Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research purpose and objectives of the study are put forth in this chapter. This chapter describes in detail the research design, methodology and procedures used for the purpose of data collection and analysis in this study. The operational definitions used in this study, the scope and limitations of this research are also discussed in this chapter.

3.1. Research Purpose

As mentioned earlier, being on social media is a trending activity of people of all ages especially the generation Y. The internet and social media dynamics are fast changing every year. The use and adoption of social media by millennials and marketers for personal use and business use is ever increasing. More marketers are jumping on the social media bandwagon inorder to increase brand awareness, brand engagement and brand sales. Since the platform can still be considered nascent from the Indian viewpoint, there are gaps in research with respect to the understanding of the use and importance of the media to the generational cohorts and the marketers of today. There is very little research has been done on the impact of the digital or the modern marketing channels on the generation Y (Joshi, 2013). Though there is a need to understand Indian millennials use of social media, there are just few studies that have assessed “Generation Y’s social media use, its antecedents and its consequences” (Bolton et al. 2013). Also, most of the research being sited is from a western point of view. According to Zhu and Thacher (2010) “Most research on technology adoption has focused on countries with a high economic and technological development.” A report by Nielsen in 2012 indicates Asian consumers are more responsive and positive towards social media advertisements than Hispanic, White, African and American consumers. Though Asian consumers are highly involved in social media advertising, there is insufficient empirical evidence to understand consumer’s perception towards them. Many studies have been conducted in countries like the USA, the UK, China and Japan but not in India (Patel et al., 2013). Moreover, there are hardly any such studies concerning Indian millennials. This study aims to review and reaffirm some of the finding of previous studies and the bridge the research gaps prevalent in the areas chosen for this study. The purpose of this research is to understand how the generation Y or the millennial generation, uses social media, their social media consumption habits, to study how the marketing efforts of lifestyle brands in social
media platforms are perceived by them and the way it affects their buying behaviour, their brand trust and loyalty with respect to lifestyle brands in the Indian context. So this research actually seeks to get some answers with respect to the behaviour of millennials to a socio-technological web based platform and their perspective on lifestyle brands’ communication strategies on these social vehicles. This research will help organisations gain more insight into branding lifestyle products and marketing to millennials on social media in India.

3.2. Research Objective

To study the influence of social media marketing on consumer behaviour and brand loyalty towards lifestyle brands

3.2.1. Specific Objectives:

The following specific objectives have been formulated inorder to achieve the primary objective.

e) To determine the millennials’ social media consumption habits
f) To identify social media marketing activities of lifestyle brands’
g) To study millennials’ attitude and perception towards social media marketing of lifestyle brands
h) To ascertain the influence of social media marketing activities on purchase behaviour, brand trust and brand loyalty of lifestyle brands

3.3. Research Hypothesis

The null hypotheses for the study are as follows:

\( H_A \): Customer Perception of Social Media Networks influences the Nature of Involvement in Social Media Networks.

\( H_B \): Perceived Importance of various Types of Social Media Marketing (Brand Communication) Activities influences the Perception of Social Media Marketing of Lifestyle Brands.

\( H_C \): Perceived Importance of Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication influences the Perception of Social Media Marketing of Lifestyle Brands.
**H_D:** Perceived Importance of various Types of Social Media Brand Communication Activities influences Brand Following of Lifestyle Brands on Social Media Networks.

**H_E:** Perceived Importance of Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication influences Brand Following of Lifestyle Brands on Social Media Networks.

**H_F:** Perceived Importance of various Types of Social Media Brand Communication Activities influences Purchase Behaviour.

**H_G:** Perceived Importance of various Types of Social Media Brand Communication Activities influences Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty.

**H_H:** Perceived Importance of Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication influences Purchase Behaviour.

**H_I:** Perceived Importance of Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication influences Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty.

**H_J:** Perception of Social Media Marketing influences Brand Following on Social Media Networks.

**H_K:** Perception of Social Media Marketing influences Purchase Behaviour.

**H_L:** Perception of Social Media Marketing influences Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty.

**H_M:** Customers are receptive towards the social media marketing efforts of lifestyle brands

### 3.4. Type of Research

Exploratory and descriptive research has been adopted owing to the nature of this study on influence of social media marketing on consumer behaviour and brand loyalty.
3.5. Data Collection Methods

Data for the study was gathered from secondary as well as primary bases. The details of which are as follows:

Primary Data

Data was collected with the help of questionnaires that were administered personally by way of intercepting prospective respondents as well as through circulation of questionnaires prepared on Google Docs through e-mails and social media platforms such as Facebook, Messenger and WhatsApp.

Secondary Data:

The secondary data requirement was met through sources such books, journals, articles, magazines, published reports of companies, company websites, blogs etc. available on online and physical (offline) formats.

3.6. Sampling Design

Sampling Frame: The millennial generation belonging to the age group of 18 to 35 years, who have at least one social media account and are from the city of Bangalore were considered for the study.

Sample Size: A sample size of 500 respondents was considered for the study. Out the 515 responses that were collected for the study 501 useable responses were considered for analysis.

Sampling Area: This study was confined to the city of Bangalore

Sampling Technique: Non-probability sampling techniques of judgemental sampling and snowball sampling were put to use in this study.

3.7. Survey Instrument

A questionnaire developed by the researcher herself, was used for the purpose of collecting data. A physical questionnaire as well as a questionnaire on Google Docs was prepared and
administered. The instrument was designed to collect data with respect to the demographic variables of respondents and data related to the topic of research.

The first part of the instrument consisted of six questions related to respondent demographics which included respondent name, age, gender, education, occupation and household income. There were a total of 18 questions that followed – questions one to seven were pertaining to social media involvement and social media habits, question eight and nine concerning attitude and perception towards social media and social media marketing, questions 10 to 14 on following of lifestyle brands, number of brands followed, names of brands followed and reason and perception towards following lifestyle brands and categories of lifestyle brands aware of, followed and purchased on influence of social media. Questions 15 and 16 were pertaining to importance of various communication aspects of social media marketing strategy and attributes of social media marketing and questions 17 and 18 concerned with purchasing of products or service viewed on social media, perception and purchase behaviour towards lifestyle brands marketed on social media.

3.8. Scaling Techniques

A 4 item, 5 point likert scale on level of involvement, with Extremely Involved (1) to Not at all Involved (5) was used for the question on involvement in social media platforms was developed by the researcher based on the social media typologies of Forrester (Bernoff, 2010). The questions with 5-point perceptual and attitudinal scales ranging from Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5) used in the survey (questionnaire) were developed for the research after referring to the works of Davis (1989), Chhateja & Jain (2014) and Al-Ghaith (2015) and Motwani, Shrimali, & Agarwal (2014) for questions related to social media, social media marketing and purchase behaviour. The research papers of Muk (2013), UI Islam & Rahman (2016) and (Leckie, Nyadzayo, & Johnson, 2016) were used to develop scales for the question related to following of brand pages on social media. The researcher also developed a five point importance scale ranging from Very Important (1) to Not Important (5) for two questions related to social media brand communication activities and attributes of social media brand communication for items that were identified based on the literature reviewed.

3.9. Reliability of the Instrument

A test of reliability is an important assessment of sound measurement. It is important that a measuring instrument provides consistent results (Kothari, 2004). Therefore Likert scale
based questions in the questionnaire was subjected to a test of reliability using Cronbach Alpha which helps in measuring the internal consistency between the items in the set. The widely accepted cut-off for Cronbach alpha values is 0.70 or higher for a set of items to be considered a coherent scale in social sciences research, as when the alpha is 0.70, the standard error of measurement will be slightly over half (0.55) of a standard deviation (Garson 2006). Pallant (2001) considers Cronbach Alpha values in the range of 0.60 to 0.80 to be moderately reliable and acceptable but values in the range of 0.80 to 1.00 to be of very good reliability and acceptability. According to George and Mallory (2003), a Cronbach alpha score of 0.70 to 0.79 is acceptable, 0.80 to 0.89 is good and an alpha greater than 0.90 is excellent.

The Cronbach alpha scores for the question wise itemised scales used for the purpose of this research ranged from 0.803 to 0.945. This indicated that the internal correlations between the items were high i.e. itemised scale based questions have high internal consistency thereby are reliable.

3.10. Tools for Data Analysis

The primary data collected was analysed with the help of the following statistical tools like Descriptive Statistics (frequencies, percentages, crosstabs and other measures of central tendency), Correlation, Factor Analysis and Regression as required, using Microsoft Excel and SPSS.

3.11. Operational Definitions

Theoretical constructs of the study have been defined as follows:

**Attitude and Interest in Social Media (AI_SM):** The approach or attitude towards and interest in using social media networks.

**Attitude & Interest towards Following Brands (AIFB):** The attitude towards following lifestyle brands and interest in or intention behind following lifestyle brands on social media.

**Attitude towards Social Media Marketing (Attitude_SMM):** The millennial awareness of social media marketing activities by lifestyle brands and their attitude towards social media marketing.
**Brand Communication using Textual Posts (BC_Textual Posts):** The social media marketing activity of using only word-based or textual posts in brand communication by lifestyle brands.

**Brand Following and Purchase Intention (SMM_BF_PI):** The perceived influence of social media marketing on millennial brand following and their intention to buy.

**Brand Loyalty and Brand Following (BL_BF):** The depiction of brand loyalty towards brands followed by millennials on social media platforms.

**Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty (BT_BL):** The depiction of millennial trust and loyalty towards lifestyle brands being marketed on social media platforms.

**Creative Content in Brand Communication (BC_Creative Content):** The creative communication activities like posting pictures, graphic interfaces, videos, using celebrity endorsements and telling stories through posts by lifestyle brands to engage customers on social media.

**Creatively Significant Social Media Marketing Attributes (SMMA_CS):** Creative Attributes or features of social media brand communication or marketing activities by lifestyle brands such as humour and entertainment.

**Evaluation Acquisition Reaction (PB_EAR):** The aspects related to product evaluation before acquisition, determinants of purchase, purchase decision and post purchase reaction related to purchase behaviour.

**Involvement in Social Media (SM_Involvement):** The nature, kind, type or extent of involvement of millennials on various social media platforms.

**Lifestyle Brand:** “A company that markets its products or services to embody the interests, attitudes and opinions of a group or a culture. Lifestyle brands seek to inspire, guide, and motivate people, with the goal of their products contributing to the definition of the consumer's way of life” (Saviolo & Marazza, 2013). The lifestyle related product categories include various brands of fashion clothing, accessories, jewellery, electronic gadgets, sports and fitness, furniture, furnishings and home décor, travelling accessories etc. which depict the lifestyle of consumers.
**Perceived Ease of Using Social Media (PEOU_SM):** The perceived ease of using or interacting with and within various online social media network applications.

**Perceived Ease of Using Social Media Marketing (PEOU_SMM):** The apparent or perceived ease of connecting with and being entertained by brands and the ease of searching, sharing and receiving information related to products, services and brands owing to social media marketing by lifestyle brands.

**Perceived Usefulness of Social Media (PU_SM):** The benefits or usefulness of social media networks, as perceived by the millennials.

**Perceived Usefulness of Social Media Marketing (PU_SMM):** The benefits or usefulness of social media marketing as perceived by millennials.

**Purchase Behaviour - Information Search (PB_Information Search):** The information seeking behaviour of millennial customers in the purchasing process.

**Purchase Behaviour Cognizance (PB_Cognizance):** Millennials’ awareness and acquaintance of their personal needs, products, brand and organisation in the purchasing process.

**Purchase Intention and Personal Gratification (PIPG_BF):** The perceived fulfilment of personal interests through brand following leading to personal gratification and influence of brand following on their intention to purchase brands.

**Receptivity:** The accessibility, attitude, interest, openness and amenability exhibited by millennial customers towards social media brand communication and social media marketing activities by lifestyle brands and their positive response to these activities thereof. (In this study positive response towards social media marketing is associated with millennial following of brands, purchase intention, purchase behaviour, brand trust and loyalty.)

**Relationship Nourishing Brand Communication Activities (BC_Relationship Nourishing):** Types of brand communication or marketing activities like having brand pages / handles / accounts and responding to comments, joining conversations, posting about latest products and services, communicating events / contests / sales promotions, providing tips and advice to customers related to products or services by lifestyle brands that are concerned with customer engagement and nourishment of brand-customer relationships on social media.
**Significance of Social Media (Sig_SM):** The professed importance of social media networks in the lives of millennials.

**Social Media Marketing (SMM):** The brand communication (BC) or marketing activities carried out by lifestyle brands on social media platforms as a part of their integrated marketing communication strategy.

**Socially Significant Social Media Marketing Attributes (SMMA_SS):** Attributes or traits exhibited by lifestyle brands through their social media brand communication or marketing activities such as honesty, authenticity, social relevance, responsibility, being politically correct, updated, active and interactive that are considered to be important by the society at large, hence socially significant.

**Subjective Norms (SN_BF):** The social and personal aspects that influence brand following of millennials.

### 3.12. Variables

**Independent Variables:**
Social media, Social Media Marketing, Types of Social Media Brand Communication activities, Attributes of Brand Communication (Attributes of Social Media Marketing)

**Dependent Variables:**
Nature or types of Social Media Involvement, Brand Following, Purchase Behaviour, Brand Trust and Loyalty

### 3.13. Scope of the Study

This study pertains to millennials between the ages of 18 to 35 years who consume lifestyle brands, are registered on at least one social media platform and are from the Bangalore City. The consumer behaviour perspective in this research is concerned with aspects related to social media consumption habits of millennials which includes – the nature of their involvement in social media, their attitude and perception towards social media networks, the perceived importance they place on various types of social media brand communication activities and their attributes, their overall attitudes and perception towards social media marketing activities, their purchase behaviour, brand trust and loyalty towards lifestyle brands that are marketed on social media platforms. In this study, social media marketing and social
media marketing activities and attributes are looked upon as an integral aspect of integrated marketing communications strategy of lifestyle brands’ that may influence brand following, consumer behaviour, trust and loyalty towards them.

3.14. Limitations of the Study

1. The size of the sample being considered for the study in relation to the population of users is one of the limitations to the study
2. The fact that there will be respondents who may have provided incomplete, incorrect, inaccurate, biased, exaggerated or falsified data that may reduce the precision of facts collected and analysed is another limitation of the study
3. There are other perspectives or methods of conducting the study, all of which cannot be considered in this study due to constraint of time and resources (financial and informational).