

Impact of Social Media Engagement on Brand Loyalty Among Millennials

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between social media involvement and brand loyalty among millennials, a demographic group of people born between 1981 and 1996. These days, social media platforms have flourished into different areas like communication, commerce, and community. It is important for the marketer to understand the influence of social media on the consumer's attitudes. In the competitive world, a marketer needs to understand the factors that influence the purchase behaviour of consumers to take the competitive advantage. This study investigates the factors such as likes, storytelling, comments, shares and user-generated content's effect on customer loyalty towards a brand and makes the customer emotionally attached to the brand. The findings of the study based on the existing literature reviews suggest that engaging social media content increases millennial loyalty towards the brand and also increases trust towards the brand.

Keywords: *Social Media, Brand Loyalty, Millennials, Consumer Engagement, Digital Marketing, User-Generated Content, Influencer Marketing, Authenticity, Brand Trust*

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation has redesigned the relationship between consumer and brand. Now, consumers are active brand builders. Digital transformation enables consumers to interact in real time, enabling them to form a community and share content online. A group of people born between 1981 and 1986 are defined as millennials. This group is the grown-ups in the digital age, and they are the first to join social media as primary interaction channels and also use these platforms to make purchase decisions. As per the latest information, 92% of the millennials in the US are available on social media (Cropink, 2026). Millennials spend 2 hours and 40 min every day on social media platforms (GWI, as cited in Content Science Review, 2025). This group of people spends the maximum of their time on social media platforms and shares content, making blogs on social media platforms. Considering the review, comments shared online about a brand, and this also influenced their purchase behaviours.

Brand loyalty is defined as consumers choosing the brand among various alternatives and repurchasing the same brand every time. Brand loyalty brings an emotional attachment in consumers with the brand, which can be due to its quality, price value, storytelling, brand advocacy, and community memberships on social media platforms.

1.1 Research Objectives

This paper pursues the following primary research objectives:

- To investigate the underlying theories of how social media engagement contributes to brand loyalty development among millennials.
- To assess the impact of engagement methods such as passive consumption, active engagement, and content creation on various aspects of loyalty.
- To understand the moderating and mediating factors in the process of developing brand loyalty from social media engagement, such as brand trust, brand authenticity, influencer credibility, and social identity.
- To recognize how different platforms affect increasing or reducing the impact of social media engagement on brand loyalty.
- To develop insights for brand managers and digital marketers on how to utilize social media for building brand loyalty among millennials.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 Research Approach

This study is based on the qualitative approach.

2.2 Research Design Type

The research employs a non-experimental, descriptive-analytical design

2.3 Data Sources and Inclusion Criteria

The sources of the secondary data was taken from publishes research papers, peered review research papers from 2019 onwards.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Conceptual Framework for Brand Loyalty in the Digital Age

Brand loyalty refers to the consistent repurchase of a brand by consumers. This also involved customers emotionally with the brand, and it also involves peer-to-peer advocacy (Oliver, 1999). Brand loyalty describes the consumer's

emotional commitment and positive word of mouth marketing and recommendations to friends, family and relatives, and it also makes the consumer refrain from switching to its available alternatives.

Various activities, such as brand interaction and engagement on social media, enhance the brand loyalty Changani & Kumar (2024). Fajarwati & Haliza (2024) investigated in their study that the degree of information sharing, various trending activities on social media, enhances the consumers' brand loyalty. Kumar & Nayak (2025) have identified in their study that intense levels of engaging activities on social media significantly increase brand loyalty and consistent repurchase among millennials. Sharma & Jain (2024) found that positive reviews, likes, shares, and comments significantly improved the brand loyalty.

Nguyen et al. (2024) found in their study that interactive activities on social media platforms improve customer perceptions towards the brand and build strong loyalty. Verma & Singh (2023) have concluded that active participation in the interactive activities significantly improves brand trust and loyalty.

observed that active participation in brand pages increases trust and long-term loyalty.

4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT AND LOYALTY

4.1 CONTENT QUALITY AS CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT DRIVERS

The quality of the content includes the visual interactive appeal, creative entertaining values, relevant information about the brand, and storytelling. Word of mouth marketing improves the brand value and purchase behaviour among millennials. The research of Kim and Ko, published in 2012, stated that various social media activities improve brand equity and customer purchase behaviour. Various studies have also claimed that there is a significant impact on the brand equity of the content quality and interactive activities of social media

Subsequent research refined these findings by demonstrating that authenticity moderates the relationship between content quality and engagement depth: high-quality content perceived as inauthentic or commercially motivated may generate passive consumption without eliciting the active engagement behaviours that most strongly predict loyalty outcomes. In the study by Research by Napoli et al. (2014) shows that brand perceptions show the consumer commitment towards the brand. Social media platforms provide numerous opportunities to marketers for storytelling, interview of founder, customer stories, etc.

4.2 Interactive Consumer Engagement and Parasocial Relationships

Social media platforms provide real-time interactions between consumers and brands, like enabling consumers to real time comments, polls, question and answer sessions and live streaming. This develops the emotional connections among consumers on one side with the brands. it also enables marketers to forecast the consumer engagement, trust, and loyalty among millennials. Various social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube live help brands to connect with customers in real time and share the experience, this make marketers predict the consumers' purchase intentions, attachment towards the brand.

4.3 User-Generated Content and Brand Advocacy

User-generated content is the most significant pathways which convert social media engagement activities into consumer loyalty towards the brand. It includes the reviews given by the consumers, photo/ video posts shared by consumers, which show the social attachment of the consumers with the brand. The impact of User-generated content is significant on the consumer's purchase intentions, especially among millennials.

According to Beat Agency (2025), Approximately 85% of millennials show trust in the brand after reviewing the real consumers' content. They consider this while making purchase decisions.

4.4 Influencer Marketing and Millennial Brand Loyalty

These days, marketers are using influencer marketing as a tool to attract millennials and engage them with the brand. Influencer marketing is a very effective strategy to develop a relationship with millennials, build trust and make them loyal towards the brand.

4.5 Brand Community Participation and Social Identity

In the digital era, social media platforms enable consumers to interact with various alternatives brand. It also refers to a platform where a consumer can engage actively with the various interactive brand engagement activities such as content sharing, reviews, co-creations and a real-time feedback process. Millennials value connections and belongings more, and active participation in brand engagement activities makes them develop an association towards the brand. Brand communities refer to a group where consumers can develop social relationships with a brand. Brand communities provide millennials with platforms where consumers can engage with the brand-related content, which develops interpersonal relationships among members. Social media provides a platform where social interaction builds trust and develops emotional support, which fosters loyalty towards the brand as well as towards communities.

5. PLATFORM-SPECIFIC DYNAMICS

5.1 Instagram: Visual Branding, Reels, and Aspiration

According to Sprout Social (2025), more than 480 million users are available on the platform of Instagram. This platform plays a significant role on social media, reaching millennials aged 25 to 34 and geographically scattered consumers. Instagram's strong visual engagement enables brands to communicate with consumers. In India, the primary source of brand discovery is Instagram due to its visual aesthetic architecture and centric storytelling. Visual branding of the product is more impactful than the product itself. Instagram provides a platform where images and videos can be uploaded, which serves as the only mode of communication. Millennials are highly reactive to the colour schemes and aesthetic designs that develop emotional connections.

5.2 YouTube: Depth, Education, and Parasocial Bonds

YouTube gives marketers a platform where long videos can be uploaded, which enables brands to connect with millennials via detailed storytelling, content sharing, and demonstration of the

product. According to the Cropink, 2026, approximately. 34% consumers prefer YouTube over television, and 55% millennials access YouTube daily. Due to the availability of long video uploads, marketers can demonstrate the product with detailed information, can also share tutorials and storytelling, which enhances the decision-making.

YouTube supports marketers in developing parasocial relationships with millennials, which are one-sided connections. These connections develop with the strong emotional attachments to the consumers, which can convert to brand loyalty over time. As such, YouTube improves the consumer's trust and their satisfaction. This platform also supports creating brand loyalty due to its credibility. Millennials are very sensitive, and they may start distrusting the brand if any brand starts doing excessive advertising or if they feel the brand content is biased. So the brand needs to maintain transparency with the consumers about the content.

5.3 Facebook: Community Building, Groups, and Targeted Engagement

Facebook plays a very important role in building brand loyalty among millennials, as more than 70% have an account on Facebook. Facebook supports brands to give ample space where they can communicate with consumers and make them followers. They also provide the space to share the feedback, experiences and can create joint value, which creates emotional attachment and a sense of belongingness. The Facebook brand can also divide the audience into target segments based on geographic, demographic, and economic factors, which allows the brand to deliver the content effectively. Consumers are very sensitive towards feedback and peer-to-peer recommendations, which influence their purchase behaviour significantly.

6. MEDIATING AND MODERATING FACTORS

6.1 Brand Trust as a Central Mediator

In the digitalisation era, information is abundant across every social platform, and many alternatives are available. In this context, brand trust plays an important role as a mediator between social media interactive activities and consumer trust. When a consumer trusts a brand's calibre to meet its commitment, that trust is called brand trust. Trust is never built solely through product performance but also through other factors that play a vital role, such as consistency, transparency, and integrity. Interactive activities on social media not only create awareness but also generate trust and

win brand loyalty. These interactive activities reduce uncertainty and enhance emotional belongingness. Two-way transparent communication enhances reliability and strengthens trust.

6.2 Perceived Authenticity

Perceived authenticity refers to the consumers believes in brand is genuine, honest, and reliable. It creates the active participation of millennials and shares the content, posts, likes, comments, and reviews, which attract consumers and influence their purchase behaviour, but excessive commercialisation on the social media platform may reduce the interaction level and can be taken as inauthentic. If any consumer perceived any brand as authentic than it influence customers values. This also foster the trust among consumers and sense of belonging which makes long-term relationships with the consumers and the brand.

6.3 Social Influence

Social media platforms enable to form an online communities where everyone share their valuable experience, their contents, reviews and millennials are actively available on social media platforms and easily get influenced by the peer experience and their feedback. This digital leader has significantly influence other consumers purchase preferences. Consumers give value to those contents which they feel relatable and authentic, such contents create a pressure to switch the brand or remain loyal.

7. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Findings

The study reveals that there is a complex relationship between social media engagement and brand loyalty among millennials. Several findings show the same result. First, there is no uniformity of relationship between loyalty and engagement; active participation on social media platforms has a stronger influence than passive participation. Millennials are active on social media platforms, and they are affected by the online available contents such as comments, shares, posts, reviews, and peer-to-peer endorsement. Brand which includes the reward in social media strategies get maximum loyalty compared to those who focussed only on content delivery.

Secondly, Millennials like only those brands which shows authenticity and trustworthiness and they get easily engage to them (Sprout Social, 2025).

Thirdly, Brands who get maximum media engagement are more likely to attract consumers towards them. Fourthly, each brand must design tailor-made strategies as per the requirements of the social media platforms

7.2 Implications for Marketing Practice

The findings of the study show several implications for marketers who seek the loyalty of millennials on social media platforms.

Brands should understand the requirements of millennials before delivering any content, as comments, likes, reviews, and posts influence millennials' purchase decisions, so they should be more careful and assign enough resources to manage the social media platforms.

The brand should examine the content reliability and authenticity and its impact on the millennials before delivering on social media platforms.

7.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study has limitations as it is based on the systematic literature review, and its quality and scope is totally dependent on the existing secondary research database. The Millennials group is taken as the 15-year database, and their digital knowledge can show different engagement.

Future research should be designed to find out the formation of loyalty in millennials from social media engagements. The growth of artificial intelligence on social media platforms can influence their brand engagement.

8. CONCLUSION

This study investigates the relationship between social media engagement and brand loyalty among millennials. This study is based on the secondary research database, and in this study research find that there is a relationship between social media engagement activities and brand loyalty. Millennials are most likely to be active on social media platforms, and they get easily influenced by the content shared on social media platforms, such as likes, shares, and posts, which can influence their purchase decisions.

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