



An Analytical Study On The Role Of Social Media Engagement In Shaping Brand Perception Among Young Consumers

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Abstract – The expansion of digital communication platforms has dramatically transformed modern marketing strategies and brand management practices. Organizations across industries increasingly rely on social media platforms to communicate brand values, disseminate information, and build relationships with stakeholders. This study examines how social media engagement influences brand perception among young consumers with reference to EY (Ernst & Young), one of the world's leading professional services firms. The research adopts a quantitative approach using a structured questionnaire distributed among individuals aged 18–35 who have exposure to EY's digital presence. A total of 310 valid responses were analyzed to identify patterns of social media usage, engagement behaviors, and perceptions of the EY brand. The findings reveal a statistically significant relationship between social media engagement and brand perception. Platforms such as LinkedIn were found to play a particularly important role in shaping perceptions related to thought leadership, credibility, and employer attractiveness. The research also highlights the importance of authenticity and knowledge-driven content in strengthening brand trust. The study provides valuable insights for professional services organizations seeking to leverage social media to enhance brand equity and attract young professionals.

Keywords: Social Media Engagement, Brand Perception, Digital Marketing, Employer Branding, Young Consumers.

I. INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has fundamentally changed the manner in which organizations communicate with audiences and build brand identities. Over the past decade, social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter) have evolved into powerful marketing and communication tools. These platforms allow organizations to share information instantly, interact with audiences, and establish a consistent brand narrative.

For professional services organizations, brand reputation is one of the most valuable strategic assets. Unlike product-based industries, professional services rely heavily on trust, expertise, and credibility. Consequently, organizations such as EY utilize digital platforms to communicate thought leadership, innovation, and corporate values.

Young consumers, particularly Millennials and Generation Z, represent a highly connected demographic group that spends a significant amount of time on social media. They frequently rely on online content to form opinions about companies, evaluate potential employers, and gather information about industry trends. Therefore, understanding how social media engagement influences their perception of brands is crucial for organizations seeking to maintain competitive advantage.

Background of the Study

EY is one of the largest global professional services organizations providing services in assurance, consulting,

tax, and strategy. With operations in more than 150 countries and hundreds of thousands of employees worldwide, the firm has built a strong reputation for professional excellence and innovation. Through its digital communication strategy, EY actively publishes research reports, thought leadership articles, and insights related to emerging business trends.

Social media platforms enable EY to reach a diverse audience that includes potential employees, clients, and industry stakeholders. The company's online presence often highlights sustainability initiatives, diversity and inclusion efforts, technological innovation, and career development opportunities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer engagement is a central concept in modern marketing theory. Van Doorn et al. describe engagement as behavioral manifestations toward a brand that extend beyond purchasing behavior. Similarly, Brodie et al. conceptualize engagement as a multidimensional construct comprising cognitive, emotional, and behavioral elements. Keller's brand equity theory suggests that brand perception is shaped by associations, perceived quality, and consumer trust. Aaker also emphasizes the importance of brand loyalty and brand awareness in strengthening long-term customer relationships.

In the context of social media, Schivinski and Dabrowski argue that both company-generated content and user-generated content influence brand attitudes and consumer



perceptions. Digital platforms facilitate real-time interaction, which enhances the level of consumer engagement and emotional connection with brands.

Studies focusing on younger audiences reveal that authenticity and transparency are key determinants of credibility in online communication. Consumers are more likely to trust organizations that share informative and meaningful content rather than purely promotional messages.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the level of social media engagement among young consumers exposed to EY's digital content.
- To examine the relationship between social media engagement and brand perception.
- To identify the social media platforms that most strongly influence brand perception.
- To evaluate the importance of authenticity and thought leadership in shaping brand trust.
- To provide strategic recommendations for improving social media marketing practices.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Parameter	Description
Research Design	Quantitative research using survey method
Sample Size	310 respondents
Target Population	Young consumers aged 18–35
Sampling Technique	Convenience sampling
Data Collection Tool	Structured online questionnaire
Analysis Techniques	Correlation analysis and descriptive statistics

The questionnaire consisted of demographic questions, social media usage patterns, engagement behaviors, and perception-based questions measured on Likert scales. The responses were analyzed to understand patterns and relationships between engagement activities and perception outcomes.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The demographic analysis revealed that the majority of respondents were between the ages of 22 and 30. This group represents early-career professionals and postgraduate students who actively consume professional content online.

Survey findings indicate that most respondents spend between two and four hours daily on social media platforms. LinkedIn emerged as the most frequently used platform for professional content consumption, followed by Instagram and YouTube.

Engagement behaviors varied among respondents. Viewing and reading posts were the most common activities, while commenting and sharing represented deeper levels of interaction. Respondents who actively interacted with EY's content reported significantly higher levels of brand trust and overall favorability.

Correlation analysis demonstrated a strong positive relationship between engagement intensity and brand perception. This indicates that increased interaction with social media content strengthens perceptions of credibility, expertise, and innovation.

VI. DISCUSSION

The results emphasize the strategic role of social media in shaping organizational reputation. For professional services firms, digital platforms offer opportunities to demonstrate expertise and share insights with a global audience.

LinkedIn's dominance in the findings highlights its importance as a professional networking platform where knowledge-based content receives high engagement. Authenticity emerged as a critical factor influencing brand perception. Participants reported higher levels of trust when organizations communicated transparently and shared meaningful information.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study confirms that social media engagement significantly influences brand perception among young consumers. Professional services organizations that maintain an active and authentic digital presence are more likely to build credibility and attract talent.

For EY, focusing on thought leadership, employee advocacy, and interactive content can further strengthen its digital brand identity.



VIII. LIMITATIONS

The study is limited by the use of convenience sampling and a relatively narrow demographic group. Future research could incorporate larger samples and explore cross-cultural differences in brand perception.

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Appendix – Sample Questionnaire

1. Age Group: 18–21 / 22–25 / 26–30 / 31–35
2. Gender: Male / Female / Other
3. Average hours spent on social media daily
4. Primary platform used for professional content
5. Frequency of engagement with EY content
6. Level of agreement: EY is a trustworthy brand
7. Level of agreement: EY demonstrates thought leadership
8. Level of agreement: EY is an attractive employer
9. Importance of authenticity in brand communication
10. Overall rating of EY's social media presence