



*Journal of Advances and
Scholarly Researches in
Allied Education*

*Vol. XI, Issue No. XXI,
Apr-2016, ISSN 2230-7540*

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON BRAND LOYALTY IN INDIA

AN
INTERNATIONALLY
INDEXED PEER
REVIEWED &
REFEREED JOURNAL

The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Brand Loyalty in India

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Abstract – The emergence of online social networks influences people in various ways and moreover, the effect is predicted to be high on the young adolescents wherein we find that target group who is more exposed themselves to the online social media. It is believed that the social networks such as online brand communities influence the purchase intentions and in turn enhances brand trust and loyalty. Taking the perspective of the brand community building plus the brand trust and loyalty literatures, our goal is to show how brand communities based on social media influence elements of the customer centric model (i.e., the relationships among focal customer and brand, product, company, and other customers) and brand loyalty.

Keywords: Impact, Social, Media, Marketing, Brand, Loyalty, India, Networks, etc.

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INTRODUCTION

The finding also demonstrates the fully mediating role of brand Trust in converting the enhanced relationships in brand community and loyalty. Since the internet and other media have been adopted and integrated into the daily lives of an increasing number of young adolescents in most of the countries, scholars and commentators are debating the impact of these new media on the activities, social relationships, and worldviews of the younger generations in India. Controversies about whether technology shapes values, attitudes, and patterns of social behavior are not new. In the recent past, the rapid expansion of television stimulated similar discussions of its cultural and social effects. Social media provide a virtual network place where people can enjoy expressing their opinions, exchange opinions, disseminate and control messages anywhere anytime. Marketers are now able to reach consumers and interact with them using social media in India. Previous studies have found that consumers tend to trust more user generated messages, such as peer recommendations or consumer reviews, on social media than messages from traditional mass media in India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Consumers' comments about a product on social media produce a negative or positive brand buzz and the virtual messages affect consumer purchasing decisions. How seriously should marketers think about social media effects in marketing practices? "Social

media is no longer a trend for marketers: It is a reality" (Soliman, 2010). Social media is an inevitable channel for customer support (Christodoulides, 2009). Even though social media has been recognized as the most potentially powerful medium, there is lack of understanding in terms of why people use social media and how they perceive marketing messages on social media.

1. Social Media and Social Networking:

Social media includes various methods such as social networking, user-sponsored blogs, multimedia sites, company-sponsored websites, collaborative websites, podcasts, etc. Social media is "the media that is published, created and shared by individuals on the internet, such as blogs, images, video and more", as well as online tools and platforms that allow internet users to collaborate on content, share insights and experiences, and connect for business or pleasure. Thus, "Social media can be called a strategy and an outlet for broadcasting, while social networking is a tool and a utility for connecting with others".

2. The Development of Social Media Marketing in India:

In recent years, social networking sites and social media have increased in popularity, at a global level. For instance, Facebook is said to have more than a billion active users (as of 2012) since its beginning in 2004. Social networking sites can be described as

networks of friends for social or professional interactions (Schau, J. H., Muniz, M. A., & Arnould, J. E. 2009). Indeed, online social networks have profoundly changed the propagation of information by making it incredibly easy to share and digest information on the internet (Akrimi & Khemakhem, 2012).

- **Validation:** Buyer and consumer reviews are as influential as the marketer's claims of the brands features and benefits. This sets the stage for the brand to meet consumers' expectations;
- **Reach:** Social media marketing allows marketers to reach a wider audience with more dramatic results in far less time and at lower costs; and
- **Control:** Control is the single biggest challenge in social media marketing.

3. Social Media Networking and Brand Communication:

The Chartered Institute of Marketing (2009) emphasized that communication as part of the promotion mix is essential in conveying the brand's personality. Bambauer-Sachse (2011) reported that marketers were engaging in social media marketing to improve on communicating the brand in online environments. This includes search engine optimisation (e.g. more hits on Google.com), communicating events and press releases and making traditional marketing tools (e.g. print display adverts, radio adverts and television adverts) available for consumers to download or review content. Good promotion is a two way street and paves the way for dialogue with consumers.

4. Social media based brand community:

The Internet and Web 2.0 have empowered proactive consumer behaviour in the information and purchase process (Burmahn and Arnhold 2008). In the information era, customers make use of social media to access the desired product and brand information. The growth of online brand communities, including social networking sites, has supported the increase of user-generated social media communication.

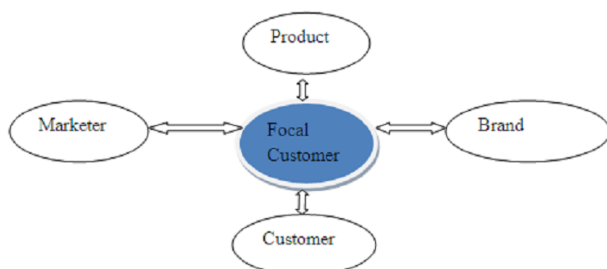


Figure 1: Customer centric model of Brand Loyalty community

5. Brand trust and brand loyalty:

A lot of previous brand researchers have agreed upon the importance of customer loyalty in enhancing customer experience within the context of brand community. McAlexander et al. (2002) advocates that the cumulative effect of enhanced relationship in customer centric model eventually results in customer loyalty; however it is still not clear how the process of increasing brand loyalty in brand community looks like. If we refer to the literature on loyalty and trust, we will find that trust plays the main role in developing loyalty.

CONCLUSION:

We showed the role of brand communities in enhancing customer relationships with elements of the brand loyalty community IN India elaborated. To the extent that a brand loyalty community based on social media acts to provide benefits to its members, to facilitate information sharing and to enhance customers bonds to each other customers relationships with the brand, the product, the company and other customers. These enhanced relationships result in enhanced brand loyalty, but we showed that brand trust has a fully mediating role in this process. All in all, our findings show how social media could be a platform for brands to achieve the same desired outcome from their brand community activities; that is having more loyal customers.

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