



How Gaming Influencers Transform Brand Identity into Consumer Demand

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Abstract

This article is dedicated to researching the mechanisms of converting brand identity into consumer demand through the activities of gaming influencers. It examines the combination of trust, parasocial closeness, and the informational value of authorial content as channels for transferring brand meanings into the behavioral attitudes of the audience. The work describes the communicative effects of a streamer's personal brand, the alignment of the author's and the brand's values, and a typology of content formats that influence the perceived value of the offering and purchase intention. Special attention is given to structuring the factors of trust (authenticity, expertise, communication style, value alignment) and their connection to engagement metrics. The study aims to identify stable causal relationships between the characteristics of an influencer and changes in consumer attitudes. To achieve this, a systematization of literature, comparative analysis, content analysis, and narrative synthesis were used, which allowed for the identification of reproducible patterns of influence. The conclusion describes an applied framework for selecting brand ambassadors and tailoring creative integration to the brand's objectives, considering reputational risks and product specifics. This article will be useful for researchers of marketing communications, managers of game studios and consumer electronics brands, analysts at influencer agencies, and developers of advertising strategies targeting young audiences. Additionally, it considers the differences between micro- and macro-influencers, the conditions for organic integration, reputational risks, and the product format. A practical matrix for selecting an ambassador is proposed, linking audience metrics, tone of delivery, and campaign goals with expected behavioral effects. Criteria for qualitative content assessment and implementation steps are described.

Keywords: Gaming Influencers, Brand Identity, Parasocial Relationships, Audience Engagement, Purchase Intention.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the global video game industry has demonstrated rapid growth and has already become one of the most dynamically developing sectors of the world economy. In parallel with the growth of the gaming industry, the phenomenon of "gaming authorities"—popular content creators and opinion leaders in the video game sphere—has emerged. Through streaming platforms and social media, they actively influence a huge audience of gamers. These influential individuals, who include well-known streamers, esports athletes, and YouTube bloggers, have turned into an important communication channel between brands and consumers. Gaming authorities form loyal communities around themselves and effectively act as trusted advisors for their subscribers, which gives their recommendations special power. Marketing research shows that engaging such opinion leaders has become a key digital marketing strategy, allowing companies to shape brand perception and directly stimulate consumer purchasing decisions through their

reputation and reach to the target audience [6]. According to consulting research data, more than a third of consumers (and the share is even higher among young people) admit that they make purchasing decisions under the influence of content from independent creators—gaming influencers [2]. This underscores the relevance of studying the influence of gaming authorities on audience behavior and the economic performance of brands.

Brand identity, in its classic sense, includes the values, image, and positioning that a company communicates to its audience. However, in the digital age, the carriers and transmitters of branding messages are increasingly not the companies themselves, but independent content creators. The audience often perceives information about products and services through the prism of the personalities of their favorite streamers and bloggers, trusting them more than traditional advertising. In these conditions, it is important to understand how gaming authorities transform the abstract identity of a brand into real consumer demand. In

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other words, how the charisma, reputation, and creative style of influential gamers convert a brand's values into a motivated action by the audience—a view, a subscription, and ultimately, a purchase.

The objective of this study is to analyze the mechanisms by which gaming authorities transform brand identity into consumer demand. To achieve this objective, the following tasks are addressed:

1. to identify the key factors of gaming influencers' influence on the audience's perception of a brand (such as trust, authoritativeness, emotional connection);
2. to study the role of audience engagement and interaction with the content of influential gamers in the formation of brand value and intentions to buy a product;
3. to assess the practical results of brand collaborations with gaming opinion leaders, as well as the possible risks and limitations of such a strategy.

This work is interdisciplinary in nature, situated at the intersection of marketing, social psychology, and media studies, which allows for a comprehensive examination of the phenomenon of the influence of gaming authorities on the market success of brands.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The initial database was formed purposefully to verify the causal relationships identified in the research. I.O. Bakach [1] proposed a conceptual model of social influence and engagement in the gaming industry; N. Li [3] described the opposing effects of YouTubers' influence on purchases and usage; X. Liu [4] examined the persuasive power of influencers in shaping brand trust and purchase intentions; M. Mahardika [5] empirically assessed the relationship between brand engagement, perceived value, and the intention to purchase top-up services; S.P. Migkos [6] investigated behavioral changes and online shopping preferences under the influence of influencer marketing; P. Samanta [7] systematized empirical results on brand perception and purchasing behavior; A. Verma [8] analyzed the influence of streamers' personal brands on fans' self-identification and imitative practices; Deloitte [2] provided industry metrics on the influence of creators on purchasing decisions.

Methods such as comparative analysis of publications, criterial classification of trust factors, and narrative synthesis of arguments were employed. Cross-validation of conclusions between academic sources and industry reports was applied. In conclusion, the body of materials ensured the replicable identification of the mechanisms for transferring brand identity into demand without being tied to single case studies.

RESULTS

An analysis of modern research confirms that the presence of influential gamers significantly enhances consumer

engagement with a brand and builds trust in its products. Influencers in the gaming sphere function as "trusted persons" for their audience: their recommendations and reviews are perceived by fans as coming from an expert who is close to the spirit of the community. This trust directly affects the consumer's relationship with the brand.

A clear example can be observed in the case of Blaza Plays, whose signature editing style—fast-paced cuts, sudden zooms, layered sound effects, and on-screen gags—transforms extended gaming sessions into short, narrative-driven storylines. This stylistic approach effectively retains the attention of younger viewers, particularly Gen Z, whose average attention span is considerably shorter. Over time, this visual and auditory dynamic has crystallized into the recognizable Blaza brand identity, associated with humor, unpredictability, and polished chaos. Moreover, the style influenced the Socksfor1 collective, where similar pacing and energetic editing were adopted, amplifying the distinctiveness of their videos in the saturated gaming market. A systematization of approaches is presented below (Figure 1).

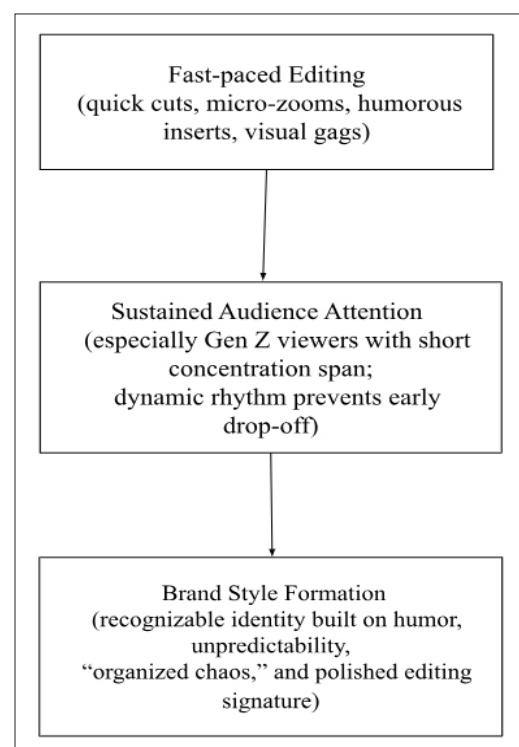


Figure 1. The impact of editing style on brand perception (author's elaboration based on Blaza Plays)

For instance, an experimental study showed that the perceived authority of a gaming influencer positively correlates with audience engagement with the brand, and simultaneously enhances the expected brand value and the intention to make a purchase [5]. Simply put, when an opinion leader genuinely supports a product, their subscribers are more likely to show interest in that brand and consider a purchase. Another study on digital marketing confirms the high effectiveness of influencer marketing in strengthening brand trust and shaping consumer preferences, especially

when the influencer is perceived as authentic and honest [7].

In technical terms, Blaza Plays integrates three methods that illustrate the communicative mechanism of gaming influencers. First, the use of dynamic camera movements and micro-zooms during unexpected gameplay events (such as jump scares or narrative twists) heightens immersion and dramatizes the experience. Second, layered sound design—memetic audio clips, distortion, and abrupt cuts—serves as a comedic intensifier that increases virality. Third, a strategic link between thumbnails and the first 30 seconds of the video ensures that the promise of the visual preview is fulfilled in the introduction, thereby extending watch time and reinforcing audience loyalty.

Interestingly, collaborations with creators who have a relatively small reach often yield the greatest returns: numerous case studies show that micro-influencers (with an audience of around several tens of thousands) often generate a higher level of engagement and conversion than “stars” with millions of followers [2]. This is explained by the closer connection and similarity of interests between a micro-blogger and their niche audience, thanks to which recommendations are perceived as extremely personal. Thus, gaming authorities act as an effective communication link that translates the brand’s declared values into a language that is close to the consumer, increasing the audience’s trust and emotional attachment to the brand.

The extent to which the image of the gaming opinion leader resonates with the values of the promoted brand is of great importance. A brand’s identity can be enhanced or reinterpreted through the prism of the influencer’s personality—their narrative style, unique video editing, humor, and attitude towards the game. If the product’s values are organically integrated into the author’s content, the audience perceives the promotion not as intrusive advertising, but as a natural recommendation woven into a familiar narrative. Research indicates that the authenticity of the influencer is a critically important factor: perceiving their favorite streamer as “real” and sincere, subscribers trust their assessments and product reviews, which enhances the persuasiveness of the advertising messages [1,4]. In particular, it has been proven that subscribers form a strong parasocial relationship with their digital idols—a one-sided “quasi-friendly” relationship in which the viewer feels an emotional closeness to the media personality [4]. This psychological attachment increases the effectiveness of subtle branding: a feeling arises that the influencer is sharing their experience of using the product with their community, rather than simply advertising it. For example, a content analysis showed that the sincerity and community engagement of a streamer, as well as the parasocial relationships formed on this basis, significantly influence the consumer decisions of fans—the audience strives to imitate their idols and ultimately spends more money on related goods, from gaming accessories to lifestyle elements [8]. Thus, the personal brand of the

influencer—their values, communication style, and image—becomes an integral part of the communicated brand identity. The gaming authority, in a sense, “lends” their social capital to the brand, translating the product’s properties into the plane of values and a lifestyle that are close to the audience. To systematize the factors of personal influence, a summary diagram is provided (Figure 2).

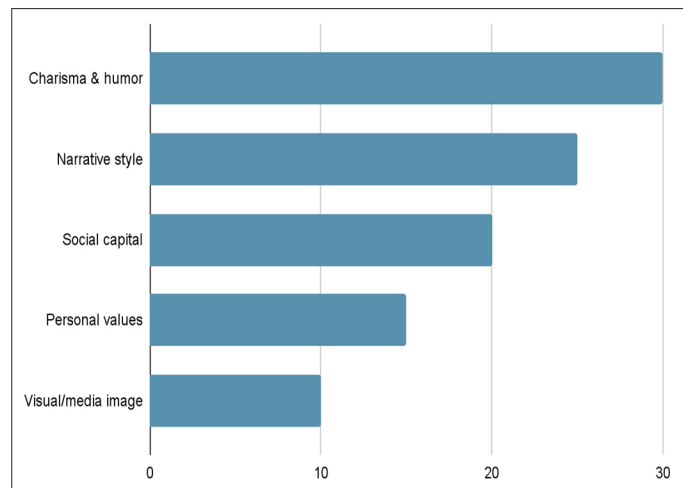


Figure 2. Impact of personal brand elements on brand perception (compiled by the author based on [5–6,8]).

The effectiveness of the influence of gaming opinion leaders is largely explained by the nature of the content they create. Unlike traditional advertising messages, the content of influencers typically combines informativeness (a review of the game’s or device’s features) and entertainment (an emotional, engaging presentation format). This combination is valued by the audience and is perceived not as direct advertising, but as a native consumer experience. It has been established that the informational value of authorial content has a positive effect on subscribers’ attitudes towards recommended products: if a reviewer provides a detailed and objective account of a product’s functions, demonstrating expertise, it strengthens trust in their recommendations and increases the intention to buy [4]. The content value model demonstrated that the more useful information an influencer provides about a product (e.g., sharing personal experience with a new gaming device, comparing features, honestly pointing out pros and cons), the stronger the audience’s trust in the promoted brand grows and the higher the probability of a subsequent purchase [4]. Thus, gaming authorities turn an advertising message into a full-fledged consumer experience: viewers feel they have received comprehensive information and have “tried on” the product for themselves, all while being in the entertaining atmosphere of a stream. Engagement through entertainment (gaming content, jokes, the host’s charisma) enhances the emotional reaction and brand memorability. The combination of these factors—rational information and emotional connection—leads to an increase in the brand’s consumer value in the eyes of the audience, and with it, a specific demand is formed [5]. For clarity, a typology of the effects of authorial content is provided below (Table 1).

Table 1. A typology of the content effects of gaming influencers on consumer behavior (compiled by the author based on [1, 4–7])

Content type	Key characteristics	Effect on audience and brand
Informative review	Detailed presentation of features, analysis of pros and cons	Increased trust, growth in perceived product value
Entertainment format	Humor, emotions, gamescenes, charismatic presentation	Enhanced brand memorability and emotional engagement
Native integration	Organic inclusion of the product into the usual narrative	Absence of the effect of forced advertising, growth in loyalty
Personal experience	Demonstration of product use in daily practice	Formation of a sense of involvement and “trying on” the product
Combined approach	A mix of analysis and entertainment	Maximization of influence: trust plus emotional engagement

The accumulated data indicate that the influence of gaming influencers on final consumer behavior is far from episodic, but manifests in widespread trends. According to a Deloitte report, about a third of all consumers in the US in 2022 directly stated that their purchasing decisions were suggested by content creators, with this share being over half among Gen Z and millennials [2]. Practical examples are multiplying: advertising integrations in the videos of popular gaming YouTube channels regularly lead to spikes in sales of the demonstrated devices and games. Research records a direct correlation: the higher the degree of an influencer’s audience engagement—measured by the number of likes, comments, shares, as well as the depth of video viewership—the stronger the impact on the sales figures of the brand with which the author is collaborating [7]. One empirical study involving 160 gamer respondents showed that recommendations from favorite streamers increase the likelihood of purchasing gaming services (e.g., a premium account subscription or in-game goods) by increasing the perceived value of the offer [5]. At the same time, it is important to consider the specific features of the product: a recent work published in the journal *Marketing Science* discovered an interesting dual effect of gaming YouTubers’ content on video game sales. On one hand, the demonstration of a game by a well-known YouTuber sharply increases interest and the time the audience spends in the game, which is beneficial for models with microtransactions or free-to-play services (for them, the influencer’s reach is effectively free advertising that stimulates an influx of players) [3]. On the other hand, for story-driven games designed for a one-time purchase, a playthrough posted by an influential streamer can partially substitute for the purchase itself: viewers, having had the opportunity to watch the entire story for free, sometimes refuse to buy, which results in lost revenue for the publisher. Thus, gaming opinion leaders almost always boost demand, but the nature of this demand depends on the monetization model and the product category. In most cases, a brand’s collaboration with an influencer leads to an increase in awareness, an improvement in consumer attitudes towards the brand, and consequently, an increase in sales or the user base. Nevertheless, optimal returns are achieved when the

product format and the brand’s marketing objectives are in harmony with the content style and the expectations of the specific gaming author’s audience.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained confirm the high effectiveness of gaming authorities as intermediaries between a brand and its target audience. It has been found that influential gamers are capable of transforming the abstract qualities and image of a brand into specific value propositions that are understandable and attractive to the gaming community. A key mechanism here is social proof and the effect of belonging to a group: when a person who is an authority for a given audience demonstrates loyalty to a brand, viewers develop a sense that supporting this brand means becoming part of a broader movement or trend. Thus, the brand’s identity is effectively transmitted through the personality of the influencer: the brand’s values acquire a “human face” and an emotional coloring. For example, if a brand is positioned on the values of innovation and fun, an influencer in the gaming segment known for their sense of humor and reviews of new products can naturally embody these values in their content. Their audience, resonating with this presentation, adopts not only an interest in the product but also a belief in its value. This corresponds to the concept of consumer self-identification with a brand: when the brand’s image is in tune with the audience’s self-perception, a strong emotional bond is formed, leading to increased loyalty and a willingness to purchase.

Another important component is the psychological closeness between the influencer and their subscribers. The parasocial relationships that viewers develop allow the brand to effectively leverage the level of trust and affection that fans have for their idol. In traditional marketing, building brand trust takes years of targeted communications; in the case of a collaboration with an opinion leader, a significant part of this work has already been done by the content creators themselves. The results show that the audience’s trust in the influencer is directly transferred to the advertised product. Moreover, interaction in the format of live streams and comments creates the illusion of two-way communication,

strengthening the viewers' conviction that their needs and opinions are being taken into account. Consequently, the "influencer-subscriber" trust relationship serves as a catalyst for the "consumer-brand" relationship. This is particularly valuable for brands seeking to win over a youth audience, which is traditionally skeptical of direct advertising but open to recommendations from their idols on the internet.

At the same time, when discussing the results, it is necessary to note the limits of the applicability of the identified effects. First, not every influencer has the same influence: the qualities of the opinion leader—their expertise, charisma, ability to hold attention—play a key role. If an influencer loses their reputation (for example, is caught being dishonest or aggressively pushing advertising), the effect can turn negative—the audience will not only ignore the promoted product but will also perceive the brand negatively due to its association with a compromised personality. Second, as the example with "story-driven" video games showed, the impact on consumer demand is not always linearly positive. There are situations where the author's content effectively saturates the consumer's interest, reducing the need for the direct purchase of the product. Brands should consider such scenarios when formulating campaign objectives: for example, for products where copy sales are important, it is worth rationing the depth of content demonstration (not revealing the entire plot), while for service-based models, on the contrary, the widest possible coverage should be encouraged. Third, measuring the effect of influencer marketing requires well-thought-out metrics: an increase in sales is an obvious indicator, but long-term indicators such as an increase in brand awareness, a change in its perception, an influx of new users, and community engagement are no less important. Academic works emphasize that the influence of influencers extends to these intangible aspects of a brand as well, forming long-term brand equity in the form of a loyal audience.

The practical significance of the results lies in the fact that companies, especially in the gaming and entertainment markets, can build collaborations with opinion leaders more consciously and subtly. Influencers act as a kind of co-author of the brand in the eyes of consumers. Understanding this, marketers must carefully select "ambassadors" from among gaming authorities, basing their choice not only on the size of the audience but also on the alignment of the influencer's values, lifestyle, and content with the brand's desired positioning. Furthermore, it is important to provide creators with sufficient creative freedom: by trusting them to adapt the brand message to the expectations of their community, companies receive more organic and persuasive content. Finally, in the long term, a brand's success in collaborating with gaming authorities will depend on its ability to adapt to changes in the digital environment—platform algorithms, new formats (e.g., short vertical videos), and the evolution of the audiences themselves. An influencer who constantly develops their style in response to new trends can maintain

high engagement and thus continue to convert their charisma and the audience's trust into commercial results for partner brands.

CONCLUSION

The study conducted has shown that gaming authorities play a significant role in transforming a brand's identity into real consumer demand. They combine the functions of brand value carriers, communication channels, and trusted advisors for the audience. Thanks to a high degree of trust and an emotional connection with their followers, influential gamers can enhance consumer engagement, increase the perceived value of products, and stimulate purchase intentions. The main conclusions are as follows: first, collaboration with opinion leaders in the gaming sphere reliably increases audience engagement with a brand and strengthens trust in its goods and services, which is confirmed by the growth of engagement and brand trust indicators in the presence of influencers. Second, the authentic content of influencers serves as the bridge that translates the abstract characteristics of a brand into the language of specific emotions and user experiences—the informativeness and entertainment value of reviews enhance the positive perception of the brand and form a conscious preference for the recommended product among the audience. Third, psychological mechanisms such as parasocial relationships and the effect of social identification provide a unique depth of influence: consumers not only learn about a brand but begin to associate it with a part of their own image and community, which leads to long-term loyalty. The scientific significance of the results obtained lies in enriching marketing theory with new data on the role of influencers as independent agents of brand communication in the digital age. The practical significance is confirmed by the fact that companies can use the findings to develop more effective promotion strategies: the right choice of a gaming ambassador and the co-creation of content taking into account the audience's interests can provide a brand with both short-term sales growth and a sustainable competitive advantage by forming a core of loyal consumers.

Overall, the influence of gaming authorities demonstrates how the boundaries between the producer, the communicator, and the consumer of a brand are blurring in modern conditions. The personality of the influencer becomes the carrier of the branding message, their creativity becomes the platform for demonstrating the product's values, and their audience becomes an active participant in the creation of market success. Gaming opinion leaders transform brand identity into a living consumer experience, and the ability of brands to skillfully integrate into this experience is becoming the key to their relevance in the digital age. Future research could be directed towards the quantitative assessment of the long-term effect of such collaborations and the study of new interaction formats (e.g., virtual influencers and metaverses), but it is already clear that this phenomenon cannot be ignored. Brands that have managed to build a genuine partnership with gaming authorities gain the key

to the hearts of a whole generation of consumers, for whom trust, emotion, and community mean more than traditional marketing calls to action.

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