

# The Impact of Nano Influencer Marketing on Brand Value: A Study of Gen Z Consumers in Vietnam

**Huynh Ba Thuy Dieu, MSc**

*Vietnam–Korea University of Information and Communication Technology*

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**Abstract:**

*The topic researches the impact of Nano Influencer Marketing on Brand Value: A Study of Gen Z Consumers in Vietnam. Survey data collected from 382 gen Z consumers in Vietnam. The proposed research model and measurement scale were formed based on the research results of gen Z consumers. Research results show that Nano influences affecting on brand value: trustworthiness, expertise, authenticity and engagement. From the research results, the author makes a number of recommendations..*

**Key words:** Nano influencer, brand value, gen Z, impact.

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## I. Introduction

In recent years, the rapid growth of social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube has significantly transformed the way businesses communicate with consumers. Traditional advertising methods are gradually losing their effectiveness as consumers become more skeptical of direct promotional messages. Consequently, influencer marketing has emerged as an important marketing strategy that enables brands to reach target audiences through trusted individuals on social media.

Among various types of influencers, nano influencers—individuals who typically have between 1,000 and 10,000 followers—have attracted increasing attention from marketers. Although they possess a relatively small audience compared to celebrities and macro influencers, nano influencers often maintain closer relationships with their followers, resulting in higher engagement rates, stronger credibility, and greater perceived authenticity. These characteristics make nano influencers particularly effective in influencing consumer perceptions and attitudes toward brands.

At the same time, building and maintaining brand equity has become a strategic priority for businesses operating in highly competitive markets. Brand equity represents the value that a brand adds to a product or service through consumers' awareness, associations, perceived quality, and loyalty. Strong brand equity can enhance customer retention, increase willingness to pay, and provide sustainable competitive advantages for firms.

Despite the growing popularity of nano influencer marketing, existing studies have primarily focused on its impact on purchase intention, consumer trust, and brand awareness. Limited research has examined how nano influencer marketing contributes to the overall development of brand equity, particularly in emerging markets such as Vietnam. Given the increasing adoption of influencer marketing by Vietnamese businesses, understanding the relationship between nano influencer marketing and brand equity is both academically and practically significant.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of nano influencer marketing on brand equity. Specifically, the research examines how factors such as credibility, expertise, authenticity, and engagement of nano influencers affect consumers' perceptions of brand value. The findings are expected to contribute to the existing literature on influencer marketing and provide practical recommendations for businesses seeking to enhance their brand equity through effective collaboration with nano influencers.

## II. Theoretical Framework and Research Model

### 1.1. Nano Influencer

#### *- Definition of Nano Influencer*

Nano influencers are social media creators with 1000 to 10,000 followers who build close community ties and spark trends through relatable content. They create stronger personal connections with audiences with much better authenticity compared to larger creators.

Nano influencers shape conversations across different channels such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube by blending everyday storytelling with brand promotion in niches like beauty, fitness, lifestyle, and food. 87.7%

of TikTok creators are nano influencers and have the highest engagement rate of 10.3% across all platforms according to a report by HypeAuditor “State of Influencer Marketing 2025.”

Nano influencers have a small but highly focused audience and authentic content that feels more like peer advice than advertising. This creates high engagement fueled by consistent comments, shares, and direct conversations.

Nano influencers provide brands with benefits like exceptional engagement rates, peer-level authenticity that boosts conversions, and cost-effectiveness that supports scalable campaigns for improving ROI.

Nano influencers should be part of marketing strategies because their genuine voices create trust, amplify brand recognition, and generate measurable returns. Brands gain access to loyal communities by working with them and achieve campaign success at a fraction of the cost of higher-tier influencer partnerships.

*-Characteristics of Nano Influencers*

Nano influencers are social media users who typically have between 1,000 and 10,000 followers. Although their audience size is relatively small compared to other types of influencers, they possess several unique characteristics that make them valuable marketing partners for brands.

**- High Credibility and Trustworthiness**

One of the most important characteristics of nano influencers is their high level of credibility. Since they are often perceived as ordinary consumers rather than professional endorsers, followers tend to trust their opinions and recommendations more. Their product reviews and personal experiences are generally viewed as genuine and unbiased.

**- Strong Audience Engagement**

Nano influencers usually achieve higher engagement rates than macro influencers or celebrities. Their followers frequently interact with their content through likes, comments, shares, and direct messages. This close interaction helps create stronger relationships and increases the effectiveness of marketing messages.

**- Authenticity**

Authenticity is a key factor contributing to the success of nano influencers. Their content often reflects real-life experiences, personal opinions, and everyday activities. As a result, followers perceive their recommendations as more natural and believable compared to traditional advertising.

**- Close Relationship with Followers**

Unlike celebrities who communicate with large and diverse audiences, nano influencers maintain closer connections with their followers. They often respond to comments, engage in conversations, and build a sense of community. This personal relationship enhances their influence on consumer attitudes and behaviors.

**- Niche Market Expertise**

Many nano influencers focus on specific interests such as beauty, fitness, fashion, food, travel, or technology. Their specialized knowledge allows them to attract highly targeted audiences who share similar interests, making them particularly effective for niche marketing campaigns.

**- Cost-Effectiveness**

Collaborating with nano influencers is generally less expensive than partnering with macro influencers or celebrities. This affordability enables businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, to implement influencer marketing campaigns within limited budgets.

## **1.2. Nano Influencer Marketing**

**Nano Influencer Marketing** is a form of influencer marketing in which brands collaborate with social media users who typically have between **1,000 and 10,000 followers** to promote products, services, or brands. Unlike celebrity or macro influencer marketing, nano influencer marketing focuses on leveraging the authenticity, credibility, and close relationships that nano influencers have with their followers.

With the rapid growth of social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, nano influencer marketing has become an increasingly popular strategy for businesses seeking to engage consumers in a more personal and trustworthy manner. Because nano influencers are often perceived as ordinary individuals rather than professional endorsers, their recommendations tend to be viewed as more genuine and reliable.

The effectiveness of nano influencer marketing can be explained by the strong engagement and trust that exist between nano influencers and their audiences. Followers often share similar interests, lifestyles, or values with the influencer, making them more receptive to product recommendations and brand messages. As a result, nano influencer marketing can positively influence consumer attitudes, brand awareness, purchase intentions, and overall brand equity.

From a business perspective, nano influencer marketing offers several advantages. It is generally more cost-effective than collaborating with celebrities or macro influencers, allows brands to target niche market segments, and often generates higher engagement rates. Furthermore, by working with multiple nano influencers, brands can create a sense of authenticity and social proof that enhances the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns.

However, nano influencer marketing also presents certain challenges. The limited audience size of individual nano influencers may restrict campaign reach, requiring brands to partner with multiple influencers to achieve broader market exposure. In addition, managing and coordinating numerous influencer partnerships can increase the complexity of marketing campaigns.

Overall, nano influencer marketing has emerged as an important digital marketing strategy that enables brands to build stronger relationships with consumers, foster trust, and create long-term brand value in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

### **1.3. Brand Equity**

**Brand Equity** refers to the value that a brand adds to a product or service beyond its functional benefits. It is derived from consumers' perceptions, experiences, and associations with the brand, which can influence their purchasing decisions and loyalty.

Theo David Aaker, brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand's name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided to customers and the firm. Aaker identified four main dimensions of brand equity:

- **Brand Awareness:** The extent to which consumers recognize and recall a brand.
- **Brand Associations:** The thoughts, feelings, and images linked to the brand in consumers' minds.
- **Perceived Quality:** Consumers' perception of the overall quality and superiority of a product or service.
- **Brand Loyalty:** The degree of consumer commitment and repeated purchase behavior toward a brand.

Similarly, Kevin Lane Keller defined brand equity from a customer-based perspective, emphasizing that the value of a brand stems from consumers' knowledge, perceptions, and responses to the brand.

In today's highly competitive business environment, brand equity is considered a valuable intangible asset. Strong brand equity can help firms:

- Increase customer loyalty.
- Differentiate products from competitors.
- Command premium prices.
- Improve marketing effectiveness.
- Achieve sustainable competitive advantages.

In the context of Nano Influencer Marketing, brand equity may be enhanced when consumers perceive nano influencers as trustworthy, authentic, and credible. Positive interactions with nano influencers can strengthen brand awareness, create favorable brand associations, improve perceived quality, and ultimately increase brand loyalty.

## **III. Methodology**

### **3.1. Research Design**

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the impact of Nano Influencer Marketing on Brand Equity. A cross-sectional survey design is employed to collect data from consumers who actively use social media and follow nano influencers.

The quantitative method is considered appropriate because it enables the researcher to measure the relationships among variables and test the proposed hypotheses statistically.

### **3.2. Research Model and Hypotheses**

Based on the literature review and relevant theories, four characteristics of nano influencers are identified as independent variables: Trustworthiness, Expertise, Authenticity, and Engagement. Brand Equity is selected as the dependent variable.

The following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Trustworthiness positively influences Brand Equity.
- H2: Expertise positively influences Brand Equity.
- H3: Authenticity positively influences Brand Equity.
- H4: Engagement positively influences Brand Equity.

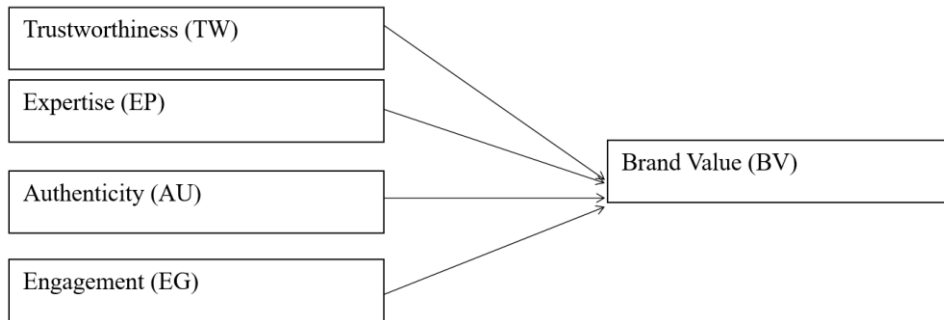


Figure 1.1: Proposal Model

**3.3. Sampling**

The target population consists of social media users who follow at least one nano influencer on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, or Facebook. A convenience sampling method is employed due to its practicality and accessibility. Data are collected through an online questionnaire distributed via social media platforms. According to Hair et al. (2019), the minimum sample size for multivariate analysis should be at least five times the number of observed variables. Therefore, a sample size of approximately 400 respondents is considered adequate for this study.

**IV. Results**

**4.1. Research sample information**

There were 382 responses, 261 were from women and 121 from men.

**4.2. Results of reliability testing and variables in the sample dataset**

The author processed the data using SPSS 26.0 software and obtained the following results: The combined Cronbach Alpha coefficients, item-total correlation coefficients, and reliability tests of the independent variables all showed that the coefficients were greater than 0.6, and all observed variables in the model, including both independent and dependent variables, had reliable item-to-variable correlation coefficients. Furthermore, the analysis of composite reliability and extracted variance showed that the composite reliability coefficients were all greater than 0.7, and the extracted variances of the factors were all greater than 0.5. Thus, it can be confirmed that the scales meet the necessary reliability standards.

**Table 1. Summary of Cronbach Alpha coefficient results**

Independent variables	Cronbach Alpha coefficient
Trustworthiness (TW)	0,861
Expertise (EP)	0,874
Authenticity (AU)	0,789
Engagement (EG)	0,801
Brand Equity (BE)	0,882

(Source: Author's analysis results)

**4.3. Results of exploratory factor analysis**

**Table 2. KMO and Bartlett tests**

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0,957
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2863.393
	Df	213
	Sig.	.000

(Source: Author's analysis results)

The results in Table 2 show that the KMO index is 0.957, which is very close to 1.0, indicating that the factor analysis was appropriate, and the significance level (sig.) of .000 is less than 0.05, which meets the statistical significance requirements.

**4.4. Results of linear regression analysis**

**Correlation coefficient test (r)**

The correlation coefficient indicates the direction of the correlation (positive or negative).

**Table 3. Correlations matrix between variables**

		Trust-worthiness	Expertise	Authenticity	Engagement	Brand Value
Trust-worthiness	Pearson Correlation	1	.359**	.377**	.428**	.567**
	Sig. (2- tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N		382	382	382	382
Expertise	Pearson Correlation		1	.164*	.119	.447**
	Sig. (2- tailed)			.013	.074	.000
	N			382	382	382
Authenticity	Pearson Correlation			1	.295**	.406**
	Sig. (2- tailed)				.000	.000
	N				382	382
Engagement	Pearson Correlation				1	.455**
	Sig. (2- tailed)					.000
	N					382
Brand Value	Pearson Correlation					1
	Sig. (2- tailed)					
	N					

(Source: Author's analysis results)

The correlation coefficient matrix shows that the correlation coefficient between the "hindering factor" and the following variables: with the variable "Trust-worthiness" (Pearson = 0.567), variable "Expertise" (Pearson = 0.447), variable "Authenticity" (Pearson = 0.406), variable "Engagement" (Pearson = 0.455). Therefore, it can be initially concluded that the independent variables that can be included in the model to explain the factors affecting the recovery of the economy, including 4 independent variables, are appropriate.

**Regression analysis**

The results of the linear regression test are shown in Table 4 as follows:

**Table 4. Results of linear regression test**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.775 <sup>a</sup>	.712	.686	.63049	2.013

- a. Predictor: (Constant), TW, EP, AU, EG
- b. Dependent Variable: BV

Model		Unstandardize Coefficients		Standardize Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
	(Constant)	-.895	.302		-2.967	.003		
	Trust-worthiness	.370	.085	.252	4.369	.000	.644	1.765
	Expertise	.284	.059	.228	4.871	.000	.833	1.581
	Authenticity	.225	.065	.178	3.489	.001	.834	1.679
	Engagement	.222	.067	.168	3.329	.001	.712	1.205

The above results show that the adjusted R2 coefficient is 0.712. This means that the research model explains 71.2% of the variation in the dependent variable by the independent variables in the model. The VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) coefficients of the independent factors in the model are all low and less than 2.2 (ranging from 1.205 to 1.765). This indicates that there is no multicollinearity between the independent variables in the model (Nguyen Dinh Tho, 2011). In addition, the Sig. coefficients of the independent factor coefficients in the model are all less than 0.05. Therefore, all 5 factors influence the dependent variable.

The standardized regression model shows a simple linear relationship between the variables:

$$BV = 0,252 * TW + 0,228 * EP + 0,178 * AU + 0,168 * EG$$

The variable "Trustworthiness" has a Beta coefficient of 0.252 and a high statistical significance level (>99.99%) with a Sig. value of 0.000; similarly, the variable "Expertise" has a Beta coefficient of 0.228 with a Sig. value of 0.000. Next are the variables "Authenticity" with a Beta coefficient of 0.178 and a Sig. value of 0.001, and "Engagement" with Beta and Sig. values of 0.168 and 0.001, respectively.

This research shows that the most powerful factor influencing Brand Equity is Trustworthiness. Expertise plays a significant role in influencing brand value, followed by Authenticity, which also greatly affects Brand Equity, and finally, Authenticity.

**VI. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed for companies and marketers seeking to enhance brand equity through nano influencer marketing among Generation Z consumers in Vietnam.

**1. Prioritize Trustworthiness When Selecting Nano Influencers**

Since trustworthiness has the strongest influence on brand equity, businesses should prioritize selecting nano influencers who are perceived as honest, reliable, and transparent. Gen Z consumers are highly sensitive to

misleading promotional content and are more likely to trust recommendations from influencers who genuinely use and endorse products.

To strengthen trustworthiness, brands should:

- Collaborate with influencers who maintain a positive reputation and ethical online behavior.
- Encourage transparent disclosure of sponsored content.
- Allow influencers to share authentic product experiences rather than scripted advertisements.
- Establish long-term partnerships with influencers to build credibility and consistency.

## **2. Partner with Influencers Who Demonstrate Relevant Expertise**

The findings indicate that expertise is the second most influential factor affecting brand equity. Therefore, companies should select nano influencers whose knowledge and experience align with the product category or industry.

For example:

- Beauty brands should collaborate with skincare enthusiasts or beauty content creators.
- Fitness brands should work with influencers knowledgeable about health and exercise.
- Technology brands should engage influencers who regularly review digital products.

When consumers perceive influencers as knowledgeable, they are more likely to trust product recommendations and develop favorable perceptions of the brand.

## **3. Foster Authenticity in Influencer Content**

Authenticity also plays a significant role in strengthening brand equity. Gen Z consumers value genuine and relatable content more than highly polished advertising messages.

Brands should:

- Give influencers creative freedom in content creation.
- Encourage storytelling and personal experiences with the product.
- Avoid excessive promotional language that may appear artificial.
- Support user-generated and behind-the-scenes content to create a sense of realism.

By maintaining authenticity, brands can build stronger emotional connections with Gen Z audiences and enhance overall brand perceptions.

## **4. Increase Meaningful Engagement Rather Than Focusing Solely on Reach**

Although engagement has the weakest impact among the four factors, it still contributes positively to brand equity. Therefore, brands should encourage meaningful interactions between influencers and followers.

Recommended practices include:

- Hosting Q&A sessions, live streams, and interactive discussions.
- Responding to comments and messages promptly.
- Creating polls, challenges, and other participatory activities.
- Encouraging followers to share feedback and experiences with the brand.

Rather than emphasizing follower count alone, marketers should focus on the quality of interactions and community building.

## **5. Develop an Integrated Nano Influencer Strategy for Gen Z Consumers**

Given the combined influence of trustworthiness, expertise, authenticity, and engagement, businesses should adopt a comprehensive nano influencer marketing strategy. Instead of selecting influencers solely based on popularity, companies should evaluate influencers using multiple criteria, including credibility, expertise, authenticity, audience relevance, and engagement quality.

Such an integrated approach can help brands build stronger relationships with Gen Z consumers, enhance brand awareness and brand associations, and ultimately improve overall brand equity in the Vietnamese market.

## **6. Managerial Implications**

For managers, the results suggest that investment in nano influencer marketing should focus primarily on building consumer trust through credible influencers. While engagement metrics such as likes, comments, and shares remain important, greater emphasis should be placed on selecting trustworthy and knowledgeable influencers who can deliver authentic content. This approach is likely to generate stronger long-term brand value and competitive advantage among Vietnam's growing Gen Z consumer segment.

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