Effective Use Of Buzz Marketing For Brand Adoption And Mediating Role Of Customer Engagement Among Millennials And Centennials

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Abstract

Modern business scenario has drastically changed due to the intrusion of technology in our everyday life. Consumer behavior has drastically changed including expectations, buying process and consumption patterns. Advertisements and marketing communication have taken a backstage as an influencer of customers. So, companies are trying to use innovative ways to attract and persuade the customers to use their products and services.

Buzz marketing, viral marketing, cause related marketing are few such techniques used by the companies. Among these buzz marketing is more liberally used as it has more credibility due to involvement of family and friends through the social media. Stronger customer engagement is required for the successful buzz marketing campaign.

When it comes to customer segmentation, both millennials and centennials are influenced. This study is trying to identify how the level of engagement and intensity of use are different among Millennials and centennials.

Here in this study the data analysis is done to found that Centennials are more active in buzz as well as they create the content. Chi square test and EFA is used to identify the mediation impact of customer mediation towards brand adoption among both millennials and the centennials.

Key Words: Buzz Marketing, Customer Engagement, Brand Adoption.

1.0 Introduction

In today's world one of the formidable tasks for the business world is marketing communication. Due to the exponential growth of the conventional media, internet and social media, it is very natural that the marketing message will be trapped in the clutter and may remain unheard by the target audience. Hence the organization are trying hard to use more innovative ways to reach the audience and make their presence felt.

Practitioners estimates suggest that consumers daily face thousands of marketing communications (Marsden 2006; Shenk1998). Many customers are preferring to avoid marketing communications directly generated by the company or from any other source (Johansson 2005; Wells 2004). Many firms have responded with innovative approaching for grabbing customer attention, including highly successful emotional branding campaigns, wild publicity stunts and creative product placement and awareness generation tactics (Marsden 2006).

In last few years social media have become a tool that is easy to share information and discussion about business activities as well as sharing various kinds of information. Social media is an effective medium in making a sale either goods or services. Social media is also seen as a message sender tool chain that will be distributed by others constantly (Yessy Artanti, Fajar Hari Prasetyo, and Raya Sulistyowati 2019).

In a postmodern society, as the individuals are reluctant towards traditional advertising and the mass advertising is increasingly neglected, marketing has developed alternatives to better communicate with its target consumer (Kapferer 1994). To ensure the better credibility in communication the present generation advertisers are showing more dependence on buzz marketing (Hetzel 2002).

Some firms like to create excitement about their products through Buzz Marketing. Buzz marketing is a form of viral advertising where carefully selected consumers are encouraged to talk about the product to friends and family in the hope that 'chatter' will create a buzz about their product. Firms will target people that are known as "trend setters" or the "opinion leaders"; people who are usually aware of the next big thing. When you 'get a buzz going' around a brand, you're inspiring conversations, interactions and discussions that center on that brand.

1.1 Buzz Marketing

Buzz marketing is the strategy to trigger the strong word of mouth in the market. According to Morrisey (2007): "The buzz marketing spreads rapidly lie a virus; it usually spreads within predefined target group of people who like to listen as well as speak about products or services which are sensational and has very strong carryover effect."

Gicquel (2006) in his study has defined the buzz marketing as a "street marketing" technique which is mainly aimed at promoting the products and services in the society so that a strong a "word of mouth" may be developed to create popularity among the large population.

According to Billon and Tardieu (2002), buzz marketing is the process of generating strong word of mouth via creating a buzz surrounding a product, service or an event. It ensures rapid diffusion of the mass information which will be subsequently relayed by consumers.

1.2 Relevance of Buzz Study

New interactive and digital media technologies into the marketing industry gained a momentous prominence on the use of online content to create buzz about a product, service or company.

Buzz generates a highly powerful and interactive form of word-of-mouth referral that occurs both online and offline.

Sophisticated word-of-mouth campaign flatter consumers to be included in the elite group of those in the "know" and willingly spread the word to their friends and colleagues.

Techniques of Buzz marketing will turn out to be a standard component in all cross-media advertising campaigns.

Reliable form of marketing where reviews or recommendations made by respondents are considered to influence buying decision of the consumers, strengthening brand image.

1.3 Six Buttons of Buzz
Buzz is created and wild spread due to one of the following triggers:
1. The Unusual (unique)
2. The Remarkable (something extremely well at an extremely high quality)
3. The Outrageous
4. Controversial
5. The Hilarious
6. Secrets (kept and revealed)

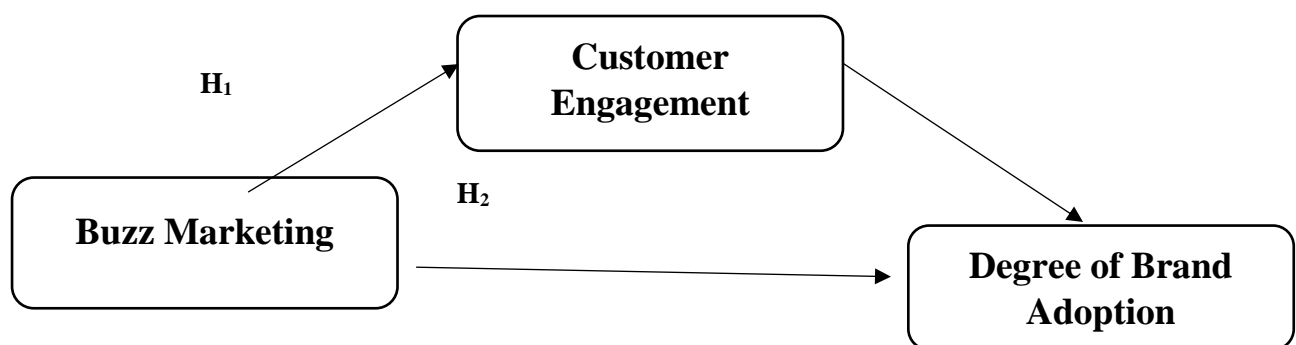## 1.4 Five Common Misconceptions About Buzz Marketing
1. 'Buzz spreads like wildfire!'
2. 'All you need is a good product, and the rest will take care of itself'
3. 'If you get buzz, you don't need any marketing'
4. 'To get buzz going, all you need to do is find those early adopters/ connectors/ evangelists'
5. 'Do it online! No, do it offline!'

1.5 Customer Engagement

Customer engagement is 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 reaction, interaction, effect or overall customer experience, which takes place online and offline. The term can also be used to define customer-to-customer correspondence regarding a communication, product, service or brand. However, the latter dissemination

originates from a business-to-consumer interaction resonated at a subconscious level.

Customer engagement is critical for the success of companies or brands in a technologically connected society. This progressive customer environment requires direct communication with customers so that they are involved in the process, giving them control in exchange for their attention, to increase brand awareness and loyalty, and to earn word of mouth. These exchanges increase the success of marketing campaigns, add value to the brand, and/or product or service, and enhance customer service.

1.6 Objective of Study:

1. To examine the type of buzz results in stronger customer engagement.
2. To determine the degree of brand adoption due to buzz marketing.
3. To define and compare the extent of customer engagement among the Millennials v/s centennials.
4. To verify the extent of use of buzz marketing by Millennials as compared to centennials.

1.7 Conceptual model of Study

1.8 Hypothesis of Study:

H_{1a} : Buzz Marketing results into strong customer Engagement among Millennials .

H_{1b} : Buzz Marketing results into strong customer Engagement among Centennials .

H_{2a} : Buzz Marketing has strong and positive impact on brand adoption in Millennials.

H_{2b} : Buzz Marketing has strong and positive impact on brand adoption in Centennials.

H_{3a} : Customer Engagement has strong positive impact on brand adoption in Millennials.

H_{3b} : Customer Engagement has strong positive impact on brand adoption in Centennials.

1.9 Research Methodology

The methodology used in this study is survey based primary data collection using structured questionnaire and analysis of the collected data using descriptive statistics.

Sample Size & Frame
For the purpose of this study the data is collected from the sample size of 374 (50%

Millennials and 50% Centennials) respondents using purposive sampling technique.

Techniques Applied in Analysis
1. Chi-square Test
2. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)
3. Correlation Analysis

2.0 Literature Review

The development of communication and information technologies has encouraged the emergence of new communication channels that have enhanced the options available to businesses for building relationships with clients (Albesa, 2007). In the last years, conventional marketing strategies and marketing communication are being classified as less effective (Oosterwijk & Loeffen, 2005).

Companies are not satisfied with their marketing results compared to their expenses; therefore, its effectiveness is questioned. Consumers are paying less attention to advertising because of advertising clutter and selective perception (Oosterwijk & Loeffen, 2005).

Online Social Media tools and set of internet applications, like blogs, social networking sites, content communities, collaborative projects, virtual game worlds and social worlds that offer people the opportunity to interact with other members by creating profile sites, group communities, uploading pictures and sending instant messages are developed as alternatives to marketing communication Kaplan & Haenlein (2010). Buzz marketing is process of amplification of companies initial marketing efforts through passive or active influence of the third parties" (Greg, 2004, Thomas (2004).

To ensure larger credibility and genuity in the advertising messages, present day advertisers are showing more dependence upon buzz marketing which is an alternative way of communication with greater scope for innovativeness to promote and sell a brand in the market, Hetzel (2002).

According Bardidia et. al (2007), Badot and Cova (2003), or Godin (2001), buzz marketing is more impactful among younger generation [15 years and 30 years] as well as among the aged 50 years and older. According to Chetochine (2006), this type of buzz marketing campaigns needs to be considered separately for the various segments of customers.

Buzz marketing is instrumental in capturing attention of consumers and the media to the extent that talking about a brand becomes highly entertaining, fascinating, and newsworthy; Hence it becomes a conversation starter (Hughes 2004).

For the successful Buzz marketing campaign all the consumer needs to have a sense of freedom, strong desire towards involvement and interaction. Else may not show the consistency with the principle of buzz marketing (Morrissey 2007).

Customer Engagement is a key success factor for firms (Kumar and Pansari 2016; Verhoef et al. 2010). Value contribution from customers to the firms extends beyond just purchase transactions and also include non-purchase customer behaviours (Kumar and Reinartz 2016).

Engaged customers generate product/brand referrals, co-create experience and value, contribute to organizational innovation processes and exhibit higher loyalty (Hoyer et al., 2010; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004).

The resulting behavioural manifestations toward a brand or firm constitute customer engagement behaviours that include word of mouth (WOM), reviews, recommendations and ratings (Van Doorn et al., 2010).
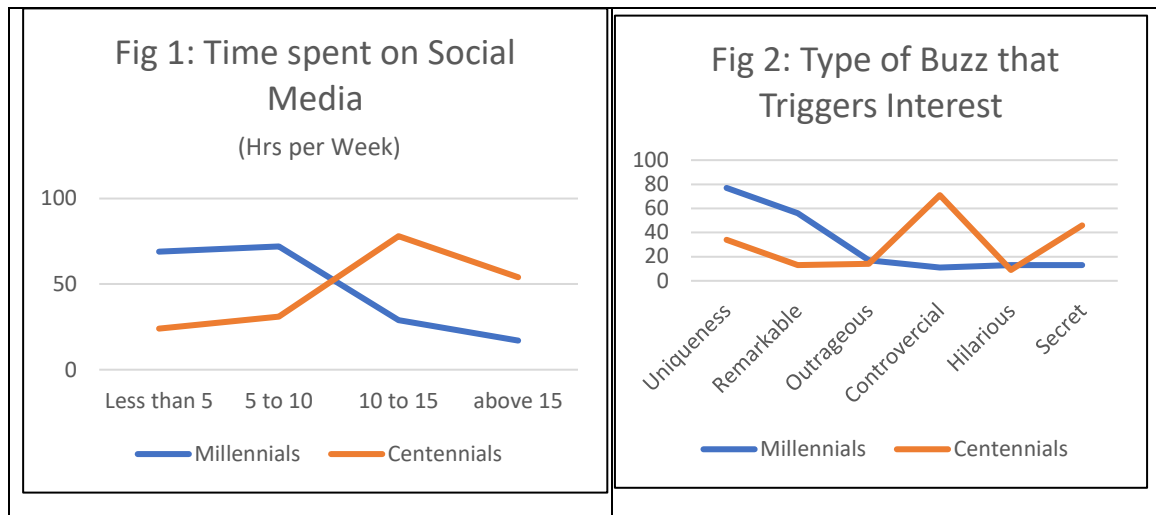
Advocacy is a special case of WOM: it is inherently positive and is accomplished when customers are loyal and delighted (Sashi, 2012). It is one of the most important outcomes of building customer engagement (Walz and Celuch, 2010). Despite its importance, very little empirical research has examined the drivers of consumer advocacy behaviours (Walz and Celuch, 2010).

Customer engagement behaviours "go beyond transactions, and may be specifically defined as a customer's behavioural manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers" (Van Doorn et al., 2010).

Building customer engagement in both business and consumer markets requires adaptation of the marketing mix to take advantage of new technologies and tools to better understand and serve customers. Social media provide the opportunity to connect with customers using richer media with greater reach (Thackerayetal., 2008).

The roles of the seller and the customer converge, with seller and customer collaborating in creating value (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Web 2.0 technologies and tools appear to facilitate the co-creation of value by seller and customer (Harrison and Barthel, 2009).

Online community networks allow customers to become active co-constructors of life experiences and consumption meanings (Firat and Dholakia, 2006).

3.0 Data Analysis

3.1 Analysis of the collected data using equal frequency distribution and plot of graphs.

Fig 1: Time spent on Social Media (Hrs per Week)

Fig 2: Type of Buzz that Triggers Interest

The analysis of the collected data from the respondents show that majority of Millennials spent on average 5 to 10 hours per week on social media as compared to Centennials who spend 10 to 15 hours per week on social media. This indicates that centennials spent more time on social media which also includes more time for the discussions about product / service in the form of E-WoM and buzz.

The type of buzz which attracts the attention of Millennials is uniqueness and remarkable features. On the other hand, Centennials are attracted more towards controversial and secret buzz making them to discuss more about the product/ service.

3.2 Analysis of the data using chi-square test for testing the hypothesis

	Test Statistics					
	Millennials			Centennials		
Variables	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp. Sig.	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
BM1	97.893[a]	4	0.000	198.267[a]	4	0.000
BM2	185.166[a]	4	0.000	201.316[a]	4	0.000
BM3	210.353[a]	4	0.000	45.594[a]	4	0.000
BM4	22.599[a]	4	0.000	143.989[a]	4	0.000
CE1	96.021[a]	4	0.000	144.738[a]	4	0.000
CE2	76.610[a]	4	0.000	163.524[b]	3	0.000
CE3	6.021[a]	4	0.198	216.663[a]	4	0.000
CE4	106.877[a]	4	0.000	70.086[a]	4	0.000
BA1	46.342[a]	4	0.000	67.840[a]	4	0.000
BA2	101.743[a]	4	0.000	231.209[a]	4	0.000
BA3	114.150[a]	4	0.000	264.043[a]	4	0.000
BA4	115.968[a]	4	0.000	203.738[b]	3	0.000
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 37.4.						
b. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 46.8.						

Table 1: Results of Chi-square test

3.3 Analysis of the data using Exploratory factory analysis (EFA) to determine the factor loading of various items related to each variable

| | Millennials | | | Centennials | |
| | Communalities | | | Communalities | |
	Initial	Extraction		Initial	Extraction
BM1	1.000	0.550	BM1	1.000	0.676
BM2	1.000	0.466	BM2	1.000	0.725
BM3	1.000	0.575	BM3	1.000	0.528
BM4	1.000	0.712	BM4	1.000	0.646
CE1	1.000	0.801	CE1	1.000	0.467
CE2	1.000	0.774	CE2	1.000	0.756
CE3	1.000	0.742	CE3	1.000	0.847
CE4	1.000	0.678	CE4	1.000	0.597
BA1	1.000	0.597	BA1	1.000	0.603
BA2	1.000	0.666	BA2	1.000	0.912
BA3	1.000	0.779	BA3	1.000	0.922
BA4	1.000	0.545	BA4	1.000	0.874
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.			Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

Table 2: Test results of Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Millennials							**Centennials**						
Total Variance Explained							**Total Variance Explained**						
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings				Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.584	21.537	21.537	2.584	21.537	21.537	1	5.176	43.133	43.133	5.176	43.133	43.133
2	1.631	13.590	35.127	1.631	13.590	35.127	2	2.006	16.720	59.853	2.006	16.720	59.853
3	1.443	12.022	47.149	1.443	12.022	47.149	3	1.371	11.425	71.278	1.371	11.425	71.278
4	1.140	9.501	56.650	1.140	9.501	56.650	4	0.874	7.286	78.564			
5	1.086	9.052	65.703	1.086	9.052	65.703	5	0.721	6.009	84.573			
6	0.947	7.892	73.594				6	0.636	5.303	89.876			
7	0.836	6.963	80.557				7	0.419	3.494	93.370			
8	0.723	6.028	86.585				8	0.302	2.520	95.890			
9	0.536	4.469	91.054				9	0.214	1.787	97.676			
10	0.457	3.810	94.863				10	0.173	1.446	99.122			
11	0.325	2.708	97.572				11	0.066	0.553	99.675			
12	0.291	2.428	100.000				12	0.039	0.325	100.000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.							Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

Table 3: Total Variance explained using EFA

Millennials							**Centennials**				
Component Matrix[a]							**Component Matrix**[a]				
	Component							Component			
	1	2	3	4	5			1	2	3	
BM1	0.053	0.383	-0.568	0.277	0.003		BM1	0.613	-0.227	-0.499	
BM2	0.363	0.089	-0.468	0.200	0.261		BM2	0.731	-0.232	-0.371	
BM3	-0.439	0.253	-0.176	0.083	-0.529		BM3	-0.013	0.404	0.604	
BM4	0.312	0.766	-0.032	0.037	-0.160		BM4	0.780	-0.174	-0.084	
CE1	0.655	-0.106	0.025	0.482	-0.357		CE1	0.413	-0.059	0.542	
CE2	0.762	0.049	0.258	0.228	-0.268		CE2	0.749	-0.335	0.288	
CE3	0.122	0.533	0.530	0.070	0.396		CE3	0.789	-0.361	0.305	
CE4	0.678	-0.034	0.393	-0.249	-0.028		CE4	0.595	-0.364	0.334	
BA1	-0.427	0.004	0.542	0.347	-0.019		BA1	0.749	-0.144	-0.142	
BA2	-0.495	0.554	0.134	0.259	0.169		BA2	0.746	0.593	-0.056	
BA3	-0.074	-0.457	0.006	0.678	0.324		BA3	0.656	0.699	-0.057	
BA4	0.491	0.106	-0.232	-0.130	0.471		BA4	0.633	0.685	-0.067	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
a. 5 components extracted.	a. 3 components extracted.

Table 4: Details of factor loading results using EFA

4.0 Results and Discussion

The above analysis shows that both the millennials and the centennials are strongly engaged with buzz marketing but the level of engagement and the intensity of involvement is varied. Also, the level of adoption is also different for both through buzz marketing. The analysis of the collected data reveal following key outputs as a result of study on a limited set of respondents.

a. Millennials are more attracted towards the uniqueness or remarkable buzz button where as centennials are attracted towards the controversial and secret buzz.

b. Millennials seek the online reviews, information circulated through social media before purchase of any product or service as a credible source of information. They also like to share such information with others after confirmation about the quality of product and its utility value.

c. Buzz creates strong and intense discussion about the product/service among both Millennials and Centennials but the nature of Millennials is Opinion seeker where as role of Centennials is opinion leader.

d. Centennials like to create the content online for the product / service and circulate the same as part of information sharing about any new product / service they come across whether they use it or not doesn't impact the buzz propagation.

e. As far as engagement is concerned Millennials will be using the buzz for discussion only based upon positive experience. But for Centennials even the negative experience on some occasion will not deviate from their engagement with the buzz.

f. Buzz marketing has strong impact in the process of creating brand loyal customers among both Millennials and Centennials.

Hypothesis	Result
H$_{1a}$: Buzz Marketing results into strong customer Engagement among Millennials	Supported
H$_{1b}$: Buzz Marketing results into strong customer Engagement among Centennials	Supported
H$_{2a}$: Buzz Marketing has strong and positive impact on brand adoption in Millennials	Supported
H$_{2b}$: Buzz Marketing has strong and positive impact on brand adoption in Centennials	Supported
H$_{3a}$: Customer Engagement has strong positive impact on brand adoption in Millennials	Supported
H$_{3b}$: Customer Engagement has strong positive impact on brand adoption in Centennials	Supported

Table 5: Summery of final results after analysis of data

5.0 Conclusion and Implications

Buzz marketing has emerged as an alternative method of marketing communication as it reflects lager credibility as far as the customers are concerned. Both millennials and centennials are engaged in buzz marketing but millennials are opinion seekers whereas the centennials are emerging as opinion leaders and spend the time and effort on generating content over social media and share the same with family and friends. Millennials are attracted more

towards the uniqueness buzz about the product but the Centennials are always interested towards controversial and secret buzz.

Implications for marketers are as follows:

a. The Marketer needs to adopt different approaches while using buzz marketing to target the millennials and centennials

b. The type of buzz also has to be changed while designing the for different market segments.

c. Marketers can use the Centennials as opinion leaders to create and propagate the buzz to popularize the product/service in the market as alternative method of marketing communication.

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