Chapter 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was intended to determine the influence of social media marketing on consumer behaviour and brand loyalty towards lifestyle brands. In order to achieve this, specific objectives were formulated to determine millennial’s social media consumption habits, identify social media marketing activities of lifestyle brands’, study millennials’ attitude and perception towards social media marketing of lifestyle brands and ascertain the influence of social media marketing activities on purchase behaviour, brand trust and brand loyalty towards lifestyle brands. This chapter discusses the precise findings of the study, highlights the implications of this research with suggestions to marketers from the researcher and concludes the study by providing directions for future research.

1.1. Summary of Findings

The summarised findings of the study have been arranged in the order of the specific objectives that were formulated for the purpose of achieving the primary objective of this research. The findings have been drawn from the literature reviewed as well as from the primary data that was analysed in the earlier chapter.

1.1.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The respondents are mostly young women (68.9 percent) in the age group of 21 to 24 years, majority of them are students (60.7 percent) – graduate (38.9 percent) and post-graduate students (36.3 percent) with annual household income of the respondents being more than five lakhs rupees (71.2 percent). So the respondents are mostly very young, students, well educated, knowledgeable and financially comfortable. They are a good representation of the millennial generation of today.

1.1.2. Social Media Consumption Habits of Millennials

The social media habits of millennials can be understood by analysing the millennials (1) involvement on social media platforms, (2) their social media usage behaviour and (3) their attitude and perception towards the use of social media platforms
1.1.2.1. Millennials involvement on Social Media Platforms:

The descriptive analysis shows that 74.8 percent of respondents are very or extremely involved in just reading, listening and watching or being spectators followed by them being reserved interactors (46.3 percent) on social media. It should also be noted that ‘Spectators’ are simultaneously engaged in higher level of activities as well, but the degree of involvement seems to vary depending on their interest in them. Considering that most millennials are actually engaged in more than one level of activity on these platforms, it can be said that they are self-confident and confident about the platforms they are engaged on.

1.1.2.2. Social Media Usage Behaviour of Millennials:

(1) Millennials like to register on social relationship networks, media sharing and microblogging platforms. The top five sites that have the maximum number of millennial registrations are (1) Facebook, (2) Instagram, (3) YouTube, (4) Pinterest and (5) LinkedIn.

(2) Millennials are registered on an average of five or more social media platforms. The highest number of social media registrations is 11 and the least is one.

(3) Most millennials (54.29 percent) spend at least one to three hours on social media and women spend slightly more time on social media than men.

(4) Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest and LinkedIn (in the given order) are the five most social media networks that millennials spend time on.

(5) Social media networks are accessed by millennials the most (1) when bored or idle, (2) before going to bed (3) while commuting (4) at every break time and (5) first thing in the morning. Most millennials treat social media as a source of entertainment, as a source of information and to keep up with happenings during the day. There are many who are even so addicted to it as they access it at every given opportunity be it during work or class time or even in the middle of the night. This indicates that social media is an important part of their daily routine.

(6) The top five social media networks that are most frequented on a daily basis are (1) Instagram, (2) YouTube, (3) Facebook, (4) Pinterest and (5) Snapchat. Snapchat is seen to be a new social networking platform is fast gaining popularity amongst the millennials.
(7) The above findings related to social media network registrations, networks that consume millennials time and frequently used networks are to a large extent consistent with the top ten social media platforms for business suggested by (Brandi, 2018)

(8) Most millennials (479 respondents) use smartphones to access social media accounts followed by laptops / personal computers and tablets/iPads. This can be attributed to the fact smartphones are they are most accessible and affordable amongst the available options for internet access. The analysis also suggests that they are open to accessing the internet on more progressive devices like smart watches or smart televisions as well.

1.1.2.3. Millennials Attitude and Perception towards the use of social media platforms:

(1) The descriptive analysis of statements related to millennial attitude and perception towards using social media networks points to the fact that social media use has become an important part of the daily routine of millennials. They use social media networks for a variety of reasons. It seems that use of social media is driven by the ease of using the platforms, the perceived usefulness of the platforms and the positive attitude towards using these platforms.

(2) Inferential analysis related findings for influence of customer perception of social media networks on nature of millennial involvement in social media networks.

(a) Karl Pearson’s coefficient of correlation analysis indicated that there is a strong and significant association between variables of customer perception of social media platforms and the nature or extent of involvement in those platforms.

(b) Factor Analysis: On subjecting the variables to factor analysis, six components were extracted (refer table 4.15). The five independent variables were termed as Perceived Usefulness of Social Media (PU_SM), Significance of Social Media (Sig_SM), Attitude and Interest in Social Media (AI_SM), Perceived Ease of Using Social Media (PEOU_SM) and Socio-Expressive Function of Social Media (SEF_SM). The dependent variable was termed as - Involvement in Social Media (SM_Involvement).

(c) Regression Analysis and Hypothesis related findings related to Involvement in Social Media Networks: The results indicate that there is a significant relationship between Attitude and Interest in Social Media (AI_SM), Socio-Expressive Function of Social Media
(SEF_SM), Significance of Social Media and SM_Involvement (Involvement in Social Media Networks) at five percent level of significance. The same is depicted in the regression equation below:

\[ \hat{Y} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \mu_i \]

SM_Involvement = 0.179 (SEF_SM) + 0.209 (AI_SM) + 0.167 (Sig_SM) + \mu_i

This shows that millennial perception towards social media networks does influence the nature / type / levels of involvement by millennials in social media networks. Thus we can accept the null hypothesis \( H_A \) that ‘Customer Perception of Social Media Networks influences Nature of Involvement in Social Media Networks’.

1.1.3. Social Media Marketing Activities of Lifestyle Brands and Latest Trends in Social Media Marketing:

Social media provides immense marketing opportunities for business since it is a burgeoning platform of customers and consumer information for marketers. These platforms are playing a very important role in marketing of various brands. So it is imperative to understand the strategies, practices and activities that brands are undertaking inorder to achieve their marketing goals. According to the 2016 Social Media Marketing Industry Report the top five benefits that marketers acquire from the use social media were (1) increase in exposure for their businesses, (2) increasing traffic, (3) developing loyal fans, (4) gain marketing insights and (5) generating leads.

Literature reviewed points out that organisations develop social media strategies that appeal to their target audience. The prevalent social media marketing tactics and activities used by lifestyle brands inorder to build brand brands and engage customers on social media are mentioned below.

- Marketers emphasise on using and posting creative content that is engaging and informative. They engage in creative story telling through posts on social media to capture the attention of consumers to make them more ‘like’able and ‘share’able.
- They use textual, picture posts as well as videos to communicate to their customers. Inorder to make picture posts attractive they post behind the scene shots, high quality images, pictures indicative of appealing lifestyles are common. Video posts or video campaigns are more popular with consumers than picture posts and links.
- Some marketers use the strategy of brand personification, with the help of images (i.e., graphic content) and language (i.e., textual content), persons (celebrities) and animals
to depict brands as living people, able to communicate with consumers via interpersonal conversations in order to engage customers (using likes, shares and comments).

- Brands are interacting with their fans on brand pages. Many brands are doing away with automated posts to bring in more personalisation in their communication with their audience. They are even trying to manage customer service related issues on these platforms.

- They are making use of user-generated content (UGC), associating with celebrities or brand ambassadors to depict brand consistency and promote brands on social media.

- Marketers are trying to engage customers on their social media networks and brand fan pages by launching new products and services, providing advice and useful information to fans, holding prize contests and games and giving freebies.

It is clear from the literature reviewed that brands that employ social media communication content that is humorous, funny, socially relevant, inspirational, emotionally connecting and entertaining have been successful in enticing and engaging consumers.

Some of the most popular lifestyle brands with successful social media strategies and campaigns over the last few years are mentioned as follows:

- The five fashion and lifestyle brands in India that have very good Facebook content are Marks & Spencer, Biba, Vera Moda, Fashion and You and Wills Lifestyle. The brands have been shortlisted based on their creative ideas, engaging and informative content with games and contests (Gandhi, 2013).

- Lifestyle brands that made a mark with their creative social media campaigns in 2016 were Biba (#Change is beautiful), Nivea (#BanBodyOdour), Fastrack (Never Have I Ever…….), Adidas (#FeelLoveUseHate), Nike (#DaDaDing), Reebok (#FittoFight), Lee (#RefreshtheCity), Dove (#RealBeauty), Micromax (#RoarforHelp), Woodland (#BeyondOrdinary), Mia by Tanishq (#BestatWork) and Turtle (#TheBlindSpot). (SocialSamosa, 2017)

- Some engaging social media campaigns that are worth a mention owing to their social relevance, humour, entertaining and emotionally connecting quotient are that of Biba, OnePlus 5 Smartphone, Oriflame, Reebok, Nokia, Tanishq Jewellery, Nivea India, Micromax India and Samsung India (Neogy, 2017).

- The names of top shared lifestyle brand posts in 2018 are that of (1) Oriflame, (4) Oppo India, (7) Tanishq and (11) Micromax India (Uttamchandan, 2018)
It is found that some of the latest trends in social media marketing are to do with distribution of good social media content, use of regional content and language, use of videos, creation of relevant, compelling and share worthy stories and content, making using user generated (UGC) content to build brands, using influencer marketing to increase brand awareness, using social media to for listening to brand conversations and the use of chat boxes or chatbots for online response management. Brands are also live streaming product launches and events on, sharing stories on Instagram, making products easily available through social media networks to drive sales and taking a stand on current social issues to build brand personality and emotionally connect with the customer especially millennials.

The findings suggest that the brands that have been successful in reaching out to their customers on social media are the ones which have good social media marketing strategies. Best brands go where consumers are, through tools and social channels that consumers most prefer. They try to use multiple tactics, activities and appeals on various social media channels to reach and connect with their target audiences on social media to create awareness, build brands, engage with audience and drive sales.

1.1.4. Millennial Customers Attitude and Perception towards Social Media Marketing by Lifestyle Brands

Customer attitude and perception towards social media marketing can be understood under the following heads

(A) Attitude and perception towards social media marketing activities of lifestyle brands:

(1) The millennial customers perceive social media marketing to be useful to them in helping them become aware of new products, fashion trends, participating in promotions and in making better product buying decisions. They also find that it is very simple and easy to access and use social media marketing communication by brands.

(2) Millennials are very aware of social media marketing activities by brands, a sizeable number of them want their favourite brands to be on social media, they are proud to follow and connect with them, and they intend to make purchases from brands they follow, are committed to and endorse their favourite brands as well as make repeat purchases from them. Millennials seem to have a positive attitude towards social media marketing by lifestyle brands. These are an indication to the influence of social
media marketing efforts of brands on purchase intention, brand trust and brand loyalty towards lifestyle brands.

(B) Following of lifestyle brands on social media:

(1) Most millennials (65 percent) are connected to brands on social media, 51.1 percent of them follow one to five brands, pointing out that some brands are already successful in engaging the customer on social media and there is further scope for such connections provided brands establish a good social media marketing and customer engagement strategy.

(2) Analysis indicates that who use a variety of social media platforms are the ones who are more exposed to brand communication activities of lifestyle brands which creates a desire in them to connect with those brands which leads to customer engagement and propelling product acquisition.

(3) Respondents follow brands they trust and are confident about and intend to buy in the future. Social influence of friends and family as well as perceived personal benefits determines the choice of the brands they connect with on social media networks. They follow brands that they believe will help them build their image and social capital. They perceive that being connected to brands is useful for getting product and brand information, to participate in brand promotions and contests, to building their image socially, to making better purchase decisions etc.

(4) A sizeable chunk of brand following millennials have a positive attitude towards following brands, they trust brand communication and are intensely involved in brands they follow and enjoy connecting with fellow brand followers in brand communities. They also exhibit loyalty towards brands they follow.

(C) Lifestyle category wise social media marketing awareness, followership and their influence on category purchases:

(1) Data analysis shows that there are more number of fashion clothing and accessories brands that are marketing through social media. Millennials follow local, national and international brands as well as designer labels and luxury brands for aspirational reasons. The top lifestyle brand segments followed by millennials on social networking platforms according to the compiled list of brand names followed by them are fashion clothing, fashion accessories, sports & fitness, multi-category lifestyle and the health and beauty segments.
The results indicate that millennials are very aware of the Sports & Fitness (55.7 percent), Consumer Electronics (54.7 percent), Travel & Luggage (53.9 percent), Furniture & Home Furnishing (53.5 percent) closely followed by Jewellery (53.3 percent) present and promoted on social media. The most popular brand segments followed on social networks are fashion clothing (55 percent), fashion accessories (44.5 percent), health & beauty (36.9 percent), sports and fitness (34.7 percent) and jewellery (34.5 percent). However the top five brand category purchases that social media influences the most are (1) fashion clothing (27.5 percent), (2) consumer electronics (24.8 percent), (3) fashion accessories (23.4 percent), (4) health and beauty (23.2 percent) and (5) sports & fitness (18.2 percent). This does show that millennials do make purchases on influence of social media.

The analysis for effect of awareness of brand presence and brand following on social media platforms on the lifestyle product / brand purchases points to the fact that conversion from brand following is in general much higher than conversions from being aware of brands being marketed on the social media networks. This is a clear indication to marketers that millennial customers who are already engaged with the brand bring in more sales than from those who are not. Also the top five lifestyle brand categories that have high conversions from brand following are (1) Computer Electronics, (2) Health & Beauty, (3) Sports and Fitness, (4) Fashion Accessories, (5) Fashion Clothing. These brand categories have an impact on the personal fulfilment and social image of the millennial consumers. They may also involve high value purchases. So consumers may prefer to know and be connected to the brand before they buy them. The results reiterate the influence of brand presence on social media on consumer purchases.

Importance of lifestyle brand communication activities and attributes of lifestyle brand communication activities on social media

Respondents perceive social media brand communication or marketing activities to be very important. They would want brands to post content related to their latest products and services, communicate about brand events / contests and sales promotions and usage tips and advice that customers can benefit from, using picture / video / GIF posts, stories, endorsements and conversations. They also want brands to address their product / brands related concerns or clarifications by responding their comments. This gives marketers a fair idea as to the brands communication activities that are important in their social media marketing strategy.
(2) The eight most important attributes of brands’ communication activities that generate consumer trust in brands in the order of their importance (based on the responses of very important and important) are (1) creativity, (2) honesty, (3) authenticity, (4) being updated and active, (5) responsibility, (6) interactivity, (7) social relevance and (8) entertainment. If millennials were to place their trust in lifestyle brands on social media, then the brands’ social media communications and marketing strategy should reflect these values and attributes.

(E) Purchase behaviour towards lifestyle brands marketed on social media.

(1) The analysis shows that 66.9 percent millennials customers believe that the presence of product or service related communication on social media platforms have influenced their product / service purchases.

(2) The results also show that brand marketing on social media influences the purchase process and behaviour of millennials. Unlike as in the traditional consumer buying process that begins with need identification followed by information search, social media marketing, to an extent, even triggers identification of need and helps respondents recall products / brands when the need arises. It helps them in the making product evaluations and taking purchase decisions. It also influences their post purchase behaviour. So, social media marketing activities influence every stage of the consumer buying process.

1.1.5. Inferential Analysis for Influence of Social Media Marketing Activities on Purchase Behaviour, Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty towards Lifestyle Brands

The influence of social media marketing activities in its totality was understood based on the following five dimensions. The data was put through inferential analysis to know the influence of

(1) Types of Social Media Brand Communication Activities and Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication on Perception of Social Media Marketing of Lifestyle Brands

(2) Types of Social Media Brand Communication Activities and Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication on Brand Following on Social Media Networks

(3) Types of Social Media Brand Communication Activities and Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication on Purchase Behaviour, Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty

(4) Perception of Social Media Marketing on Brand Following on Social Media Networks
(5) Perception of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Behaviour, Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty.

1.1.5.1. Influence of Types of Social Media Brand Communication Activities and Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication on Perception of Social Media Marketing of Lifestyle Brands.

(a) **Karl Pearson’s coefficient of correlation analysis** shows that there is a strong association between the perceived importance of various types of brand communication activities and perception of social media marketing by lifestyle brands as well as attributes of social media brand communication and perception of social media marketing (refer table nos. 4.19 and 4.20).

(b) **Factor Analysis**: First, on subjecting the independent variables – Types of Social Media Marketing (Brand Communication) Activities and Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication to factor analysis, five components were extracted (refer table no. 4.22). Three components / dimensions related to types of social media marketing were termed as Relationship Nourishing Brand Communication Activities (BC_Relationship Nourishing), Creative Content in Brand Communication (BC_Creative Content) and Brand Communication using Textual Posts (BC_Textual Posts). Two components concerned with the attributes of social media marketing / brand communication were named as Socially Significant Social Media Marketing Attributes (SMMA_SS) and Creatively Significant Social Media Marketing Attributes (SMMA_CS). Then, on subjecting the dependent variable – Customer perception of Social Media Marketing Activities by lifestyle brands to factor analysis, four components were extracted (refer table no. 2.24). The four variables extracted from the analysis were named as Perceived Ease of Using Social Media Marketing (PEOU_SMM), Perceived Usefulness of Social Media Marketing (PU_SMM), Attitude towards Social Media Marketing (Attitude_SMM) and Brand Following and Purchase Intention (SMM_BF_PI).

(c) **Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Related Findings:**

The regression analysis highlights that there is a significant relationship between various dimensions of Types of Social Media Brand Communication Activities or Types of Social Media Marketing Activities and dimensions of Perception of Social Media Marketing Activities. So we accept the null hypothesis $H_B$ that ‘Perceived Importance of various Types of Social Media Marketing (Brand Communication)
Activities influences the Perception of Social Media Marketing of Lifestyle Brands’.

The regression analysis also indicates that the dimensions of dependent variable – customer perception towards social media marketing activities are significantly related to the dimensions of the independent variable – attributes of social media marketing (brand communication). Thus, we accept the null hypothesis $H_C$ that ‘Perceived Importance of Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication influences the Perception of Social Media Marketing of Lifestyle Brands’.

1.1.5.2. Influence of Types of Social Media Brand Communication Activities and Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication on Brand Following on Social Media Networks.

(a) Karl Pearson’s coefficient of correlation analysis shows that there is a significant association between the social media marketing (brand communication) activities and brand following of lifestyle brands on social media. The correlation analysis also indicates that there is a significant association between the attributes of brand communication and attitude and following of lifestyle brands on social media marketing (refer table nos. 4.49 and 4.50).

(b) Factor Analysis: The dimensions of the independent variables – Types of Social Media Marketing (Brand Communication) Activities and Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication were identified and named using factor analysis in table no 4.22 as mentioned earlier and the four underlying dimensions of the dependent variable - Brand Following of Lifestyle Brands on Social Media Networks that were extracted using factor analysis (refer table no. 4.52). The variables were named as - Attitude & Interest towards Following Brands (AIFB), Brand Loyalty (BL_BF), Purchase Intention and Personal Gratification (PIPG_BF) and Subjective Norms (SN_BF).

(c) Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Related Findings:
It is evident from the regression analysis that perceived importance of social media brand communication activities or social media marketing activities do influence millennial following of lifestyle brands on social media platforms. So we accept the null hypothesis, $H_D$ that ‘Perceived Importance of various Types of Social Media Brand Communication Activities influences Brand Following of Lifestyle Brands on Social Media Networks’. The analysis also indicates that the perceived importance of Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication do influence millennial lifestyle
brand following on social media networks thereby we accept the null hypothesis, $H_E$ that ‘*Perceived Importance of Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication influences Brand Following of Lifestyle Brands on Social Media Networks*’.

### 1.1.5.3. Influence of Types of Social Media Brand Communication Activities and Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication on Purchase Behaviour, Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty.

(a) **Karl Pearson’s coefficient of correlation analysis** shows that there is a very strong association between the perceived importance of various types of brand communication activities and purchase behaviour, brand trust and brand loyalty. The correlation analysis also indicates that except for a few variables, there is a very strong association between attributes of social media brand communication and purchase behaviour, brand trust and brand loyalty (refer table nos. 4.76 and 4.77).

(b) **Factor Analysis:** The dimensions of the independent variables – Types of Social Media Marketing (Brand Communication) Activities and Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication were identified and named using factor analysis in table no 4.22 as mentioned earlier. The underlying dimensions of the dependent variables - Purchase Behaviour, Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty were extracted using factor analysis (refer table no. 4.79) and were named as Purchase Behaviour Cognizance (PB_Cognizance), Purchase Behaviour - Information Search (PB_Information Search), Evaluation Acquisition and Reaction (PB_EAR) and Brand Trust and Loyalty (BT_BL).

(c) **Regression analysis and Hypothesis Related Findings:**

It is clear from the regression analysis that the perceived importance of social media brand communication activities influence millennial purchase behaviour, brand trust and loyalty amongst millennials, thus we accept the null hypothesis, $H_F$ that ‘*Perceived Importance of various Types of Social Media Brand Communication Activities influences Purchase Behaviour*’. The regression analysis also illustrates that the attributes of social media marketing or brand communication influence millennial purchase behaviour, brand trust and loyalty. So we accept the null hypothesis, $H_G$ that ‘*Perceived Importance of various Types of Social Media Brand Communication Activities influences Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty*’.
Regression analysis shows that all dimensions of attributes of social media brand communication are significantly related to all dimensions of purchase behaviour. This clearly illustrates that attributes of social media marketing or brand communication influence millennial purchase behaviour. Thus we accept the null hypothesis, $H_0$ that ‘Perceived Importance of Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication influences Purchase Behaviour’. It is evident from the regression analysis that attributes of social media marketing or brand communication influence brand trust and brand loyalty towards lifestyle brands by millennials. Hence we accept the null hypothesis that $H_1$ that ‘Perceived Importance of Attributes of Social Media Brand Communication influences Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty’.

1.1.5.4. Influence of Perception of Social Media Marketing on Brand Following on Social Media Networks.

(a) Karl Pearson’s Co-efficient of Correlation analysis shows that except for a few variables, there is a very strong association between perception of social media marketing activities and brand following on social media (refer table nos. 4.101 and 4.102).

(b) Factor Analysis: Four dimensions of the independent variable – Customer perception of Social Media Marketing Activities by lifestyle brands were extracted using factor analysis (refer table no. 2.24) and the four underlying dimensions of the dependent variable - Brand Following of Lifestyle Brands on Social Media Networks that were extracted using factor analysis (refer table no. 4.52) as mentioned earlier in section 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 in this chapter.

(c) Regression analysis and Hypothesis Related Findings: The results of the regression analysis clearly highlights that that millennial perception of social media marketing activities does influence their brand following on social media networks. Thereby we accept the null hypothesis, $H_1$ that ‘Perception of Social Media Marketing influences Brand Following on Social Media Networks’.
1.1.5.5. Influence of Perception of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Behaviour, Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty.

(a) Karl Pearson’s coefficient of correlation analysis indicates that all variables related to perception of social media marketing activities are strongly associated with the variables related to purchase behaviour and brand trust and loyalty at five percent level of significance (refer table nos. 4.114 and 4.115).

(b) Factor Analysis: Four dimensions of the independent variable – Customer perception of Social Media Marketing Activities by lifestyle brands were extracted using factor analysis (refer table no. 2.24) and The underlying dimensions of the dependent variables - Purchase Behaviour, Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty were extracted using factor analysis (refer table no. 4.79) as mentioned earlier in section 5.5.1 and 5.5.3 in this chapter.

(c) Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Related Findings:

It is clear from the regression analysis that the perception of social media marketing activities by lifestyle brands has a significant influence on all stages of the millennial purchase behaviour thereby we accept the null hypothesis, \( H_K \) that ‘Perception of Social Media Marketing influences Purchase Behaviour’. The regression analysis also illustrated the influence of external variables perceived usefulness of social media marketing and perceived ease of using social media marketing on millennial brand trust and loyalty towards lifestyle brands. We thus accept the null hypothesis, \( H_L \) that ‘Perception of Social Media Marketing influences Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty’.

Overall Hypothesis Related Findings for the Data Analysis on Influence of Social Media Marketing by Lifestyle Brands:

It can be inferred from the overall data analysis on social media marketing that millennial customers are influenced by and are amenable to social media and marketing activities of lifestyle brands on various social media platforms. Thereby we accept the null hypothesis - \( H_M \) that ‘Customers are receptive towards the social media marketing efforts of retail brands’.
5.2. Decisive Model for determinants of Behavioural Intention and Millennial Adoption of Social Media Networks

Regression analysis was carried out to determine the influence of various dimensions of perception towards social media networks on the dependent variable - nature of involvement on social media networks that were extracted using factor analysis (refer Table no. 4.15) and thereby determine the behavioural intention and acceptance or adoption of social media by millennials in their daily lives. Using the results of the analysis, a decisive model for behavioural intention and adoption of social media marketing was constructed, based on the theory of reasoned action (TRA) by Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) and Ajzen & Fishbein (1980) and the technology acceptance model (TAM) by Davis et al. (1989). It was found that behavioural intention (Nature of Involvement in social Media) is a function of variables Attitude and Interest in Social Media (AI_SM), Socio-Expressive Function of Social Media (SEF_SM) and Importance or Significance of Social Media (Sig_SM) to millennials. The external variables perceived usefulness of social media and perceived ease of using social media do not directly influence the behavioural intention (nature of involvement on social media networks). The equation for behavioural intention is given as follows:

\[
BI \text{ (Involvement_SM)} = AI\text{ _SM} + SEF\text{ _SM} + Sig\text{ _SM}
\]

It is clear from the analysis that millennials have embraced social media as a part of their daily lives. The adapted technology acceptance model constructed below captures the results of the analysis in its entirety.
5.3. Decisive Models for determinants of Behavioural Intention and Acceptance of Social Media Marketing

Three conclusive models of behavioural intention and acceptance / adoption of social media marketing by millennial customers have emerged on studying the influence of various dimensions of the perception towards social media marketing activities on purchase intention, dimensions of brand following and dimensions of purchase behaviour, brand trust and loyalty. The findings for the same have been included below.

(1) Using the philosophy of the technology acceptance model by Davis et al. (1989) regression analysis was carried out to determine the influence of variables related to customer perception of social media marketing activities on brand following and purchase intention thereby the acceptance of social media marketing by millennials. The results of this simple analysis indicate the behavioural intention and acceptance of Social Media Marketing activities by millennial consumers as depicted in the model below.

It is evident from the analysis that there significant influence of attitude toward social media marketing on the behavioural intention (BI) and a high collinearity exists between the external variables Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Using social media marketing and the behavioural intention (brand following and purchase intention) towards using social media marketing. Since multicollinearity does not hinder the prediction of the model (Frost, 2018), the Behavioural Intention (BI; Brand Following and Purchase Intention) for this model is a function of Attitude towards Social Media
Marketing, Perceived Usefulness of Social Media Marketing and the Perceived Ease of Using Social Media Marketing as depicted in the following equation;

\[ \text{BI (SMM_BF_PI)} = \text{Attitude}_{\text{SMM}} + \text{PEOU}_{\text{SMM}} + \text{PU}_{\text{SMM}}. \]

The model developed indicates the behavioural intention, its determinants and the acceptance of Social Media Marketing activities by millennial consumers.

(2) Regression Analysis was carried out to gain a deeper understanding of the influences of the perceptual and attitudinal dimensions of social media marketing on dimensions of brand following and thereby the behavioural intention of respondents. The outcome was utilised to construct a decisive model for behavioural intention and millennial acceptance and use of social media marketing based on the theory of reasoned action (TRA) by Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) and Ajzen & Fishbein (1980) and the technology acceptance model by Davis et. Al (1989). The results of the analysis are captured in the adapted technology acceptance model below. The findings indicate that behavioural intention of social media marketing (Purchase Intention and Personal Gratification and Brand Loyalty towards Brands Followed) are influenced by Perceived Usefulness of Social Media Marketing (PU_SMM), Perceived Ease of Using Social Media Marketing (PEOU_SMM), Attitude and Interest (or Intention) towards Brand Following (AIFB) and Subjective Norms / Social Influences (SN_BF) as depicted in the equation below:

\[ \text{BI (PIPG_BF & BL_BF)} = \text{PEOU}_{\text{SMM}} + \text{PU}_{\text{SMM}} + \text{AIFB} + \text{SN}_{\text{BF}}. \]

The following model adds one more dimension to millennial behavioural intention towards usage of social media marketing and thereby the acceptance of social media marketing by the millennial consumers.
Regression analysis was carried out in order to gain a deeper understanding of the influences of the perceptual and attitudinal dimensions of social media marketing on millennial attitude towards dimensions of purchase behaviour (Cognizance, Information Search, Evaluation, Acquisition and Reaction), brand trust and brand loyalty. The outcome of the analysis was made use of inorder to construct another conclusive model for determinants of behavioural intention (BI) and acceptance of social media marketing on the foundations of the technology acceptance model of Davis et.al (1989). The results of the analysis are captured in the adapted technology acceptance model below.

The findings indicate that behavioural intention of social media marketing (Purchase Behaviour – Cognizance, Information Search, Evaluation, Acquisition, Reaction, Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty related to lifestyle brands) are influenced by dimensions of perception towards social media marketing as depicted in the equation that follows;

(a) Purchase Behaviour:
(i) BI (PB_Cognizance) = Attitude_SMM + PU_SMM + PEOU_SMM;
(ii) BI (PB_Information Search) = PU_SMM + Attitude_SMM + PEOU_SMM;
(iii) BI (PB_EAR) = PU_SMM + PEOU_SMM and

(b) Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty:

\[
\text{BI (BT_BL) = PU_SMM + PEOU_SMM.}
\]

The model above highlights the influences on millennial behavioural intention of using social media marketing in the stages of their buying process and brand trust and loyalty with respect to lifestyle brands and thereby the acceptance of social media marketing by the millennial consumers.

The findings of inferential analysis lead us to accept all the thirteen null hypotheses that were framed for the purpose of this study. It shows that consumers are very receptive to social media marketing activities by lifestyle brands. The study also highlights the social media habits, embracement of social media by the generation and the prevalent influence of social media brand communication on consumer behaviour and brand loyalty. Thus, the acceptance of the thirteenth null hypothesis (H_{13}): “Customers are receptive towards the social media marketing efforts of retail brands” is reiterated.

5.4. Implications of the Research

The purpose of this to understand the impact of the growing phenomena of social media marketing on consumer behaviour, brand trust and loyalty and thereby bridge the research gaps that justified the need for this study. Dealing with the impacted dimensions of this study, have huge marketing consequences for businesses today. There are many practical implications of this study for marketers of businesses big or small, new or established, which consider social media networks as platforms for millennial customer engagement, brand building and driving sales.

This research provides deep insights into the demographic characteristics of the respondents and millennials use social media platforms. It tells marketers about the social media consumption habits of millennials and their attitude and perception towards social media networks. It helps marketers understand the millennial customers’ attitude and perception towards social media marketing activities by lifestyle brands, provides an understanding about lifestyle brand following by millennials customers, the importance millennials place on various social media brand communication activities and attributes of brand communication
on social media. This research shows the influence that social media marketing has on the dimensions of consumer behaviour – on purchase intention, on every stage of the customer purchase behaviour and on brand trust and loyalty that is exhibited towards lifestyle brands.

The decisive models constructed highlight the external and the internal variables that influence the behavioural intention of millennial customers towards making use of social media networks and social media marketing by lifestyle brands. This information is critical to marketers to help them devise tactics to influence and persuade the customers to make choices that benefit both.

This kind of information is crucial to businesses. It will help lifestyle brand marketers to gauge their customers amenability towards social media marketing by brands, strategise on social media networks, tools, techniques and applications they should use to profitably engage with their target audience, know the lifestyle brand / product categories where merchandise purchases are highly influenced by social media marketing, design brand communication content based on preferred customer communication activities and attributes that encourages customers to connect and stay connected with the brand.

Overall the findings of this study gives optimum direction to lifestyle brand marketers to develop cost effective and ideal social media marketing strategies as a part of their integrated marketing communication strategies to help in the achievement of their organisational goals. Growth of businesses in will benefit the economy as a whole.

5.5. Suggestions

The following suggestions have been made based on the finding of this study, to help brand marketers to design suitable and cost-effective social media programs and social media strategies to engage their millennial target customers, build brands and achieve organisational goals.

A. Development of Social Media Tactics and Strategy

1. It is clear from the findings of the study that social media networks have become an important part of the daily lives of millennials. They are also receptive to social media marketing by lifestyle brands. A majority of millennials follow brands – local, national, international, designer and luxury brands. So it is imperative for businesses big, small or new to engage with their target customers on this burgeoning platform called social media. Lifestyle brands that are already marketing to customers on these
platforms must continue and strengthen their engagement, but if they aren’t already marketing to customers on social media networks then they must take a step forward to do so. Businesses must ensure that they have a good social media strategy in place before reaching out to their target audience on social media channels.

2. Literature reviewed indicates that implementing a good social media marketing strategy alone is not enough to achieve marketing goals. So a social media marketing strategy should be developed and used in conjunction with the traditional marketing strategies that are a part of the integrated marketing communication strategy of the business. Only then will the organisation be able to achieve the desired results and thereby achieve success.

3. Marketers must also take care to ensure that the social media communications tactics and marketing strategy is consistent with the organisation’s culture, values and vision.

B. Choice of Social Media Networks:

1. While selecting the social media channels to connect with the millennial customers, marketers must make sure that they choose channels that millennials frequent often and channels that they tend to spend more time on rather than just selecting networks with most millennials registrations. As these are the networks on which customers will be more accessible to the marketing efforts of businesses. So the social media networks that marketers should consider for connecting with millennial customers are Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn and even Snapchat. Brands can be marketed on other platforms as well depending on the presence of their target audience on those networks.

2. The findings point out that millennial consumers who access and use more social media networks are the ones who follow more number of brands. Thus, marketers also need to make sure that they post content on multiple channels simultaneously. This will increase visibility of the brand to the target customers. Being visible is the first step to creating a connection with the customer.

C. Developing Content for Social Media Brand Communication or Social Media Marketing

Being visible on social media networks is just not enough. It is very important to sustain interest in the lifestyle brand that is being marketed on these networks. That is the key to customer engagement. There are many things that marketers have to note when creating
content for social media marketing or brand communication. These points are highlighted below.

1. Most millennials are involved in social media platforms as ‘spectators’ who mostly read, watch and listen on social media followed by ‘reserved interactors’ who apart from being spectators also ‘like’, ‘share’ and ‘comment’ on social media posts. Marketers can creating content that is, ‘like’ worthy, ‘share’ worthy and content that will elicit positive comments from these ‘reserved interactors’ that will increase the viewership of the posts and thus increase awareness of the brand.

2. Customers prefer using technology or application that are personally useful and are simple to use. So brands must consider developing content that the target customers consider to be useful to them. The content should also be easy to understand and use. These aspects actually shape the attitude and significance of the brand to the customers. Thus making them want to follow and use the brand.

3. Research indicates that consumers already engaged with brand are the ones who make more purchases from the brand rather than the ones just aware of their presence on social media platforms. So marketers should work towards increasing customer engagement on these networks by using tactics / tools and content that will increase brand awareness, encourage followership and thus purchases from brands followed.

4. Reach out to millennial customers by designing and implementing social media brand activities that millennials consider important like posting content related to their latest products and services, communicating about brand events / contests and sales promotions as customers look forward to earning good deals, discounts, prizes and freebies from their favourite brands and providing usage tips and advice that can benefit customers. This will make millennials proud to follow, trust and make purchases to own a part of the brand.

5. Millennial customers want brands to address their product / brands related concerns or clarifications by responding to their comments on social media platforms. Even literature review suggests that brand marketers should stop giving automated replies and instead reply to questions and comments directly. So marketers should employ dedicated personnel or chatbots to handle customer service related queries, comments and complaints on social media platforms on a real time basis if, they want to engage customers in the long run, build brand trust and loyalty.
6. Marketers should employ a variety of activities and tactics like using picture / video / GIF posts, telling stories through their posts, use celebrity endorsements and hold conversations with customers on social media in order to increase brand awareness and strengthen the brand using social media marketing.

7. Millennials access social media mainly for the purpose of entertainment and to get information or keep up with the world around them. Considering these marketers must develop content that is creative, entertaining and relevant to the times. They should adhere to the concept of ‘less is more’ when developing content. Apart from using English or Hindi in brand posts for the Indian cosmopolitan millennials, efforts must be put into developing regional brand content in vernacular languages. This will take the brand closer to the customers, thereby establishing customer connection with the brand.

8. Most millennials use smartphones to access social media networks. Generation Y, use social media on their smartphones many times during the day, even at times when they are commuting, at work, in the class or even in the middle of the night when it is difficult to watch videos with the audio. Literature review also indicated that there are many users who watch muted videos on social media networks. So while developing audio-visual content for brand communication, marketers need to ensure that the content can be easily understood even without the audio. So adapting content for access and use on smart phones during various situations, will increase popularity of the brand content, as well as facilitate easy grasping of the relevant communication.

9. Brands can also make use of popular millennial icons and achievers who have a huge following on social media platforms to become influencers for the respective brands. If users with a huge follower base endorse products or like and share brand content, then many of their followers too would look up to the brand, follow it and consume it.

10. It is not enough just designing good social media tactics and activities, the marketers must also work towards strengthening the hold of the brand on the millennial customers by ensuring that brand communication on social media platforms fulfils the brand communication attribute expectations of the millennials from the brand. Since millennials consider attributes such as creativity, honesty, authenticity, being updated and active, responsibility, interactiveness, social relevance and entertainment to be very important in brand communication on social media. Brand marketers must ensure that their brand communication on social media imbibes such attributes. They also
have the responsibility of making sure that the social media brand communication reflects the organisation’s culture and values. This will make millennials place their faith in the brand and be loyal to it.

Social media marketing influences brand following, purchase intention, personal gratification and every stage of the buying process or purchase behaviour of the millennial customers, right from identification of a need to the post purchase behaviour. It even influences trust and loyalty towards brands on social media. So developing a social media strategy and brand content for social media is a responsible job. It can make or break a brand. The above suggestions will help marketers in understanding their millennial customers better and develop superlative social media strategies and brand content as a part of their integrated marketing communication strategy. This in turn will help them achieve their marketing as well as organisational goals.

5.6. Scope for Further Research

The current study was focussed on understanding the influence and impact of social media marketing on the dimensions of consumer behaviour, brand trust and brand loyalty towards lifestyle brands pertaining to the millennial customer. This research was carried out purely from the marketing perspective and touches upon the present. Considering the sheer number of Indian millennials and their share in the overall Indian population, their increasing ability to spend and their embrace of the internet have made them an economic force to reckon with. There will business trying to satisfy their ever changing needs and, brands that will be vying for their attention. Thus, there is so much scope for future researches on this cohort with respect their interactions with a complex and dynamic environment. Marketers will continue to face numerous challenges posed by the fast changing technological systems, as well as the decoding of complex consumer behaviour. So the future scope for research in consumer behaviour concerning millennial as well as other generational cohorts is very vast.

5.7. Limitations of the Study

4. 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
5. 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
6. 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).

5.8. Conclusions

The study reveals that millennials of the very cosmopolitan Bengaluru, who represent Indian millennials, have embraced social media networks as a part of their everyday lives and that social media marketing by lifestyle brands has a very strong influence on consumer behaviour, brand trust and loyalty. The outcome of this research justifies the thrust being given by marketers to the use of social media marketing as a part of the integrated marketing communication strategy. The models constructed for the acceptance of social media networks and social media marketing provides critical insights on the external variables and the internal variables that influence millennial consumers’ intent towards using and thereby adopting social media networks and accept social media marketing by lifestyle brands. This information on consumer behaviour is vital to understand the target consumers and design programs to engage them. According to the 2014 Social Media Marketing Industry Report, marketing tactics and engagement are top areas marketers want to master, with at least 89% of marketers wanting to know the most effective social tactics and the best ways to engage with their audience on social media. The findings of this research and the modified technology acceptance models developed can propel better design of social media marketing tactics and strategies by all organisations - small medium or large to achieve their business objectives.