

# Consumer Social Media Brand Engagement, Brand Equity and Generational Cohorts

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## Abstract

Although brands consider social media as an essential marketing communication tool, scholars still debate over its utilitarian value. However, generational cohorts, a concept considered in these studies, might lie behind the variations in findings among these studies, as the impact of generational cohorts varies according to their level of engagement. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between consumer social media brand engagement and brand equity, and the moderating effect of the generational cohorts X and Y on this relationship in the mobile telecommunication industry in Sri Lanka. The study used a self-administered structured questionnaire, and data was collected from 400 users of social media, utilising the convenience sampling technique. Twelve outliers were removed from the dataset during the data cleaning stage, and the remaining 388 data were analysed following a two-step structural equation modelling with AMOS version 20. The findings revealed that there is a relationship between consumer social media brand engagement and brand equity. Also, the study revealed that generational cohorts moderate the relationship in a manner that Generation Y is more actively engaged in the cognitive and activational attitudinal components than Generation X, whereas Generation X is more affectively committed than Generation Y. This study helped address, at least partially, the theoretical gap in the field of consumer engagement, which is recognised as a priority research area. Further, this study encourages practitioners in the field of digital marketing to use customised approaches in order to engage different generational cohorts, since each cohort differs from others regarding its type of engagement.

**Keywords:** Consumer social media brand engagement; Social media; Generation X; Generation Y; Brand equity

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