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"MILLENNIAL PERCEPTION TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT IN BANGALORE"

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ABSTRACT

In today's highly lively and dynamic business environment, the role of "customer engagement" (CE) in creating customer value and generating positive customer perception about businesses isreceiving snowballing attention from business associates and researchers. The very question of how Online Customer engagement or in other terms Social Media Engagement is changing the world today has been answered by the help of taking today's generation or millennials opinions and thoughts.In spatial dimension, the paper refers to Bangalore urban area. The paper is draws inferences from an extensive literature study in the relevant field that has shown consistent change. The paper analyses the relationship between millennials and the millennial customer's perception towards customer engagement and more specifically online customer engagement which changes due to many factors.

The customer's brand loyalty, purchase decision and factors like exposure of a brand and all have a relationship with customer engagement. It is for the companies to understand that online is the new present which is proven by the opinion and perception of these millennials.

KEYWORDS *: Marketing, Internet, Customer Engagement, Online, Social Media Engagement, Millenials, Perception.*

INTRODUCTION

Customer engagement is the means by which a company creates a association with its customer base to foster brand loyalty and awareness. This can be attained via marketing campaigns, new content created for and posted to websites, and outreach via social media and mobile and wearable devices, among other methods.

Customer engagement can be defined also as a business communication connection between an external stakeholder (consumer) and an organization (company or brand) through various channels of correspondence. This connection can be a response, interface, effect or overall customer experience, which takes place *online and offline.*

Engagement marketing, sometimes called "experiential marketing", "event marketing", "on-ground marketing", "live marketing", "participation marketing", or "special events" is a marketing strategy that directly engages consumers and invites and encourages them to participate in the evolution of a brand.

Coming to the topic of online customer engagement, over the years and across the generation that we live in, the existence of the internet has taken over our world. More things are now online than offline. The world is moving and as we speak, most information and data is existing on the internet.

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This makes it even more compulsory for companies and brands to have a bigger and better online presence and the content they put out is operative and drives the eventual objective of engendering sales.

The research of this topic struck me as a point of interest as I see things as a visionary and I was struggling to realize the existence of traditional marketing, advertising and promotion to exist in the coming future or even the current present. Brands are making impressions and are driving online traffic with the minimum of efforts most of them being online.

Customer engagement is about inspiring your **customers** to interact and share in the experiences you create for them as a business and as a growing brand. When implemented well, a strong **customer engagement strategy** wills stand-in brand growth and loyalty.

Customer engagement can be done both offline and online. However, it was very challenging for companies to employ customer engagement strategies and measure behaviors of customers towards customer engagement strategies. A customer engagement scale was developed in the later years and found that highly engaged companies were more effective in engaging customers and creating customer loyalty.

At the end of the day the goal is to be more striking, promote your company and its products/ services in the best way. Through this research we can find out how customer engagement is moving completely online and how people feel about, duly catering to the way people feel about it in the millennial world of Bangalore.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Doorn et. al. (2010) deliberated the notion of customer engagement behaviours (CEB), which we defined as the customers' behavioural manifestation toward a brand or firm, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers. CEBs included of massive conduct of behaviours comprising a word-of-mouth (WOM) activity, recommendations, helping different clients, blogging, composing reviews, and even captivating in legal programs. The writers developed a conceptual model of the antecedents and consequences—customer, firm, and societal—of CEBs and discussed how it varies from customer attitudes such as trust satisfaction and commitment etc.

Enginkaya&Esen (2014) fixated on defining and measuring online customer engagement by gathering data from customers who are using internet in shopping. An online customer engagement scale was developed and used. It was found that client's engagement could be clarified with trust, commitment and in a reputed dimensional way. The examination scrutinized evaluation and other features of online client engagement.

Khan &Inbaraj (2014)identified the role of mobile apps in engaging customers. Today, gadgets like smart phones and tablets, mobile apps, stages like online networking, and data advances have given another intending to the idea of business-client correspondence and client engagement. Frequent utilities are working on mobility resolutions for clients to raise assignation levels. For instance, apps mounted on new age devices like the smart phone, allow customers to access information including bill statements and provide self-service options like the capability to make bill payments, even when the customer is on the move. The key advantage utility administration applications offer to the shopper is convenient Protestation enrolment has turned out to be significantly less demanding now daily. Presently grievance might be enrolled effortlessly through portable mobile applications.

Awareness Inc. (2011) distinguished 11 methodologies to expand client engagement. Connecting with customers can give different points of interest. For example, you can get individuals discussing your image, you can take in more about your clients, and you can take in more about your rivals. In light on the above, you can make—and request reaction on—most recent showcasing strategies to interconnect with potential clients all the more effectively in the up and coming. To receive these rewards, you ought to be set up to include your audience members with various engaging methodologies that advantage your customers.

Patterson et. al. (2012) studied the role of customer engagement in services. They explored the notion of customer engagement in service industries which has the potential to make unique contributions in explaining service loyalty. Customer engagement includes four elements, namely, vigor, devotion, immersion and interaction.

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Sashi (2012) explained understanding of customer engagement by examining practioner views of customer engagement, linking it to the marketing concept, relationship marketing, modeling the customer engagement cycle and developing a customer engagement matrix. He developed a model of customer engagement cycle with connection, interaction, satisfaction, retention, loyalty, advocacy and engagement as stages in cycle. He further tried to explain customer engagement strategies using Web 2.0 apparatus like online networking.

Wei et. al. (2013)focused on one particular type of customer engagement behaviors: user-generated hotel reviews. They examined potential customers' perceptions of CEBs and hotels' management responses to CEBs. The analysis of an exploratory study demonstrates that clients' apparent motivational drivers fundamental CEBs changes with their objectives and positive CEBs appreciate more ideal assessments than negative CEBs. For administrative reactions to CEBs, the perceived inspiration drivers were dictated by the specificity of reactions and the valence of CEBs. The adequacy of specific administration responses was evaluated higher than that of generic responses to negative CEBs. This study proposed that cordiality firms should create more straightforward channels to encourage customer engagement activities

So et. al. (2015)distinguished the part of client engagement in building dedication in setting of tourism brands. They surveyed relationship of client engagement with precursors of client faithfulness with the assistance of basic condition demonstrating. They reached 496 lodging/hotel and airline clients and found that that client engagement assumes key part in expanding clients' administration image assessment, mark trust, and brand faithfulness. The result shows that organizations that mark unwaveringness can be fortified not only through the administrative utilization experiences well as through client engagement beyond the administrator experience.

Greve (2014) evaluated the controlling effect of customer engagement on brand image – brand loyalty relationship. He developed a model for measurement of antecedents of customer engagement, to explain customer engagement behaviour on a facebook fan page and to analyzethe effect of customer engagement on brand image – brand loyalty relationship. They found that brand image is negatively moderated by engagement activity. This meant that a higher level of engagement can diminish the effect of brand image on brand loyalty. Thus, this outcome can give managers direction on how to allocate scarce marketing budgets.

Wirtz et al. (2013) explored the role of online brand forums in engaging customers. For this purpose, they developed a conceptual framework having four key dimensions of online brand communities or brand – introduction, web use, financing and administration and three antecedents or brand –related, social and utilitarian. They stated that companies must focus on building online brand communities to engage customers.

Econsultancy&Cscape (2011) decided to make a customer engagement report 2011 in which more than 1000 companies took part. This report observed at trends linking to customer behavior and attitudes and numerous customer engagement strategies being assumed by companies. It was decided that online and offline strategies both are notable in engaging customers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:
1. The objective of the study is to understand the growing need for companies of all kinds to employ various means of customer engagement for maximum benefit.
2. To understand the perception of today's millennial's about customer engagement and social media engagement.
3. To understand how the times of marketing are changing and how online customer demands have to be met.
4. To prove that millennial have an inclination towards online advertising.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:
The problem at hand is for companies to judge and understand how consumer preferences are changing and how to keep them rightly engaged in order to leverage the best out of them. The current times are changing and getting an insight into the customer perception about CE will go a long way towards helping the company achieve its goals.

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Hypotheses:

1. H1:Age and customer inclination towards online/ offline CE is related. / millennials are more inclined towards online CE.
2. H2:Loyalty factor has an effect on customer perception in social media engagement. / Online CE has an effect on brand loyalty in millenials.
3. H3: Age and exposure to Online or Offline customer engagement is related
4. H4:Purchase decision is affected by brand presence online

Research methodology:
Descriptive and Empirical.

      The questionnaire has been designed to cater to the theme of the research which is to describe the customer perception and customer opinion on current CE and most specifically their opinion towards online CE.

      The questionnaire consisted of questions based on the Likert model scale, 3 point scale, either or questions and Descriptive Questions.

      For the purpose of the research, only the Likert scale questions and Either or Questions have statistically provable variable connections and have hence been used. The other questions are for the theory and understanding part of this project that go on to reveal many facts that the population should know.

      Twenty one questions are asked in the survey in order to collect data . When preparing the questionnaire in this study, attention ad to be given to 7-8 main questions that will be used for research

      It is understandable that many of the questions were ignored for a statistical test in the research process as they give reliable answers but from a descriptive point of view. Since this paper is indented to be descriptive, it plays into our hands.

Method of data collection: Data collection took place on a fully PRIMARY BASIS. Questionnaire was prepared first hand with 21 questions of different types of scales accommodating all possible aspects of the topic and information required for study.

Main objective of this study is to observe the customers perceptions towards social media engagement

Sampling Type / size:The population we had for the study was indefinite. The reach was nearly in the millions due to the usage of internet and the reach of google forms. Out of the many, we have received answers and responses from 113 people. Hence, 113 will be our Sample Size.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation:**
Reliability Test:

RELIABILITY STATISTICS	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.721	9

      Since the reliability statistics value is more than 0.6, therefore the test is accurate and reliable. Thus we can accept or reject the hypotheses based on the test.

      The data collected is to be analyzed using relevant statistical tools followed by suitable interpretation.This survey has 13 questions of five-point Likert scale, 3 point and 2 point scale and Croanbach'salpha analysis applied on these questions only. Croanbach's alpha value was found to be 0.66 for Likert questions and this value is acceptable in SPSS reliability statistics.

      In addition, for each likert question the reliability test was separately performed. Consequently, only question 21 was below 0.5 so it was removed and it was not evaluated in terms of the quality of the survey. In this study, reliability analysis is hence considered for relevant questions only.

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Age group of respondents

COUNT OF AGE
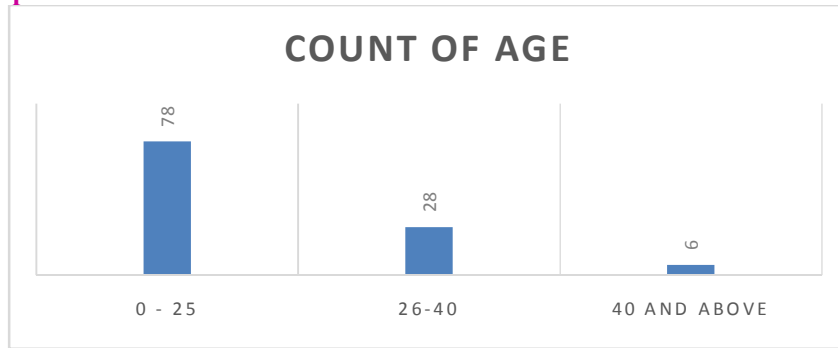
As this research was done with the millenials kept in mind, it is safe to say that more than 70% of our respondents fall in the millennial category. This makes it easy for drawing conclusions and also gauging how the current gen Y as they call it perceive all things about customer engagement.
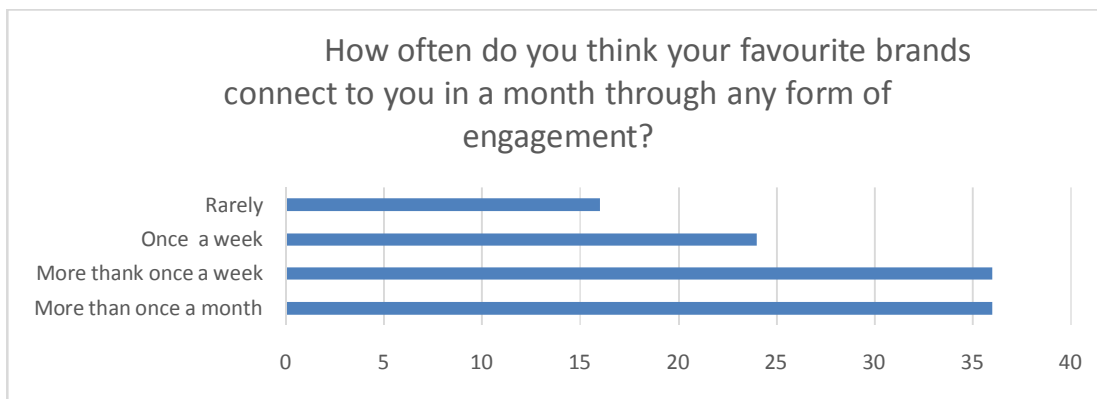
This data gives us an insight into the very basics of customer engagement. Customers were asked how often they think their favourite brands connect to them in a month through any form of engagement, and most of them (94) agreed that they are connected through some form of CE more than once a month at the very least.

This is only to tell that brands do exhibit some engagement techniques, whatever they are to keep customers in the loop.

Age and Inclination towards online execution of marketing
   Correlations

		Age	VAR00003
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	.574
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.069
	N	110	110
VAR00003	Pearson Correlation	.574	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.069	
	N	110	113

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

H 1 - Age and customer inclination towards online CE is related.
According to the revelations of the data, age is a determining factor as to whether one is inclined towards online CE or offline CE. Here, since the correlation sig (2 tailed) is more than .005 at .069 and

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Pearson correlation shows .574, we can establish that there is a positive correlation between age and customer's inclination towards online CE.

Loyalty and perception towards CE is related

Correlations

		Online :Promotions have higher impact over short duration of time (VAR 1)	Brand Loyalty
VAR 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.416[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.052
	N	110	108
Brand Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.416[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.052	
	N	108	111

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

H 2 - Loyalty factor has an effect on customer perception in social media engagement.

According to the revelations of the data,there is a correlation between people who are brand loyal and those who believe Online Promotions have higher impact over short duration of time. Thereby, brand loyalty and perception of online CE over short durations are correlated as the correlation sig (2 tailed) is more than .005 at .052 and Pearson correlation shows .416.

Age and Agreement over whether most promotion happens online or offline / exposure to Customer Engagement.

Correlations

		Age	LinkertAgree/Disagree
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	-.032
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.073
	N	110	110
LinkertAgree	Pearson Correlation	-.032	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.073	
	N	110	113

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

H -3 : Age and exposure to Online or Offline customer engagement is related
HYPOTHESIS REJECTED

According to the analysis, the data suggests that there is a negative correlation between age and exposure to online / offline CE. That means that customers aren't differentiated in terms of their exposure towards either online or offline CE. At sig (2 tailed) 0.73 and Pearson Correlation of -.32, there is a negative correlation that makes us reject the hypothesis.

By this, we can surely conclude that we cannot critically define that a particular age group is exposed to a particular form of CE.

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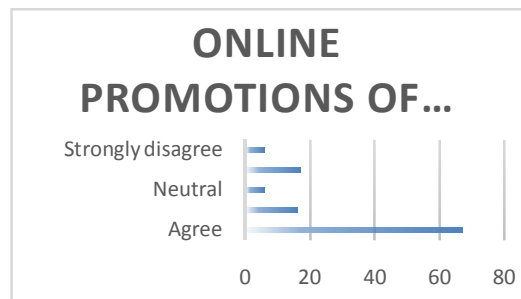
Purchase decision isaffected by brand presence online
Statistics
VAR00001

N	Valid	113
	Missing	0

VAR00001

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
V ali d	Maybe	33	29.2	29.2	29.2
	No	18	15.9	15.9	45.1
	Yes	62	54.9	54.9	100.0
	Total	113	100.0	100.0	

This snippet of descriptive statistics is used to show that a brand's online presence is a huge factor in today's world. So much so that it may even affect the customer's purchase decision. At 54.9% Yes and 29.2% maybe, we can conclude that brand's online presence has a definite say in customer's purchase decision.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:
1.   H 1 : Age and customer inclination towards online CE is related.
Online promotions/social media promotions are necessary **for a company** in the short run over offline modes of promotion, we can say that millenails are inclined towards this notion of understanding. IN the future, the researchers can determine the degree to which social media engagement or online CE is attracting the differnet age groups.

2.   H 2 : Loyalty factor has an effect on customer perception about social media engagement.
More than 75% of the respondents agree that online Online promotions/social media promotions have a higher **impact on customers** than offline means over a short duration.
Due the established correlation , brand loyal people are hence perceiving Online promotions/social media promotions differently.
So, we can conclude that, loyalty factor has an effect on customer perception in social media engagement.

3.   H -3 : Age and exposure to Online or Offline customer engagement is related
Since the hypothesis was rejected,we can say we cannot signify that a certain age group is exposed to a certain kind of CE. It is often assumed that the younger generation is exposed to online CE or Social media engagement while the older generation is exposed more to the traditional offline means of CE. However, this data suggests that it is not true. In a way,this proves that online CE has a wider reach and its exposure cannot be correlated with age.

H - 4 : Purchase decision is affected by brand presence online
According to the data collected and post analysis, we can say that that a sizable number(close to 85%) of respondents believe that a brand's online presence is a determining factor when it comes to purchase making decision.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:
The subject matter of the paper is of a very recent and upcoming one. There are several researchers taking place in the file that have touched the qualitative part, quantitative part, theoretical aspect and conceptual aspect. Measures have now been developed to appropriately distinctly value customer engagement. Since the research caters to online customer engagement and social media engagement in specific, further

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quantitative research can be done on figuring out the degree to which online customer engagement is better or more popular or more effective than off-line customer engagement.

Neuro based research can also be done to guauge how much each type of CE affects and works with the brain.

Upcoming any researches can also help figure out which specific outlet of social media is more engaging to customers.

Reesearch about online advertising and its takeover from traditional means of advertising as a comparative study backed with numbers will also help as a base study for this subject.

Further study can be done on how Millennials and their behaviour is changing and setting a new pattern day by day. How much deeper research can be done about the millennial consumer behaviour. That will not only help business practitioners but also academicians.

Taking an alternate point of view, another aspect of future scope lies with gauging how and why ofoff-line and traditional modes of customer engagement losing touch.

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