

Helal, Guida and Ozuem, Wilson ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0337-1419>
(2019) Social media and social identity in the millennial generation. In: Bowen,
Gordon and Ozuem, Wilson, (eds.) Leveraging computer-mediated marketing
environments. IGI Global, Pennsylvania, US, pp. 43-82.

Downloaded from: <https://insight.cumbria.ac.uk/id/eprint/4421/>

Usage of any items from the University of Cumbria's institutional repository 'Insight' must conform to the following fair usage guidelines.

Any item and its associated metadata held in the University of Cumbria's institutional repository Insight (unless stated otherwise on the metadata record) may be copied, displayed or performed, and stored in line with the JISC fair dealing guidelines (available [here](#)) for educational and not-for-profit activities

provided that

- the authors, title and full bibliographic details of the item are cited clearly when any part of the work is referred to verbally or in the written form
 - a hyperlink/URL to the original Insight record of that item is included in any citations of the work
- the content is not changed in any way
- all files required for usage of the item are kept together with the main item file.

You may not

- sell any part of an item
- refer to any part of an item without citation
- amend any item or contextualise it in a way that will impugn the creator's reputation
- remove or alter the copyright statement on an item.

The full policy can be found [here](#).

Alternatively contact the University of Cumbria Repository Editor by emailing insight@cumbria.ac.uk.

Chapter 3

Social Media and Social Identity in the Millennial Generation

Guida Helal

American University of Beirut, Lebanon

Wilson Ozuem

University of Cumbria, UK

ABSTRACT

The active presence of fashion brands online serves as a channel for customers to connect with brands for different intentions. This connection acts as an outlet customers employ in furthering social identity through brand associations. Brand perceptions are accordingly formed among consumers based on the promised functional and symbolic benefits consumption of that brand guarantees. Social media has assumed an integral role in fostering brand-customer relationships that ultimately augment social identity. The following chapter examines the role social media has played on brand perceptions in the fashion apparel and accessories industry from a social identity theory perspective. The chapter focuses on theoretical implications and managerial implications. The concluding section offers some significant roles that social media and social identity may play in keeping up with the design and development of marketing communications programs.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing logics and developments have comparably and effectively progressed over the years to parallel the whirlwind innovations that primarily define the fashion industry. The dynamic nature of marketing means fashion companies are relentlessly on guard for the next groundbreaking development (Jayachandran, Gimeno & Varadarajan, 1999; Lusch, 2007; Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Webster, 1992). One case of a sought after phenomenon that has dramatically revolutionised today's society, is the technological Millennial approach to communication. Traditional marketing has gradually lost bearing, as the rigid likes of one-way communication is superseded by active two-way interchange (Houman Andersen, 2001; Ozuem, Howell, & Lancaster, 2008). The shift in communication has consequently encouraged worldwide organisations to assume the likes of Internet technologies along with their varied manifestations, such as social media,

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-7344-9.ch003

as an outlet allowing brands to produce content for followers (Evans, 2012; Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Zarrella, 2009). An abundance of literature has consequently surfaced examining the evolution social media has enthused in routine life (Fischer & Reuber, 2011; Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011; Hoffman & Fodor, 2016; Huy & Shipilov, 2012; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011; Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011). Further studies have explored the application of social media within a brand's marketing strategy (Luo, Zhang, & Duan, 2013; Naylor, Lamberton & West, 2012; Simmons, 2008; Tuten & Solomon, 2014).

Kim and Ko (2012) addressed the promising relationship between social media marketing and resultant customer equity among luxury fashion brands. The study aimed to demonstrate the success luxury fashion brands gain from employing social media marketing activities including entertainment, interaction, or word of mouth. Based on the findings, the study concluded that the use of social media is directly correlated with subsequent enhanced purchase intentions and customer equity within the luxury fashion industry. However, the study paid limited attention to a demographic age that is familiar with social media and able to produce pertinent feedback that enhances the accuracy of research results. An analysis conducted by a statistic portal, Statista, on the worldwide daily usage of social media found that the highest degree of daily social media usage in 2016 was held by global users aged 25 to 34 years old (Statista, 2016). A more recent study revealed the highest time consumption of visual activities on social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram to be among ages 16-34 years, while preceding generations demonstrated fewer percentages of average time spent participating in such activities (Statista, 2017). The Millennial generation outruns other age groups as the leading social media user. Albeit the current extensive literature investigating social media, few studies have examined the use of social media in the fashion industry, particularly on the Millennial generation.

Social media is a development of the World Wide Web that began gaining ground between the late 1990's and early 2000's, establishing worldwide prominence by the late 2000's (Dewing, 2010). Yet before delving into the profound significance social media has exerted globally, the course of events leading up to its inception are considered

The initiation of the World Wide Web began in the early 1990's upon Tim Berners-Lee linking hypertext technology to the Internet. This allowed for one common worldwide foundation to be formed, whereby networked communication was born (Van Dijck, 2013). The consequent evolution of Web 2.0 brought about social media. Web 2.0 is described as consisting of two features that help define it, and these are *microcontent* and *social media*. *Microcontent* comprises of pieces of content that express a primary idea. Such pieces cover much less information than websites and may take the form of blog posts, comments, or small images. These are designed for easy upload, reuse, and stimulating participation. The second feature of Web 2.0, *social media* or *social software*, consists of platforms organized around the framework of connecting people to one another. The *microcontent* produced by multiple users creates a page of shared interests different users can access to bond with one another (Alexander & Levine, 2008). In time, the growth of Web 2.0 prompted the birth of two-way communication platforms and the flow of user-generated content, which is today identified as social media (Arora, 2014; Fuchs, 2014; Gillies & Cailliau, 2000; O'Reilly, 2005).

A study conducted by Statista further affirms the significance social media has gained across the fashion industry (Statista, 2016). This study emphasizes the sheer 'clout' that virtual channels have when it comes to the fashion domain through the integration of social media throughout London Fashion Week. The show is a highly anticipated bi-annual fashion trading weeklong event, and in 2014, it generated over half a million mentions on social media. The majority of these mentions emerged over

38 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the product's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/social-media-and-social-identity-in-the-millennial-generation/221503?camid=4v1

This title is available in *Advances in Marketing, Customer Relationship Management, and E-Services*, *InfoSci-Books*, *InfoSci-Business and Management*, *Business, Administration, and Management*, *InfoSci-Computer Science and Information Technology*, *Science, Engineering, and Information Technology*. Recommend this product to your librarian:
www.igi-global.com/e-resources/library-recommendation/?id=101

Related Content

Communicative Content of Selected Visual Construction of Humour on Facebook: A Visual Social Semiotic Analysis

Ibrahim Esan Olaosun (2016). *Analyzing Language and Humor in Online Communication* (pp. 85-100).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/communicative-content-of-selected-visual-construction-of-humour-on-facebook/156879?camid=4v1a

Comparing FTF and Online Communication Knowledge

(2017). *Solutions for High-Touch Communications in a High-Tech World* (pp. 103-113).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/comparing-fff-and-online-communication-knowledge/174301?camid=4v1a

An Analysis of a Decade of Research Published in the "Journal of Computer Mediated Communication"

Jamie Switzer (2008). *Handbook of Research on Computer Mediated Communication* (pp. 541-550).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/analysis-decade-research-published-journal/19770?camid=4v1a

Online Trust: A Moving Target

Natasha Dwyer (2013). *Online Credibility and Digital Ethos: Evaluating Computer-Mediated Communication* (pp. 24-36).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/online-trust-moving-target/72620?camid=4v1a