

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS' INFLUENCE ON MILLENNIAL CONSUMER'S ATTITUDES

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ABSTRACT

People have always been looking for different ways for connecting and networking with each other. The advent of the numerous social networking platforms and apps gives different ways to the people to be socially active in the internet. Social media marketing has increased due to the increased growth of active users on social media sites. Advertisement strategy focusing on the interactive social media platforms are helpful to the marketers to reach, connect and communicate with a much wider audience precisely and effectively.

Millennials are a truly unique generation. Their lives are completely integrated into the tech world, making platforms like social media a prime opportunity for marketers to reach them. The objective of this study is to analyse the influence of social media marketing communications on millennial consumers' cognitive , affective and behavioural attitudes. A descriptive study was conducted using convenient sampling methods. Data was collected from 300 respondents aged between 18 and 30 years old (Millennials) who are using at least two social media platforms on regular basis. Eranadu Taluk of Malappuram District was selected as the sampling area. The collected data was analyzed via statistical software known as SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics Mean and Standard deviation were used for a detailed analysis.

Study result concluded that social media marketing communication has a positive influence on each hierarchy response model stages but on a decreasing level.

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1.INTRODUCTION

People have always been looking for different ways for connecting and networking with each other. The advent of the numerous social networking platforms and apps gives different ways to the people to be socially active in the internet. Social media marketing has increased due to the increased growth of active users on social media sites

Listening is not a quality that marketers are traditionally renowned for but now in order to embrace the opportunity presented by Web.2.0.they need to take notice of what the online customers and prospects are talking about their brands, industry and the world in general. Companies can take advantage of social media to reach billions of potential customers with these innovative marketing channels. They need to examine the attitude of the consumers towards the marketing communications on these web based media.

Consumer attitudes are a composition of consumer's beliefs, feelings and behavioral intentions about products or services. One of the prime reasons for conducting marketing research is to identify what are the attitudinal barriers exists among consumers in purchasing a product or service. Marketers can frame strategies to counter these obstacles through marketing activities. Attitude towards marketing communication has been investigated by many researchers.

The Hierarchy of effect model was developed in 1961 by Gary A Steiner and Robert J Lavidge. According to the Hierarchy of Effect Model consumer passes through a six step process before the final purchase is made. These six stages are Awareness & Knowledge (Cognitive phase), Liking & Preference (Affective phase) Conviction & Purchase (Behavioral phase). Awareness is the stage at which customers become aware of the products, brands and different models available. In Knowledge stage, customers gain more knowledge about the products and brands. Liking is the third stage where customers tend to develop a liking for the product. The liking can be aroused by the advertisers by highlighting the appropriate emotional appeals related to the product. The fourth stage is preference stage in which customer is clear about the product, model and brand choices he wants to go in for. The advertiser tries to reinforce the positive aspects of their brand in the minds of the customers. In conviction (Intention to purchase) phase, the customers have made up their mind to go in for a particular brand and product.

The advertisers guide the customers towards making a choice of brand, product and store etc. The final stage is purchase at which the customer purchases the product. As they progress through the latter stages of pyramid, the number of prospective consumers decreases.

Millennials are the generational demographic cohort following Generation X and preceding Generation Z. There are no precise dates for when this cohort starts or ends. Demographers and researchers typically use the early 80's as starting birth years and the mid 90's to early 2000 as ending birth years¹. Through the proliferation of internet they have quickly become used to having any and all the information that they need right at their finger trips. They are the first generation raised on digital and comfortable with technology and are often called as "digital natives" or Generation Y. They want a far more holistic experience from companies. They want to be entertained but they also want to be able to make their own voice heard.²

This group is now extremely important to the marketers especially in India as they have changed the way marketers look at customers and created a marketing revolution. According Morgan Stanley report of April 2017, India will have 410 million millennials who will spend 330 billion dollars annually by 2020.³ Nearly two third of the households in the country have a millennial who are often part of the rising market in the middle due to their higher educational attainment and earning potential. (Mint graphics). Except for mobile penetration millennial households remain large untapped markets.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Millennials are a truly unique generation. Their lives are completely integrated into the tech world, making platforms like social media a prime opportunity for marketers to reach them. Social media has changed and continues to change everything. India is expected to become the youngest country by 2022 with an average age of 29. Being the largest generation in history, millennials have become the juggernaut that can

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/millennials>

² Jack Medland-Slater (2016), "Defining your target audience-who are millennial consumers?", posted in PERCEPTIVE on 26 May 2016.

³ Sounak Mitra (2018) "Deciding millennial consumer", published on 25th June 2015 in livemint.com

wield immense influence on the way businesses are run. It becomes extremely important to understand their buying preferences.⁴

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

- **Areeba Toor et al (2017)** investigated the influence of social network marketing on purchase intention of consumers and the mediating role of consumer engagement on the relationship between social network marketing and purchase intention of consumers. The result indicated that there exists significant relationship between social network marketing and consumers' purchase intention. The consumer engagement acts as a partial mediator between social network marketing and purchase intention.
- **Carlo Russo and Maria Rosaria Simeone (2017)** developed and tested a theoretical model to show the effects of the increasing importance of social media on consumer behavior and market equilibrium in differentiated food industries. The model predicts that consumers using social media become more informed and also more concerned about environmental issues than those using mass media.
- **Rodney Graeme Duffett, (2017)** examined the influence of interactive social media marketing communications on teenagers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitude components in South Africa. The study also considered the impact of demographic and social media usage variables on the attitude of young consumers towards social media marketing communications. The research study concluded with the findings that Social media marketing communications have a positive impact on each attitude component but on a declining stage .
- **PrabhaKiran and Vasantha (2016)** attempted to identify the factors affecting consumers' attitude towards purchase intention of cars and he identified five factors which have a strong impact on consumer attitude towards the development of purchase intention of cars. They also found that there is significant difference in social media information search between male and female in respect of car factors such as economical, functional and psychological.

⁴ Harshita Jain (2017," what the millennial Indian wants: Not cars and houses, just fun and convenience", Economic Times ET Markets.

4. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To study the influence of social media marketing communications on millennial consumers' cognitive, affective and behavioural attitudes.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is empirical and descriptive in nature. The researcher conducted an extensive literature review and with the popularly believed characteristics of social media marketing communication a well-structured questionnaire was phrased.

5.1 Period of study

The period of study is 3 months from October 2019 to December 2019.

5.2 Area of the study

The Eranadu Taluk of Malappuram District in Kerala is the sampling area.

5.3 Profile of the study area

Malappuram district is one of the 14 revenue districts in the state of Kerala and Eranadu Taluk is one of the seven taluks in the Malappuram district. There are 29 villages and 7 towns in the taluk. As per the census India 2011, Eranadu taluk has a population of 9,10,978 of which 49% are Male and 51% Female population. Literacy rate is comparatively higher as the male literacy is 82% and Female 81%. Out of the total population 65% of population lives in the urban areas and 35% lives in rural areas.

5.4 Sources of data

Primary data was collected through Questionnaire method from sample respondents who are residing in Eranadu Taluk of Malappuram District in Kerala. Researcher also used secondary sources like books, journals, newspapers, internet etc. for collecting data for developing theoretical framework.

5.5 Sampling Design

Researcher used one of the non-probability sampling techniques, convenience sampling method for data collection. The sample size was fixed as 300 respondents aged between 18 and 30 years old (Millennials) who are using at least two social media platforms on regular basis.

5.6 Tools of Analysis

The collected data was analyzed via statistical software known as SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics Mean and Standard deviation have been used for a detailed analysis.

6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

An empirical academic study explaining the impact of interactive social media marketing communications on the attitude of millennial consumers who are aged from eighteen years old to early thirties, in different hierarchy response model stages would help the marketers who are spending a considerable amount of money on various kind of advertising for taking informed decisions.

7. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study covers analyzing the effect of social media marketing communication on consumer attitude..A research that helps the marketers to understand the attitude of consumers towards social media marketing communication is relevant for developing and adopting effective strategies to achieve their marketing objectives.

8. SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS' INFLUENCE ON MILLENNIAL CONSUMER'S COGNITIVE, AFFECTIVE AND BEHAVIOURAL ATTITUDES-Analysis and interpretations.

Marketing communications through social media platforms have resulted in both positive and negative attitudes among millennials. It is important to understand how they perceive social media and what are the factors that influence their attitude towards social media marketing communications. As per the hierarchy of response model, consumer goes through three stages such as cognitive, affective and behavioural. The influence of social media advertisement on these three phases are to be analyzed in order to acquire a complete understanding of these generations' attitude in response to social media marketing communications. It was analyzed using Mean and Standard deviation. Before computing mean, reliability of the scale was tested using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure the internal consistency of the statements used for measuring consumer attitudes.

Table.1 gives the result of reliability study Cronbach’s Alpha.

TABLE .1
RELIABILITY STATISTICS

Attitude Components	Cronbach’s Alpha	
Awareness(Cognitive)	0.709	0.810
Knowledge(Cognitive	0.756	
Liking (Affective)	0.715	0.805
Preference(Affective)	0.707	
Intention to Purchase(Behavioral)	0.740	0.867
Purchase(Behavioral)	0.844	

Source: Primary data (Computed using SPSS)

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach’s Alpha and the test result is shown in Table 4.15. The Alpha value of each attitude constructs are above 0.7 and the value is more than 0.8 for each attitudinal phases such as cognitive, affective and behavioral (0.810, 0.805, 0.867). Alpha value more than 0.7 is considered as acceptable and more than 0.8 shows more reliability of the scale. The test result confirms the internal consistency of the scale.

Table 2 gives the Mean value and Standard Deviation of each attitude components such as Awareness, Knowledge, Liking, Preference, Intention to purchase and Purchase constructs. It also shows the P value at 1% significance level when Pearson’s correlation analysis was done to know the association between attitudes.

TABLE-2

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING COMMUNICATION
ATTITUDE CONSTRUCTS

Attitude Components	Mean	SD
Awareness(Cognitive)	3.3513	.71480

Knowledge(Cognitive	3.2620	.76322
Liking (Affective)	3.0775	.77968
Preference(Affective)	2.9177	.67099
Intention to Purchase(Behavioral)	2.9067	.83793
Purchase(Behavioral)	2.8513	.80544

Source: Primary Data (Computed using SPSS)

It is evident from the Table 2 that social media marketing communications have a positive influence on all the hierarchy response attitude stages such as cognitive, affective and behavioral, but on a declining level as they progress to the higher stages, which is compatible with the hierarchy of effect model theory which says that when they progress through the latter stages of pyramid, the number of prospective consumers decreases.

Comparison of the means of different constructs reveals that marketing communications via social media have greater effect on awareness and knowledge than on the other attitude components. Mean Value 3.3513 in case of awareness construct and Mean Value 3.2620 in case of Knowledge construct show that communication through social media gives higher level of awareness and knowledge about products, brands, services, company offerings etc. to the millennial consumers. Similarly Mean Value 3.0775 of Liking and 2.9117 of preference constructs show that influence is less compared to cognitive attitude components such as awareness and knowledge. The value of mean is reduced again when comes to the last stage of behavioral attitude. Mean value is 2.9067 and 2.8513 for intention to purchase and purchase constructs respectively.

Thus, the study result becomes congruent with the hierarchy of effect model. It confirms that though social media is primarily interactive in nature, facilitates two way communication and higher level of consumer engagement ,these innovative platform still follow the principles of communication effect pyramid model.

9. CONCLUSION

Social media marketing communications have a positive influence on all the hierarchy response attitude stages such as cognitive, affective and behavioral, but on a declining level as they progress to the higher stages, which is compatible with the hierarchy of effect model theory which says that when they progress through the latter stages of pyramid, the number of prospective consumers decreases.

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