

Social Networking Sites and Brand Attachment: New Bond to Influence Consumers

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ABSTRACT

The past few decades have witnessed astounding advances in technology and computing and because of that period innovation coincided with Millennials' childhoods, it has shaped the ways that Millennials interact with technology and seems to have affected their expectations for creativity and innovation in their own work lives. Millennials, also known as Gen Y, are those that were born into a generation of technology sharing practically everything online. As per the Deloitte Millennial Study – they are defined as those with big demands and high expectation. Now a days the digital marketing strategies designed by corporate is moreover focused to align the Millennials as their prospect and are effective in influencing their brand attachment behavior. There is potential growth and value in using social networking sites aimed at Millennials. The purpose of this study is, why should any organization care or, for that matter, try to understand these Millennials, more so if they have a well-established social media presence or they aspire to have one?

Keywords: Social Networking Sites, Brand Attachment, Consumer Behaviour, Digital Marketing Strategies, Millennials behaviour

1. Introduction

Millennials, the cohort of Indians born between 1980 and the mid-2000s, are the largest generation in the India, with the first cohort of Millennials only in their early thirties, most members of this generation are at the beginning of their careers and so will be an important engine of the economy in the decades to come. The significance of Millennials extends beyond their numbers. This is the first generation to have had access to the Internet during their formative years. Millennials also stand out because they are the most diverse and educated generation to date. Yet perhaps the most important marker for Millennials is that many of them have come of age during a very difficult time in our economy, as the oldest Millennials were just 27 years old when the recession began in December 2007. As unemployment surged from 2007 to 2009, many Millennials struggled to find a hold in the labor market. They made important decisions about their educational and career paths, including whether and where to attend college, during a time of great economic uncertainty. Their early adult lives have been shaped by the experience of establishing their careers at a time when economic opportunities are relatively scarce. Today, although the economy is well into its recovery, the recession still affects lives of Millennials and will likely continue to do so for years to come. In the digital era, social networking sites are playing vital role to make the brand value, and marketers are trying to build the relationship between customers' expectation and delivery of brand value to them. However, in the dynamic digital landscape, it is imperative to position the brand on social media sites and strengthen the timeless values projected by consumers while modulating manifest mercantile motives. Mollen, Anne and Wilson (2010) find the existence of numerous online web tools which are the key to not only post and share interests and

information but also assist learning the open process have come to be defined as social media. This upcoming social media platform has opened the Pandora's Box when it comes to searching for innovative strategies for the conduct of business (Weber,2011). Notwithstanding the fact whether companies are overhauling the long term marketing objectives for building the brand awareness or are playing for the short term by strengthening instantaneous purchase intention, The level of functioning exhibited on the online platform is not to the extent desired by the market (Weber 2011, Hanna et al. 2011, Kaplan & Haenlein 2010; Chung & Austria 2010).

This generation is marked by transformations at nearly every important milestone: from changes in parenting practices and schooling choices, to the condition of the Indian economy they entered, to their own choices about home and family. However, in many cases, Millennials are simply following the patterns of change that began generations ago. Millennials are also the generation that will shape our economy for decades to come and to claim this predictions we have the above given data about Indian's Millennials;

1.1 Indian's Millennials present situation:

The United Nations said last year that India will become the most populous country by 2022, when it will draw even with — and exceed — China at 1.4 billion people. Nearly 60 per cent (701 million of the 1.2 billion estimated during the 2011 census) are under the age of 30. That's more than the 503 million residents of the European Union and double the US population. They're the best-educated generation in independent India and most likely to drive the country to long-term prosperity. This is the most socially conscious generation of all time. Perhaps because of India's developing world problems, its youth are ahead of the pack on this front. Deloitte found that a whopping 89

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per cent believe their company has a strong sense of purpose, which 86 per cent can understand and relate to (compared to 80 per cent and 66 % worldwide).



Like their counterparts elsewhere, however, Indian Millennials want to close the gap, and believe senior leadership should be focused more strongly on long-term goals, making a positive contribution to society and employee wellbeing. Nearly 70 per cent of Indian Millennials will deliberately seek employers whose corporate responsibility behaviour reflects their own, PwC found.

1.2 Millennials have been shaped by technology

The past few decades have witnessed astounding advances in technology and computing. Since personal computers were introduced to schools in the late 1970s, technology companies have innovated at startling speed, often rolling out a groundbreaking new platform or computer model every year. Because much of this period of innovation coincided with Millennials' childhoods, it has shaped the ways that Millennials interact with technology and seems to have affected their expectations for creativity and innovation in their own work lives.

Millennials are more connected to technology than previous generations and a quarter of Millennials believe that their relationship to technology is what makes their generation unique.(1)* While all generations have experienced technological advances, the sheer amount of computational power and access to information that Millennials have had at their fingertips since grade-school is unparalleled. Computational processing power has roughly doubled every 2 years, and storage prices continue to drop.(2)* In 1980, IBM's first gigabyte hard drive weighed 550 pounds and cost \$40,000.(3)* Today, consumers have access to 3 terabyte hard drives — 3000 times the size — that weigh under 3 pounds and cost around \$100. Under these trends, Millennials have come of age in a world in which the frontiers of technology have appeared unlimited.(4)*

At the same time, the costs of creating and distributing all kinds of digital content — from books to music to software — have fallen dramatically.(5)* This creates opportunities for this generation to be pioneers in production, as well as consumption, of technology. One study found that more than half of the Millennials surveyed expressed interest in starting a business. And although several Millennials became well-known entrepreneurs in their 20s, this generation is just beginning to reach the peak age for entrepreneurship, which generally occurs in one's 40s or early 50s.(6)*

In addition to creating opportunities for entrepreneurship, advances in computer processing power, along with widespread access to cell phones and the Internet, have changed how Millennials communicate and interact with one another. Millennials use social media more frequently and are even more likely to sleep near their cell phone.(7)* Three-quarters of Millennials have an account on a social networking site, compared with only half of Generation Xers and less than a third of the Baby Boomers.(8)* The impacts of these practices have extended beyond Millennials' peers to their families. For instance, the Wall Street Journal reported that this is the first generation to also have tech savvy parents, and that some Millennials use texting or online chat to have running conversations with their parents throughout their day.

1.3 Social Media strategy for Millennials

Millennials, also known as Gen Y are those that were born into a generation of technology sharing practically everything online. As per the Deloitte Millennial Study — they are defined as those with big demands and high expectation. So why should your organization care or, for that matter, try to understand these Millennials, more so if you have a well established social media presence or you aspire to have one? Are they really different or are they just a convenient categorization of any other generation? Social media, today, is not just a tool but a way of life. Therefore, if any brand has to have a meaningful relationship with its consumers, it needs to have a strong presence on these platforms. The effect of India on the global social media map can be understood by the fact that recently India became the second country, after US, to hit 100 million Facebook users and is poised to become the number one in 2016. Also, it is said that due to the rapid penetration of internet and smart phone users in India, Facebook is likely add another 100 million users in the next 2-3 years.

1.4 Engaging Millennials on Social Media:

Social networking is a fact of life for Millennials. The rules of engagement with these Millennials are likely to be different. Their characteristics vary by region, depend on their social and economic conditions and are generally marked by an increased use and familiarity with communication, media, and digital technologies. Organizations, worldwide, need to crack the marketing riddle to convert likes, follows. Digital marketing (DM) and social media need to be central to any marketing approach, rather than an add-on Delivery of DM solutions must be client-centred. DM allows clients and their customer's immediacy of response. DM and social media makes it easier to engage with clients and customers. Many companies are 'trying out' social media and digital marketing approaches to see how they work. It is easier to measure effectiveness and engagement with DM and social media, compared to traditional marketing

approaches. New metrics and efficacy measures need to be developed to determine effectiveness of DM and social media Flexibility towards new technological developments is essential, as DM and social media are so dynamic. Fore-sighting is important in such a dynamic field. Messaging content is more important than the vehicle used Core skills (writing, project management, productivity) are a vital foundation for DM and social media skills. Education and training needs: It can be challenging to find new employees with appropriate strategic DM and social media skills.

1.5 Brand Attachments:

Psychology considers the Bowlby's (1982) research, the source of the theory of attachment, which state "relationship that is developed between infants and their caregivers. Generally, humans tend to develop, maintain and dissolve emotional bonds with particular others (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991; Hazan and Shaverr, 1994). Later on, the theory turned from person-to-person relationship to corporate or brands (Carroll and Ahuvia, et al. 2006). This is because of the brand attachment is a multi-faceted, and researcher tried to deliver the various definitions but all have various perspectives. Like as, definitions sourcing from the attachment theory, describe brand attachment as an emotional-laden bond or as an emotional-laden bond or an emotional link between a person and a brand (Bozzo et al., 2003; Lacoevilhe and Belaid, 2007, Thomson et al., 2005). Every product or brand have some loyal customer(s), who get in touch with the product or brands, passion or affection towards them, have some feeling connection, to a degree that can vary from one brand to another (Thomson et al., 2005).

2. Research Methodology:

The research was conducted as a descriptive one wherein a survey was conducted by administering a structured

questionnaire from people. The developed model and hypothesized relationship was tested by Regression analysis. The research was an extension of the literature review and conducted through data collection from various sources, and research commenced as the final idea of the subject was to shape the relationship of consumer engagement on social networking sites and brand attachment. To test the proposed hypothesis on selected two brands, a series of an online and off-line survey conducted. An online questionnaire was prepared by using the facility to make online forms available on google form. The questionnaire was circulated to the number of people by physical, and link to the survey was emailed to the people as well as shared on social networking sites such as; WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn to target the maximum people those are the customer / consumer of the SAMSUNG products. The questionnaire was prepared to addressee consumer engagement on social networking sites with following three constructs; named as connection with digital ads on SNS (CDASNS), connection with brand's SNS pages (CBSNSP), convenience for reviews (CRSNS), and two constructs for brand attachment, brand self-connection (BSC), brand prominence (BP).

2.1 Hypothesis:

We have gone through the depth of formulized concept and the literature for constructs to form the conceptual model. Therefore we hypothesize:

H1. Social networking sites have positive impact on consumer's brand engagement.

H2. Engagement on social networking sites positively effect on consumer brand attachment behaviour.

Out of 235 questionnaires distributed, 202 (86 percent) correctly filled responses were obtained and details for those candidates are listed in table 1.

Table 1: Data Analysis and Results

VARIABLE	PERCENTAGE (%) Approx.	<25	25-35	35-45	45-55	>55
Gender						
Female	38					
Male	62					
Age		8 %	55 %	22 %	13 %	2 %
Education Level						
Graduate or less	55					
Masters	34					
Ph.D	3					
Others	7					

3. Results

3.1 CFA Model Results

Fornell & Larcker (1981) and Nunnally & Bernstein (1994) have indicated that for better scale of reliability, the value

more than or equal to 0.70 is acceptable analytically. Table II shows the composite reliability of all constructs as more than 0.86, which aids us to construe that composite reliability of all the constructs in the measurement model is on an accurate scale.

Table 2: Factor Loadings, Cronbach α , CR, AVE, ASV

Construct	Factor Loadings	Cronbach α	CR	AVE	ASV
Engagement on SNS through Ads Communication (EAGS) - EA1-EA4	.75	.85	.81	.58	.005
	.96				
	.68				
	.73				
Engagement through SNS pages (ETS) EE1-EE4	.85	.88	.80	.52	.003
	.74				
	.78				
	.77				
Convenience for Reviews with SNS(ECON) EC1-EC3	.75	.74	.70	.58	.004
	.84				
	.77				
Brand Self Connection – BSCON BB1-BB3	.62	.77	.71	.54	.012
	.93				
	.77				
Brand Prominence – BPRO BP1-BP3	.88	.79	.75	.56	.004
	.96				
	.73				

For convergent validity, the rule is; $CR > 0$, $CR > AVE$, $AVE > 0.5$ and for discriminant validity, these two terms should follow; maximum shared variance (MSV) should be less

than AVE and AVE should be greater than the average shared variance (ASV). As per the received result, no validity issues were found in the formation of these constructs.

Table 3 : Convergent Validity

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	CDASNS	CBSNSP	CRSNS	BSC	BP
CDASNS	0.882	0.654	0.048	0.012	0.745				
CBSNSP	0.748	0.688	0.012	0.005	0.101	0.767			
CRSNS	0.767	0.542	0.013	0.003	0.016	0.023	0.722		
BSC	0.678	0.578	0.016	0.004	0.009	0.013	0.000	0.720	
BP	0.725	0.649	0.048	0.016	0.220	0.039	0.113	0.128	0.790

The results of model fit is counted in table 4 and table 5.

Table 4: Model Fit Summary: CMIN/DF

Model	NPART	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	54	1.304	155	.006	1.554
Saturated model	210	.000	0		
Independence model	20	1894.210	190	.000	9.970

CMIN/DF should be less than 3, which is 1.304 in this model.

Table 5: Model Fit Summary: CFI, GFI, NFI, TLI, RMSEA

Model	CFI	GFI	NFI	TLI	RMSEA
Default model	.988	.979	.984	.956	.025
Saturated model	1.000	1.000	1.000		
Independence model	.000	.557	.000	.000	

In order to achieve an adequate fit indices with data, the suitable relevant values of CFI, GFI, TLI and NFI should have value more than 0.9 and the RMSEA value must be lower than 0.08 (Gefen and Straub, 2000). Table 5 shows goodness-of-fit indices for conceptualized measurement model. The corresponding GFI, CFI, TLI, and NFI values are above the threshold value 0.9.

3.2 Regression Analysis Results:

Linear Regression analysis is conducted between consumer engagement on social networking sites and brand attachment, where R² is coming 67 % with R value 54 % with standard error 1.094. Adjusted R square is 34.4 %. And the Anova result analysis is given in the following table.

Table 6-a: ANOVA Result

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	48.098	1	48.098	40.164	.000
Residual	207.175	173	1.198		
Total	255.273	174			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), ESN
- b. Dependent Variable: BATT

Table 6-b: Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	7.739	.700		11.050	.000
ESN	1.186	.187	.434	6.337	

- a. Dependent Variable: BATT

Linear regression results shows that relationship is coming significant with $p < 0.005$, B value 1.186 and t-value

11.050, means consumer engagement on social networking sites are influencing their brand attachment behaviour.

4. Conclusion:

In this research we are trying to explain somehow, what are the social networking sites focused for Indian consumers and how do they fit with Indian market in digital era, i.e. overall strategic and operational marketing approach followed by companies to target consumers. The research probes how using the digital marketing skills by companies helping them to have more consumer attachment.

These days, corporate is agreed that digital marketing was a growing part of the service they provided, predominantly due to the widespread adoption of social media such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube among the public. There was a plethora of other digital approaches used, ranging from the provision of intranet for clients; developing a bespoke TV brand for YouTube; targeted e-comms (e-mail communications sent to a distribution list advertising a specific product, service or event) and the provision of iPad with pre-programmed presentations advertising clients' services, for use at trade fairs. These digital marketing innovations often navigated clients back to a central website, and many of the communication professionals referred to their website as the core starting point, or touchstone of their digital business. Also, the analysis of this study suggest that consumers who are engaged with companies on social networking sites have more attachment with the same brand.

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