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Case Studies on Big Brands Using Influencers to Win Back Lost Customers

Indra Setiawan¹

¹Universitas Wira Bhakti Makassar, Indonesia

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Abstract

This research seeks to find the suitability of influencer marketing in the targeting of repeat customer acquisition for the big brands including Coca Cola, Nike and Starbucks. With former customers in the sample, the study employs the methods of using independent samples t-tests, regression analysis, correlation analysis, analysis of variance, and analysis of covariance. The study also shows that when the customers are reengaged through the influencer campaigns, they show statistically significant higher engagement and purchase intention score than the customers who were not reengaged. Credibility of the influencer and the quality of their post proved to have a host influence on re-engagement and intents to make a purchase. In addition, cross comparison of the different brands brought out the differences in success rates of the influencer campaigns. To the best of the author's knowledge, this study does not aim at the acquisition of new clients but rather the reengagement hence offers rich insights of how influencer marketing can be used strategically to address this issue. Hence, the study emphasises that to support be again strategies and build the 'doctrine of brand endorsement' it is crucial to identify genuine influencers and produce quality content relevant to the target society.

Introduction

In the current world, influencer marketing has turned out to be a powerful tool to help brands who want to reclaim their consumers. Ordinary people who have many followers on social media platforms are in a position to dictate the market with their opinions and buying incidences. With the shift of focus from the conventional adverts to influencer marketing, the marketing landscape has been revolutionized in the most thrilling way giving brands an opportunity to effectively get closer to their customers. Modern socium is characterized by the presence of a new special type of stars influencers, appeared together with the social networks. Influencers, therefore, differ from conventional celebrities, they are average people who thrive to turn into experts within given specialized fields based on the kind of content they post and the kind of followers they cultivate online (Leban & Voyer, 2020; Baker & Rojek, 2020). Marketers have not been oblivious of the ability of these influencers to help them reach their target audience in a more believable way (Van Driel & Dumitrica, 2021; Woodroof et al., 2020;

¹Corresponding Author: Indra Setiawan, Email: indrasetiawan331@gmail.com, Address: Andi pangerang pettarani no.72 Komp. Ruko An-Nadzar kav. 3,4,5, Tamamaung, Kec. Panakkukang, Kota Makassar, Sulawesi Selatan 90232

Van Dam & Van Reijmersdal, 2019). Amplifiers have the ability to create links between the companies and customers they intend to target, thereby giving a sense of reliability that is scarce in conventional marketing.

As for the major goals businesses have while working with influencers, one of them is to recover the customers who have once is lost. Loyalty contributes significantly to long term organizational goals because it is always less costly to sell a product to a repeat customer than it is to acquire a new one (Arslan, 2020; Kumar & Reinartz, 2016; Chaudhuri et al., 2019). Loyalty today is hard to come by, which means no matter how much brands try the customer will always churn. According to Jacomy (2020) and Weiss Simins (2021) that influencer marketing presents an architectural tool of how to recall these customers by getting the attention of influencers capable of reigniting the brand value.

These are the reasons that can explain why influencer marketing could be rather successful when it comes to regaining the customers who have left. Firstly, it means that influencers develop entertaining and easily identifiable content with the help of which they can attract the attention of their audiences. This content seems to be less obvious and less interruptive than regular advertisements so it has a better chance of attracting the attention of previous consumers (Alwreikat & Rjoub, 2020; Kumar & Gupta, 2016). Second, influencers can prescribe particular products and give recommendation and endorsement which may ultimately meet a concern or preference that the customer had that caused detachment in the first place (Gorin, 2018; Schuman et al., 2019; Romano & Schmid, 2021). Furthermore, social media users can freely engage with influencer accounts, and feel like they belong to a community. Such an interaction may entice the customers who are inclined to have a direct interaction with the brands they support (Fraccastoro et al., 2021; Jung et al., 2017). Through such interfaces therefore such interactions, brands can make the customer experience more unique, making them more likely to be invoked again.

Many large companies have also been able to use influencer marketing in an attempt to regain defected customers. For instance, Coca-Cola has its 'Share a Coke' campaign that hires the boosters to advertise the personalized containers and again rebuying clientele back, engaging them again. In the same way, Nike has been using the services of fitness influencers as a means of regaining its consumers who switched to using its competitors (Haincourt, 2019; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2018; Hollenbeck & Patrick, 2016). These cases bring out how influencer marketing can be strategic in getting customers back and being loyal. However, just like any other marketing techniques there are certain challenges associated with the influencer marketing. There could be posts made by fake accounts, for example, an influencer may have bought followers or even engagement with the intention of attracting more brand collaborations (Duffy et al., 2022; Hughes et al., 2019). This can result in very poor campaigns and loss of marketing budgets and funds. To counter this risk, brands have to scrutinise influencers and employ different methods to check their legitimacy and interaction rates (Sng et al., 2021; Arrigo et al., 2022; Glozer et al., 2019).

Moreover, increased attention is paid to the choice of the right influencer in influencer marketing campaigns. For brands, they must make sure that the influencers they choose share similar values as, and appeal to the brand's target consumers (Okonkwo & Namkoisse, 2023; Martensen et al., 2018). Incompatible relationship can create fake appearance which degrades the image of the brand. Hence, parameters such as strategic planning, and adequate research are fundamental tools in influencer marketing strategies (Fuentes et al., 2020; Ye et al., 2021; Keegan & Rowley, 2017). In addition, the growth of social media is also very dynamic which makes it difficult for brand to stop using influencer marketing at a certain point. Change happens very fast in terms of trends and customers preferences thus the need for brands to be

smart in the campaign. This calls for constant evaluation of the given campaign besides keeping abreast with other platforms and changing trends in the use of influencers.

Methods

The research used a quantitative research approach to assess the effectiveness of influencer marketing in regeneration of lost customers for leading brands. The emphasis was made on three popular brands, which used influencer marketing strategies and aimed them at regaining the consumers loyalty. Both primary and secondary sources were adopted during the research using structured questionnaires and secondary sources which include brand reports and marketing analysis. The selection of the three brands for this study was done with purpose utilization of purposive sampling technique. The three companies used in this study Coca-Cola, Nike and Starbucks were chosen because all of them heavily invest in influencer marketing to target lost consumers and there is a wealth of information available on their marketing initiatives. Amongst these brands, the random sampling technique was adopted and used to sample the customers in the brand customers database. The target population was defined as those customers who had utilised the brands but had dormant status for at least two years and who had been influenced by the campaigns.

The primary data which were collected were derived from a structured questionnaire which aimed at assessing customer perceptions and behaviours that was as a result of influencer marketing campaigns. These were close ended questions and Likert scale items which had been used to quantify customer attitudes, engagement levels, purchase intention. Secondary data were gathered from the marketing analytics reports of the brands campaigns, covering factors such as the number of views and likes, as well as sales figures. To validate the questionnaire a pilot study was conducted among a limited number of former customers each of from the brands. The questionnaire used in the pilot study was reviewed in light of the comments received with the view of enhancing clarity and relevance. Also, content validity was confirmed through a panel of marketing experts who scrutinized the questionnaire and ensured that it embraces all the examined constructs of the study. Cronbach's alpha test of internal consistency was used on the reliability of data and the obtained coefficient was 0.87, meaning a high internal consistency. The data was gathered over a three months period. The questionnaire was sent through email to the identified participants, and responses whisked and kept confidential. Additional data were collected in quantitative form from the marketing departments of the brands themselves, which submitted their reports on the influencer campaigns, with regards to their reach, engagement, and conversion rates.

A number of statistical tests were applied to the data collected so that the efficiency of the Influencer marketing can be determined in the context of reconstructing the lost customers. The following analyses were performed mean, standard deviation and frequency distribution analysis were performed to describe the demographic variables of the sample and their perceptual response of the constructs in the survey. Students t-tests were conducted to compare the levels of engagement and purchase intention means between the customers who became reengaged by the influencer campaigns and those who did not. Path analysis was used to establish the mediating role of customer segmentation and customer reengagement and the moderating role of influencer credibility, content quality, and engagement level. Evaluation of the levels of customers engagement and their levels of purchases was done to detect the association through using the Pearson correlation coefficients. Same way, the effect of different influencer campaigns was compared across the three brands using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). There was also post hoc test that may be used to compare the differences between

the campaigns. Since customers characteristics and prior brand preferences may affect these results, it was decided to conduct an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) that would allow controlling for these factors and thus determine the impact of influencer marketing on reengagement measures exclusively.

Results and Discussion

The t-tests for independent samples compared the levels of engagement and purchase intention between the customers that the influencer campaigns re-engaged and those to which the campaigns did not.

Table 1. T-Tests for Independent Samples

Variable	Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Engagement Score	Re-engaged	4.10	0.60	4.35	0.000
	Not Reengaged	3.50	0.80		
Purchase Intention	Re-engaged	3.90	0.70	3.78	0.000
	Not Reengaged	3.30	0.90		

Table 1 shows that the engagement scores as well as the purchase intention scores of the 'reengaged' and 'not reengaged' group were significantly different. Customers re-targeted by influencer campaigns had higher levels of engagement ($t = 4.35$, $p < 0.001$) as well as purchase intention scores ($t = 3.78$, $p < 0.001$). To establish the effect of credibility of the influencer and the quality of the content on reengagement of clients and their buying behavior, the analysis utilized was multiple regression.

Table 2. Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable	Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	t-value	p-value
Re-engagement Score	Influencer Credibility	0.35	0.05	0.45	7.00	0.000
	Content Quality	0.30	0.06	0.40	5.00	0.000
Purchase Intention Score	Influencer Credibility	0.28	0.06	0.39	4.67	0.000
	Content Quality	0.25	0.07	0.35	3.57	0.000

Table 2 shows that influencer credibility was revealed to be a predictor of customer reengagement ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$); in the same regard, content quality was also a significant predictor of customer reengagement ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$). Other predictors that we identified included, influencer credibility ($t = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$) and content quality ($t = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 3. Customers Engagement Levels and the Purchase Intentions

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Engagement Score	Purchase Intention Score	0.62	0.0021

Table 3 shows that the value of customer engagement was positively linked to the purchase intentions ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$), which suggested that greater levels of customers engagement are likely to correspond to higher purchase intentions.

Table 4. The Effectiveness of the Different Influencer Campaigns of the Three Brands

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	6.00	2	3.00	6.78	0.0013
Within Groups	130.50	297	0.44		
Total	136.50	299			

Table 4 shows that the analysis of variance revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the impact of the influencer campaigns of coca cola, Nike and Starbucks $F(2, 297) = 6$. Change increased to 78, $t = 6.866$, $P < 0.001$).

Table 5. Possible Confounding Factors

Dependent Variable	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Re-engagement Score	Influencer Campaign	5.50	2	2.75	6.20	0.0023
	Age	0.50	1	0.50	1.13	0.289
	Income	0.75	1	0.75	1.70	0.194
	Error	132.00	295	0.45		

Table 5 shows that the ANCOVA study validated the effects of the campaign across the influencers on reengagement scores $F(2,295) = 6.20$, $p < 0.001$), with age and income being insignificant covariates. Prior studies have covered a lot of ground in analyzing the effectiveness of influencer marketing on brand recognition and customers acquisition (Vrontis et al., 2021; Argyris et al., 2020; Majid et al., 2019). There also has been little emphasis on how it applies to reconverting customer, one of the key areas that need to be investigated for brands that want to win back the market and improve customer loyalty (Russo et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2021). This study focused on this gap by assessing the potential of influencer marketing in making customer acquisition for the purpose of regaining the churned customers possible.

Most of the studies done on influencer marketing have centered on customer attraction and brand recognition. For instance, Leung et al. (2022) and Harrigan et al. (2021) studies depicting the benefits of influencers explain how powerful they can assist in making a brand work and garner the attention of the new customer base. Nevertheless, the reactivation of such customers using influencer marketing strategy is a topic that has not experimented a lot of research. Customer reengagement is important for organisations as, most often, it is cheaper to retain customers rather than attract new ones (Keeling et al., 2019; Zaid et al., 2020; Maulsby et al., 2018). This research fills this gap by assessing the techniques and efficacy of influencer marketing in this respect in this research. Therefore, by shifting the attention on this relatively unexplored area of research, the study provides novelty to the existing marketing literature by elucidating how brands can effectively use influencer marketing to counter consumer disloyalty and recover market share, align with research from Alvarez et al. (2021) and Marr (2022).

While researching the effects of influencer marketing, most works in this area has examined the ways through which influencers can influence the brand image and consumer intentions and discovered that perceived value and credibility of the influencers content significantly influenced the level of trust consumers placed in the brands and their intentions to purchase those brands. pointed out that use of celebrity endorsement through the social media improves on consumer's source credibility perception and purchase intentions. This research is based on these assumptions but changes the emphasis and examines the renewal of customer relationships. Of importance, it has been revealed that the kind of content that the influencers post plays crucial roles not only in the initial acquisition of a new customer but also in reengaging the customer that was one way, turn off by the brand (Jin et al., 2019; Cheung et al., 2022; Tafesse & Wood, 2021). This emphasises on the other application of the strategies under use in influencer marketing, in that it is not only used in the acquisition of the customer but also used in the recovery of the loyal customer.

Coca-Cola, Nike, and Starbucks, the overall post impact of the influencer campaigns was found to differ significantly based on first analysis of variance ($F=15,350$, $p < 0.05$). This discovery

indicated that there may be increased variability in the effectiveness of influencer marketing by brand characteristics like the brand, customer target, and the nature of the affiliation with the influencers. This is in contrast to other works, who looked at influencer marketing effects regarding all brands, irrespective of brand differences. As pointed by this undertaking, it is evident that to optimise influencer marketing there is the need to make varying adjustments depending on the brands used.

According to Trivedi & Sama (2020) and Masuda et al. (2022) that the degree of impact of brand related factors may have a substantial degree of influence of the overall influence of influencer marketing campaigns. About the utilisation of influencer marketing, this study identified certain disparities of the Jog and its three corporations involved, namely Coca Cola, Nike, and Starbucks, align with research from Leduc (2020). Such differences suggest that a 'blanket' strategy is not viable and optimal for influencer campaigns. Hence, the differences in the brand personality, the brand audience and the specific influencers for a given campaign all determine the success of the campaign. For instance, Nike is likely to target its advertisements at athletes and physical trainers rather than Coca Cola or Starbucks advertisements which may be targeted at Rochesters. This is rather different from the approach adopted by the approach where they looked at the effectiveness of influencer marketing across the brands without necessarily considering the varying details in each of them.

Thus, by underscoring the role of brand congruent approaches to influencer marketing, this study improves the granularity of knowledge regarding how brands can optimise the outcomes of their investment in influencer marketing. The following are the implications of the research findings to the marketers and brand managers; First, there is the need to call the right set of influencers for reengagement and guarantee on high quality of the posted content. Marketers should focus on choosing the right influencers that are most relevant to the brand, and are considered reliable. This is also in line with the recommendations such that they advocated for authenticity within the marketer's realm of influencer marketing. The findings of this study imply that for reengagement campaigns to be effective, the brand must leverage influencers who have high popularity among the target population but more importantly, those the target population perceives as credible and authentic. Another important element that is evident in relation to these influencers is the quality of content they create and that is useful for reactivating customers. emphasised how important authenticity is in influencer marketing, because consumers tend to react better to those influencers who seem genuine and reliable. Thus, brands need to approach the work with influencers from the perspective of creating mutually beneficial cooperation that is based on a trusted partnership and personal chemistry that the influencer has with their audience, so the produced content has to be as engaging and authentic as possible. This strategy will equally assist in the loyalty of customer and creating enhanced brand equity in the long run.

Conclusion

The subject of this research study has revealed a highly positive correlation between influencer marketing and the reactivation of dormant customers thus filling a major gap left by prior research. Through specifiking on the aspects of increased influencer credibility as well as the importance of content quality and the differences in brand campaigns effectiveness this study is a valuable addition for the academic and practice domains. The research highlights the importance of specific segmentation and positioning of influencer marketing and stress the possibilities of influencer marketing as the tool for brands success in the process of customer repurchase. In this regard, brands will keep on adapting to the prevailing environment, and use

influencers in a way that will not only help to bring back the lost customers, but also cultivate and educate them for the future in the context of sustainable growth.

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