those born between 1997 and 2012, is the first true generation of digital natives— young individuals who have always lived with the internet, smartphones, and social media as essential parts of their lives. Recent demographic data indicates that Gen Z makes up about 30% of the global population and wields spending power estimated at over \$450 billion, with forecasts suggesting they are on track to become the wealthiest generation in history. The relationship between Gen Z and social media influencers is particularly noteworthy, as this

generation has formed what researcher's term "parasocial relationships" with content creators—these are one-sided emotional connections where followers see influencers as friends or trusted peers. The preference for authenticity also applies to the types of influencers that Gen Z considers most credible; micro-influencers (typically those with 1,000 to 100,000 followers) consistently achieve higher engagement rates and trust metrics compared to their macro and mega counterparts. Micro-influencers resonate particularly well with Gen Z due to their ability to cultivate meaningful, reciprocal relationships with their followers. Unlike celebrities or mega-influencers, who often cannot personally engage with millions of fans, micro-influencers can actively participate in conversations, respond to comments, and foster authentic community ties.

Brand loyalty—the tendency for consumers to repeatedly buy products from a specific brand—has typically been seen as the result of positive experiences, perceived quality, and emotional connections. In the context of influencer marketing, loyalty may arise through different channels. When followers trust an influencer's opinions and that influencer consistently endorses certain brands over time, the positive feelings associated with the influencer can extend to those brands. Recent studies have shown that factors like influencer credibility—including trustworthiness, expertise, and effective communication—significantly enhance brand loyalty among Gen Z consumers. Purchase intention—the consumer's inclination or willingness to buy products from a specific brand—represents another important outcome in influencer marketing research. However, purchase behavior isn't always driven solely by brand loyalty; elements such as constant visibility, algorithmic targeting, and timely relevance can sometimes outweigh skepticism and prompt purchases even without strong brand commitment.

Idukki district, situated in the Western Ghats region of Kerala, is renowned for its spice plantations, tourism opportunities, and diverse communities, making it an intriguing setting for understanding how global influencer marketing trends play out in specific local contexts. As a primarily rural area with increasing digital connectivity, Idukki's Gen Z population finds itself at an interesting crossroads between global digital culture and local traditional values. Young people in Idukki are active consumers of social media

content like their urban peers; however, their purchasing decisions may be influenced by different cultural and economic factors compared to those affecting metropolitan Gen Z consumers.

1.2 Statement of The Problem

Idukki district, with its unique socio-cultural landscape, limited direct exposure to mainstream brand communications, and distinct consumer values, offers an underexplored context where the dynamics of influencer credibility, authenticity, and cultural alignment may differ from those in urban Kerala. Although national studies indicate that influencers enhance purchase intentions and brand loyalty through emotional engagement, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding Gen Z consumers in Idukki and their perceptions, trust levels, and responses to influencer recommendations. This absence of localized insights hinders brands and marketers from creating effective strategies that resonate culturally with this geographically unique yet digitally connected consumer segment. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the actual influence of influencer marketing on brand loyalty and purchase intentions among Gen Z in Idukki district.

1.3 Significance of The Study

From an academic perspective, it applies established theoretical frameworks like source credibility theory in a new context, potentially uncovering context-specific adaptations that could enhance the understanding of consumer behavior. Methodologically, it lays the groundwork for future comparative studies between urban and semi-urban consumer groups throughout India. Practically, the study delivers actionable insights for brands, marketers, and policymakers working within regional markets. It helps determine whether Gen Z consumers in Idukki are following urban trends toward increased skepticism about influencers or if they still depend heavily on them for purchase decisions. This understanding allows brands to refine their regional marketing strategies and make informed choices about influencer partnerships. The findings also clarify whether local micro-influencers or national celebrities will resonate more with this audience by identifying which qualities—trustworthiness, expertise, or cultural familiarity—are most appealing. From a socio-economic standpoint, the research recognizes

Idukki's increasingly digitally connected youth as an attractive consumer segment while contributing to consumer protection efforts through targeted digital literacy initiatives. Furthermore, understanding how digital influence operates can empower local businesses and agricultural producers to effectively utilize influencer marketing, potentially enhancing the district's economy and creating job opportunities for residents balancing tradition with technology in this unique regional landscape.

1.4 Scope Of the Study

This study is geographically focused on Idukki district in Kerala and specifically targets Generation Z consumers born between roughly 1997 and 2012. It explores how influencer marketing on digital platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook affects brand loyalty and purchase intentions. The research examines important factors such as the credibility of influencers (including trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness), perceived authenticity, and cultural relevance. Methodologically, the study adopts a quantitative approach by using surveys to gather primary data from Gen Z respondents in both urban and rural areas of Idukki district, representing various educational backgrounds and age groups.

1.5 Objectives of The Study

- To examine the extent to which social media influencers impact brand loyalty among Gen Z in Idukki district.
- To identify the key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of influencer marketing in building brand loyalty among Gen Z in Idukki district.
- To investigate the relationship between influencer marketing and customer retention among Gen Z in Idukki district.

1.6 Hypotheses Of the Study

Hypothesis 1

H₀: Gender wise, there is no significant difference in brand loyalty and purchase intention among Gen Z respondents.

H₁: Gender wise, there is significant difference in brand loyalty and purchase intention among Gen Z respondents.

Hypothesis 2

H₀: There is no significant difference in purchase intention and brand loyalty among different age groups of Gen Z respondents.

H₁: There is a significant difference in purchase intention and brand loyalty among different age groups of Gen Z respondents.

Hypothesis 3

H₀: Educational qualification has no significant influence on purchase retention and brand loyalty of Gen Z respondents.

H₁: Educational qualification has a significant influence on purchase retention and brand loyalty of Gen Z respondents.

1.7 Research Methodology

1.7.1 Population Of The Study

The population of the study includes all members of Generation Z in Idukki district who use social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and other digital channels, and who are influenced by online influencers in their brand-related decisions, loyalty, and purchase intentions.

1.7.2 Sample Design

A sample size of 50 respondents was selected for the research were chosen using a convenience sampling method, allowing those who were readily accessible and willing to participate to be included in the survey. This approach enabled the researcher to gather pertinent data within the constraints of time and resources.

1.7.3 Source of Data

Both primary and secondary data were used for study where the primary data were collected through questionnaire and secondary data was collected from different books, journals, websites, and other publications etc...

1.7.4 Tools of Analysis

The data have been analyzed using mathematical and statistical tools like Percentage, and inferential tools like T-test and ANOVA. It has been analyzed with the help of SPSS (statistical package for social science).

1.8 Literature Review and Research Gap Identification

A literature review is done to understand past studies and support the current research. The rapid growth of influencer marketing in India has transformed consumer behavior, especially among Generation Z. The proposed study is both academically and practically important as it addresses a significant gap

in the current literature on influencer marketing, aims to fill that gap by offering localized insights into how factors such as influencer credibility, authenticity, and cultural alignment function in an environment where consumer behavior is influenced by specific community values, language preferences, and limited exposure to mainstream brand communications. The significant research gaps identified are ;

Firstly, most of the existing studies have been conducted in urban or global contexts, with a limited focus on rural or semi-urban areas. There is a noticeable lack of region-specific research, particularly in places like the Idukki district, where consumer behavior, cultural values, and media exposure may differ greatly from those in metropolitan regions.

Secondly, while many studies primarily examine purchase intention, fewer delve deeply into brand loyalty. Although some research indicates that influencer marketing affects loyalty, the long-term impact and consistency of this relationship are not well established.

Thirdly, there is limited research that looks at both purchase intention and brand loyalty within a single framework, especially among Generation Z. Understanding how purchase intention translates into loyalty is still an underexplored area. Additionally, existing studies often emphasize characteristics of influencers such as credibility and attractiveness but overlook factors like content type, platform differences, and local cultural influences that could significantly shape consumer responses.

Lastly, there is a pressing need for more research on Gen Z consumers in the Indian context, especially in smaller districts, to gain insights into their unique preferences, digital behaviors, and reactions to influencer marketing strategies.

1.9 Chaptalization

The project report comprised of three chapters as described below;

1. Introduction includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study. scope of the study, objectives of the study, hypotheses of the study, Research

methodology, literature review and research gap and chaptalization.

2. Results contains data presentation, statistical analysis, and interpretation of results.
3. Discussion and Conclusion encompass major findings of the study, contribution of the study, recommendations, scope for further research and the overall conclusion.

II. RESULTS

This chapter shows the data collected from the respondents and its detailed analysis with the help of frequency tables and diagrams.

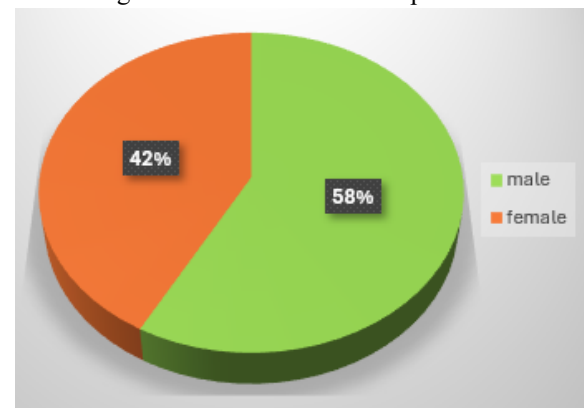
Table 2.1 Age of the Respondents

| Age Group | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 14-17 | 5 | 10.0 |
| 18-21 | 10 | 20.0 |
| 22-25 | 31 | 62.0 |
| 26-29 | 4 | 8.0 |
| Total | 50 | 100.0 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 2.1 depicts the age of the respondents and showed that 62 percentage of the respondents are in the age group of between 22 to 25 years, 20 percentage are in the age group between 18 to 21 years,10 percentage are in the age group between 14 to 17 years and 8 percentage are in age group between 26 to 29 years.

Figure 2.1 Gender Of the Respondents



Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.1 explains the gender of the respondents and depicts that 58 percentage of respondents are male and the rest 42 percentage are female.

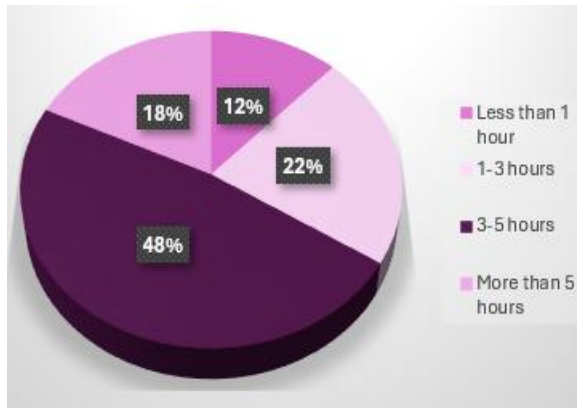
Table 2.2 Educational Qualification of The Respondents

| Highest Educational Qualification | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| High School | 2 | 4 |
| Plus Two | 9 | 18 |
| Undergraduate | 28 | 56 |
| Postgraduate | 6 | 12 |
| Professional | 5 | 10 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 2.2 shows the educational qualification of the respondents where 56 percentage of the respondents are undergraduates, distantly followed 18 percentage are plus two qualified, 12 percentage are postgraduates, 10 percentage are professional qualified and 4 percentage of are high school qualified.

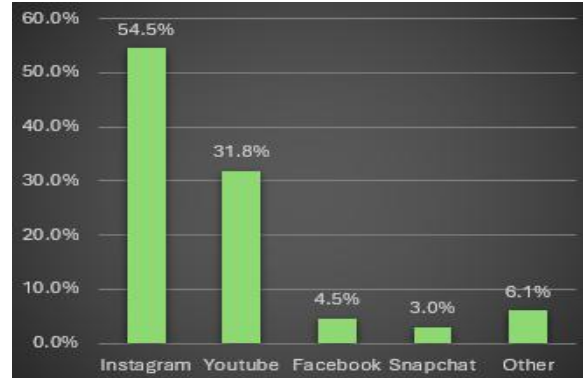
Figure 2.2 Average Daily Time Spent On Social Media



Source: Primary Data

Figure 2.2 depicts the average daily time spend on social media and 48 percentage of the respondents use social media 3-5 hours in a day, 22 percentage use social media between 1-3 hours in a day, 12 percentage use social media less than one hour and another 18 percentage use social media in a day more than 5 hours.

Figure 2.3 Social Media Platforms Used by The Respondents



Source: Primary Data

Figure 2.3 shows the social media platforms used by the respondents and 54.5 percentage of the respondents use Instagram, 31.8 percentage use YouTube, 4.5 percentage use Facebook, 3.0 percentage use snapchat and 6.10 percentage uses other social media platforms.

Table 2.3 Frequency of Following Social Media Influencers

| Particulars | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Very often | 16 | 32 |
| Often | 15 | 30 |
| Sometimes | 13 | 26 |
| Rarely | 4 | 8 |
| Never | 2 | 4 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 2.3 shows the frequency of following social media influencers depicting that 32 percentage of the respondents very often follow social media influencers, 30 percentage often follow social media influencers, 26 percentage sometimes follow social media influencers, 8 percentage rarely follow social media influencers, and 4 percentage never follow social media influencers.

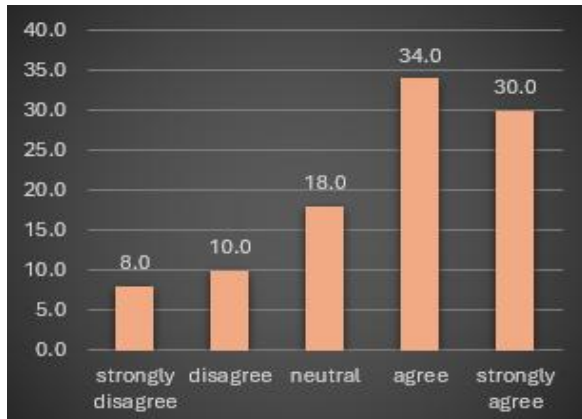
Table 2.4 Types of Influencers Mostly Followed

| Particulars | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Fashion/Lifestyle | 24 | 28.6 |
| Technology | 15 | 17.9 |
| Beauty | 5 | 6.0 |
| Fitness | 11 | 13.1 |
| Travel | 24 | 28.6 |
| Other | 5 | 6.0 |
| Total | 84 | 100.0 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 2.4 displays the types of influencers mostly followed by the respondents and indicated that 28.6 percent of the respondents follow both Fashion/Lifestyle and travel influencers, which is followed by Technology influencers with 17.9 percentage. Fitness influencers are followed by 13.1 percent of the respondents, while 6 percent follow beauty and other influencers.

Figure 2.4 Influencer Recommendations Increase Brandtrust



Source: Primary Data

Figure 2.4 demonstrates the opinion of respondents about whether influencer recommendations increase trust in a brand, where 34 percent are agreed, 30 percent strongly agree and 18 percent neutral. Meanwhile, 10 percent disagree and 8 percent strongly disagree with this statement.

Table 2.5 Preference For Brands Promoted By Influencers

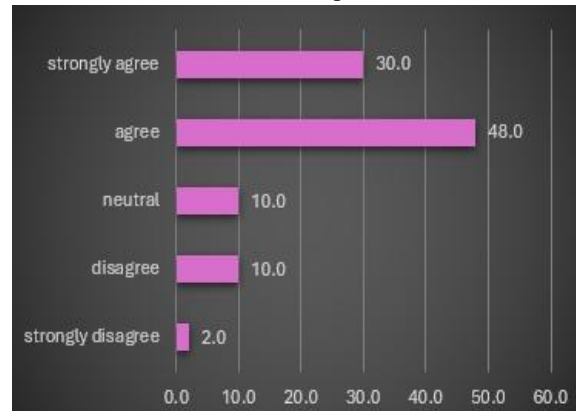
| Particulars | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Disagree | 2 | 4 |
| Neutral | 8 | 16 |
| Agree | 25 | 50 |
| Strongly Agree | 15 | 30 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 2.5 reveals the respondents' preference for brands promoted by influencers. Among the total respondents, 50 percent agree, 30 percent strongly

agree that they prefer brands promoted by influencers, while 16 percent neutral with the statement and 4 percent disagree with the statement.

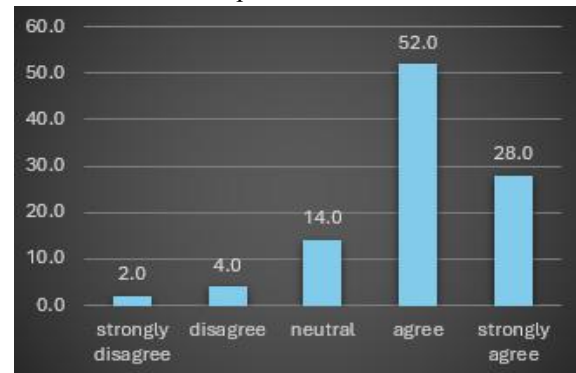
Figure 2.5 Influence of Influencer Marketing on Brand Perception



Source: Primary Data

Figure 2.5 exhibits the influence of influencer marketing on brand perception among the respondents indicated that 48 percent agreed with the statement, 30 percent strongly agreed while 10 neutral with the statement. On the other hand, 10 percent of the respondents disagreed, and 2 percent strongly disagreed.

Figure 2.6 Influence of Influencer Promotion on Repeat Purchase

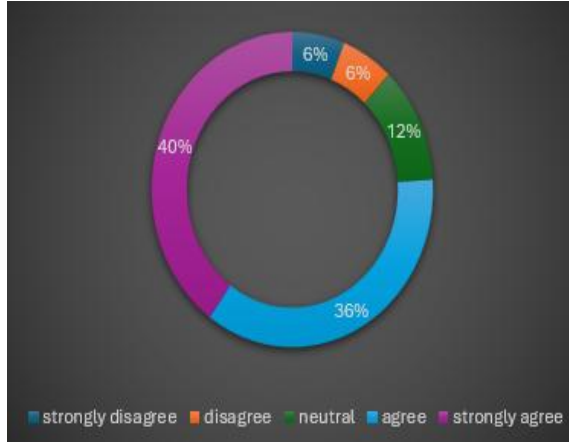


Source: Primary Data

Figure 2.6 displays the influence of influencer promotion on repeat purchase depicted that 52 percent of respondents are agree regarding the influence of influencer promotion on repeat purchase followed by 28 percent who strongly agree and 14 percent who have neutral opinion. Meanwhile, 4 percent of

respondents disagree, and only 2 percent strongly disagree that influencer promotion influences repeat purchase.

Figure 2.7 Influencer Credibility



Source: Primary Data

Figure 2.7 shows the respondents’ opinion about influencer credibility and revealed that 40 percent expressed a strongly agree, 36 percent of the respondents agree, and 12 percent neutral opinion that influencers are credible. On the other hand, 6 percent disagree and 6 percent strongly disagree with the credibility of influencers.

Table 2.6 Authentic and Honest Content

| Particulars | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 |
| Disagree | 3 | 6 |
| Neutral | 6 | 12 |
| Agree | 26 | 52 |
| Strongly agree | 14 | 28 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 2.6 shows the respondents’ opinion regarding authentic and honest content in influencer marketing and depicted that 52 percent agree, and 28 percent strongly agree that authentic and honest content influences the effectiveness of influencer marketing. 12 percent of the respondents remain neutral, while 2 percent disagree, and 6 percent strongly disagree with the statement.

Table 2.7 Relatability Of Influencers

| Particulars | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Disagree | 2 | 4 |
| Neutral | 7 | 14 |
| Agree | 29 | 58 |
| Strongly agree | 12 | 24 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 2.7 exhibits the respondents’ opinion regarding the relatability of influencers and 58 percent of the respondents agree, 24 percent strongly agree, 14 percentage of the respondents neutral to the opinion and 4 percentage of the respondents disagree.

Table 2.8 Consistency of Promotions

| Particulars | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 |
| Disagree | 5 | 10 |
| Neutral | 13 | 26 |
| Agree | 20 | 40 |
| Strongly agree | 11 | 22 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 2.8 shows the respondents’ opinion regarding the consistency of promotions in influencer marketing and 40 percent agree, 26 percent neutral, 22 percent strongly agree and 10 percent disagree and 2 percent strongly disagree with the statement.

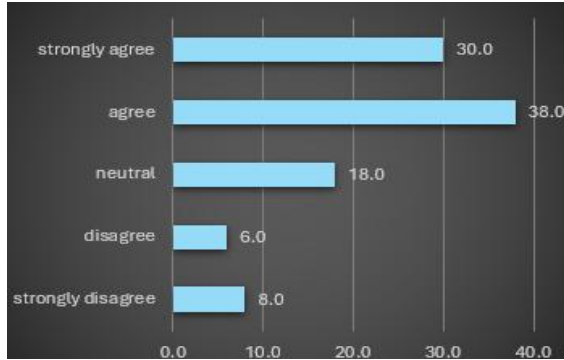
Table 2.9 Trustworthiness Of Sponsored Content

| Particulars | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agree | 0 | 0 |
| Disagree | 4 | 8 |
| Neutral | 7 | 14 |
| Agree | 24 | 48 |
| Strongly agree | 15 | 30 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 2.9 demonstrates the respondents' opinions regarding the trustworthiness of sponsored content and 48 percent agree and 30 percent strongly agree that the sponsored contents are trustworthy, while 14 percent neutral to the opinion and 8 percent disagree with it.

Figure 2.8 Influencer Marketing Encourages Repeat Purchase



Source: Primary Data

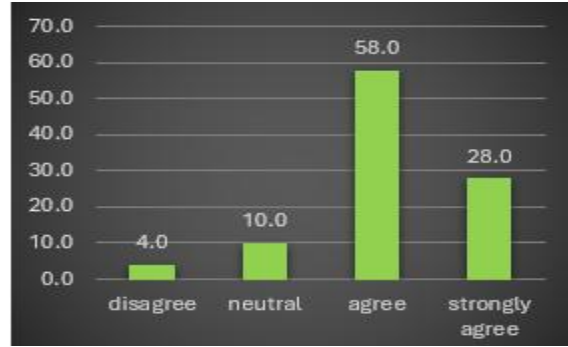
Figure 2.8 shows the respondents' opinions regarding whether influencer marketing encourages repeat purchases and showed that 38 percent agree and 30 percent strongly agree with the statement, 18 percent neutral opinion, 8 percent strongly disagree with this and 6 percent disagree with the statement.

Table 2.10 Loyalty to Brands Endorsed by Trusted Influencers

| Particulars | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly disagree | 2 | 4 |
| Disagree | 3 | 6 |
| Neutral | 6 | 12 |
| Agree | 19 | 38 |
| Strongly agree | 20 | 40 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

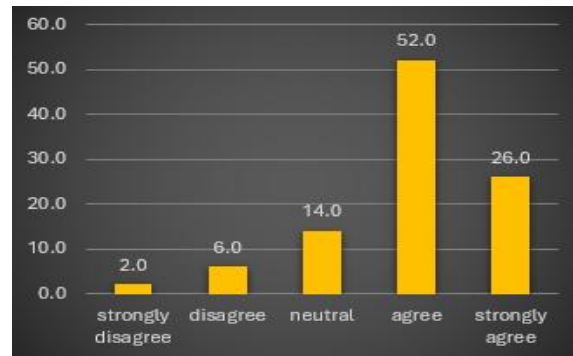
Table 2.10 presents the respondents' opinions regarding loyalty to brands endorsed by trusted influencers and revealed that 40 percent strongly agree and 38 percent agree with this opinion and 12 percent neutral to this opinion. Meanwhile 6 percent disagree and 4 percent strongly disagree to this opinion. figure 2.9 influencer promotions encourage brand recommendation



Source: Primary Data

Figure 2.9 illustrates the respondents' opinions regarding influencer promotions encourage brand recommendation and 58 percent agree and 28 percent strongly agree with this opinion and 10 percent neutral to the opinion and 4 percent disagree to the opinion.

Figure 2.10 Influencer Discounts Encourage Repeat Purchase



Source: Primary Data

Figure 2.10 shows the respondents' opinions regarding influencer - provided discounts encourage repeat purchases and 52 percent agree and 26 percent strongly agree to this statement, 14 percent neutral, 6 percent disagree and 2 percent strongly disagree to this statement.

Table 2.11 Reduced Brand Switching Due To Trusted Influencers

| Particulars | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 6 |
| Disagree | 5 | 10 |
| Neutral | 8 | 16 |
| Agree | 16 | 32 |
| Strongly agree | 18 | 36 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 2.11 displays the respondents' opinions regarding whether trusted influencers help reduce brand switching behavior and depicted that 36 percent strongly agree and 32 percent agree to this statement, 16 percent neutral to this, 10 percent disagree and 6 percent strongly disagree to this statement.

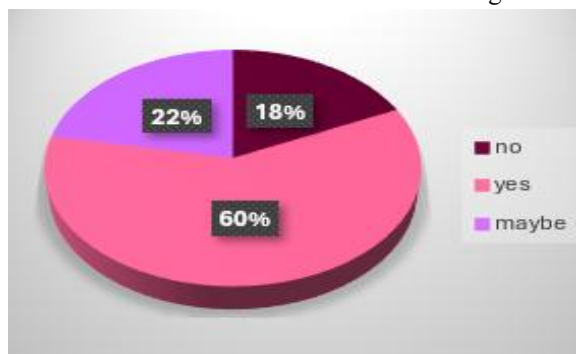
Table 2.12 Role Of Influencer Marketing In Building Brand Loyalty

| Particulars | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 6 |
| Disagree | 2 | 4 |
| Neutral | 8 | 16 |
| Agree | 22 | 44 |
| Strongly agree | 15 | 30 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 2.12 indicates the respondents' opinions regarding the role of influencer marketing in building brand loyalty and indicated that 44 percent expressed an agreement and 30 percent strongly agreed, showed that influencer marketing plays a significant role in fostering brand loyalty. Meanwhile, 16 percent expressed a neutral opinion, suggesting a level of uncertainty among a large portion of the sample. On the other hand, 4 percent disagree and 6 percent strongly disagree with the statement.

Figure 2.11 Whether Influencer Marketing Is More Effective Than Traditional Advertising



Source: Primary Data

Figure 2.11 depicts the respondents' opinions regarding whether influencer marketing is more effective than traditional advertising and 60 percent

answered "yes," meanwhile, 22 percent expressed a "maybe" opinion, suggesting a significant portion of the sample is still weighing the comparative effectiveness of the two approaches and 18 percent answered "no".

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1

H₀: There is no significant difference in brand loyalty and purchase intention between male and female Gen Z respondents.

H₁: There is a significant difference in brand loyalty and purchase intention between male and female Gen Z respondents.

Table 2.13 Independent Samples t-test showing the difference in Brand Loyalty and Retention based on Gender

| Variable | Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------|--------|----|-------|----------------|-----------------|
| Brand Loyalty | Male | 29 | 11.7 | 2.85 | 0.258 |
| | Female | 21 | 12.31 | 3.06 | |
| Purchase Intention | Male | 29 | 12.23 | 3.2 | 0.884 |
| | Female | 21 | 12.31 | 3.2 | |

Independent samples t-test conducted to determine whether there is a significant difference in brand loyalty and purchase intention between male and female respondents. For brand loyalty, the significance value is 0.258, which is greater than 0.05 indicating that there is no significant difference in brand loyalty between male and female respondents. Similarly, for purchase intention, the significance value is 0.884, which is also greater than 0.05 indicated that there is no significant difference in purchase intention between male and female respondents. Although female respondents show slightly higher mean scores for brand loyalty compared to male respondents, and the mean difference in purchase intention is minimal, these differences are not statistically significant.

Hypthesis 2

H₀: There is no significant difference in purchase intention and brand loyalty among different age groups of respondents.

H₁: There is a significant difference in purchase intention and brand loyalty among different age groups of respondents

Table 2.14 Anova Test for Retention and Brand Loyalty Across Age Groups

| Variable | Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------|
| Brand Loyalty | Between Groups | 22.261 | 3 | 7.42 | 2.244 | 0.096 |
| | Within Groups | 152.079 | 46 | 3.306 | | |
| | Total | 174.34 | 49 | | | |
| Purchase Intention | Between Groups | 26.824 | 3 | 8.941 | 2.373 | 0.082 |
| | Within Groups | 173.307 | 46 | 3.768 | | |
| | Total | 200.131 | 49 | | | |

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was conducted to examine whether there are significant differences in brand loyalty and purchase intention across different age groups. For brand loyalty, the calculated F-value (2.244) with a significance level of 0.096 is greater than the standard threshold of 0.05, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in brand loyalty among the age groups. Similarly, for purchase intention, the F-value (2.373) with a significance value of 0.082 also exceeds 0.05, suggesting that differences in purchase intention across age groups are not statistically significant. Although slight variations exist between groups, they are not strong enough to conclude that age has a significant impact on either brand loyalty or purchase intention. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted in both cases, implying that age groups do not play a

decisive role in influencing consumer retention and buying behavior in this study.

Hypothesis 3

H₀: Educational qualification has no significant influence on purchase retention and brand loyalty.

H₁: Educational qualification has a significant influence on purchase retention and brand loyalty.

Table 2.15 ANOVA Showing the Difference in Purchase Retention and Brand Loyalty Based on Educational Qualification

| Variable | Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------|
| Brand Loyalty | Between Groups | 13.864 | 4 | 3.466 | 0.972 | 0.432 |
| | Within Groups | 160.476 | 45 | 3.566 | | |
| | Total | 174.34 | 49 | | | |
| Purchase Intention | Between Groups | 32.78 | 4 | 8.195 | 2.204 | 0.084 |
| | Within Groups | 167.351 | 45 | 3.719 | | |
| | Total | 200.131 | 49 | | | |

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to examine whether educational qualification has a significant impact on brand loyalty and purchase intention. For brand loyalty, the F-value (0.972) with a significance level of 0.432 is considerably higher than the standard 0.05 level, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in brand loyalty among respondents with different educational qualifications. Similarly, for purchase intention, the F-value (2.204) and significance value (0.084) also exceed 0.05, showing that variations in purchase

intention across educational levels are not statistically significant. Although minor differences are observed between groups, they are not strong enough to establish a meaningful relationship. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted, concluding that educational qualification does not significantly influence brand loyalty or purchase intention among the respondents in this study.

III. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The major findings derived from the study are summarized below;

- Majority of the respondents are in the age group of 22–25 years, undergraduates and male and spend 3–5 hours daily on social media, specifying heavy usage among them.
- More than half of the respondents preferred Instagram as the most used social media platform and preferred Fashion/Lifestyle and Travel influencers, depicting a higher interest in style-related and aspirational content.
- Majority of the respondents often follow social media influencers, pointing to active and regular engagement rather than occasional following agreed that influencer recommendations increase trust in a brand, expressing confidence in their impact.
- Most of the respondents conceded that they prefer brands promoted by influencers, denoting a clear positive attitude.
- More than three-fourth of the respondents admitted that influencer marketing influences their brand perception and having an emotional connection with brands endorsed by influencers, marking strong emotional attachment too.
- Majority of the respondents admitted that the influence of influencer promotion on repeat purchase, implying a positive impact on repeat buying behaviour and believed that authentic and honest content improves the effectiveness of influencer marketing.
- More than three-fourth of the respondents acknowledged that influencer credibility, revealing confidence regarding the trustworthiness of influencers.
- Majority of the respondents agreed about influencers' expertise, pointing out its positive impact on effectiveness and the trustworthiness of

sponsored content, depicting confidence about its credibility.

- More than two-fifth of the respondents conceded about the consistency of influencer promotions, suggesting its importance for effectiveness.
- Majority of the respondents accorded that influencer marketing and influencer-provided discounts encourages repeat purchases, marking its positive role in driving loyalty.
- Majority of the respondents acknowledged that influencer promotions encourage brand recommendations, showing their positive influence.
- Majority of the respondents agreed that trusted influencers reduce brand switching, expressing confidence about their impact on brand stability.
- More than two-fifth of the respondents believed that influencer marketing plays a role in building brand loyalty.
- Majority of the respondents believe influencer marketing is more effective than traditional advertising.
- Gender, age and educational qualification have no significant influence on brand loyalty and purchase intention.

IV. CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

From a socio-economic standpoint, the research recognizes Idukki's increasingly digitally connected youth as an attractive consumer segment while contributing to consumer protection efforts through targeted digital literacy initiatives. Furthermore, understanding how digital influence operates can empower local businesses and agricultural producers to effectively utilize influencer marketing, potentially enhancing the Idukki district's economy and creating job opportunities for residents balancing tradition with technology in this unique regional landscape.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations For Brands and Marketers
- ✓ Brands should target the age group of 22–25 years as they form the majority of Gen Z consumers who are financially active and highly receptive to influencer marketing.
- ✓ Marketers need not create separate influencer marketing strategies for male and female Gen Z

consumers, as gender has no significant influence on brand loyalty or purchase intention.

- ✓ Since educational qualification does not influence brand loyalty or purchase intention, brands can design uniform influencer campaigns that appeal across all education levels without segmentation.
- ✓ Brands should prioritize Instagram and YouTube for influencer collaborations, as these are the dominant platforms used by Gen Z, while allocating minimal resources to Facebook and Snapchat.
- ✓ As most of the respondents spend more than 3 hours daily on social media, brands should invest in consistent and frequent influencer content to maintain visibility and engagement.
- ✓ Fashion, Lifestyle, and Travel brands have the highest potential for influencer partnerships, as these categories are most preferred by Gen Z respondents.
- ✓ Technology and Fitness brands should also leverage influencer marketing, as a significant portion of respondents follow influencers in these categories.
- ✓ Marketers should combine influencer endorsements with discount codes or exclusive offers, as majority of the respondents agree that such incentives encourage repeat purchases.
- ✓ Companies should allocate a significant portion of their advertising budget to influencer marketing over traditional advertising, as majority of the Gen Z respondents believe it is more effective.
- ✓ Brands should use influencer marketing not only for awareness but also as a strategic tool for building long-term brand loyalty, as three-fourth of respondents acknowledge its role in loyalty formation.
- ✓ Marketers should collaborate with influencers to create emotionally engaging content, as four-fifth of the Gen Z respondents form emotional connections with endorsed brands.
- ✓ Brands should leverage trusted influencers to reduce customer churn and brand switching, as two-third of the Gen Z respondents agree that trusted influencers stabilize their brand choices.
- ✓ Companies should design influencer campaigns that target the entire Gen Z cohort uniformly, as age within 14–29 years does not significantly alter consumer responses.

- Recommendations For Social Media Influencers
- ✓ Influencers should prioritize authenticity and honesty in their content, as four-fifth of the Gen Z respondents believe these attributes significantly enhance marketing effectiveness.
- ✓ Influencers should demonstrate domain expertise in their niche, as four-fifth of the Gen Z respondents value expertise and find knowledgeable influencers more persuasive.
- ✓ Influencers should focus on being relatable and accessible to their audience, as most of the Gen Z respondents value relatability, which is marginally higher than expertise.
- ✓ Influencers should maintain consistency in their promotional content, as two-third of the Gen Z respondents value regular and predictable promotion schedules.
- ✓ Influencers need not worry that sponsored content labelling reduces trust, as three-fourth of the Gen Z respondents find sponsored content trustworthy when delivered by credible influencers.
- ✓ Influencers should clearly communicate their expertise and share personal stories to build both credibility and emotional connection with their followers.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study shows that influencer marketing has a strong positive impact on brand loyalty and purchase intention among Gen Z. Most respondents value trust, emotional connection, and authenticity in influencers. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube play a key role in attracting their attention. Factors such as age, gender, and education do not significantly affect their preferences. Therefore, brands should focus on honest, relatable, and consistent content to build long-term customer relationships.

VII. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Influencer marketing Vs. Traditional marketing in Idukki District
- Social media marketing in Idukki District
- Instagram Influencer marketing
- Influencer marketing strategies and purchase decisions in Idukki District
- Digital content marketing and consumer behavior in Idukki District

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- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- 7.What type of influencers do you mostly follow?
- Fashion/Lifestyle
- Technology
- Beauty
- Fitness
- Travel
- Other:

Appendix
Questionnaire
Influencer Marketing Impacton Brand Loyalty and Purchase Intention Among Gen Z In Idukki District

1.Age Group

- 14-17
- 18-21
- 22-25
- 26-29

2.Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other

3.Highest Educational Qualification

- High School
- Plus Two
- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate
- Professional
- Other:

4.Average daily time spent on social media

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-3 hours
- 3-5 hours
- more than 5 hours

5.Which social media platforms do you use most frequently?

- Instagram
- YouTube
- Facebook
- Snapchat
- Other:

6.How often do you follow social media influencers?

- Very often
- Often

8. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding the impact of social media on brand loyalty

| | Strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | Strongly agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1.Influencer recommendations increase my trust in a brand | | | | | |
| 2.I prefer brands promoted by influencers I follow | | | | | |
| 3.Influencer marketing positively affects my perception of a brand | | | | | |

9. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements related to factors influencing the effectiveness of influencer marketing

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1. Influencer credibility plays an important role in building brand loyalty | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 2. Authentic and honest content increases the effectiveness of influencer marketing. | | | | | |
| 3. Influencer expertise in the product category influences my buying decisions | | | | | |
| 4. Relatability of influencers increases my loyalty towards a brand. | | | | | |
| 5. Consistency in influencer promotions strengthens brand trust. | | | | | |
| 6. Sponsored content that is clearly disclosed appears more trustworthy | | | | | |

10. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding influencer marketing and customer retention.

| | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| | Strongly disagree | disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1. Influencer marketing encourages me to continue purchasing from the same brand. | | | | | |
| 2. I am likely to remain loyal to a brand endorsed by influencers I trust | | | | | |
| 3. Influencer promotions increase my likelihood of recommending the brand to others | | | | | |
| 4. Discounts or offers promoted by influencers encourage repeat purchases | | | | | |
| 5. I am less likely to switch brands when influenced by | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| trusted influencer s. | | | | | |
| 6. Overall, influencer marketing plays a significan t role in building brand loyalty | | | | | |

11. Do you think influencer marketing is more effective than traditional advertising?

- No
- yes
- Maybe