

The Impact of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Brand Loyalty Towards Luxury Cosmetic Brands: with Special Reference to Gen Z in Western Province of Sri Lanka

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This study investigates the relationship between brand loyalty and social media influencer marketing among Generation Z customers in Sri Lanka's luxury cosmetics sector, namely in the Western Province. Because of their knowledge, credibility, and attractiveness, as well as the informational and entertaining value of their content, social media influencers are becoming more and more important in digital marketing. The study fills gaps in understanding how these aspects generate long-term brand loyalty in emerging economies by providing insights into the dynamic convergence of digital and luxury brand marketing. The study used a quantitative research methodology to examine 375 Generation Z customers living in Sri Lanka's Western Province, who were between the ages of 12 and 27. A structured questionnaire assessed how influencer marketing elements, such as informational and entertainment content, as well as influencer attributes like trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, shape brand loyalty. To evaluate these relationships, statistical techniques such as regression analysis and correlation were used. were also investigated in order to determine how they affected the process of establishing loyalty.

The findings show that influencers' expertise and trustworthiness are crucial for building strong brand loyalty, followed by their attractiveness. Content with high entertainment value enhances consumer engagement, while informational content bolsters decision-making confidence, fostering brand loyalty. Stronger emotional bonds between influencers and their audiences are produced when they successfully reflect brand values. This results in

brand endorsement, repeat business, and resistance against competing efforts to market. The study also shows that Gen Z consumers are increasingly choosing relatable and genuine influencers over conventional advertising. The study's focus on Generation Z customers and Sri Lanka's Western Province may limit its applicability to other age groups or regions. Because the study uses self-reported data, response bias may be present. Additionally, the cross-sectional design captures data at a single point in time, providing a snapshot rather than longitudinal insights into evolving trends. To capture long-term loyalty patterns, future research could use longitudinal designs, qualitative approaches, or a wider demographic reach.

This study provides theoretical contributions by expanding the existing body of literature on influencer marketing and consumer behavior within emerging markets. Practically speaking, it provides useful data for marketers looking to create efficient influencer marketing campaigns geared to Generation Z's unique taste in the luxury cosmetics sector. Marketers should prioritize collaborations with influencers that represent integrity and knowledge, while also ensuring that the content is consistent with brand values and customer expectations. This study contributes to the ongoing discussion about influencer marketing in developing economies by demonstrating how cultural and socioeconomic characteristics influence customer behavior in digital arenas. It emphasizes the unrealized potential of targeted influencer collaborations for developing long-term brand relationships in the premium category. Future research might investigate these patterns in a variety of geographic and cultural contexts, as well as the influence of emerging platforms such as TikTok in luxury brand marketing.

Keywords: *Attractiveness, Brand Loyalty, Entertainment Value of the Content, Expertise, Generation Z, Information Value of the Content, Luxury Cosmetics Brands, Social Media Influencer Marketing, Trustworthiness*