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**Investigating the Long-Term Effects of Influencer Marketing
on Brand Loyalty in the Technology Industry among
University Students**

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E-Declaration Form



Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation Declaration Form.

1. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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2. This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

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3. This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated.

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Abstract

Influencer marketing has become a potent instrument for brands to engage with consumers, particularly among university students in the technology sector, in the current digital era. The objective of this investigation is to investigate the dynamics of influencer marketing and its influence on brand loyalty among university students. This research examines a variety of influencer marketing aspects, such as credibility, the efficacy of strategies, demographic characteristics, and purchasing behaviour, through a thorough literature review and survey.

The results indicate that university students' purchasing decisions are considerably influenced by influencer marketing, with the majority having a neutral stance towards influencer recommendations but a propensity to experiment with promoted products. The survey revealed that 55.8% of respondents were neutral, 25.0% were likely to try a product, and only a relatively small segment expressed a very high likelihood of attempting a promoted product. In addition, product evaluations and demonstrations were identified as the most effective influencer marketing strategy, with 63.5% of respondents favouring this approach. This highlights the significance of comprehensive, informative content in the development of consumer behaviour and the cultivation of brand trust. Furthermore, 23.1% of respondents reported that they had purchased a technology product or service as a result of participating in a giveaway or contest hosted by an influencer on social media. This underscores the efficacy of interactive campaigns in promoting consumer engagement and sales.

The engagement of students with influencer marketing content is significantly influenced by their age and academic background, as indicated by demographic analysis. For example, influencer marketing content is actively consumed by respondents aged 22-25, who constitute 42.3% of the sample. Additionally, 57.7% of respondents who were pursuing Business/Marketing degrees demonstrated a greater interest in or engagement with influencer marketing, underscoring the significance of customising strategies to accommodate specific demographic segments. Despite the efficacy of influencer marketing, potential biases and limited awareness of beta-testing programmes are still present, indicating that there is a need for additional research and the refinement of marketing strategies.

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s1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

A perspective shift has occurred regarding the impact of social media and online platforms on consumer behaviour in the current digital environment, which is characterised by rapid change. In an effort to engage target audiences, marketing strategies have entered a new era marked by the utilisation of personal brands and online personalities, as social media influencers have proliferated (Leung, Gu and Palmatier, 2022). The aforementioned occurrence, widely known as influencer marketing, has garnered considerable attention in numerous sectors, with technology being a particular emphasis. The convergence of influencer marketing and the technology sector offers an intriguing field of research, bearing consequences for consumer engagement and brand allegiance. With the ongoing integration of technology into every facet of existence, brands operating in this industry encounter the difficulty of distinguishing themselves in a progressively saturated market. Influencer marketing provides tech companies with a distinctive opportunity to establish an authentic and engaging connection with their intended audience by capitalising on the credibility and extensive reach of social media influencers in order to endorse their offerings.

Multiple considerations influenced the decision to concentrate on college students as the primary demographic for this study. To begin with, college students constitute a demographic subset characterised by substantial engagement and sway on social media platforms (Shabadi, 2023). Being accustomed to digital environments since birth, they frequently demonstrate proficiency in utilising novel technologies and trends. As a result, their perceptions and actions regarding influencer marketing can yield significant observations regarding more general consumer patterns in the technology sector. Furthermore, college students are distinguished in the consumer realm by a confluence of factors including disposable income, receptiveness to brand endorsements, and vulnerability to peer pressure. During the period of transitioning from adolescence to maturity, individuals' brand preferences and allegiances undergo significant changes, rendering them especially susceptible to marketing communications and brand associations. Through an analysis of the effects of influencer marketing on brand loyalty among college students, this research

endeavours to elucidate the determinants that mould consumer conduct in the technology sector and provide insights for strategic marketing choices.

This research is situated against an enthralling backdrop in the technology industry, which is distinguished by its swift rate of innovation and disruption. In light of the rapid influx of novel products and technologies into the market, it is imperative for brands to consistently modify their marketing strategies in order to maintain their competitiveness and relevance. Influencer marketing provides a malleable and ever-evolving strategy for endorsing brands, enabling organisations to correspond with popular subjects and interact with customers immediately (Martínez-López et al., 2020). In addition, the technological sector's dependence on novelty and distinction poses obstacles and prospects for companies aiming to exploit influencer marketing. One advantage of the industry's rapid tempo is that it requires marketing strategies that are adaptable and responsive to shifting consumer preferences and market dynamics. Conversely, the prioritisation of creativity and innovation fosters an environment conducive to influencer partnerships, enabling brands to exhibit their merchandise in novel and captivating fashions.

Through a targeted investigation of the enduring consequences of influencer marketing on brand loyalty among college students, this research endeavours to fill a substantial void in the current body of knowledge. Although the immediate effects of influencer endorsements on consumer behaviour have received considerable attention, the long-term consequences of these marketing strategies remain largely unknown. A comprehensive knowledge of the enduring impact that influencer marketing has on brand perceptions and loyalty is imperative for organisations seeking to foster lasting connections with their intended demographic.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To assess the relationship between the frequency of exposure to influencer content and the longitudinal evolution of brand loyalty among university students in the technology sector.
2. To analyse the influence of perceived influencer credibility on the sustained brand loyalty of university students in the technology sector.

3. To identify and quantify the impact of distinct influencer marketing strategies on the sustained brand affinity of university students within the technology industry.
4. To explore and quantify the moderating effects of demographic factors and individual characteristics on the relationship between influencer marketing exposure and brand loyalty within the technology industry among university students.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How does the frequency of exposure to influencer marketing content among university students in the technology industry correlate with changes in brand loyalty over an extended period?
2. What role does the perceived credibility of influencers play in shaping university students' brand loyalty within the technology industry over time?
3. To what extent do demographic factors and individual characteristics moderate the relationship between influencer marketing exposure and brand loyalty among university students in the technology sector?
4. How do specific influencer marketing strategies impact the long-term brand affinity of university students towards technology brands?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study's significance resides in the convergence of scholarly investigation and pragmatic implementation in the field of marketing, specifically in the dynamic and rapidly progressing technology sector. Through an exploration of the complex correlation between influencer marketing and brand loyalty among college students, this study seeks to make a scholarly contribution to the field of consumer behaviour dynamics in the era of digitalization. The deliberate selection of college students as a demographic cohort is calculated, taking into account their crucial status as pioneers of new technologies and early adopters of trends. College students, being individuals who have grown up digitally, are profoundly ingrained in the digital environment (Heverly, 2007). Within this environment, social media influencers possess significant sway over their purchasing choices and preferences. Therefore, through an analysis

of the enduring consequences of influencer endorsements on brand loyalty and perceptions, this research addresses a significant void in the current body of knowledge, which frequently disregards the lasting influence of influencer marketing initiatives.

Furthermore, this research has practical ramifications for marketers and brand managers who are attempting to navigate the fiercely competitive landscape of the technology sector, in addition to its theoretical contributions. Amidst a contemporary period marked by an excess of information and apathy towards advertisements, brands are progressively resorting to influencer marketing as a strategy to bypass the sea of noise and establish genuine connections with their intended demographic (Smilansky, 2009). Through a comprehensive analysis of the factors that determine successful influencer collaborations—including authenticity, relevance, and consistency—this study provides marketers with practical knowledge that can be utilised to improve marketing strategies and strengthen connections between brands and consumers. Moreover, the study's longitudinal design facilitates a more comprehensive investigation into the temporal intricacies of influencer-brand interactions, thereby providing significant perspectives on the enduring impacts of influencer endorsements on consumer behaviours and attitudes throughout the course of time.

Moreover, this research adds to the wider academic conversation regarding consumer behaviour in the digital realm by illuminating the significance of social media influencers as critical taste and opinion arbiters in the technology sector. In light of the ongoing impact of social media on brand discovery, evaluation, and engagement, it is critical for marketers to comprehend the mechanisms that underlie influencer marketing if they wish to maintain their competitiveness and relevance in the digital era. Through the exploration of the motivations and decision-making processes that underlie consumer reactions to content generated by influencers, this study offers valuable insights for brands seeking to establish genuine connections with their intended audience and cultivate brand loyalty amidst a progressively crowded marketplace.

Furthermore, this research has significant ramifications for scholarly research methodologies, specifically in the domains of marketing and consumer behaviour

studies. Through the utilisation of qualitative and quantitative research methods in conjunction with a longitudinal design, this study demonstrates a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to comprehending intricate consumer phenomena. By incorporating various research methodologies, a thorough analysis of the complex correlation between influencer marketing and brand loyalty can be conducted. This approach provides valuable insights that go beyond simple statistical correlations, encompassing nuanced qualitative information regarding consumer motivations and preferences.

1.4 Dissertation Structure

2. Literature Review

2.1 Impact of Influencer Marketing Frequency on Brand Loyalty

In light of the competitive digital environment, influencer marketing has become a crucial tactic for brands seeking to cultivate brand loyalty and consumer engagement in recent years. The frequency of brand exposure via influencer channels is a pivotal factor in determining the effectiveness of influencer marketing, as it significantly influences consumer attitudes and conduct in relation to the brand. The relationship between brand loyalty among millennials and the frequency of influencer marketing was examined in a study by Sunny (2022). By conducting an analysis of consumer reactions to influencer content presented at different frequencies, the research unveiled a noteworthy and positive correlation between the frequency of exposure and the degree of brand loyalty. The results indicate that regular exposure to content generated by influencers has a positive impact on consumers' brand recall and affinity, ultimately fostering greater loyalty to the endorsed brand. This highlights the critical importance of maintaining regular interaction via influencer platforms in fostering long-lasting connections between brands and consumers.

In support of these results, Ahmed et al. (2024) investigated the fundamental processes by which the frequency of influencer marketing impacts brand loyalty. By employing qualitative interviews and conducting content analysis of influencer campaigns, the researchers successfully discerned two pivotal mechanisms: emotional resonance and cognitive processing. Cognitive processing involves the

iterative exposure of consumers to influencer-generated content, which serves to strengthen brand associations and promote brand recognition. Conversely, emotional resonance refers to the sentimental connections established between consumers and the brand via empathetic narratives and genuine interaction facilitated by influencers. Collectively, these mechanisms explicate how the frequency of influencer marketing fosters long-lasting brand loyalty among consumers through the development of cognitive and affective bonds.

Nevertheless, despite the extensive documentation of the favourable impacts that influencer marketing frequency has on brand loyalty, recent studies have also brought to light possible restrictions and limitations. An investigation conducted by Kim and Kim (2021), for example, explored the manner in which influencer credibility moderated the relationship between frequency and brand loyalty. In contrast to initial assumptions, the research revealed that an overabundance of influencer endorsements may engender consumer scepticism and resistance, particularly when the credibility of the influencer is compromised. This highlights the significance of striking a careful equilibrium between the frequency of influencer marketing campaigns and the credibility of the content in order to prevent the erosion of brand loyalty.

Furthermore, the operational environment in which influencer marketing takes place can have a substantial impact on the efficacy of frequency strategies. An investigation conducted by Vrontis et al. (2021) examined the impact of influencer marketing frequency on consumer responses across cultures. The researchers discovered, that although brand loyalty in Western contexts was most effectively fostered at moderate frequency levels, Asian consumers displayed a predilection for higher frequency levels. This inclination can be attributed to cultural norms that prioritise reciprocity and social responsibility. This underscores the imperative for brands to customise their frequency strategies for influencer marketing in order to account for cultural subtleties and consumer inclinations in various markets.

Furthermore, the effect of influencer marketing frequency on brand loyalty may be influenced by the characteristics of the product category. Leung, Gu and Palmatier (2022) investigated this matter through an analysis of the ways in which frequency impacts durable products differently from non-durable products. The results of the study indicated that increased frequency of purchases promoted brand loyalty in non-

durable sectors with regular purchase cycles, but could result in decreased returns and consumer fatigue in durable categories with less frequent purchase decisions. This highlights the significance of ensuring that frequency strategies are in accordance with the distinct consumption patterns and purchase cycles that are intrinsic to particular product categories.

In summary, although regular exposure to content generated by influencers may enhance consumer brand recall, affinity, and emotional connection, the effectiveness of frequency strategies is dependent on a number of variables, such as the credibility of the influencer, the cultural environment, and the dynamics of the product category. By clarifying these intricacies, organisations can enhance their influencer marketing approaches in order to foster long-lasting brand allegiance and gain a competitive edge in the online marketplace.

2.2 The Role of Influencer Credibility in Shaping Brand Loyalty

Within the ever-evolving realm of influencer marketing, the reliability of influencers becomes a pivotal factor in shaping brand allegiance, especially in the technology sector, where consumers are exceptionally astute and price-sensitive. Umesh, Rajkumar & Karthika (2021) conducted an investigation that explored the correlation between the credibility of influencers and brand loyalty in the technology industry. By utilising a mixed-methods strategy that included content analysis and surveys pertaining to technology-focused influencer campaigns, the researchers discovered a robust positive correlation between brand loyalty and the perception of influencer credibility. With regard to the attitudes and behaviours of consumers towards endorsed brands, it was specifically observed that influencers who were perceived as knowledgeable, authentic, and trustworthy had a substantial impact. This highlights the critical significance of influencer credibility in cultivating long-lasting brand-consumer relationships and establishing trust in the technology industry.

Additionally, the distinct attributes of technology products—including their intricate nature and swift rate of advancement influence consumer intentions to make purchases. Consumer reactions to influencer endorsements of technological devices were examined in a study by Trivedi and Sama (2019), which found that perceived expertise and authenticity were the most influential factors in fostering brand loyalty.

Consumers actively pursued validation and direction from reputable influencers who exhibited profound expertise in the respective fields and authentic enthusiasm for the products they endorsed. As a result, consumers viewed influencers with limited authenticity and regarded them with scepticism; they were unable to inspire enduring brand loyalty.

Similarly, an investigation conducted by Ela (2024) explored the mechanisms by which brand loyalty in the technology industry is impacted by the credibility of influencers. Two fundamental mechanisms were discerned by the researchers via sentiment analysis and in-depth interviews involving consumers and tech influencers: expertise-based trust and relational trust. Consumers develop trust in influencers based on their perceived expertise and knowledge in the technological field. This trust inspires confidence in the influencers' recommendations and cultivates brand loyalty. In contrast, relational trust is established when consumers perceive the interactions between influencers and brands as genuine and open. This fosters a feeling of camaraderie and encourages brand loyalty among consumers who are endorsed by the influencers. Collectively, these mechanisms highlight the complex and diverse ways in which influencer credibility impacts the relationship between brands and consumers in the technology industry.

Nevertheless, despite the considerable influence that influencer credibility has on brand loyalty, recent studies have brought to light potential obstacles and subtleties that are intrinsic to this relationship. An investigation conducted by Reinikainen et al. (2021) examined the effects of influencer scandals and controversies on brand loyalty and consumer perceptions of credibility. Instances of influencer malfeasance or ethical violations could severely tarnish both the influencer's and the brand's reputation, resulting in decreased consumer trust and loyalty, according to the findings. This highlights the significance of exercising caution and employing calculated risk management when choosing and collaborating with reputable influencers in order to protect brand value and cultivate long-lasting customer allegiance.

Furthermore, the dynamic characteristics of influencer marketing platforms and content formats add fresh aspects to the relationship between brand loyalty and credibility in the technology industry. For example, interactive content and live streaming provide influencers with unparalleled possibilities to interact with audiences

in real-time, which in turn enhances the perception of their credibility and authenticity. Zhang et al. (2021) investigated the effects of live streaming influencer marketing on brand loyalty. Their findings indicated that consumers developed a sense of trust and intimacy through the influencers' real-time interactions, which consequently strengthened their allegiance to the brand. This highlights the significance of utilising inventive content formats and engagement tactics to bolster the credibility of influencers and foster long-lasting brand-consumer connections within the technology industry.

To conclude, credible influencers can exert substantial impact on consumer attitudes and behaviours concerning endorsed brands through the establishment of trust, authenticity, and expertise. In the technology sector, however, brands must effectively manage obstacles such as influencer scandals and capitalise on emergent content formats in order to optimise the effectiveness of influencer marketing in cultivating long-lasting brand loyalty and gaining a competitive edge.

2.3 Demographic Moderators of Influencer Marketing and Brand Loyalty

Gaining insight into the manner in which demographic variables moderate the correlation between influencer marketing and brand loyalty is critical for technology-oriented brands that wish to efficiently engage university students. Dogra (2019) investigated the influence of demographic moderators, including gender, age, and income, on the relationship between influencer marketing and brand loyalty. Variations in response to influencer content were found to be statistically significant according to demographic characteristics. Furthermore, it is worth noting that age was identified as a substantial demographic moderator, as younger students exhibited a greater capacity to be receptive to influencer marketing messaging and developed stronger brand loyalty as time progressed. These findings were supported by Bruns (2018) which underscored the significance of customising influencer marketing tactics to align with the inclinations and actions of younger cohorts comprising university students. Younger students are more inclined to develop enduring brand loyalty and commitment to the technology industry when influencer content corresponds with their digital-native sensibilities and lifestyle preferences.

In addition, it is worth noting that income levels were identified as a significant demographic moderator that affected the extent to which influencer marketing influenced brand loyalty. Shin and Lee (2021) conducted a study which found that individuals with higher socioeconomic status displayed an increased inclination to interact with influencer-generated content and exhibited greater degrees of allegiance to endorsed brands. This highlights the significance of categorising university student audiences according to their income levels and customising influencer marketing approaches to align with the spending patterns and inclinations of affluent segments operating in the technology industry.

Nevertheless, although demographic moderators have a substantial impact on the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies, recent studies have also emphasised the significance of psychographic variables in comprehending how consumers react to influencer-generated content. The impact of personality traits, including extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness, on brand loyalty among who were exposed to influencer marketing in the technology industry was the subject of a study by Mete (2021). Personality traits interacted with demographic variables to influence consumer attitudes and behaviours towards endorsed brands, according to the findings. As an example, individuals with elevated levels of extraversion demonstrated a heightened inclination to interact with influencer-generated material and exhibit allegiance to a brand, especially when influenced by experiential and interactive marketing approaches. This underscores the necessity for brands to employ a sophisticated strategy that incorporates demographic and psychographic factors when developing influencer marketing campaigns aimed at technology-associated university students.

In summary, demographic factors play a substantial role in moderating the influence of influencer marketing on the level of brand loyalty that technology-sector university students develop towards a particular brand. By comprehending the intricate dynamics among gender, age, income, and psychographic characteristics, organisations can customise influencer marketing approaches to effectively connect with the inclinations and actions of varied student segments. This enables them to optimise the effectiveness of their campaigns and foster long-lasting connections between the brand and consumers within this critical demographic group.

2.4 Influencer Marketing Strategies and Long-Term Brand Affinity

Understanding the intricacies of enduring brand loyalty among university students, specifically in the technology industry, is critical for brands aiming to establish lasting connections with this crucial demographic in the context of influencer marketing. An investigation conducted by Argyris et al. (2020) explored the efficacy of influencer marketing tactics in cultivating enduring brand allegiance. The researchers uncovered that the establishment of lasting brand affinity was significantly facilitated by the strategic congruence between influencer content and their aspirations, values, and lifestyle preferences. Research has discovered that over time, brand advocacy and loyalty among students are more effectively influenced by influencers who genuinely incorporate brand messages into their personal lives and aspirations. This underscores the significance of developing influencer marketing tactics that genuinely resonate with the aspirations and values of college students majoring in technology, with the intention of cultivating enduring brand allegiance.

In addition, it becomes apparent that perceived authenticity and relatability play a crucial role in establishing enduring brand loyalty among college students in relation to influencer content. The impact of authentic influencer-brand collaborations on brand loyalty was investigated in a study conducted by Okonkwo and Namkoisse (2023). People developed a stronger sense of trust in and long-lasting affinity towards a brand when they perceived influencers to be authentic, approachable, and forthright in their dealings with the brand. Encouraging emotional attachments and maintaining involvement with the endorsed brand, thus cultivating long-lasting brand-consumer relationships, depended heavily on the principle of authenticity. This emphasises the significance of placing a high value on genuineness and connection when developing influencer marketing tactics aimed at college students in the technology industry, with the intention of fostering enduring brand allegiance.

Furthermore, by employing a variety of influencer marketing strategies that are specifically designed to appeal to the inclinations and actions of college students, organisations can effectively cultivate enduring brand loyalty in the technology sector. An investigation conducted by Vashisht (2023) examined the efficacy of interactive content and gamification in influencer marketing initiatives. As a result of the influencers' facilitation of immersive and interactive experiences, people developed

greater engagement, emotional resonance, and long-lasting brand affinity, according to the findings. The utilisation of gamification strategies, including interactive storytelling, loyalty, and recall through the implementation of assessments and challenges, contributed to the long-term consolidation of brand-consumer connections among university students. This highlights the significance of adopting inventive and immersive influencer marketing approaches in order to foster lasting brand allegiance among technologically proficient college students.

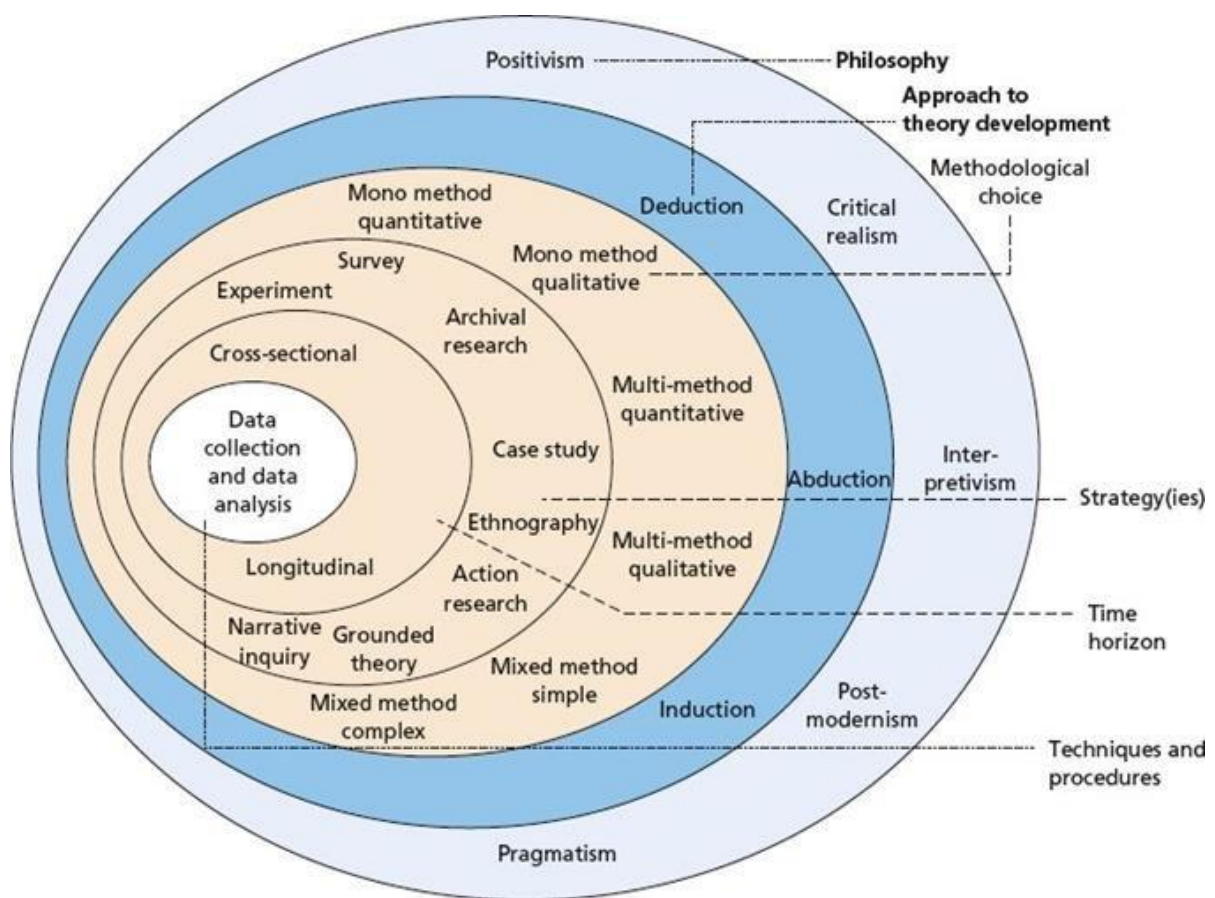
However, despite the considerable potential of influencer marketing to cultivate enduring brand loyalty among technology-sector university students, brands must adeptly navigate the distinct challenges and considerations that are specific to this demographic. As an illustration, Bruns (2018) investigated the relationship between the authenticity and transparency of influencers and brand loyalty among college students. The findings suggested that trust and long-term brand affinity could be eroded if university students perceive influencers as dishonest or insincere. The significance of authenticity and transparency in influencer-brand relationships became apparent, as students were drawn to influencers who upheld sincere and open communication with brands. This highlights the significance of establishing authentic, mutually advantageous collaborations between brands and influencers in order to nurture lasting brand allegiance among technology-focused university students.

To summarise, through the implementation of inventive engagement strategies, strategic alignment, and a focus on authenticity, brands have the ability to nurture long-lasting relationships with consumers and inspire brand loyalty within this crucial demographic group. To maximise the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies in fostering enduring brand loyalty and a competitive edge in the technology industry, brands must maintain a vigilant stance while addressing obstacles such as transparency and authenticity.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a clarification of the methodology utilised to accomplish the research objectives that were defined in Chapter 1. The methodology functions as a comprehensive plan for carrying out this research, providing direction for the gathering, examination, and understanding of data. Implementing a systematic methodology is essential in order to guarantee the soundness, consistency, and validity of the research outcomes.



Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Saunders-et-als-Research-Onion-30_fig2_349316382

The methodology selection and design process is guided by the research onion model, which was originally proposed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009). The metaphorical representation of the research onion's layers of complexity in research design signifies distinct facets of the investigation process for each layer. Through a methodical examination of the research onion's strata, this study delves into the

complexities of research design, encompassing both overarching philosophical presumptions and precise methods of data collection.

Every layer of the research onion represents an essential element of research methodology, encompassing a time horizon, data acquisition methods, philosophical stance, research approach, and data analysis techniques. Although further explanation of the research onion's strata will be provided in later sections, for the time being, it is critical to recognise their combined influence on the methodological structure of this investigation.

3.2 Research Philosophy

This dissertation will employ positivism as the fundamental philosophical position that will direct its research methodology. Positivism presents a resilient framework distinguished by its prioritisation of empirical inquiry, objectivity, and the acquisition of knowledge that can be applied universally (Crossan, 2003). Our objective is to utilise a methodical and organised approach to research by adopting positivism. This framework is especially well-suited for our examination of the relationship between influencer marketing and brand loyalty in the ever-changing technology industry.

Positivism posits that empirical evidence originating from discernible phenomena ought to form the basis of knowledge. We will give precedence to the gathering and examination of empirical data acquired via rigorous methodologies, including surveys, experiments, and observations, in our research. Through the methodical collection of data, our objective is to reveal latent patterns and causal connections that are inherent in the phenomena being investigated. By employing this empirical methodology, we are able to transcend conjecture and intuition and derive conclusions grounded in concrete evidence.

3.3 Research Approach

This dissertation aims to investigate the intricate phenomena of influencer marketing and brand loyalty through the utilisation of an inductive research approach. In contrast to the process of testing hypotheses against empirical evidence that commences with deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning operates by extrapolating general principles

from particular observations or patterns within the data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

Our inductive methodology acknowledges the complex and dynamic characteristics of brand loyalty and influencer marketing, recognising that these phenomena may be influenced by a multitude of factors and interactions that are not comprehensively accounted for in current frameworks or theories. By embracing an inductive approach, our objective is to enable the data to provide its own explanation, thereby fostering the revelation of novel insights and perspectives that might not have been predicted beforehand.

3.4 Research Strategy

This dissertation aims to examine the correlation between brand loyalty among college students in the technology sector and influencer marketing exposure through the utilisation of a quantitative research approach (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Quantitative research strategies entail the systematic gathering and examination of numerical data in order to validate hypotheses and reveal relationships or patterns among variables.

In accordance with the positivist paradigm that underpins our investigation, our quantitative research approach emphasises the utilisation of systematic observation and measurement to obtain empirical data and formulate impartial conclusions. Through the utilisation of quantitative methodologies, our objective is to generate results that are statistically reliable and capable of influencing policy, practice, and theory in the domain of influencer marketing and brand loyalty.

3.5 Time Horizon

This dissertation will employ a cross-sectional research design, which is characterised by a short-term time frame, to investigate the relationship between brand loyalty and influencer marketing exposure among technology-sector college students. By gathering data at a single moment in time, a cross-sectional design enables the capture of a static image that depicts the attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions of individuals at a particular moment (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

Our objective is to offer a momentary depiction of the present condition of brand loyalty and influencer marketing exposure among technology-sector college students through the utilisation of a cross-sectional research design. This methodology enables us to collect data in a streamlined and economical fashion, rendering it highly compatible with our research goals and limitations in resources.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

As the principal data collection approach for this dissertation, surveys administered via Microsoft Forms will be utilised to acquire quantitative data pertaining to the relationship between brand loyalty and influencer marketing exposure among college students specialising in the technology sector. Surveys provide a methodical and effective approach to gathering data from a substantial number of participants, enabling the systematic acquisition of information pertaining to pertinent variables and the examination of patterns and correlations.

Microsoft Forms offers an intuitive interface that facilitates the creation and management of surveys, rendering it readily comprehensible for both researchers and participants. By utilising Microsoft Forms, we shall generate an individualised survey instrument that is precisely suited to our research aims and conjectures. The survey will comprise inquiries pertaining to pertinent factors including demographic data, frequency of exposure to influencer content, perceived credibility of influencers, and brand loyalty towards technology brands.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

This dissertation will utilise bar charts and pie charts as data analysis methods to visually depict and interpret the results obtained from our survey concerning the relationship between brand loyalty and influencer marketing exposure among technology-sector college students. Bar charts and pie charts are prevalent visual aids utilised to present categorical and numerical data in a straightforward and comprehensible manner. They facilitate comparisons, enable the detection of patterns, and facilitate the communication of findings.

In order to illustrate categorical data and compare the frequency or distribution of responses across various categories, charts will be employed. As an illustration, bar

charts could be employed to depict the distribution of participants' answers pertaining to inquiries concerning the frequency of influencer content exposure, perceived influencer credibility, or brand loyalty towards particular technology brands. Each category shall be visually depicted through an individual bar, where the bar's height shall signify the frequency or proportion of responses falling within that particular category. Through the visual comparison of bar heights, it is possible to discern patterns, trends, and distinctions among various categories.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Prior to their involvement in the research, all participants will be required to provide informed consent. Ensuring informed consent entails furnishing participants with exhaustive and unambiguous information pertaining to the research's aims, methodologies, possible advantages and disadvantages, safeguards against disclosure, and their entitlements as participants. Participants will be afforded the opportunity to pose inquiries and will be able to exercise informed judgement regarding their potential involvement in the research.

Additionally, safeguarding the privacy and confidentiality of participants will be a top priority throughout the entirety of the research endeavour. Each piece of information gathered will be anonymized and securely preserved, ensuring that only authorised personnel will have access to it. Unless required by law or ethical guidelines, the personal information of participants will be kept strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to any third parties without their explicit consent.

Furthermore, we will guarantee that the research design and procedures are conducted in strict adherence to the ethical guidelines and standards established by the appropriate ethics committees or institutional review boards (IRBs). Before beginning data collection, we will obtain approval from the relevant ethics review board and adhere to any further requirements or recommendations that may be specified by the IRB.

Moreover, throughout the research process, we will make every effort to mitigate any potential risks or discomfort that participants may experience. This entails guaranteeing that survey inquiries are unambiguous, devoid of intrusiveness, and

devoid of any unsolicited pressure or coercion. Participants shall retain the prerogative to discontinue their involvement in the research without incurring any adverse consequences for withdrawal, and protocols shall be established to attend to any apprehensions or grievances expressed by participants.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Research Question 1

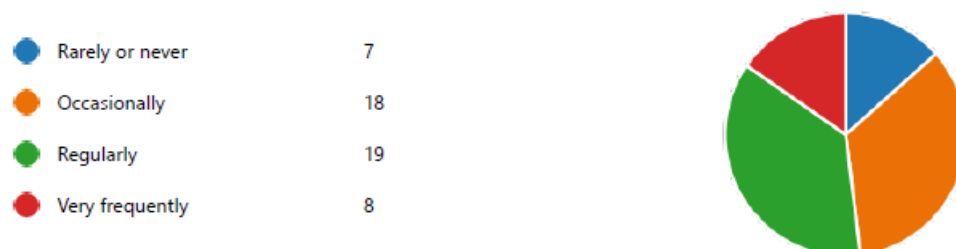
Research Question 1: How does the frequency of exposure to influencer marketing content among university students in the technology industry correlate with changes in brand loyalty over an extended period?

To answer this research question, we must analyse the responses of the following survey questions:

- How often do you come across content on social media platforms where individuals promote or recommend technology products/services?
- Have you noticed any change in your loyalty to certain technology brands after seeing people talk about them on social media?
- In your opinion, which aspect of influencer marketing is most likely to contribute to sustained brand affinity for technology products/services?
- How often do you engage with technology-related content created by influencers who specialize in niche areas such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, or renewable energy?

Let us analyse the responses of each of these questions now.

How often do you come across content on social media platforms where individuals promote or recommend technology products/services?



The survey indicates that university students have varying degrees of exposure to influencer marketing content. It is important to note that 36.5% of respondents reported that they are regularly exposed to such content, while 34.6% encounter it occasionally. This implies that a substantial number of students are consistently engaging with influencer marketing, which may influence their purchasing behaviours and perceptions. The pervasive character of influencer content in the lives of some students was underscored by a smaller segment, 15.4%, who reported very frequent

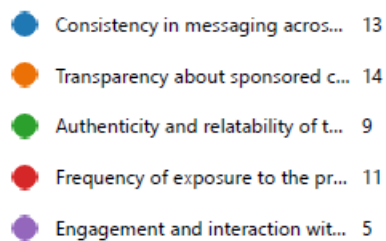
exposure. It is intriguing that only 13.5% of respondents indicated that they engage with this content on an uncommon or nonexistent basis. This distribution suggests that the majority of university students have encountered influencer marketing. The high exposure rates may be attributed to the targeted nature of influencer marketing within the technology industry and the increased use of social media platforms. These results emphasise the significance of influencer marketing strategies in its ability to engage and reach a significant portion of the university student demographic. In order to foster loyalty and influence purchasing decisions among these students, brands must take into account the high exposure rates and customise their content to resonate with this highly engaged audience.

Have you noticed any change in your loyalty to certain technology brands after seeing people talk about them on social media?



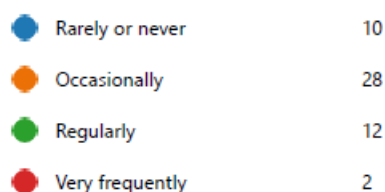
Interesting trends are demonstrated by the influence of influencer marketing on brand loyalty. Approximately 30.8% of students reported an increase in brand loyalty as a result of exposure to influencer marketing, indicating that effective influencer campaigns can improve brand affinity. Nevertheless, 32.7% of respondents reported that they did not observe any change, suggesting that influencer marketing may garner attention but does not always result in increased loyalty. It is important to note that only 7.7% of respondents had a decrease in loyalty, which is a relatively low percentage and indicates that the negative effects are minimal. The loyalty of the remaining 28.8% remained stable, indicating that it is not necessarily increasing. These results indicate that influencer marketing has the potential to increase brand loyalty among university students; however, its efficacy is inconsistent. In order to effectively increase loyalty, brands must guarantee that their influencer campaigns are pertinent, engaging, and resonate with their target audience. Furthermore, comprehending the factors that contribute to enhanced loyalty can assist in the optimisation of strategies and the maximisation of the beneficial effects of influencer marketing.

In your opinion, which aspect of influencer marketing is most likely to contribute to sustained brand affinity for technology products/services?



The primary factors that contribute to the sustained affinity of a brand among university students are transparency regarding sponsored content (26.9%) and consistency in messaging (25.0%). This suggests that students prioritise honesty and dependability in influencer marketing. Authenticity and relatability (17.3%) are also significant factors, emphasising the significance of authentic connections between influencers and their audience. Transparency and consistency are more important than the frequency of exposure (21.2%). Engagement and interaction (9.6%) are the least significant, indicating that interaction is essential but not as powerful as the other factors. These results indicate that in order to sustain long-term loyalty, brands must prioritise transparent, consistent, and authentic messaging through influencers. Brand affinity and loyalty among university students in the technology sector can be substantially improved by establishing authentic relationships and delivering candid content.

How often do you engage with technology-related content created by influencers who specialize in niche areas such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, or renewable energy?



The responses are more evenly distributed in terms of engagement with technology-related content created by influencers who specialise in niche areas, such as renewable energy, artificial intelligence, or cybersecurity. The "Occasionally" category

is occupied by a significant number of respondents (28), indicating a moderate level of interest in the content but a lack of consistent engagement. This suggests a prospective interest in remaining informed about technological advancements, but without the commitment of significant time or attention. In contrast, a significant minority of respondents (12 respondents) or (2 respondents) indicated that they engage with such content "Regularly" or "Very Frequently," suggesting a strong interest in keeping informed about the latest developments in these niche areas. This could indicate a professional interest, a fervour for technology, or a desire to remain informed about emergent trends.

The following table summarises the results:

Survey Question	Responses	Count	Percentage	Patterns and Insights
Frequency of exposure to influencer content	Rarely or never	7	13.5%	Most respondents are regularly or occasionally exposed to influencer content (67.3%).
	Occasionally	18	34.6%	
	Regularly	19	36.5%	
	Very frequently	8	15.4%	
Change in brand loyalty	Increased	16	30.8%	Most respondents noticed an increase or no change in brand loyalty after exposure (59.6%).
	Decreased	4	7.7%	
	No change	15	28.8%	
	Not noticed	17	32.7%	
Aspect contributing to sustained brand affinity	Consistency in messaging	13	25.0%	Transparency and consistency are significant contributors to brand affinity.
	Transparency about sponsored content	14	26.9%	
	Authenticity and relatability	9	17.3%	
	Frequency of exposure	11	21.2%	
	Engagement and interaction	5	9.6%	

Engagement with niche influencer content	Rarely or never	10	19.2%	Most students occasionally engage with niche technology content (53.8%).
	Occasionally	28	53.8%	
	Regularly	12	23.1%	
	Very frequently	2	3.8%	

4.2 Research Question 2

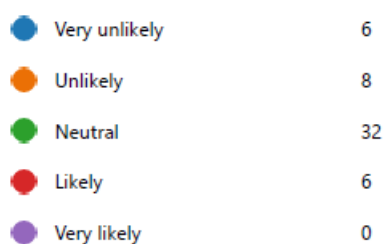
Research Question 2: What role does the perceived credibility of influencers play in shaping university students' brand loyalty within the technology industry over time?

Similarly, to answer the second research question, we must analyse the responses of the following survey questions:

- How likely are you to trust a technology product/service recommended by an influencer who regularly features it in authentic, non-promotional content?
- When evaluating the credibility of an influencer promoting a technology product/service, how much weight do you give to their ability to provide detailed technical specifications and insights?
- In your opinion, how important is it for influencers endorsing technology products/services to disclose any financial relationships or sponsorships with the brands they promote?

Now analysing these questions individually,

How likely are you to trust a technology product/service recommended by an influencer who regularly features it in authentic, non-promotional content?



The responses to trust in influencer recommendations are diverse, with 61.5% of students remaining neutral. This implies a cautious yet receptive stance towards influencer endorsements, in which students may require additional convincing or substantiation from other sources before placing their full trust in recommendations. A small but significant group that is highly receptive to such endorsements is highlighted by the fact that only 11.5% of respondents are likely to trust influencer recommendations. Alternatively, 26.9% of students are extremely unlikely or unlikely to trust influencer recommendations, which suggests a need for influencers to establish greater credibility and authenticity. These results indicate that influencer marketing has the potential to be successful; however, its success is contingent upon the perceived trustworthiness and expertise of the influencers. In order to foster trust and influence purchasing decisions among university students, brands should partner with influencers who have established credibility and can provide honest, transparent, and valuable content.

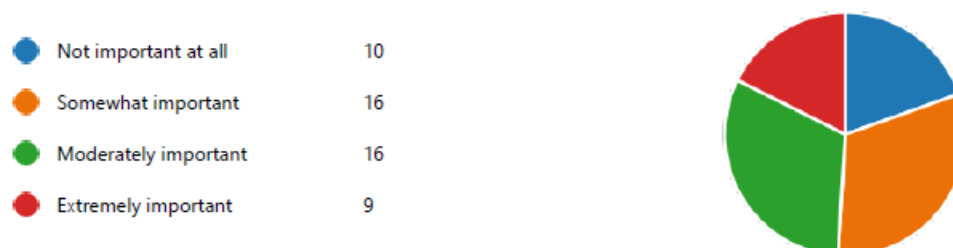
When evaluating the credibility of an influencer promoting a technology product/service, how much weight do you give to their ability to provide detailed technical specifications and insights?



59.6% of respondents consider the significance of technical specifications and insights from influencers to be moderately essential, suggesting that university students in the technology industry appreciate detailed and knowledgeable content. A smaller segment, 26.9%, considers it to be of great importance, indicating that a substantial number of students put a high value on technical expertise. In contrast, 11.5% of respondents regard it as slightly essential, while only 1.9% find it to be of no importance. This underscores the fact that technical details are generally valued, but their significance varies. These results indicate that influencers who possess a high level of technical expertise and the capacity to communicate intricate insights are more likely to establish trust and influence the purchasing decisions of students. In order to

meet the needs of students who prioritise technical specifications and insights, brands should establish partnerships with knowledgeable influencers who can offer comprehensive product information.

In your opinion, how important is it for influencers endorsing technology products/services to disclose any financial relationships or sponsorships with the brands they promote?



69.2% of respondents rated financial disclosure in influencer marketing as moderately essential, underscoring the importance of transparency in the financial relationships between influencers and brands. This implies that students desire to be informed about the financial aspects of endorsements in order to make informed decisions about the authenticity of the content. The viewpoint of 17.3% of respondents is very significant, emphasising the importance of financial transparency. Only a small segment, 9.6%, considers it slightly important, and 3.8% do not consider it to be important at all. These results suggest that university students' trust and brand loyalty can be substantially influenced by transparency regarding financial disclosures. In order to establish trust and credibility with their audience, brands must guarantee that influencers disclose their financial relationships in a transparent manner. Ultimately, the authenticity of influencer endorsements can be improved through transparent financial disclosure, which in turn fosters stronger brand loyalty.

The following table summarises the results:

Survey Question	Responses	Count	Percentage	Patterns and Insights
Trust in recommendations	Very unlikely	6	11.5%	Majority are neutral towards trusting influencer recommendations (61.5%).
	Unlikely	8	15.4%	
	Neutral	32	61.5%	

	Likely	6	11.5%	
	Very likely	0	0.0%	
Weight given to technical specifications and insights	None at all	4	7.7%	Most respondents consider technical insights moderately important (59.6%).
	A little	11	21.2%	
	Moderately	31	59.6%	
	Significantly	6	11.5%	
Importance of disclosing financial relationships	Not important at all	10	19.2%	A majority find it at least somewhat to moderately important for financial disclosure (69.2%).
	Somewhat important	16	30.8%	
	Moderately important	16	30.8%	
	Extremely important	9	17.3%	

4.3 Research Question 3

Research Question 3: To what extent do demographic factors and individual characteristics moderate the relationship between influencer marketing exposure and brand loyalty among university students in the technology sector?

To answer the 3rd research question, we must analyse the responses of the following questions:

- Which of the following age groups do you belong to?
- What is your gender identity?
- What is your academic major or field of study?

Now we analyse them individually.

Which of the following age groups do you belong to?

18-21	12
22-25	22
26-30	10
Above 30	8



The survey respondents' age distribution indicates a substantial concentration of students aged 22-25, who account for 42.3% of the sample. This implies that the technology industry's influencer marketing content is most engaging or interesting to this age group. The presence of students aged 18-21 makes up 23.1% of the population, suggesting a slightly lower level of engagement. This may be attributed to a lack of exposure to influencer marketing or to a difference in interests. 19.2% of the population is between the ages of 26 and 30, while 15.4% are over the age of 30. The broad range of university students that influencer marketing reaches is underscored by this diverse age distribution. However, the highest engagement is observed among those in their early to mid-twenties. In order to effectively customise their influencer marketing strategies, brands that are targeting university students should take into account the unique preferences and behaviours of these age groups. Selecting suitable influencers and developing content that resonates with the majority of the target audience can be facilitated by comprehending the dominant age group.

What is your gender identity?

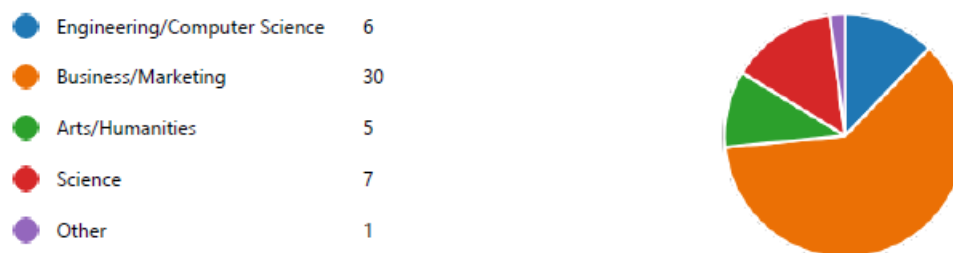
Male	36
Female	15
Non-binary	0
Prefer not to say	1



The gender identity of respondents is characterised by a male plurality of 69.2% and a female representation of 28.8%. This gender distribution implies that male pupils are more responsive to or engaged with influencer marketing in the technology industry. The tiny percentage (1.9%) of respondents who chose not to disclose their gender suggests a slight presence of non-binary or privacy-conscious individuals. The overall findings may be influenced by the skewed gender distribution, as male and female

pupils may exhibit distinct engagement patterns and responses to influencer marketing. When creating influencer marketing campaigns, brands should take into account the gender dynamics to ensure that the content is appealing to both male and female students. Furthermore, comprehending gender-specific preferences and behaviours can assist in the selection of influencers who are well-suited to the target demographic, thereby improving the efficacy of the marketing strategy.

What is your academic major or field of study?



There is a substantial concentration of respondents from the Business/Marketing academic major or field of study, comprising 57.7% of the sample. This suggests that students from these disciplines are more interested in or engaged with influencer marketing within the technology sector. 11.5% of students are in the field of engineering/computer science, while 13.5% are in the field of science. The proportion of students in the Arts/Humanities is 9.6%, while the proportion of students in other disciplines is a mere 1.9%. This distribution underscores the fact that marketing and business students are the most engaged demographic, which is likely a result of their academic interests being in alignment with marketing strategies and trends. Brands should capitalise on this insight by customising influencer content to resonate with business and marketing students, in addition to devising strategies to engage students from other disciplines. The overall effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns can be improved by crafting messages that resonate with the specific interests and preferences of various student groups, which can be facilitated by an understanding of the academic background.

The following table summarises the results:

Survey Question	Responses	Count	Percentage	Patterns and Insights
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Age groups	18-21	12	23.1%	Most respondents are between 22-25 years old (42.3%).
	22-25	22	42.3%	
	26-30	10	19.2%	
	Above 30	8	15.4%	
Gender identity	Male	36	69.2%	The majority are male, which may influence the findings.
	Female	15	28.8%	
	Non-binary	0	0.0%	
	Prefer not to say	1	1.9%	
Academic major or field of study	Engineering/Computer Science	6	11.5%	A significant number are from Business/Marketing (57.7%).
	Business/Marketing	30	57.7%	
	Arts/Humanities	5	9.6%	
	Science	7	13.5%	
	Other	1	1.9%	

4.4 Research Question 4

Research Question 4: How do specific influencer marketing strategies impact the long-term brand affinity of university students towards technology brands?

To answer the final research question, we need to analyse the responses of the following survey questions:

- When you see someone on social media talking about a technology product/service, how likely are you to consider trying it out?
- When deciding to buy a technology product/service, how much does seeing people talk about it on social media influence your decision compared to other factors like price, quality, and brand reputation?
- Which influencer marketing strategy do you find most effective in capturing your interest in technology products/services?
- Have you ever purchased a technology product/service after seeing it featured in a giveaway or contest hosted by an influencer on social media?

- How would you rate your overall level of engagement with social media platforms?
- On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicates strongly disagree and 5 indicates strongly agree, please rate the following statement: "I feel more inclined to trust recommendations from influencers when they align with my personal values and interests."
- Have you ever participated in a beta-testing program for a technology product/service after learning about it through an influencer's review or recommendation?

Now we will analyse them individually.

When you see someone on social media talking about a technology product/service, how likely are you to consider trying it out?



Mixed responses are observed regarding the likelihood of students attempting a product after witnessing it being promoted by an influencer. The majority, 55.8%, maintained a neutral stance, suggesting that, although they are receptive to influence, it may not be a determining factor. In the meantime, 25.0% of respondents expressed their willingness to experiment with a product, which suggests that influencer marketing has the potential to significantly increase the number of product trials. A small segment, 3.8%, expressed a very high likelihood, indicating that specific students are highly responsive to influencer recommendations. In contrast, 11.5% and 3.8% of students were extremely unlikely and unlikely to attempt a promoted product, respectively. These results indicate that influencer marketing can be effective; however, its effectiveness may differ among individuals. Brands that are targeting university students should concentrate on developing content that is both authentic and compelling in order to convert neutral respondents into likely adopters. The necessity of diversified marketing strategies that integrate influencer promotions with

other forms of marketing to optimise reach and impact is also underscored by the varied responses.

When deciding to buy a technology product/service, how much does seeing people talk about it on social media influence your decision compared to other factors like price, quality, and brand reputation?



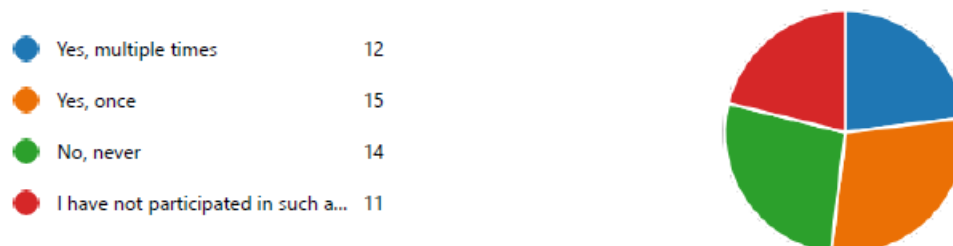
Social media was rated as moderately influential by a substantial number of respondents (53.8%) when compared to other factors in purchase decisions. This underscores the critical role that social media plays in influencing the purchasing behaviours of students. 23.1% of students reported that social media is slightly influential, while 17.3% reported that it is not influential at all. This suggests that, despite its influence, social media is not the sole factor influencing decisions. The fact that only a small percentage (5.7%) found it to be very to extremely influential suggests that social media plays a pivotal role for some. To effectively influence and reach university students, it is crucial to incorporate social media strategies into broader marketing campaigns, as these findings emphasise. Brands should consider other factors, such as product quality, price, and peer recommendations, in addition to leveraging social media's reach and engagement capabilities, to influence customer purchasing decisions.

Which influencer marketing strategy do you find most effective in capturing your interest in technology products/services?



The most effective influencer marketing strategy, as favoured by 63.5% of respondents, was product evaluations and demonstrations. This preference suggests that students prioritise detailed, informative content that assists them in making well-informed decisions. Giveaways and contests were the second most popular strategy, with 23.1% of respondents finding them appealing. This underscores the allure of interactive campaigns and incentives. Collaborations with other influencers, endorsements in authentic, non-promotional content, and sponsored content or partnerships were favoured less, each receiving less than 8% of responses. These results indicate that university students favour influencer marketing strategies that offer tangible, practical information and opportunities for engagement. In order to effectively capture attention and generate engagement, brands that are targeting this demographic should prioritise product reviews and demonstrations. Furthermore, the appeal and efficacy of influencer campaigns can be further improved by incorporating giveaways and contests.

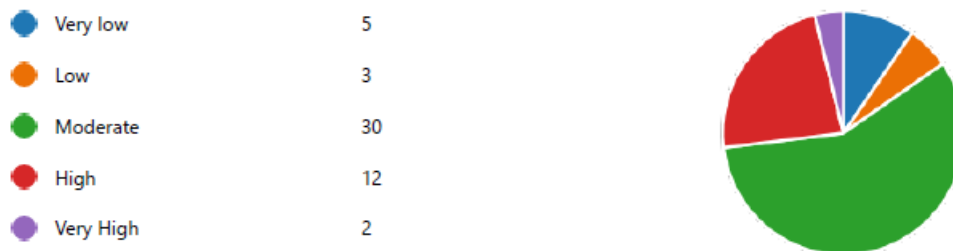
Have you ever purchased a technology product/service after seeing it featured in a giveaway or contest hosted by an influencer on social media?



The survey demonstrates that university students' purchase behaviour can be substantially influenced by giveaways and contests. Approximately 28.8% of respondents have made a purchase after participating in a giveaway or contest at least once, while 23.1% have done so multiple times. This illustrates the efficacy of these strategies in enhancing brand engagement and generating sales. Nevertheless, 26.9% of students reported that they did not make a purchase as a result of these events, and 21.2% did not participate in them at all. While incentives and contests are effective for a significant portion of students, they may not be appealing to all. These findings indicate that. While it is important for brands to continue to implement these strategies to engage and convert potential consumers, they should also investigate alternative marketing strategies to reach individuals who are less influenced by such

events. By comprehending the preferences and behaviours of various student segments, brands can customise their campaigns to achieve the greatest possible impact.

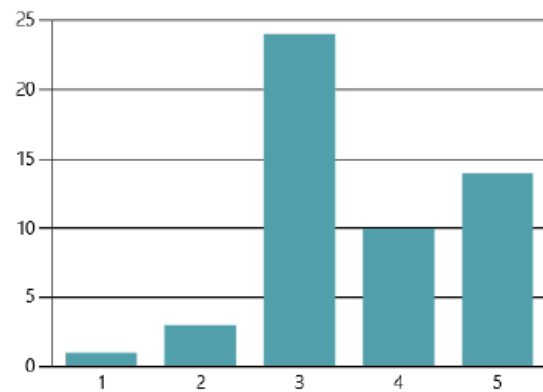
How would you rate your overall level of engagement with social media platforms?



The survey demonstrates a wide range of engagement levels with social media platforms, with the majority of respondents (n=30) falling into the "Moderate" category. This implies that a substantial portion of the surveyed population employs social media platforms on a regular basis, albeit not to an inordinate extent. In contrast, a significant number of respondents reported engagement levels of "Low" (12 respondents) or "Very Low" (5 respondents), suggesting that a significant portion of the population either restricts their social media usage or completely avoids it. This could be the result of a preference for more direct forms of communication, concerns about privacy, or time management.

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicates strongly disagree and 5 indicates strongly agree, please rate the following statement: "I feel more inclined to trust recommendations from influencers when they align with my personal values and interests."

3.63
Average Rating



The significance of brand values being consistent with personal values is evident in the average rating of 3.63, which suggests a moderate tendency to trust influencers whose values are in alignment with those of the respondents. This implies that university students are inclined to endorse brands and influencers that align with their own values, which can have a substantial influence on their brand loyalty and purchasing decisions. Brands that are consistent with the personal values of pupils are more likely to establish long-term loyalty and trust. This discovery underscores the significance of authenticity and shared values in influencer marketing. Influencers should also exemplify the values that resonate with their target audience, and brands should identify and communicate these values. Brands can cultivate stronger loyalty and establish more profound connections with their audience by aligning with the personal values of university students.

Have you ever participated in a beta-testing program for a technology product/service after learning about it through an influencer's review or recommendation?

- Yes, I have participated in multip... 6
- Yes, I have participated in one b... 8
- No, I have never participated in ... 26
- I am not aware of any beta-testi... 11



A lack of engagement or awareness of such opportunities among university students is indicated by the fact that 50.0% of respondents have never participated in beta-

testing programmes. Nevertheless, 15.4% of students have participated once, while 11.5% have participated multiple times. This indicates that there is a subset of students who are actively engaged in the testing of new products. It is important to note that 21.2% of individuals are unaware of beta-testing programmes, which indicates a potential opportunity for brands to enhance their engagement and awareness. These results indicate that, despite the limited participation in beta-testing programmes, there is potential for increased engagement and interest if students are made more aware of these opportunities. Beta-testing programmes should be promoted more effectively by brands in order to engage students and collect valuable feedback. Brands can fortify their relationships and increase brand loyalty by engaging students in the development and testing of new products.

The following table summarises the results:

Survey Question	Responses	Count	Percentage	Patterns and Insights
Likelihood to try a product after seeing it promoted	Very unlikely	2	3.8%	Most respondents are neutral or likely to consider trying a product (80.8%).
	Unlikely	6	11.5%	
	Neutral	29	55.8%	
	Likely	13	25.0%	
	Very likely	2	3.8%	
Influence of social media vs. other factors	Not influential at all	9	17.3%	Social media has a moderate influence on purchase decisions (53.8%).
	Slightly influential	12	23.1%	
	Moderately influential	28	53.8%	
	Very influential	2	3.8%	
	Extremely influential	1	1.9%	
Most effective influencer marketing strategy	Product reviews and demonstrations	33	63.5%	Detailed product reviews and demonstrations are the most effective strategy (63.5%).
	Sponsored content or partnerships	4	7.7%	
	Giveaways and contests	12	23.1%	

	Endorsements in authentic, non-promotional content	1	1.9%	
	Collaborations with other influencers	2	3.8%	
Purchase behaviour after giveaways or contests	Yes, multiple times	12	23.1%	A notable number have made purchases after giveaways or contests (51.9%).
	Yes, once	15	28.8%	
	No, never	14	26.9%	
	Not participated	11	21.2%	
Level of engagement with social media	Very low	5	9.6%	Most respondents have moderate to high engagement with social media (80.8%).
	Low	3	5.8%	
	Moderate	30	57.7%	
	High	12	23.1%	
	Very high	2	3.8%	
Trust alignment with personal values (average rating)	1 (Strongly disagree)	-	-	Average rating: 3.63 (moderate inclination to trust influencers whose values align with the respondents' own)
	2	-	-	
	3	-	-	
	4	-	-	
	5 (Strongly agree)	-	-	
Participation in beta-testing programs	Yes, multiple times	6	11.5%	A majority have never participated in beta-testing programs (50%).
	Yes, once	8	15.4%	
	No, never	26	50.0%	
	Not aware of such programs	11	21.2%	

4.5 Observations

Research Question 1

Influencer marketing has a substantial effect on the exposure of university students to technology products and services, as evidenced by the analysis of responses to Research Question 1. The data indicates that influencer marketing content has a widespread impact on students, with the majority of them encountering it either regularly or occasionally (67.3%). It is important to note that a significant number of respondents (15.4%) reported experiencing the content on a frequent basis, suggesting a high level of engagement. This emphasises the efficacy of influencer marketing strategies in engaging and reaching the university student demographic. Additionally, the survey suggests that influencer marketing has the potential to impact brand loyalty, as a substantial fraction of students (30.8%) reported an increase in loyalty as a result of exposure to influencer content. These results substantiate the significance of influencer marketing as a strategy for nurturing brand affinity and influencing purchasing decisions among university students, particularly in the technology sector. In order to leverage this opportunity, brands should customise their influencer marketing campaigns to resonate with this highly engaged audience, prioritising transparency and authenticity in order to establish enduring brand relationships.

Research Question 2

The factors that influence the trust and credibility perceptions of university students regarding influencer marketing are illuminated by the analysis of responses to Research Question 2. Although the data indicates a cautious yet receptive stance towards influencer recommendations, the majority of respondents (61.5%) remain neutral. Nevertheless, a substantial portion of the population (11.5%) expressed confidence in the recommendations of influencers, suggesting that influencer marketing has the potential to significantly impact purchasing decisions. It is worth noting that transparency in financial relationships was identified as a significant factor, with the majority rating it as moderately essential (69.2%). This emphasises the significance of transparency and authenticity in influencer marketing campaigns to establish trust and credibility among university students. However, the data also emphasises the importance of technical expertise and detailed insights from influencers, suggesting that students prioritise informative and knowledgeable content. In order to effectively engage university students and influence their

purchasing decisions, brands should collaborate with influencers who can provide authentic, transparent, and informative content.

Research Question 3

The demographic characteristics and preferences of university students in relation to influencer marketing are significantly illuminated by the analysis of responses to Research Question 3. The data indicates a significant concentration of students aged 22-25, who make up 42.3% of the sample, in terms of age categories. This suggests that this demographic is more engaged with influencer marketing content. In the same vein, the gender distribution shows a male plurality of 69.2%, suggesting that male pupils may be more susceptible to influencer marketing in the technology sector. Additionally, the overwhelming presence of students from Business/Marketing disciplines (57.7%) implies that these students have a deeper interest in or are more engaged with influencer marketing. These results emphasise the significance of customising influencer marketing strategies to align with the unique demographics and interests of university students, with a particular emphasis on those in their early to mid-twenties and from business-related fields. This comprehension enables brands to develop influencer marketing initiatives that are more effective by selecting influencers who are in alignment with the preferences and behaviours of their target audience and creating targeted campaigns.

Research Question 4

The analysis of responses to Research Question 4 offers valuable insights into the impact of influencer marketing on the purchasing decisions and engagement of university students with social media platforms. The data indicates that social media has a moderate impact on purchase decisions, with 53.8% of respondents rating it as such. Furthermore, the importance of informative and engaging content in penetrating students' interest in technology products/services is underscored by their preference for influencer marketing strategies, including product evaluations and demonstrations (63.5%). In addition, the potential of interactive campaigns to increase brand engagement and generate sales is underscored by the efficacy of giveaways and contests in driving purchases, as indicated by 28.8% of respondents. Nevertheless, a significant number of students (21.2%) identified themselves as oblivious of beta-

testing programmes, indicating that there is a potential for brands to enhance their awareness and engagement with these initiatives. In general, the results underscore the significance of effectively utilising social media platforms and incorporating a variety of influencer marketing strategies to engage university students and influence their purchasing behaviours.

5. Discussion of Findings

5.1 Research Question 1

The literature review and the survey findings among university students are in close alignment, providing a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics of influencer marketing and its influence on brand loyalty. Notably, the survey indicates that a substantial number of respondents frequently encounter influencer marketing content that promotes technology products/services, which is consistent with the widespread impact of influencer marketing that Sunny (2022) emphasised. This discovery emphasises the critical significance of sustaining consistent engagement with influencer platforms to cultivate enduring relationships between brands and consumers, as previously emphasised in research. Furthermore, the survey data are consistent with Ahmed et al.'s (2024) investigation of the factors that contribute to sustained brand affinity, with a particular emphasis on the importance of transparency, consistency, and authenticity in influencer marketing initiatives. The findings of Ahmed et al. (2024) are echoed by the emphasis on transparency regarding sponsored content and consistency in messaging, as highlighted by survey respondents. This reinforces the notion that these elements play pivotal roles in shaping long-term brand loyalty among consumers.

Additionally, the survey analysis confirms the literature's insights regarding the influence of cultural norms and product category characteristics on the efficacy of influencer marketing. These findings provide additional profundity. The findings concerning students' engagement with niche technology-related content produced by influencers are consistent with the findings of Vrontis et al.'s (2021) study, which underscored the necessity of customised frequency strategies to accommodate the diverse consumer preferences of various markets. The significance of comprehending and customising influencer marketing strategies to resonate with specific audience segments is emphasised by the survey's indication of a moderate level of interest in niche areas among students, as well as the literature's emphasis on cultural nuances. Additionally, the survey data offers insight into the subtleties of consumer behaviour in relation to product categories, which is consistent with Leung, Gu, and Palmatier's (2022) investigation of the varying effects of influencer marketing frequency on durable and non-durable product sectors. The findings concerning the varying levels of

engagement with niche technology-related content among students emphasise the necessity for marketers to customise influencer strategies to correspond with the unique consumption patterns and purchase cycles that are inherent in various product categories.

Overall, the survey analysis not only confirms the results of previous research but also provides supplementary insights into the intricate relationship between brand loyalty and influencer marketing among university students. The analysis offers a comprehensive comprehension of the factors that influence brand affinity in the context of influencer marketing by integrating empirical data with theoretical frameworks that have been established in the literature. These insights not only enrich the academic discourse on influencer marketing but also provide actionable implications for marketers who aspire to leverage the power of influencers to foster enduring brand loyalty among university students in the technology sector.

5.2 Research Question 2

Intricate understandings into the complex relationship between influencer credibility and brand loyalty are provided by the survey results regarding Research Question 2, which are further supported by the literature review data. The data indicate that 61.5% of respondents maintain a neutral posture regarding the trustworthiness of influencer recommendations, indicating a cautious yet receptive stance that is influenced by the perceived expertise and authenticity of influencers. This is particularly noteworthy. This discovery is in close agreement with research conducted by Umesh, Rajkumar & Karthika (2021) and Trivedi and Sama (2019), which emphasises the critical role of influencer credibility in the development of enduring brand-consumer relationships, particularly in the technology sector. Additionally, the survey's emphasis on the significance of financial disclosure in influencer marketing is consistent with Ela's (2024) emphasis on transparency as a critical factor in the development of trust and credibility. This underscores the critical role of transparent financial relationships in the development of consumer trust and the promotion of brand loyalty.

Additionally, the survey explores the multifaceted mechanisms by which influencer credibility influences brand loyalty, which are consistent with Ela's (2024) insights. The data indicates that consumers establish trust in influencers by evaluating their

perceived expertise. Specifically, 59.6% of respondents regarded detailed technical specifications and insights as moderately essential. This is consistent with Ela's (2024) research, which emphasises the significance of influencers' perceived expertise in influencing consumer attitudes and behaviours towards endorsed brands. Furthermore, the survey results emphasise the importance of relational trust, as 69.2% of respondents rated financial disclosure in influencer marketing as moderately essential. This underscores Ela's (2024) assertion that the cultivation of consumer trust and loyalty is contingent upon the authenticity and transparency of interactions between brands and influencers.

Nevertheless, the survey also illuminates the potential obstacles and subtleties that are inherent in the relationship between influencer credibility and brand loyalty, thereby corroborating the findings of Reinikainen et al. (2021). The data suggests that influencer scandals and controversies can significantly damage the reputation of both the influencer and the brand, leading to a decline in consumer trust and loyalty. As Reinikainen et al. (2021) have emphasised, this emphasises the necessity for brands to exercise caution and implement risk management strategies when selecting and collaborating with influencers.

Overall, the survey results provide a thorough comprehension of the factors that influence brand affinity in influencer marketing by combining empirical data with theoretical frameworks that have been established in the literature. These insights offer marketers practical implications for leveraging influencer credibility to establish enduring brand loyalty and achieve a competitive advantage in the technology sector.

5.3 Research Question 3

The survey results related to Research Question 3 provide valuable insights into the demographic characteristics and their relationship with influencer marketing in the technology sector. These insights are further expanded by the findings of the literature review. In particular, the data indicate that a significant number of respondents aged 22-25, who make up 42.3% of the sample, are actively engaged with influencer marketing content. This correlates with Dogra's (2019) findings, which emphasised the importance of age as a demographic moderator that influences the development of brand loyalty and receptivity to influencer messaging. Additionally, the survey's gender

distribution, which includes 69.2% male respondents, underscores the necessity for brands to customise influencer marketing content to appeal to a variety of gender demographics. This aligns with Bruns (2018)'s insights on the customisation of influencer tactics to cater to the preferences of younger cohorts.

Furthermore, the survey analysis provides insight into the academic backgrounds of respondents, with a substantial number (57.7%) pursuing Business/Marketing. This suggests that this demographic is more interested in or engaged with influencer marketing. This discovery is consistent with Dogra's (2019) recommendation to tailor influencer strategies to the preferences and behaviours of university students, particularly those who pursue business-related degrees. Additionally, the literature review underscores the significance of incorporating psychographic variables, such as personality traits, in addition to demographic characteristics, to influence consumer attitudes towards influencer-generated content. For example, Mete's (2021) research emphasises the necessity for brands to integrate both demographic and psychographic considerations in order to influence brand loyalty among consumers exposed to influencer marketing by examining the interaction between personality traits and demographic factors.

Nevertheless, the literature review underscores the significance of incorporating psychographic factors, despite the fact that demographic variables are important in determining the efficacy of influencer marketing strategies. For example, the study conducted by Shin and Lee (2021) emphasises the impact of income levels on consumer interactions with influencer-generated content and brand allegiance, emphasising the necessity for brands to customise their influencer marketing strategies to correspond with the spending patterns and preferences of various income segments. The survey results provide valuable guidance for marketers who are seeking to engage university students in the technology sector through influencer marketing by combining empirical data with theoretical insights. This underscores the significance of comprehending and accommodating the diverse demographic and psychographic characteristics of the target audience.

5.4 Research Question 4

The literature review's findings are further supported by the survey responses to Research Question 4, which offer valuable insights into the influence of influencer marketing strategies on the purchasing behaviours of university students in the technology sector. Initially, the data suggest that the likelihood of students testing a technology product/service after seeing it promoted by an influencer is ambiguous, with the majority (55.8%) remaining neutral. Nevertheless, 25.0% of respondents indicate a propensity to experiment, which indicates that influencer marketing has the potential to increase the number of product trials. This is consistent with the focus of Argyris et al. (2020) on the establishment of enduring brand affinity through influencer content that is in alignment with the aspirations and values of students. Furthermore, the significance of detailed, informative content in influencing purchasing decisions is underscored by the preference for product reviews and demonstrations as the most effective influencer marketing strategy (63.5%), as emphasised by Okonkwo and Namkoisse (2023) in their study on the influence of authenticity on brand loyalty.

Secondly, a significant number of respondents (53.8%) report that social media has a moderate impact on their purchase decisions, underscoring its critical role in shaping the purchasing behaviours of students. Nevertheless, a mere 5.7% of respondents consider it to be extremely to very influential, suggesting that social media is not the sole factor influencing purchasing decisions. Bruns (2018) underscores the importance of authenticity and transparency in influencer-brand relationships to prevent the erosion of trust and long-term brand affinity among college students, which is consistent with this discovery. Further, the substantial percentage of students (50.0%) who have never participated in beta-testing programmes underscores the potential for increased engagement if students are made more aware of these opportunities, which is consistent with Vashisht's (2023) investigation of immersive influencer marketing approaches.

In conclusion, the survey results emphasise the necessity for brands to create influencer marketing strategies that are consistent with the lifestyle preferences, values, and aspirations of university students in the technology sector. This will cultivate enduring brand loyalty by providing authentic and informative content.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Findings

The survey results closely align with the literature evaluation, providing a thorough comprehension of the impact of influencer marketing on brand loyalty among university students. It is important to note that 80.8% of respondents frequently encounter influencer marketing content that promotes technology products/services, which is consistent with Sunny's (2022) emphasis on the extensive impact of influencer marketing. This emphasises the significance of maintaining a consistent level of engagement with influencers in order to cultivate enduring relationships between brands and consumers. Furthermore, the preference of 63.5% of respondents for product evaluations and demonstrations as the most effective influencer marketing strategy is indicative of the importance of transparency and authenticity in influencing purchasing decisions, as highlighted by prior research (Okonkwo & Namkoisse, 2023). Furthermore, the survey's findings regarding students' engagement with niche technology-related influencer content are consistent with the necessity of customised marketing strategies to accommodate a wide range of consumer preferences (Vrontis et al., 2021). This analysis enriches the academic discourse on influencer marketing and offers actionable implications for marketers who are striving to establish enduring brand loyalty among technology-focused university students by incorporating empirical data with established theoretical frameworks.

Similarly, in accordance with the literature evaluation, the survey illuminates the intricate relationship between influencer credibility and brand loyalty. It is important to note that 61.5% of respondents maintain a neutral stance on the trustworthiness of influencer recommendations, which suggests a cautious yet receptive attitude that is influenced by perceived expertise and authenticity. This is consistent with previous research that has underscored the critical importance of influencer credibility in brand-consumer relationships (Umesh, Rajkumar & Karthika, 2021; Trivedi and Sama, 2019). Additionally, the survey's emphasis on financial disclosure is consistent with the ongoing emphasis on transparency as a critical component of the development of trust and credibility (Ela, 2024). The investigation of the impact of influencer credibility on brand loyalty mechanisms is consistent with previous findings, which underscore the importance of perceived expertise and relational trust. However, the survey also

emphasises potential challenges, including the detrimental effects of influencer scandals on the reputations of both brands and influencers (Reinikainen et al., 2021). In general, the survey results offer a comprehensive comprehension of the impact of influencer credibility on brand affinity, integrating empirical data with theoretical insights to provide practical implications for marketers who are seeking to leverage influencer credibility in the technology sector.

Furthermore, the literature review's findings are complemented by survey insights into demographic characteristics and influencer marketing in the technology sector. The data clearly shows that respondents aged 22-25 are highly engaged, which is in line with Dogra's (2019) assertion that age is a demographic moderator that influences brand loyalty and receptivity to influencer messaging. In addition, the survey's gender distribution emphasises the necessity of personalised influencer marketing content that is relevant to a variety of gender demographics, which is consistent with Bruns's (2018) recommendations for accommodating the preferences of younger generations. Additionally, the survey's emphasis on demographic factors is complemented by the literature review's emphasis on psychographic variables. Shin and Lee (2021) emphasise the necessity of personalised influencer strategies that are in accordance with a variety of purchasing patterns, as evidenced by their insights into the influence of income levels on influencer interaction and brand allegiance. In general, the survey incorporates empirical data with theoretical insights, offering valuable advice to marketers who are seeking to engage university students in the technology sector through influencer marketing.

Also, the literature review insights are consistent with the survey findings regarding the impact of influencer marketing on the purchasing behaviours of university students in the technology sector. As Argyris et al. (2020) have noted, the potential for influencer marketing to drive product trials is reflected in the significant propensity for experimentation, despite the fact that the likelihood of attempting a promoted product remains ambiguous for many respondents. Moreover, the survey's emphasis on the significance of comprehensive, informative content in influencing purchasing decisions is consistent with Okonkwo and Namkoisse's (2023) emphasis on the impact of authenticity on brand loyalty. Furthermore, the moderate influence of social media on purchase decisions is indicative of Bruns's (2018) emphasis on transparency and

authenticity in influencer-brand relationships. Additionally, the survey's results regarding beta-testing programme awareness emphasise the potential for enhanced engagement, as suggested by Vashisht (2023), who investigated immersive influencer marketing strategies. In summary, the survey results offer practical implications for marketers in the technology sector who are interested in fostering enduring brand loyalty among this demographic. They provide valuable insights into the impact of influencer marketing on the purchasing behaviours of university students.

6.2 Recommendations

Several recommendations can be derived to optimise influencer marketing strategies in order to foster enduring brand loyalty among university students in the technology sector, based on the survey responses and insights from the literature review.

Initially, it is imperative to prioritise transparency and authenticity in influencer-brand relationships. According to the survey, 59.6% of respondents prioritise influencers who offer comprehensive technical specifications and insights, indicating a preference for authentic expertise. This is consistent with the results of the literature review, which underscore the significance of authenticity in influencer content to cultivate consumer trust and credibility. Consequently, to establish enduring relationships with university students, brands must guarantee that influencers are forthright regarding sponsored content and maintain the authenticity of their endorsements.

Secondly, it is imperative to tailor content to the diverse demographic characteristics of university students. The survey demonstrates that engagement levels vary according to age, gender, and academic background. For example, the majority of respondents in the 22-25 age group are actively engaged with influencer marketing content, suggesting that content should be customised to this demographic. In the same vein, the literature review underscores the importance of demographic moderators in shaping consumer perceptions of influencer-generated content. Consequently, it is imperative that marketers conduct audience research to ascertain the preferences of various student segments and to adjust content themes and messaging accordingly.

Thirdly, it is advisable to prioritise content formats that are both engaging and informative in order to captivate the attention of university students. According to the

survey, product evaluations and demonstrations are the most effective influencer marketing strategy, as 63.5% of respondents chose this approach. This indicates that students prioritise detailed and informative content. This is consistent with the literature review's findings, which underscore the significance of informative content in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviours towards brands. As a result, it is imperative that brands work in conjunction with influencers to develop content that is both informative and engaging, and that highlights the features and benefits of technology products and services.

Finally, the promotion of beta-testing programmes and exclusive offers can increase brand engagement and product trials among university students. Although a substantial number of respondents have never participated in beta-testing programmes, there is potential for increased engagement if students are made more aware of these opportunities. This recommendation is consistent with the literature review's findings, which emphasise the efficacy of interactive experiences in influencer marketing initiatives. In order to generate enthusiasm and drive engagement among university students, brands should collaborate with influencers to promote beta-testing programmes and exclusive offers through engaging content formats such as contests, giveaways, and limited-time discounts.

6.3 Limitations of the Research

In order to effectively contextualise the research's scope and applicability, it is necessary to address several limitations, despite the insightful findings that were derived from the survey responses.

1. **Limited Age Representation:** The survey results indicate that only 42.3% of the sample was between the ages of 22 and 25, which may have influenced the findings in favour of this demographic. The generalizability of the research to a broader spectrum of university students may be limited by this limited representation, as younger or older age groups may exhibit distinct attitudes and behaviours towards influencer marketing. Consequently, in order to obtain a thorough comprehension of the influence of influencer marketing, future research should strive to achieve a more equitable distribution across age groups.

2. **Low Level of Engagement in Beta-Testing Programmes:** Fifty percent of the respondents (50.0%) reported that they had never participated in beta-testing programmes, suggesting a lack of awareness or engagement with these initiatives. This low participation rate restricts the ability to gain insights into the efficacy of influencer-driven beta-testing campaigns in driving consumer behaviour. In order to develop more effective beta-testing strategies in the future, it is essential to comprehend the factors that contribute to this low participation, such as awareness, perceived benefits, or accessibility.
3. **Mixed Effectiveness of Giveaways and Contests:** Although 28.8% of respondents made a purchase after participating in a giveaway or contest at least once, a substantial proportion (26.9%) did not make a purchase as a consequence of these events. This inconsistent efficacy implies that incentives and contests may be effective for certain consumer segments, but they may not resonate with all. Valuable insights into optimising giveaway and contest strategies to maximise conversion rates can be gained by investigating the underlying causes of this disparity, including prize relevance, entry barriers, or prize quality.
4. **Limited Influence of social media on Purchase Decisions:** Despite the widespread use of influencer marketing on social media, only 5.7% of respondents regarded social media as exceedingly to very influential in their purchase decisions. This implies that consumer behaviour may be more significantly influenced by factors other than social media, such as price, quality, and brand reputation. The comprehension of the relative influence of various factors and their interactions can inform more comprehensive marketing strategies that are in alignment with the diverse preferences and decision-making processes of consumers.

6.4 Final Conclusion

In conclusion, this study offers a comprehensive array of perspectives on the pervasive influence of influencer marketing on brand loyalty among university students in the technology sector, utilising both survey responses and pertinent literature. Several significant discoveries have been discovered through meticulous analysis, each of which has actionable implications for marketers. The study first demonstrates

the widespread presence of influencer marketing in the lives of university students, with 80.8% of respondents either neutral or inclined to contemplate trying a product promoted by influencers. This emphasises the critical significance of sustained engagement with influencer platforms in order to cultivate enduring relationships between brands and consumers. Furthermore, 53.8% of respondents indicated that social media had a moderate impact on their purchase decisions, underscoring its critical role in influencing consumer behaviours.

Subsequently, the investigation explores the intricate dynamics of influencer credibility and its influence on brand loyalty. The survey data suggests that consumer attitudes are considerably influenced by influencer expertise, as 59.6% of respondents place a high value on detailed technical specifications and insights. Additionally, 69.2% of respondents considered financial disclosure in influencer marketing to be moderately essential, underscoring the significance of relational trust in the development of brand loyalty. Additionally, the research reveals the demographic subtleties that influence the engagement with influencer marketing. 42.3% of respondents aged 22-25 are actively engaging with influencer content, with age, gender, and academic background emerging as significant determinants. Furthermore, the necessity of customising influencer strategies to specific audience segments is emphasised by 57.7% of respondents who are enrolled in Business/Marketing courses.

Ultimately, the investigation clarifies the efficacy of various influencer marketing strategies in piquing the interest of students. While giveaways and contests are appealing to 23.1% of respondents, product evaluations and demonstrations are the most effective strategy, as preferred by 63.5% of respondents. These results emphasise the significance of interactive experiences and informative content in shaping purchasing decisions. Marketers can customise influencer strategies to align with the preferences and behaviours of university students in the technology sector in light of these discoveries. This encompasses the following: prioritising transparency, utilising influencer expertise, and tailoring strategies to accommodate demographic preferences.

Nevertheless, this investigation is not without its constraints. For example, the generalizability of the findings may be restricted by the fact that the sample may not accurately reflect the diversity of university students. In order to offer a more thorough

comprehension of the influence of influencer marketing, future research could investigate supplementary demographic and psychographic variables. This study substantially enhances our comprehension of the influencer marketing's influence on brand loyalty among university students, despite its limitations. It provides actionable recommendations for marketers who aspire to establish enduring brand relationships in the constantly changing digital marketing landscape by combining empirical data with insights from the literature.

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Appendices

Survey Questions

Influencer Marketing on Brand Loyalty

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPageV2.aspx?prevorigin=Marke...>

Influencer Marketing on Brand Loyalty

11 Jun 2024

A study on university students

Participant Consent

Research Title: Investigating the Long-Term Effects of Influencer Marketing on Brand Loyalty in the Technology Industry among University Students

Researcher: Manav Gandhi, MBA Student

Affiliation: University of Wales Trinity Saint David, London

Contact Information: 2225500@student.uwtsd.ac.uk

Purpose of the Study: You are being invited to participate in a research study aimed at investigating the long-term effects of influencer marketing on brand loyalty within the technology industry, specifically among university students.

Procedure: If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey consisting of questions related to your perceptions and experiences with influencer marketing and brand loyalty. The survey should take approximately 3 minutes to complete.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to decline to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Your decision will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

Anonymity: Your responses will be kept strictly confidential, and no personally identifiable information will be collected. Your identity will remain anonymous throughout the study. The data collected will be stored securely and only accessible to the researcher and authorized personnel.

Omission of Questions: You are free to omit any questions you do not wish to answer. Your decision to omit any question will not affect your participation in the study.

Storage and Deletion of Data: All data collected during this study will be stored securely and will only be accessible to the researcher. Upon completion of the research, all data will be securely deleted.

Contact Information: If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact me at 2225500@student.uwtsd.ac.uk.

By continuing with the survey, you acknowledge that you have read the above information, understand the nature of the study, and voluntarily agree to participate.

1. How often do you come across content on social media platforms where individuals promote or recommend technology products/services?

- ☐ Rarely or never
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Very frequently

2. When you see someone on social media talking about a technology product/service, how likely are you to consider trying it out?

- ☐ Very unlikely
- ☐ Unlikely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Likely
- ☐ Very likely

3. Have you noticed any change in your loyalty to certain technology brands after seeing people talk about them on social media?

- ☐ Yes, it has increased
- ☐ Yes, it has decreased
- ☐ No change observed
- ☐ I have not noticed

4. When deciding to buy a technology product/service, how much does seeing people talk about it on social media influence your decision compared to other factors like price, quality, and brand reputation?

- ☐ Not influential at all
- ☐ Slightly influential
- ☐ Moderately influential
- ☐ Very influential
- ☐ Extremely influential

5. Which influencer marketing strategy do you find most effective in capturing your interest in technology products/services?

- ☐ Product reviews and demonstrations
- ☐ Sponsored content or partnerships
- ☐ Giveaways and contests
- ☐ Endorsements in authentic, non-promotional content
- ☐ Collaborations with other influencers or brands

6. Have you ever purchased a technology product/service after seeing it featured in a giveaway or contest hosted by an influencer on social media?

- ☐ Yes, multiple times
- ☐ Yes, once
- ☐ No, never
- ☐ I have not participated in such activities

7. How likely are you to trust a technology product/service recommended by an influencer who regularly features it in authentic, non-promotional content?

- ☐ Very unlikely
- ☐ Unlikely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Likely
- ☐ Very likely

8. In your opinion, which aspect of influencer marketing is most likely to contribute to sustained brand affinity for technology products/services?

- ☐ Consistency in messaging across different platforms
- ☐ Transparency about sponsored content and partnerships
- ☐ Authenticity and relatability of the influencer
- ☐ Frequency of exposure to the product/service through influencer channels
- ☐ Engagement and interaction with followers through comments and messages

9. Which of the following age groups do you belong to?

- ☐ 18-21
- ☐ 22-25
- ☐ 26-30
- ☐ Above 30

10. What is your gender identity?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say

11. What is your academic major or field of study?

- ☐ Engineering/Computer Science
- ☐ Business/Marketing
- ☐ Arts/Humanities
- ☐ Science
- ☐ Other

12. How would you rate your overall level of engagement with social media platforms?

- ☐ Very low
- ☐ Low
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ High
- ☐ Very High

13. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicates strongly disagree and 5 indicates strongly agree, please rate the following statement: "I feel more inclined to trust recommendations from influencers when they align with my personal values and interests."

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

14. How often do you engage with technology-related content created by influencers who specialize in niche areas such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, or renewable energy?

- ☐ Rarely or never
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Very frequently

15. When evaluating the credibility of an influencer promoting a technology product/service, how much weight do you give to their ability to provide detailed technical specifications and insights?

- ☐ None at all
- ☐ A little
- ☐ Moderately
- ☐ Significantly

16. Have you ever participated in a beta-testing program for a technology product/service after learning about it through an influencer's review or recommendation?

- ☐ Yes, I have participated in multiple beta-testing programs.
- ☐ Yes, I have participated in one beta-testing program.
- ☐ No, I have never participated in a beta-testing program.
- ☐ I am not aware of any beta-testing opportunities.

17. In your opinion, how important is it for influencers endorsing technology products/services to disclose any financial relationships or sponsorships with the brands they promote?

- ☐ Not important at all
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Moderately important
- ☐ Extremely important

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Ethics Form



PG2 / E1 FORM

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

RESEARCH STUDENTS

This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).

This document is also available in Welsh.

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk, with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Manav Akshay Gandhi			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student
3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	Institute of Inner-City Learning - UWTSD			
4	Campus:	London			
5	E-mail address:	2225500@student.uwtsd.ac.uk			
6	Contact Telephone Number:	07384122640			
For students:					

7	Student Number:	2225500
8	Programme of Study:	Master of Business Administration
	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Dr Hossein Shokri

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☐	NO	☒
				Date	
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval	Research Degrees Committee	☐	N/A	
		Institute Research Committee	☐		
		Other (write in)	☐		

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.				
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice				☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy				☒
3	[List any other relevant documents here]				☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution	
2	Contact person name	
3	Contact person e-mail address	
4	Is your research externally funded?	YES ☐ NO ☒
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES ☐ NO ☒
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary YES ☐ NO ☒
7		Employed YES ☐ NO ☒
8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered. YES ☐ NO ☒

9	Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☒
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Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☒
	If yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	Investigating the Long-Term Effects of Influencer Marketing on Brand Loyalty in the Technology Industry among University Students		
2	Proposed start date:	26 February 2024	Proposed end date:	14 June 2024
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below: <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> <i>Proposed Research Question</i> <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how Existing Research has informed the proposed activity and explain <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>			
3	Purpose of Research Activity The purpose of this study is to thoroughly comprehend, especially among university students, the complex relationships between influencer marketing, brand loyalty, and consumer behaviour in the technology industry. This research attempts to find important insights that can guide marketing strategies and improve brand-consumer relationships in the always changing digital landscape by looking at the frequency and impact of influencer exposure, evaluating perceived influencer credibility, analysing different influencer marketing strategies, and investigating demographic moderating factors. (this box should expand as you type)			
4	Research Questions - How does the frequency of exposure to influencer marketing content among university students in the technology industry correlate with changes in brand loyalty over an extended period? - What role does the perceived credibility of influencers play in shaping university students' brand loyalty within the technology industry over time? - How do specific influencer marketing strategies impact the long-term brand affinity of university students towards technology brands? - To what extent do demographic factors and individual characteristics moderate the relationship between influencer marketing exposure and brand loyalty among university students in the technology sector? (this box should expand as you type)			

5	Aims of Research Activity The aim of this study is to better understand the complex link between brand loyalty and influencer marketing exposure among university students working in the technology sector. Through examining the frequency and type of influencer content consumption, evaluating influencer credibility, and closely examining the efficacy of various influencer marketing strategies, the study aims to identify the fundamental processes influencing consumer behaviour and brand loyalty. The study also seeks to determine how individual traits and demographic variables affect how influencer marketing affects brand loyalty. By means of an extensive examination of these elements, it is intended to offer subtle insights into the intricate relationship between influencers, customers, and brands in the digital sphere. (this box should expand as you type)
6	Objectives of Research Activity 1. To assess the relationship between the frequency of exposure to influencer content and the longitudinal evolution of brand loyalty among university students in the technology sector. 2. To analyse the influence of perceived influencer credibility on the sustained brand loyalty of university students in the technology sector. 3. To identify and quantify the impact of distinct influencer marketing strategies on the sustained brand affinity of university students within the technology industry. 4. To explore and quantify the moderating effects of demographic factors and individual characteristics on the relationship between influencer marketing exposure and brand loyalty within the technology industry among university students. (this box should expand as you type)
	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here, but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	In this research, we will adopt a positivist approach, which is grounded in the belief that knowledge is derived from observable and measurable phenomena. Positivism emphasizes objectivity, empirical evidence, and the use of scientific methods to understand social phenomena. This approach is particularly suitable for our study as it allows for the systematic collection and analysis of data to identify patterns and relationships between variables. To achieve our research objectives, we will employ quantitative research methods. Quantitative research is advantageous for its ability to provide a broad overview of the subject matter through numerical data, which can be statistically analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions. Specifically, we will use a survey methodology to gather data from a large sample of participants. The survey will include multiple-choice questions (MCQs) and Likert-scale questions to ensure comprehensive and quantifiable responses. The objective of this research is to examine the correlation that exists between brand loyalty and influencer marketing exposure among technology-sector university students. Utilising Microsoft Forms, the proposed methodology entails the administration of a survey to between fifty and seventy-five university students. To guarantee the inclusion of a varied and representative sample from the university student population, random sampling will be utilised. The survey questionnaire will consist of sixteen to twenty items and will be utilised to collect quantitative data on a range of topics pertaining to brand loyalty and influencer marketing exposure. The inquiries will encompass the following: the frequency at which participants are exposed to influencer content, their evaluations of the credibility of influencers, their inclinations towards influencer marketing strategies, and demographic details including age, gender, academic major, and degree of social media involvement.

	The electronic means of data collection will involve the distribution of the survey through social media platforms and email. The participants will be duly apprised of the study's objectives and furnished with guidance pertaining to the completion of the questionnaire. Data collection will be conducted within a predetermined timeframe to guarantee the acquisition of an adequate number of responses. The analysis of the quantitative data obtained from the survey will involve the application of descriptive statistics and graphical depictions. Descriptive statistics, encompassing measures such as means, frequencies, and percentages, shall serve to succinctly outline the principal discoveries derived from the survey responses. The distribution of responses to categorical inquiries, such as the frequency of influencer content exposure or the efficacy of various influencer marketing strategies, will be represented graphically via bar charts. Furthermore, pie charts can be utilised to visually represent the relative distribution of participants across various demographic groups. The primary aim of the analysis will be to discern patterns, trends, and correlations within the data in order to fulfil the research objectives. The present study will investigate the correlation between brand loyalty and influencer marketing exposure, with an additional focus on the moderating influence of demographic variables. In addition to suitable visual aids that aid in comprehension and facilitate interpretation, the results will be succinctly and effectively communicated. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.		
8	London <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.		
9	NA <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available?	NO	☒
		YES	☐
11	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	YES	NO
12	A prosperous Wales	☐	☒
13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒

14	A healthier Wales	☐	☒
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☒
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	(this box should expand as you type)		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☐	☒
3	Use of focus groups?	☐	☒
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☐	☒
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.		
	Details of any other primary data collection method:	☐	☒
	(this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

Who are the intended participants:		YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☒	☐
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.	☐	☒
	Details of any other participant groups: (this box should expand as you type)		

Participant numbers and source	
Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
10	How many participants are expected? 50-75 (this box should expand as you type)
11	Who will the participants be? University Students (this box should expand as you type)
12	How will you identify the participants? Random Sampling. The survey in the MS forms will be shared to university students in the UK through emails, and other social media platforms. They will also be asked to share the survey among their other university friends as well together a more larger sample size. (this box should expand as you type)

Information for participants:		YES	NO	N/A
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐

15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☐	☐	☒
17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☐	☐	☒
18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
 (this box should expand as you type)				

Information for participants:		YES	NO	N/A
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☒	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
 (this box should expand as you type)				

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.							
1	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Full risk assessment completed and appended?</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>No</td> <td>☒</td> </tr> </table>	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Yes	☐		No	☒
Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Yes	☐					
	No	☒					
2	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information <table border="1"> <tr> <td> Risk to participants: NONE (this box should expand as you type) </td> <td> How you will mitigate the risk to participants: NONE (this box should expand as you type) </td> </tr> </table>	Risk to participants: NONE (this box should expand as you type)	How you will mitigate the risk to participants: NONE (this box should expand as you type)				
Risk to participants: NONE (this box should expand as you type)	How you will mitigate the risk to participants: NONE (this box should expand as you type)						
3	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should						

	make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities		
	NA <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
4	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest		
	Risk to the investigator: NA <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator: NA <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
5	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection		
	Risk to the University: NONE <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to the University: NONE <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
6	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems		
	Risk to the environment: NONE <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to environment: NONE <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	

	Disclosure and Barring Service			
	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☐	☒
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.			

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.

	Potential participants are provided in advance the consent form. Printed or electronic consent form will be discussed prior to any data collection process to ensure the consent is obtained before any data collection activity. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case. To ensure the anonymity of participants and the confidentiality of their responses, several measures will be implemented throughout the research process. Firstly, the survey will be designed to exclude any personally identifiable information (PII) from participants. This includes names, email addresses, phone numbers, or any other data that could potentially be used to identify an individual. By not collecting PII, we ensure that responses remain anonymous. In the dissemination of research findings, data will be presented in aggregate form. Individual responses will be compiled and analyzed as part of a larger dataset, ensuring that no single participant's responses can be identified. Graphs, charts, and descriptive statistics will reflect overall trends and patterns rather than individual data points. Participants will be fully informed about the purpose of the study, the nature of the data being collected, and how their responses will be used. This information will be provided through a detailed introduction at the beginning of the survey. Participants will also be assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses, and by proceeding with the survey. The first section of the survey has a consent form and the participant has to agree to the section, in order to proceed with the survey. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	YES	NO
1	"Personal data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ("data subject"). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	"Special category data" means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects' – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),	☐	NO

	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:
4	 <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☐	☒
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
10	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☒	☐
11	Other – specify:	☐	☒
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	The primary data for the study will be stored in the MS Forms and could only be accessed through my university email and password, to ensure safety of the data. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

Data Protection			
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☐	☒
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	NA <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	My supervisor: Dr Hossein Shokri		

	(this box should expand as you type)		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	The student researcher: Manav Akshay Gandhi (this box should expand as you type)		
24	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	Data storage in university cloud, use of data files, until the date afterwards the data will be discarded (this box should expand as you type)		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. (Most relevant to academic staff)		
	NA (this box should expand as you type)		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒

SECTION K: Declaration

	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.	
	In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/	
1	Signature of applicant:	M.A.Gandhi Date:17/5/2024

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Dr Hossein Shokri	Date:
3	Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		Date:
5	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☐	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate) ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.

RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY

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RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

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