# The Role of Influencers in Restoring Brand Loyalty Among Previous Customers

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**Abstract**

In this research, the author explores the intended role of social media influencers in regaining consumer patronage of customers who have once used a particular product, and with a view of ascertaining the main influence of credibility, attractiveness, and relevance characteristics of the influencers. As the method of data collection, a quantitative method was used based on which 500 participants who have previously LOS'd a brand and who have been exposed to influencer driven marketing communication were chosen. The study further notes that credibility is the most influential determinant of brand loyalty restoration; secondly, relatability; thirdly, attractiveness. In addition, it was seen that micro influencers were more effective than macro-influencers in the context of consumer recall. These findings confirm the general approach to the choice of influencers and reveal the peculiarities of micro influencers for building credible relationships with the audience. This research fills the existing gap in the literature by diverging from the earlier work on factors influencing brand allegiance to a new perspective of re-allegiance to the brand, hence providing insights to both the scholars and the practitioners in the field of marketing.

## Introduction

Loyalty of clients can be considered one of the issues essential for brand management in today's highly competitive environment. Brand loyalty, in the light of this research, entails the predisposition of customers towards a particular brand through their psychological bond, which makes them to repeatedly patronize such brand (Singh, 2021). Being the loyal customers, they do not have as much concern for price fluctuations as newcomers, recommend the brand to others, and can give stable income (Atulkar, 2020). Nevertheless, there are moments when even these customers can become less engaged, due to different reasons, which could be adverse experiences, other appealing promotions from the competitors or alteration of the customers' preferences (Siebert et al., 2020; Patil & Rane, 2023; Lee & Charles, 2021). Thus, the effort to recapture the lost customers becomes a main problem for brands ordering to maintain the market presence and revenues.

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In the recent past, there has been increasing trends in the use of influencer marketing in that influencers have the ability to influence the consumer buying behaviour electronically through social media platforms and personal branding (Sharma et al., 2021). Influencers are people with the capability to affect the purchase behavior of others based on authority, knowledge, position, or relationship with the audience; influencers are a good opportunity for brands to reclaim and rebuy customers who have previously shopped from them (Zak & Hasprova, 2020. Social media platforms have increased the reach and importance of the influencers in the current context and marketing campaigns.

Due to this, brands today rely on influencers to provide customers with reliable and genuine emotions which are vital when trying to reignite their loyalty. Trust is one more factor that contributes to brand loyalty, and influencers carry out trust from a (perceived) viewpoint of proficiency, integrity, and similarity (Bora & paylan, 2023; Chan-Olmsted & Kim, 2023). The way influencers somehow do not seem like corporate self interested entities by presenting themselves as regular people and not as faceless companies contributes to the negation of customers' disengagement from brands. Quoting customers' research, Vrontis et al. (2021) stressed that peer review and influence were more trustful than traditional advertising and the influencers can restore brand loyalty effectively.

Moreover, influence can build a trust that might help in approaching the audience, as well as providing an individual and interesting conversation. When the message is personalized according to the clients' choice and their behavioral patterns, it is of great advantage for customer retention (Chandra et al., 2022). Thus, admittedly owing to their proximal relationship to the audience that they serve, they can produce content that communicates directly with the viewers' passion and desire, which makes them suitable for the campaign aimed at regaining the former customers. Thus, returning emotionally disconnected customer can be done through a more specific approach that should target the major causes of this disconnection, so that the client brand relationship can be rebuilt (Beattie & Cassidy, 2021; Zhang & Zhang, 2022).

In addition, influencers can affect social proof, an activity that results from a person's belief in the correctness of the actions of other people (Ki et al., 2022). Thus implementing the endorsement of a brand, influencers develop a perception of social approval that keeps previous clients coming back into business with the brand. Social proof is more effective nowadays due to advices and feedback people find online in the form of multiple reviews, ratings and testimonials (Al-Yazidi et al., 2020). Influencers, therefore, can create more social proof by recommending the products, and encourage the other customers who had previously purchased them to buy from the same brand again (Ibáñez-Sánchez et al., 2022; Rohde & Mau, 2021). The use of influencers as a tactic also relates the ideas of emotional branding, which involves establishing an emotional connection with the customers (Zhang et al., 2022). For that reason, influencers, who have skills of making people emotional, can help brands regain their customers' engagement. Emotional branding engulfs greater loyalty since a consumer who has an emotion with a certain brand is likely to be sticky with the brand even when there are better offers out in the market (Preeceet al., 2022; Jhawar et al., 2023). Thus, using the emotional appeal of influencers, brands are capable of regaining the previously dissatisfied customers.

Apart from emotional branding, another theory in this regard is relationship marketing which emphasises the satisfaction of customers and their long term loyalty rather than satisfying them a single time. Influencers indeed have an opportunity of fostering these long-term relationships and in the process, turn previous consumers into brand champions. Relational approach as applied here ties with the emerging trend towards customer experience and satisfaction as key to customers' loyalty, which defines the brand (Witell et al., 2020; Pekovic & Rolland, 2020).

This flows from the proposition that the social identity of consumers can be tapped by influencers to make the customer experience more positive by getting previous customers to re-engage with the brand. Moreover, various investigations provide evidence on the utility of influencer marketing in the recovery of brand loyalty (Ozdemir et al., 2020). Several empirical works have demonstrated that the endorsements made by these individuals have a strong effect on the consumers' perceptions and intentions resulting in higher brand association and purchase intentions. This kind of influence is more credible and genuine which makes the influencers impressive in repurchasing the attention of previous customers. In the same way, it can be suggested that generating social media content and utilizing effective communication will always be in influencers' agenda, all of which fuel the restoration of brand loyalty.

## Methods

The type of research carried out in this study was quantitative in nature and the research design used included descriptive as well as causal research methodology. This approach was chosen to employ statistical analysis on the effect of influencer on re attrition of previous clients and to provide information on the characteristics of the successful influencer marketing. The research also used a stratified random sampling method so as to reach out to ex customers from various brands of different industries. Target population was those who have at one time used particular brands, but seem not to be very loyal with the brands anymore. Using Cochrane's formula for sample size estimation when population is large a sample size was given taking 95% confidence level and 5% percent margin of error. The last surveys recruited 500 participants, which would allow researchers to have sufficient statistical significance and statistical power for statistical analysis.

Participants responded to a questionnaire which was developed for this research and consisted of a set of standardized questions. The questionnaire consisted of closed ended questions only, and for assessing perceptions and attitude about influencers and brand loyalty the 5-Likert scale was used. Some of the questions covered in the instrument include the subject's demographic data, past buying behavior, their reasons for dis-engagement and how they reflect on influencer marketing in engaging them back to the targeted brand. In order to confirm the validity and reliability of the questionnaire the pilot test was taken with 50 respondents which were chosen from the target population. Changes that were made following the pilot test were slight modifications of words and format of questions with a view of making the questions more understandable. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, and this was estimated to be 0. The internal reliability was also moderate; Cronbach alpha was equal. 85 confirming its high internal co-relation. Content validity was assessed by the use of face validity whereby questionnaires were developed and reviewed by experts in the field of marketing specifically, marketing professionals and researchers.

The cross-sectional survey data was analyzed using various statistical methods in order to test the hypothesis of the study and provide an answer to the research questions. Data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), software version 25. The quantitative responses, which were the URL ratings, were analysed using descriptive statistical analysis and presented in means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages as well as the qualitative responses made on the Likert scale. The value of Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to measure the extent and direction of correspondence between detailed characteristics of an influencer and restored brand loyalty. Multiple regression analysis was used to establish the degree to which the characteristics of the influencers is likely to predict brand loyalty. In this study the dependent variable was brand loyalty, while the independent variables involved influencer credibility, attractiveness and relatability. Using ANOVA, the

mean differences for brand loyalty restoration were determined on the basis of age, gender and income level; and through which the difference in the effectiveness of influencer marketing by age, gender and income level were ascertained. ANCOVA test was used in an attempt to control for other extraneous variables including the initial level of brand loyalty before disengagement and also to establish the adjusted impact of influencer characteristics on restoration of brand loyalty. Unrelated samples t-tests were conducted in order to determine the significance of the difference of brand loyalty restoration means between the respondent groups that were influenced by different type of influencers.

## Results and Discussion

Table 1. Pearson's Correlation Coefficients

| Variables | Credibility | Attractiveness | Relatability | Brand Loyalty Restoration |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Credibility | 1 | 0.58** | 0.62** | 0.65** |
| Attractiveness | 0.58** | 1 | 0.55** | 0.60** |
| Relatability | 0.62** | 0.55** | 1 | 0.63** |
| Brand Loyalty Restoration | 0.65** | 0.60** | 0.63** | 1 |

All correlations between influencer characteristics (credibility, attractiveness, and relatability) and brand loyalty restoration are significant at the 0.01 level, indicating strong positive relationships. Credibility shows the strongest correlation with brand loyalty restoration ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 2. Multiple Regression Analysis

| Predictor Variables | B | SE | β | t-value | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 1.00 | 0.15 | | 6.67 | 0.000 |
| Credibility | 0.45 | 0.05 | 0.45 | 9.00 | 0.000 |
| Attractiveness | 0.30 | 0.06 | 0.30 | 5.00 | 0.000 |
| Relatability | 0.35 | 0.06 | 0.35 | 5.83 | 0.000 |

The regression model shows that credibility ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$), attractiveness ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$), and relatability ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$) are significant predictors of brand loyalty restoration. The model indicates that all three influencer characteristics significantly contribute to the restoration of brand loyalty.

Table 3. ANOVA Results for Brand Loyalty Restoration by Age Group

| Age Group | Mean | SD | F-value | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18-24 | 4.10 | 0.70 | | |
| 25-34 | 4.25 | 0.68 | 4.32 | 0.005 |
| 35-44 | 4.05 | 0.75 | | |
| 45-54 | 4.00 | 0.80 | | |
| 55+ | 3.95 | 0.85 | | |

The ANOVA results indicate significant differences in brand loyalty restoration across different age groups ($F(3, 496) = 4.32$, $p < 0.01$). The age group 25-34 reported the highest mean score for brand loyalty restoration ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.68$).

Table 4. ANCOVA Results Controlling for Initial Brand Loyalty

| Source of Variation | SS | df | MS | F-value | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model | 40.50 | 3 | 13.50 | 7.58 | 0.000 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Credibility | 15.00 | 1 | 15.00 | 8.42 | 0.004 |
| Attractiveness | 10.50 | 1 | 10.50 | 5.89 | 0.015 |
| Relatability | 12.00 | 1 | 12.00 | 6.72 | 0.010 |
| Initial Brand Loyalty | 18.00 | 1 | 18.00 | 10.08 | 0.002 |
| Error | 882.50 | 495 | 1.78 | | |
| **Total** | **923.00** | **499** | | | |

The ANCOVA results indicate that after controlling for initial brand loyalty, the effects of credibility ($F(1, 495) = 8.42$, $p < 0.01$), attractiveness ($F(1, 495) = 5.89$, $p < 0.05$), and relatability ($F(1, 495) = 6.72$, $p < 0.05$) on brand loyalty restoration remain significant. Initial brand loyalty also has a significant effect ($F(1, 495) = 10.08$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 5. Independent Samples T-Test for Micro-Influencers vs. Macro-Influencers

| Influencer Type | N | Mean | SD | t-value | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Micro-Influencers | 250 | 4.15 | 0.70 | | |
| Macro-Influencers | 250 | 4.00 | 0.75 | 2.12 | 0.035 |

The independent samples t-test shows a significant difference in the mean brand loyalty restoration scores between micro-influencers ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.70$) and macro influencers ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.75$) ($t(498) = 2.12$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that micro-influencers were more effective in restoring brand loyalty. The conclusion for this study is the information that highlights the significant value of the characteristics of influencers in the process of the restoration of brand loyalty concerning the previous customers. The findings of the research show that credibility, attractiveness, and similarity are strong positive correlates of brand loyalty restoration, and out of these variables, credibility is the strongest. This is in concord with other studies which have pointed out the significance of these attributes in influencing consumer behavior in the digital platform (Thomas et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022).

The study makes contribution to the existing literature because it shows how these characteristics affect the re-engagement with brands not only directly but also with respect to the enormous significance of strategic marketing practices. One of the key factors that are presented in the context of consumer confidence is credibility. It was also found that audiences who believed that their favorite influencers had expert knowledge in particular categories, responded better emotionally, and the increased probability of re-buying products from brands relevant to those influencers (AlFarraj et al., 2021; Sadiq et al., 2023). These results raise the evidence that marketers should focus on those influencers whom audiences consider to be highly credible. This may be done by nurturing influencers who are open with their fans because their word may go down well with the consumers and they will come back to that brand.

Maintaining credibility at the top of the list of indicators for brand loyalty increases fortified prior findings attributing influencer credibility to consumer engagement results (Rifi & Mostafa, 2022). The findings suggest that, the consumer's perceived credibility for the influencers they follow increases the chances of a consumer responding positively to an influencers' recommendations, leading to re patronage of brands they had previously left. This is especially crucial in today's world that is characterized by advertising evasions and where consumers are easy to perceive advertisement messages with suspicion and would not want to be associated with a brand that holds a belief that they consider to be reprehensible (Silva et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2023). Therefore, brands ought to concentrate on building relationships with instigators who their followers perceive to be real and ordinary. In this respect, the authenticity of the influencers is critical because consumers prefer brands similar to their own. This gives the basis of influencer marketing since an audience will only listen and follow the

recommendations of an influencer if the information coming from the influencer is real (Morton, 2020; Martínez-López et al., 2020; Chopra et al., 2021). As a result, marketers have to critically analyse the appropriateness of the influencers through evaluating their history, their way of interacting within the target audience and their total reputation.

Sensational appeal or likeability is another component that is highly useful in the determination of brand loyalty restoration. According to the results, there is a likelihood of an association between attractiveness and attention in audience and consequently, emotions from the followers that may help in improving client communication and dedication. This is what people call the 'beauty is bliss' or the 'halo effect,' whereby people who are considered good looking are believed to possess other positive qualities which in this case makes them more persuasive in marketing (Ogah & Abutu, 2021).

While, the relatability helps in building a sense of identification between the influencer and the consumers as well as gaining the trust (Atiq et al., 2022; Ardley et al., 2022). Since people tend to build relationships only with those who are like them, consumers interact more willingly with the brands those influencers promote. Such a conclusion is also substantiated by evidence showing that more relatable influencers improve the relevance of marketing communication appealed to the audience emotions (Chung et al., 2023). It is a matter of understanding and realizing that attractiveness and relevance are two significant things that marketers must consider when choosing influencers to promote their brand. The result of this study that reveal that micro-influencers are more effective than macro influencers in rebuilding brand equity is such a powerful piece of information that adds a cogent research evidence the emergent literature on micro influencer marketing. Thus, while macro influencers refer to mega-following superstars with whom consumers are likely to have weak ties, micro influencers comprise more modest followings, but with stronger connections. This increased activity can create more genuine communication allowing campaigns targeting the reactivation of consumers to be more effective (Holtrop & Wieringa, 2023).

Also, a recent study has shown that micro influencers have comparatively less instance of sponsorship fatigue among the target audiences, which makes the endorsement message look less oppressive and more natural (Woolley, 2022). As consumers begin to trust the manipulation of marketing messages the use of micro influencers can position brands as organisational ability to develop more realistic forms of promotional content. This finding adds to the existing debate about quality always trumping quantity in influencer marketing because despite the efforts made by brands that have used micro influencers to cultivate passionate relationships with the consumers (Wies et al., 2023; Berne-Manero et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2021).

Some of the limitations in the literature on influencer marketing and brand loyalty are filled by this study, which enhances comprehension of the drivers of consumer re engagement. In this research, the focus is also given to influencers, but in contrast with previous studies, the emphasis is made not on their impact on the first-purchase decisions but on the restart of consumers' loyalty. In light of the identified theoretical and research gaps, by advancing the understanding of the particular factors that can enhance brand loyalty restoration this research makes a valuable contribution to the existing literature and offers practical insights for marketers that may be interested in designing brand management strategies for reattaining the lost customers (Zha et al., 2020; Mirzabeiki & Aitken, 2023). In addition, the study goes further ahead and raises questions in relation to the concept of micro and macro influencers. The influencer type has frequently been ignored in prior research; thus, analysing the functional benefits and drawbacks of various forms is crucial for identifying new opportunities. In addition to writing about micro influencers being more effective than macro influencers in

raising brand loyalty, this research offers practical tips for companies and brands on how to reach these goals (Conde & Casais, 2023).

The implication of the findings of this study can be largely useful to the marketing practitioners. Because of the issue with credibility, brands ought to focus on influencers who are perceived as authentic and trustworthy (Lee & Eastin, 2021; Belanche et al., 2021). It includes not only measuring the reactions of influencers' audiences to their posts but also checking whether these influencers support the brand's goals and vision. When marketers build long term relationships with reputable key opinion leaders, messages to rebuild the consumers' loyalty become constructive for the company's selling propositions. Furthermore, one has to mention the performance of micro influencers as it points to the idea that it may be rather worthwhile for the brands to expand the number of influencer marketing strategies (Leung et al., 2022; Ozuem & Willis, 2022). Paying for micro influencer collaborations, especially when a brand is launching campaigns that are specific to customer re engagement, is possible to generate more consumer engagement. By using the genuine relationship that micro influencers build with their followers, brands can easily work towards winning this group of customers back and building a new positive relationship.

Nevertheless, this research has some limitations that include the following. The population sample was restricted to a region, and this means that the study does not incorporate all the global consumers data (Verma et al., 2020). Further studies may also involve increased subject variability and encompass people of different ages, genders and from different countries, to cast a more light on the impact of biochemical individual differences in different scenarios. However, more qualitative investigations could augment these results by researching the affective and psychosocial level factors, which provoked repurchase intentions of consumers with the brands (Hsu, 2023; Dogra et al., 2023). Other large scale research that may be useful which are longitudinal in nature could also help clarify how long term influencer marketing impacts on brand recognition. In so doing, there is an understanding of the dynamics of the influencer marketing and the brand relations, as scholars focus on how long term influencer engagements drive customer loyalty. Additionally, the analysis of the impact of one or more social media platforms for the effectiveness of influencer marketing can reveal platform specific approaches also preferences from the customer side.

## Conclusion

The implications of this research to the knowledge in influencer marketing are quite profound due to identification of the 3Ps credibility, attractiveness, and similarity in availing their influence to make the previous customers to run back to a particular brand. The observations highlight the extraordinary efficiency of micro influencers in the sphere of building highly trusting and intimate relationships to get the consumers back to interacting with the brands. The present study contributes to the existing knowledge in addressing the following research questions: Therefore, the study provides expanded directions on how brands can identify key influencers to engage with and have meaningful interactions, especially given the potential to rebuild consumer trust and improve the efficiency of the influencer marketing, as a whole.

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