

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to get a complete understanding of consumer engagement with social networks, a review of literature was undertaken. To uphold the need of this study the gap in the previous studies were identified through the review of literature which is divided into following six sections.

2.1 Usage pattern of online social network sites

Online social network websites like Facebook or Twitter are fast emergent tools, which facilitate their users to develop informative profiles, allow sharing of multimedia content, send messages and connect with friends and family (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Online social networks are acting as crucial components to maintain existing social connection (Ellison et. al. 2007) and to create new ones. Social networks being the part of social media are available to masses at free or almost negligible financial costs. This property in online social network websites act as a big catalyst in its wide spread usage and popularity. The phenomenal growth of online social network sites across the digital world spear headed by services like Google+ and Facebook etc. have brought major changes for business to business, business to consumer and consumer to consumer marketers of all sorts. Numerous researches had been conducted regarding usage pattern of social networking sites worldwide including India, but particularly in Punjab, there has been negligible research on social network site usage. Following review of existing studies on the usage pattern of social networks provides a base to go ahead in the pursuit of understanding usage pattern of social networking sites by social networkers of Punjab.

Out of all the Internet users, approximately one third of them use online social networking websites worldwide all the Internet users, approximately 1/3rd use social networking sites (Nielsen Company, 2009) and combined daily use of online social networks has been increasing comparatively than previous years (Nielsen Company, 2010). Due to differences in contextual characteristics, social network website users demonstrate individual differences in usage of such services (Rubin, 2002). Demographic profile of users like gender and age have been found as important variables to comprehend differences in usage of social networking sites. People in varying age categories and different genders in online social

network sites use such sites differently (Dumrongsiri & Pornsakulvanich, 2010). Differences are identified even in the intensity to make new friends across males and females in social sites (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Pfeil et. al. 2008). Across all age groups, teenagers have been found to use social networking websites at least once a day and teens also try to keep an attractive and updated profile (Lenhart, 2007).

Facebook is amongst the most popular online network service with four out of five students using it (Hargittai, 2008). College students spend approximately half an hour on Facebook in their daily schedule in order to connect with offline friends in the online world (Pempek et. al. 2009). To trace out the insights into the usability of online social networks among institutional students this study involving 92 undergraduate students. Information related to time spent and activities performed on social networking sites was collected along with the demographic profile of the users. Institutional students were using online networks to maintain connections with old and current friends. The study also registered activities like reading other persons profile, surfing through photos and reading friends news feed were most common activities performed by college students as users of social networking sites. Extracting the information of other social networkers has been found as a more keenly done activity by users than just any other activity like doing browsing over social network sites (Wise et. al. 2010). An Australia study related to the usage of online networking by young people found that messaging or chatting and sharing of user generated content was the most common activity performed by young people over social network site usage (Australian Communication and Media Authority, 2008). One of the similar studies related to Australian populations social networking site usage accessed the frequency of usage of social networking sites based on age, gender and location for four social network sites namely Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Myspace. This study also collected information related to time spend spent by users, number of friends/contacts or followers of users, devices used to access social network sites, types of products or services researched by users, brand followed by users and posting of online content by users over online networks (Sensis, 2011). Khan (2009) traced out that sixty five percent of users of Facebook (an online social network) access their SNS account on daily basis & also log into their profile multiple times a single day with the intention to read new feed. The volume of time spent on online social networks like Facebook mottled from few minutes to as long as many hours on each login. Observations also claimed that 30 hours per week was the average usage time spent of teens on their social networks online.

Haq & Chand (2012) collected information for 384 students and found majority of respondents to have an account on Facebook (online social network) without any variation based on gender. Respondents from both genders spend equal time on internet on an average. Relative to males female spend a bit more time and male had a larger friend network in online social networks than females. Supporting literature of female devoting more time to online networks as compared to males was also found in the work of Tham & Ahmed (2011). Both genders in case of institutional students have been found to carry an inverse relationship between age and online network usage i.e. time devoted to online social networks decreases as the age of user increases. Positive correlations have been reported in online network site usage and persons interacting with peers and friends/family members. A negative correlation exists between a person's alertness of others and improved search largely for purpose of dating and age via online networking site.

To understand the activities performed by the users on social networking site Shambare et. al. (2012) undertook a study in which activities like chat/messaging, meeting new friends, downloading or sharing music/videos, playing games, doing homework, viewing other people profiles have been studied. Data collection was done using a self-administered questionnaire among 256 South African students. This study found that faster internet access, cost effective third generation technology and smartphone telephony are factors which are positively influencing the adoption of social networking sites by internet users. Isa et. al. (2012) inspected the patterns for social network site usage among 327 students of business education stream in which 89 male students and 238 female students participated. This study collected information related to access methods used by students like note book computer or public computer, computer skills with the users and time spent. The study revealed that 172 students out of the total sample were spending one to three hours per day in using social networking sites. 93 students were spending three to five hours and 47 students more than 5 hours daily respectively on online social networks. Only 15 students were using their social networking site for less than one hour a day. When it came to the time of the day associated with social networking site usage 235 students out of the total sample were using it during 5pm to 12 am slot of the day i.e. during evening and late night. 43 students were using their social networking site between 8 am to 5 pm and 49 students were using the same between 12 am to 8 am. Information related to favorite social networking site of the students, longevity of students using their favorite social networking site, log in frequency per day to their favorite social networking site and activities performed by users over the same was also

collected. Activities such as photo sharing/tagging, video/link sharing, status updates, checking on friends, chatting, applications, messaging, business activity and event invitation were performed by users/students. On the similar lines findings of a study among 131 psychology students specified that seventy eight percent used social networking sites and fifty seven percent students used their social networking site on daily basis. Students have been found performing activities like reading and responding to comments, posting pictures and links on social networking sites (Subrahmanyam et. al. 2008).

Ophus & Abbit (2009) in a study with the intention to trace usage patterns for online networks among education institute participants selected 110 undergraduates, among whom 107 females and 3 male were selected. Out of the total 110 social networking site users, approximately 96 percent of users logged into their online network profile at least once a day. Majority of users were using their social networking site as a tool to communicate with existing known people. In one of the other studies gender, age, ethnicity, income, education level and terrestrial location have been studied in order to identify the usage habits of people about social networking sites (Madden & Zickuhr, 2011).

In order to get insights into the activities performed by the social networking users over social networks, Cohen (2012) studied user participation in different politically motivated activities. The results depicted that topics related to society are among the major discussion topics in online networks. 35 % users encourage friends to vote using social networking sites. Users were also found posting links to political stories, liking or follow elected officials and encouraging friends to talk related to political issues.

To maintain a social profile on a social network site is part of daily life for continuously growing number of Internet users, social networking sites explicitly aim at supporting people in maintaining existing and establish new relationships. Contacts on the social networking profiles have been seen to consist of both work and personal contacts which many times do overlap with the contacts in the real-world. Social networking site users do add unknown contact as friends and for most of these the relationship never develops further (Schaefer, 2008).

Based on the above reviews, one can gain an understanding that there are different types of usage habits, user preferences, topics and activities of user interest, which are associated with online social networking websites. This user engagement in terms of usage pattern calls for

insights about the underlying motivational intentions of online social network users to indulge in such a behavior.

2.2 Motivations to use online social networking sites

Online social network are having crores of active users and for whom collaborative activities over online networks have become a regular activity in life. Literature revealed studies that have been carried in social sciences to trace different factors which motivate people to use online social networks to gratify their needs. An assortment of possible reasons which motivate young people to use online social networks have been identified by Krasnova et. al. (2011). The study concluded that use of online social networks satisfy needs related to personal relationships, fantasy, togetherness, and belongingness. Online social networks plays a role in improvement of user's self-concept and for most of the users, self-concept improvement can be a motivator for indulging in online social networks. Pressure from peer group to use social networks also motivate young individuals to use such services. Considering the work by Allen (2008), one can identify factors motivating South African people to use online network sites. Age and gender of the online network users, along with access to internet technology were identified as the factors of motivation. Study highlighted that business related activities motivate males to use online networks whereas female side were motivated due to the intention for socialization i.e. to be in touch with others. There are always certain kind of costs which either inhibit people or motivates them to switch between different social networks (Hsieh et. al. 2011). Extrinsic and intrinsic motivations were identified as the reasons to motivate and inhibit bloggers switching in between online network sites. Extrinsic motivation emphasize goal oriented motives of committing to an action and intrinsic motivators in form of self-gratification leads to performance of various activities over online networks. Three motivations of expression effectiveness, usefulness and playfulness were identified as extrinsic and intrinsic motives. One more important aspect of motivation has been researched by Chen & Pang (2012) which explains about the relationship between leisure activities and motivations of the users. It explained how leisure relates to intrinsic motivations, constraints, negotiations and culture of the users. It reveals that emotions, cognitions and motivation are affected by person's self-construal. It also reveals that the need of leisure activities of an individual is not only depended on their culture but also on individual's need, personality and experience which again gives an insight about the thought process of an individual to use any SNS. Among the Malaysian population a

study was carried out to find online network use motivation (Leng et. al. 2011). The study considered two models, first being technology acceptance model indicating the susceptibility towards technology acceptance and second was planned behavior model to study behavior of users. Ease of use of an online network along with perceived value of useful of such service enhances the intrinsic motivations value leading to acceptance of online network site. People with high intrinsic motivation were found to devote more time & energy over online network sites supplementing the proposed model. Observing the model of self traits, one can identify online network usage motivators like that of self-identity & self-construct. These factors can help to find motivators of online network usage across cultures. Other than these two motivations, information seeking along with personal entertainment, socialization, expression of self, time pass and keeping track of new trends also motivated people in using online social networks (Kim et. al. 2010). Kim et. al. (2011) identified utilitarian and hedonic motives enhancing user motivations to consume online network sites. It is either of the two types of motives that forces an individual to indulge into networking activity online. Personal networking, information collection and stress busting are the key motivators to participate among users in online social networks. Although the study brought out emotions related with intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivators but it could have been more descriptive to bring out more motivations from the users accessing SNS. (Yu Lin & Lu, 2011) highlighted importance of SNS in an individual's life and found intentions of social network users through a research model in which two factors of 'usefulness' and 'enjoyment' were identified. As suggested in this study, online social networks need to offer means by which users of such sites are able to arouse their inner feeling of pleasure acting as a motivator to enhance online networking site usage over time. Schaefer (2010) revealed that the personal goals of an individual coupled with need for individual media use to achieve stated objectives makes an impact on social network usage. The study investigated the purpose and manner in which online social networks are used which in turn affects the nature of information developed in social networks. Major motivations reflected in the research were keeping in contact with others, to re-initiate long lost contacts but along with managing existing ones. Considering the work of Dorner et. al. (2011) for a particular SNS that is Facebook, one can understand motivations which push users to use Facebook. Other than need to maintain contact with old and existing friends or use it to reunite with their older friends, users admitted that Facebook helped them to pass their time and help them to fulfil their needs and desire of entertainment. Barker (2009) focusing on older adolescents describes that communication among peer groups over online network sites is linked to the level of self-

esteem. If the latter is high, there are strong chances of increase in the former. Time pass, peer communication, enjoyment along with learning from others acts as motivators for adolescents to use online social networks. This study also highlighted that females tend to use online networks for building and nurturing relationships and men are more interested to search for and make new contacts or friends. One of the important aspects of using SNS is to use the 'social capital' which is a collective set of benefits that is derived from mutual cooperation between the different users over the different SNS. Improved understanding of technology with larger reach of internet is one the prime motivators in making people use online social networks (Foster et. al. 2010). Based on the study of Best & Krueger (2006) which uses social capital as the basis to study user motivation, the researcher found membership of a community, peer connections, need for information, network participation confidence and concerns as the motivations influencing participation in online social networks. Based on the same research one can use social capital as multi-layered concept to understand its effect on the motivations to use online network sites. Further the research carried out by Wise et. al. (2010) explains about the difference between the concept of passive social browsing and extractive social searching. The researchers in their research have given contrasting differences and examples so as to differentiate the two activities of social browsing and social searching which are followed and done by the users over 'Facebook'. However we can use this research because it helps us to know the seven motivational factors that encourage users to access Facebook. Making and keeping contacts, self-expression, sharing of content like pictures and applications use act as a major motivational factors. Also, other motivations include social connection and social investigation. If we move further and look upon the work done by Stefanone et. al. (2011) then it was found that the research emphasized on investigating and finding out the primary variables or the motivational factors which instigates the users to visit different SNS's along with their behavior when individuals are online. The outcome of the study determined the two main types of behavior of the individuals which were public and private. Different factors were being associated with both the behavior, such as desire of approval from others, other people's approval or how an individual want to get perceived by others and how each individual depict his or her own relationship with his peers or his family to other individuals over different SNS's. Also the crucial finding of the research was that both behavior of the individuals were closely related with their actual and online behavior. Pagani et. al. (2011) Undertook two simultaneous studies to trace factors that influence people in the manner they access different online social networks. First study was carried out with principal objective

to understand the impact of individual's innovativeness and expressiveness on both users active as well as passive usage of online networks. The outcome of first study depicted a direct relationship between pattern of use for online networks and level of user innovativeness. In the second research an attempt was made to study self-identity expressiveness influence along with social-identity expressiveness influence on online network sites users in order to understand active and passive use of online networks. Results depicted that both kind of influence were happening with the active users of online network sites indicating multiple reasons for social networkers to join any online social network. Moving to negative part of the human nature, researchers have also tried to find out those motivations which motivates the users to use SNS in negative sense, work by Cravens (2010) throws light on various factors like cost effectiveness in accessing online social networks and suitability of use coupled with privacy features acts as motivators due to which people access SNS and engage themselves in certain infidelity behavior. Research also shed light on emotions and feelings like boredom, sadness and depression making users to visit SNS. Kim et. al. (2011) identified two personal and two environmental factors motivating users to share their information and content creation over online social networks. Personal factors were information self-efficacy and expectations related with socialization, and environmental factors were social tie strength and network size in terms of the number of associated people.

J. Kuss & D. Griffiths (2011) investigated the negativities associated with social network use in form of compulsive use disorder due to prolonged use of online network sites leading to addiction with social networkers. People with self-absorbed tendencies with relatively less actual life connections in real world with peers/friends tends to take sanctuary of online social networking to fulfil their innate desires. Also many of the users fulfil their social enhancement concept by using SNS as they perceive playfulness and trust in the website as a major source of motivation for themselves. Gangadharbatla (2007) found young individuals join and participate in any of the online SNS to fulfill need for self-efficacy over the virtual network along with needs of cognition, belonging and self-esteem fulfillment. If any online social network marketer can appeal to individual's self-esteem and if the individual's likability towards features of the SNS could be established then surely that online network site can expect more number of active users online.

Marketers would be benefitted, if a match can be established between consumer personality perceptions of social networking sites and brands promoted through them. Understanding the consumer perception of an online site personality can help marketers target consumer more precisely. This calls for a need to understand online social networking website personalities from the perspective of users.

2.3 Online social networking website personification

Brand differentiation is an important tactic used by marketers. Brand differentiation can be achieved by differentiating the personality of brand. Brand personification i.e. humanizing brand attempts to re-form consumer's perception of the aspects of a product or service into a human like character (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009). Brand personification is a projective technique to describe the brand from customer's perspective i.e. what the brand is? But not what the brand should be? Personality of any brand acts as the major differentiator for it as compared to other competitors. The research conducted in the field of marketing has given a significant sum of attention to shed light on brand personality as a concept to understand consumer behavior. Brand personality carries humanoid features related to a brand (Aaker, 1997). Personality of the brand is an enabler for consumers to satisfy their self (Belk, 1988). Brand personality study is based on giving human like characteristics to things, as we usually find people doing so in their normal propensity.

A study conducted by Delbaere et. al. (2011) found that personification can encourage consumers to humanize brands using visuals in print advertising. Brand personality effect customers emotional response to the brand. Success of any brand in the market depends upon brand personality as professed by its consumers (Pandey, 2009).

In order to discover the applicability of brand personification concept Tan & Wee (2004) examined the likelihood of applying human personality approach to the construct of brands. The idea was also to find that whether brand personality is stable over time or not. Results proved that brand personality operated almost in the same manner as the human personality. This leads to the justification of having a definite personality for brands, as brands do have a uniform need for identity i.e. need to assign meaning by people to a brand.

The research done in the field of assigning personality to social networking brands is very limited. In an attempt to determine the personality of online brands, variables like excitement, affection, popularity, sophistication and competence were determined (Okazaki,

2006). These five variables determined in the study defined the personality of online brands appropriately. If one closely go through the work done by various researchers in the field of determining brand personality, the work of Aaker (1997) can be seen as a milestone. Aaker (1997) treated brand personality as unidimensional construct and established that brand personality can be segmented. In the ground breaking research done by Aaker (1997) in identification of brand personality elements, five elements had been identified. These elements for personality of brands are ruggedness, sincerity, existent, sophistication & competence. The dimension for sincerity is having traits like honest, genuine, cheerful and domestic. The dimension of exiting personality is having daring, spirited, up-to-date and imaginative traits. Competent dimension is having the traits like reliable, efficient, responsible and dependable. Sophisticated personality dimension is explained using the traits of glamorous, charming, romantic and pretentious personality and lastly rugged personality is associated with traits like tough, strong and outdoorsy. Applicability of Aaker's model has been studied by Supphellen & Gronhaug (2003) over a sample of 200 respondents to trace the effect of personality on two brands. Considering brand personality measures like excitement, sophistication, successful, sincerity and ruggedness, the study found that brand personalities influences consumers attitude towards brands.

A comparative study of respondents from two countries United States and Korea conducted by (Sung & Tinkham, 2005) to test the influence of culture and values on the brand personality over 400 respondents identified eight dimensions of brand personality. Out of the eight dimensions, six dimensions of competence, traditionalism, likeableness, trendiness, sophistication and ruggedness were found common for both the United States and Korean culture. In case of Korea, passive likableness and in United States androgyny were traced out as culture specific factors.

In an attempt to understand brand personality of KFC, food restaurant (Sophonsiri & Polyorat, 2009) in Thailand revealed that dimension of competence influences brand association and brand attractiveness more as compared to any other dimension of the brand personality (Thomas & Sekar, 2008). Brand personality acts as a source of continued advantage as it is difficult to imitate by the competitors in the market. In a similar kind of effort to apply Aaker's brand personality framework to identify differences between brands within and across classes of restaurant, a study was conducted among 247 students of Cornell University. The respondents were selected from the age category in between 18 to 42 years.

Out of the total sample selected for research 60 percent of the respondents were female and rest were males. In order to analyze the results multivariate analysis of variance was applied on the data collected with gender kept as a covariate that nullify the effect of different perception between females and males. Result based on different dimensions of sincerity, existent, competence, sophistication and ruggedness found that McDonald's is more competent as per the perception of the respondents in comparison to the other fast food restaurants like Wendy's (Judy & Anna, 1999).

Azoulay & Kapferer (2003) argued in contradiction to Aaker (1997) scale and raised that it is not measuring construct but just integrating a number of proportions of brand identity, of which personality is just a part, leading to conceptual confusion. In the scales developed to identifying brand personality, one of the potential limitations identified till date are, the presence of negative personality characteristics. Every time when the human like personality characteristics are assigned to a brand, there could be some negative personality traits that can be associated with the brand but no brand personality identification inventory is still catering to this need.

Most of the researches on personality of brands focused mainly on brands like cameras, beer etc. i.e. within the symbolic categories only but the brand personality scale of Aaker (1997) is a general brand personality identification scale enabling researches to understand representative brand use from perspective of multi-attribute models. Aaker's scale is based on factor analytical approach which is having five dimensions to it. This scale is used across many years by researches to identify the brand personality across various product categories and variations through brand personalities. This scale also covers 42 attributes associated with personality. For the purpose of studying the role of Brand Personification in building perception about the social networking sites, framework of five dimensions given by Aaker (1997) has been considered. Studies have also proved that brand personification help in changing attitude of people towards the brand and also in motivating consumers to purchase or use the product or service (Hassanein & Head, 2004). A seriously narrow and limited research documentation is available when it comes to finding the personality of social networking sites. Based on the above reviews, an identification of personality of social networking sites will help marketers in many aspects of better product positioning and consumer targeting ultimately leading to a better value offering to consumers.

2.4 Value creation for brands through consumer engagement

Value is the satisfaction derived by the person from using a product or a service. Value is the amount of benefit that is derived from a service or product relative to its cost. If customer don't perceive value in the product or service then it is not valuable. Value is important for both potential as well as existing customer, who continually searches for it. Whenever any transaction is commenced in commercial world, along arises the perception of value which plays a very heavy role in customer delight (Gitomer, 2007). Observing the need of changing times marketers have moved from traditional marketing models to contemporary marketing models online in the virtual world, leading to a dire need of identifying how value is created or augmented in these new online marketing models i.e. social network sites. Value has been defined for a brand as increase in sales due to awareness, positive perceptions, intent of purchase, loyalty and advocacy for a brand. As per the old model, value was created in the business to consumer relationship on the basis of cost per impression. More the impression created at low cost, more value is created. In traditional marketing model marketing information in form of advertising is forwarded towards potential audience. Among these potential audiences a certain number of audiences become aware and in certain way for these audiences who are touched by advertisements, value is created. But if we think from the social network perspective, i.e. where consumers interact with consumers i.e. (C2C) then each interaction is an impression. Value in the new model is created due to the pass along behavior which is shown by the users in online social networks. In this new era of social network marketing, advertisement message don't stop with marketer just communicating the message to customers but the message still keeps in moving among customer. In any consumer to consumer network, there are two kind of people, one who are influenced to visit the community and other who are not interested to visit but are positively influenced. Among both kind of people there are some who will pass along the information to others and keep the chain alive, which creates value. The same is also true for online social networks like Twitter or Facebook, where value is created due to the pass along behavior of the users (TNS, TRU & Marketing evolution, 2007).

Brand equity acts as an important parameter in increasing the pass along behavior of the content among online network users. Enhancing brand equity has become the focus point of most of the marketing activities because customers switching cost is decreasing and for companies customer acquisition cost is increasing. One of the positive influencer of brand

equity is increasing brand loyalty. Loyalty for a particular brand leads to continuous purchase of the same brand by the customer (Aaker, 1996). When brand loyalty is thought in terms of virtual world, we are more concerned with electronic loyalty which means how positive is the attitude of the people to repurchase items in electronic business settings (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003). Electronic loyalty or website loyalty increases if good quality support service is offered to customers, along with quick product delivery and value for money pricing including shipping. Value enhances further if products are showcased properly online with multiple views and business is having clearly defined easy to understand policies (Lim & Dubinsky, 2005). So this leads to a conclusion that awareness about brand affects brand loyalty. Trust in the service of a website along with quality of service and perceived value leads to perception of loyalty (Ramanathan, 2010) which is percolated to perceived quality of service leading to perception of loyalty among customers. As per the study by (Yoo et. al. 2000) perceived quality as well as brand awareness leads to brand loyalty. Riding along the same lines (Khan & Mahmood, 2012) added one more dimension to brand loyalty i.e. willingness to pay more, making brand loyalty as a resultant of perceived quality of product or service, brand awareness and willingness to pay more by the customers and proved this research model doing a study over two mineral water brands i.e. Aquafina and Nestle.

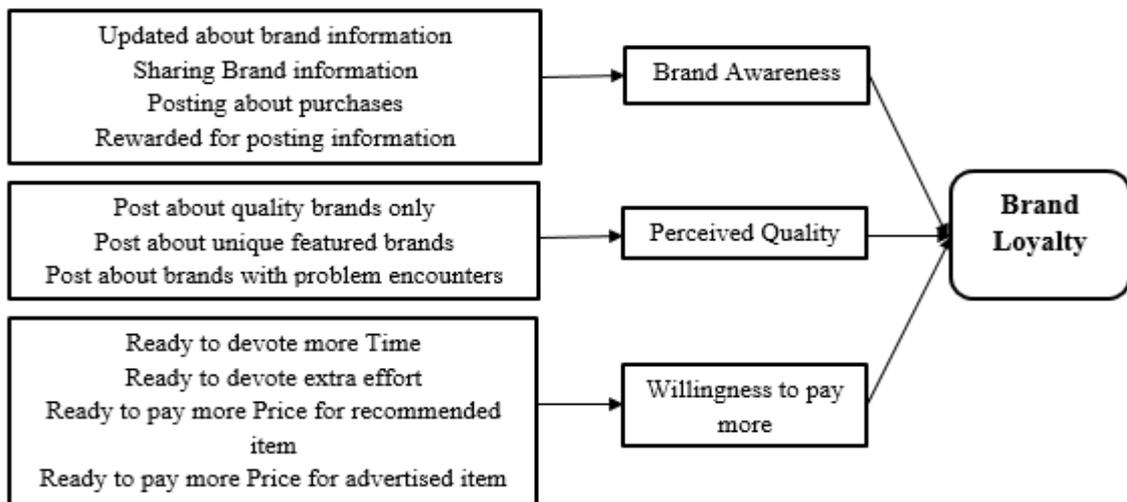


Figure 2.1: Variables of brand loyalty

Once the stage of loyalty is surpassed, any consumer would enter the advocacy stage over a period of satisfied relationship with the company or brand. Brand advocates speak positive about their brands and spread a favorable word of mouth about the brand (Aaker, 1996). But this advocacy is only about one or more particular brands only. Even the spending of a consumer who is advocate of a particular brand would be high for which the person is an advocate. Brand advocates have been observed by marketers to recommend brands to others

along with trying to seek more knowledge and keeping themselves updated with favorite brand knowledge (Deloitte, 2010). Brand advocates leads to amplification of word of mouth leading to boost in product/brand ratings and enhancing credibility in the market (Fuggetta, 2012). Brand advocates acts as the customers who have reduced their consideration set to the minimum and are extremely in favor of a particular brand (Lowenstein, 2012). Brand advocates do not need any kind of provocation to recommend a brand. Brand advocates over social platforms act as a voice of the brand showcasing their authentic and genuine feelings toward the brand. When trust is the key to crack the market, brand advocates act as the prominent allies to marketers. This can lead to inference that opinion leadership and pass along behavior of the users over social networks act as advocacy activities which leads to recommending of brand to others along with trying to seek more knowledge and keeping oneself updated with favorite brand information. Considering the interactions in social networking sites, opinion leaders can create positive impression of the brand by suggesting a brand to opinion seekers. On the other hand advocates can pass on information or their opinion on brands to contacts in their “friends” list of the social networking site whenever they find it fit to share (eMarketer, 2012).

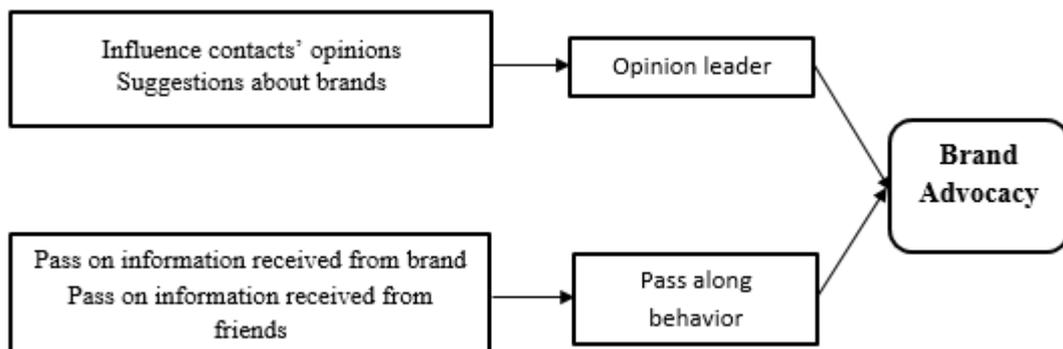


Figure 2.2: Variables of brand advocacy

When we think of value creation in social networking sites and keep in mind the brand loyalty and brand advocacy, it seems different from value creation in traditional advertising channels. In case of advertising over social networking sites, value is not only created due to impression created in business to consumer transactions, because the transactions never stop here. Over social networking sites impressions are also created due the consumer to consumer interactions and their transactions. So if any messages is floated through social network and if it does not stop just after business to consumer transactions but also travels through consumer interactions, then ‘momentum effect’ takes place. Momentum effect basically occurs when any user over social networks would use a brand as a point of reference in his/her conversations, users it on his/her profile or make recommendations about the same

to contacts (Gbadeyan, 2010). The idea behind this effect is motivated by enhancing the list with friends on social networking sites who are enthusiastic about any brand. These people add brands as friends or use the images or logo or anything associated with a brand in order to showcase or improve their profile. Momentum effect occurs when the pass along of the brand related information starts' to occur over the network by the follower to few or to all of person contacts. This could be in the form of mentions, likes to brand related information etc. Take an example of a person who over Facebook is using picture of brand X as his profile picture or users name of brand X in order to showcase his purchase and other put a like on the same, this content would be highlighted to his/her friend list also and if this chain reactions occurs, momentum effect has happened (Lai, 2010). This could be considered other way around when a consumer visits any of the brand communities and download or perform some activity in that community in order to show his liking or association for brand in some way to friends. People are doing these kind of activities and information is flowing from consumers to consumers due to their pass along behavior. This creates value for the brand through momentum effect (TNS, TRU & Marketing evolution, 2007). Social networking sites have gained prominence in the marketer's handbook, owing to the fact that it has so much to offer in terms of a large pool of users, platforms for communication, content sharing and a lot more. As per the literature identified and highlighted in the previous paragraphs, value is created through momentum effect in social networks, this has initiated a need among marketers to understand the nitty-gritties of online user engagement, their patterns and the reasons behind such engagements, thereby making social network consumer engagement a vital area of study. Social media tools are taken by Telstra- a telecommunication company as one of the primary tool for business engagement. Employees at Telstra are encouraged to use and access social media services to share information and views with peers in order to reach out to new connections. Telstra appreciates value in using social media tools for customer's and other stakeholder's engagement. Engagement is basically studied in literature in two different ways. On one side engagement is identified as the frequency of using the social networking sites (Sharma & Verma, 2012), meaning that if people tend to incline towards activities like visiting brand pages or participating in brand communities etc. on social networking sites then, it is be regarded as consumer engagement. This viewpoint is common among practitioners. Second side represents consumer engagement as co-creation of brand content in virtual communities to interact and involve with other users leading to feeling of advocacy towards brands. Nielsen (2012) identified brand engagement activities on social networking sites to be as reading reviews about brands, discussion on brands,

watching brand related videos, following the brand, and sharing one's own views about brand in form of reviews. Haven (2007) defined engagement in form of influence level, interaction level, involvement level and intimacy level that a person carries with brand over a period of time. Engagement acts an indicator to measure inner feelings of a person associated with the brand and it not just restricted to reach and frequency. Involvement and interaction of a customer deepens with any brand with regular use and continued purchase leading to increase in intimacy (affinity) & influence (championing). These four engagement parts collectively frame holistic picture of consumer engagement in online social networks. Engagement of consumer in social media stands on two pillars: social strategy and technology. The aim of consumer engagement is to generate value for both customer and company by extending brand/product experience throughout all phases of relationship: from need to loyalty to advocacy (Digital ingredients, 2009). With almost a similar focus, engagement can be considered to materialize for brands in social networking sites, if present or potential customers tend to be co-creators for brand related communication. Co-creators discuss about the positive attributes of a brand, recommend brand/brands, share concerns for one or multiple attributes for any brand i.e. share their brand related feeling with others on social network. If users are inclining towards such collaborative activities of sharing thoughts and concerns etc. about brands amongst each other and if these collaborative activities leads to brand advocacy, consumer engagement with brands will happens over social networks (Evans & Bratton, 2010). In order to study the engagement of Japanese youth over online networks Takahashi (2010) carried a study over Myspace and Mixi - two social networks in Japan. Activities related to information seeking, maintaining and creating connections, and participation were identified to be the primary dimension of user engagement over online social networks. Results shed light on the fact that in order to engage in online networks youth of Japan are creating or recreating themselves on regular basis. Epsilon (2010) conducted a study in pharmaceutical sector to trace the customer engagement through social media in pharmaceutical Industry. The study indicated that there exists two kinds of patient's. There are patients who are highly engaged with self-health management and take active role in it. On the other hand there is other extreme of patients lacking in confidence and who don't play any active role in self-health management. The results suggested opportunities that lies with identification of varied groups of different types in online networks to facilitate tailored conversations as per group needs.

For the purpose of studying the value creation process for brands through social networking sites w.r.t momentum effect leading to increase in advocacy and loyalty, the constructs detailed above for brand loyalty and brand advocacy have been considered. Value would be considered to be created for the brand if loyalty and advocacy is happening over social networks due to momentum effect. In order to understand the concept of value creation better, one needs to learn about the association between eWOM and components of social relationships because as the occurrence of eWOM will increase, so do the chances of momentum effect.

2.5 Social relationships and eWOM

Social media is different from traditional media because of its model of consumer to consumer networking. Online consumer to consumer communication channels through social network sites allow messages to be spread in word of mouth fashion i.e. quickly from one person to another. Consumer to consumer marketing over the period of last few years has gained much attention from practitioners and academicians. The new interactive technologies like social networking sites (a tool of social media) offer powerful platform for spread of word of mouth electronically. To any user there is a known group of people linked on a social network, who can interact with others in their network related to purchase related or other kind of decisions (Lis & Neßler , 2014). Majority of people who use social networking sites voted that their social networking links acts as a source of information during buying decision process (Knappe & Kracklauer, 2007). This has benefitted businesses a lot. Word of mouth through online social networks have hyper boosted degrees with which people talk amongst groups. eWOM in online networks has been characterized with consumer sharing information in certain ways. The three behavioral dimensions which are prominently highlighted in past literature about eWOM were information pass along behavior, opinion giving and opinion seeking behavior (Feick & Price, 1987). In opinion giving behavior people act as opinion leaders and try to influence the behavior of their followers. Opinion giving behavior can be characterized by content pass along behavior of people through their social networking sites and opinion seeking behavior is about people asking for opinion of others on their social networking sites about products or some kind of opinion. Electronic word of mouth in online networks was described to comprise of opinion leadership activities along with behavior of opinion seeking and information or content pass

along (Sun et. al. 2006). Based on this literature, a need to study association between eWOM in online networks and three variables of opinion giving, seeking and pass along is identified.

With increasing number of marketers using internet for marketing their products and services has led to communication clutter in the online world. Social network sites provide the ability to marketers to move away from the clutter by electronic word of mouth marketing. In virtual democracy i.e. in online social world consumers create virtual communities to communicate with like-minded people (Goldenberg, Barak, & Muller, 2001) and social similarity performs an important role in online social network. A connection or a person is considered as a node and similar nodes tends to connect more as compared to dissimilar nodes, i.e. people with similar characteristics tend to be more inclined to associate with people who share these characteristics. Keeping the same in mind homophily has been considered as one of the factors in order to study social relationships on social networking sites (Aggarwal, 2011). On a social network when similar beings become friends, this will be denoted as the effect of homophily (Zafarani et. al. 2014). This could be denoted with age old saying that birds of a feather flock together (McPherson et. al. 2001). At an individual level, homophily can be segregated into three types. The very first one is status based homophily which comprises of people similar in age, gender, social class, religion etc. The second type of homophily is characterized by acquired homophily denoted by marital status, financial situation, occupation and education acquired etc. and lastly there is third type of homophily called value based homophily that can be denoted by the common interests within persons (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954). Considering these three differential type of homophily, in the instrument nine statements comprising of status homophily, acquired homophily and value homophily have been asked with an intention to understand that whether there is any one kind of homophily at the individual level which leads to increase in social relationship or all three have equal contribution to building social relationships. Considering the work done by Choi et. al. (2008) and Chu (2009) strength of social ties, social capital, homophily, trust and interpersonal influence act as the root cause of social relationships in social networking sites.

A recurring theme in electronic word of mouth is group cohesion - strong versus weak ties (Goldenberg, Barak, & Muller, 2001). When the tie strength is weak then network structures (design elements, navigability) are essential to build trust and consumer interaction with websites. Communications in a social network sites augments a user's susceptibility to the opinions of fellow members (Kozinets, 1999). Group cohesion (strong/weak ties), relational

motivations (trust, social norms) and network structures (design elements, navigability) provide means of generating active eWOM. Information dispersed using eWOM has a far reaching quality and variety which can't be provided through any commercial message. User via electronic word of mouth discuss a product or service on the basis of their multiple experiences from multiple perspectives including price, features or any kind of potential benefits or problems. When we talk about social networking sites, basically we can divide the contacts into two type's i.e. personal contacts and professional contacts (Ferri et. al. 2012). The tie strengths for personal as well as professional contacts for a single person can vary over a social networking site. One of the famous social networking sites in India, i.e. Google+ provides the facility of circles. In Google+ circles users can organize their contacts as per friends, family or work colleagues. Similar kind of options are available on Facebook and other social network sites to organize user contacts. This kind of features allow users to make group of their contacts based on their strength of relationship with user (Pappalardo et. al. 2012). Tie strength in social networking sites can be judged on the basis of centrality and power relationship within the nodes. Degree, closeness and betweenness are used to understand the tie strength relationship (Hanneman, 2005). Degree can be associated with frequency of communication with contacts, Closeness can be associated with closeness with the contact and betweenness can be associated with importance of contacts. Chu (2009) considered tie strength as tracing the feel of closeness with the contact (Wu et. al. 2010), importance of contacts to user and frequency of communication with contacts on social networking sites.

After further drilling down in the literature of social relationship, reference group influence has been identified as an important variable. Interpersonal influence is important for the study of social relationship because it acts as a major factors in decision making by consumers (Gatignon & Thomas, 1985). To understand the reference group influence, one needs to understand three type of influence i.e. value expressive, utilitarian & informational influence (Yang et.al 2007). When people try to get themselves associated with a group in order to portray a particular kind of image to other, it leads to value expressiveness. There are advertisements of Tata Nano in which youngsters are showcased using this car, implying that people who use this car are young. Value expressive function implies that the reflection of the product on the consumer is the main reason for a consumer to use this product. Consumer is under value expressive function when the product usage intention depicts his/her social identity (Dean, 2010). Simply it means that people use a product or service to

portray their belonging to a group. Informational influence occurs when any individual who is lacking in knowledge about something, asks about informational support from members in the reference group, whom he is considering as credible source of information. This can be also taken as a person who is asking someone for information about a product or service in order to support a purchase decision i.e. referrer is considered as an expert or more knowledgeable. A desire to make knowledgeable choice characterizes informational influence. Suppose, X is interested to buy a new motorcycle but not having enough knowledge about this product. X posted in his online community about which bike to purchase in a certain sum of money and also listed his other requirements. Now the people in his reference group gave their opinion to him about which bike to purchase and X made the final decision based on the information received from reference group experts (as per him). This will be regarded as informational influence (Hoffmann & Broekhuizen, 2009). Informational influence can occur both voluntarily and involuntarily in social networking sites. Lastly in case of interpersonal influence normative or utilitarian influence plays a part. When users show a complaint behaviour in order to get praise from reference group or avoid punishment from the group, normative or utilitarian influence occurs (Kelman, 1961). Informational interpersonal behavior highlights acceptance behavior but normative or utilitarian interpersonal influence highlights compliance behavior.

Social capital is an important concept that helps in building of virtual communities i.e. networks on social networking sites. Social capital is signified into two forms of bonding and bridging capital (Putnam, 1993). Based over cohesiveness, bridging social capital would emerge when the people in the group are heterogeneous and bonding social capital would emerge when the people in the group are homogenous. It signifies inclusive nature of bridging and exclusive nature of bonding capital. Social relationship with inclusive nature will lead to information assemblage from peripheral sources outside the community. So bridging capital leads to creation of social ties between groups of people. Bonding social capital also called exclusive capital is the linking between people who are similar (Putnam & Robert, 2002) and strong bonding social capital leads to better emotional support to an individual. One major thing about bonding social capital is that ties of this capital constitutes small part of a person's total social network (Putnam, 2000). Considering the work done by (Chu, 2009) bonding social capital in social networking sites are considered as ties based on trust, information, support-financial as well as moral and bridging social capital is considered as ties based on the curiosity to learn new things.

As the social networking sites which are web based platforms are becoming very common among people to discuss their thoughts and share opinions among community of selected people, trust plays an important role. On any of the social networking sites, there are nodes connected to other nodes depicting a relationship in-between nodes. Relationship signifies mutual understanding (Schurr, 2007) which is dependent on trust factor in the relationship. If trust would have been missing in this community, then information disseminated would reap no results as every other person will treat the information shared to be useless. It is trust of the people in their online communities that makes social networking sites a success. Trust is an enduring characteristic in the attitude of a person that gives a signal of reliability to other person or group of people (Carroll et. al. 2007). It is feeling of trust that makes eWOM credible on online social networks. Information shared with a node which is considered as highly trustworthy by the other nodes would be treated as most credible source of information of social networking sites.

Relying on literature review, to learn the association amid social relationships & eWOM in online networks five different social relationships have been identified i.e. social ties, social capital, homophily, trust and interpersonal influence. This study of Social ties, social capital, homophily, trust and interpersonal influence with electronic word of mouth will help us identify the strength of relationship between variables of these relationships and variables of electronic word of mouth. This will also lead to understand association of social relationship variables with variables of electronic word of mouth across varying demographics. This will help to identify about which variables are impacting the most in flow of eWOM in online social networks and identification of most influential variables will help marketers to focus on nurturing such relationships in social networking sites to improve their efforts.

2.6 Advertisements on social network website

As large number of people are using social networking sites, this has attracted marketers towards social networking sites to use this medium for the purpose of advertising their brands/products/services. Services model of social network sites is based on providing completely free service to users and income for social network sites is generated by selling advertisements to precisely targeted individual and also selling users profile data (Barnes, 2006). Richards & Curran (2002) expressed advertising to be “a paid, mediated form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action, now or in the future which is conveyed to audience through print, electronics or any

method other than direct person-to-person contact”. In marketing mix, promotions are very critical part and advertising is based on the simple sender-receiver communication model, resembling push marketing model in which incentives to purchase are sent to consumers. If we consider integrated marketing communication model, advertising is crucial element belonging to customer focused marketing strategy with provision for customer feedback in a two-way communication process (Schultz, 2007). Internet marketing has come a long way and new adverts in the online social media marketing have taken it many steps further (Cory, 2010). The web 2.0 is all about two way interactions with the customer rather than one way communication i.e. just informing your customers. Social networking sites fuse promotion mix elements to enables organizations to directly talk to their customers and also allows for the direct interaction of the marketing organization with other organizations (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Social networking sites have been identified as the one of the top three most suitable digital media for marketing to benefit management professionals. If email and the web have benefited ones business, then with social media is step towards next generation. For marketers social media is a tool which reaches to wider audience quickly with greater transparency, also leading to deeper relationships with existing customer and helps in expanding prospects network.

Social network based advertisements differ from traditional medium of advertisements in both element and way of message delivery. Advertisements over social networking sites can be pushed to the audience like sponsored/display advertisements and users can also pull the marketing content by following someone on micro blogging sites like twitter (Taylor et. al. 2011).

Advertising on social networking sites is done in many different forms ranging from sponsored advertisements which are like of display advertisements or putting brand/products in the games that people play through social networking sites, a form which is known as gamification. In a reports by Boundless (2014) different type of advertisements on internet have been discussed in which social network advertisements have been highlighted. As per this report there are different ways of advertising on social networks, ranging from direct display advertisements to advertisements using a social network application. Business houses are advertising on social networking sites either by doing advertising in the form of display advertisements on the different pages or by creating their own business pages/fan sites (Lusted, 2011).

As per the study conducted by Psychster.com in collaboration with allrecepies.com for comparing user engagement across social media, seven types of advertisements have been identified (Psychster Inc., 2010). Different types of social media advertisements identified for the study were as follows:

- Sponsored Content Advertisements
- Newsletter
- Banner
- Corporate Profiles with and without Fans and Logos
- Appvertisements or Widgets

In the new wave of social network site advertising, games are playing a major part. There are brands like discovery network or ESPN which are using social networking site games for promoting their products or services. These kind of games are called as branded games and technically these games are called widgets. Discovery network has created a game named Deadliest Catch which is weaved around its television show with the same name. The idea is to promote the interest of the audience in the television series while creating new experiences for the user base (Vidyarthi, 2010). The social branded games can be put into three kinds i.e. games with low level brand integration, mid-range brand integration and games with high level brand integration. In case of low level integration brands are not directly involved with the game but are associated like on giving the right answer about a movie question on Facebook, winners were getting some Farmville currency as reward. On the other hand, high level integrated brands are like the Deadliest Catch game of discovery network, where the complete game is designed by the marketer around a product or service. When any brand is integrated in the story of the game, like if a person is required to collect 20 crowns of a cold drink brand in the game to complete the level, the cold drink brand has put itself at the mid-level of integration (Aaron, 2012). Brand based gaming on social networking sites have become a major advertising strategy by companies.

Sponsored content advertising which is a common form of display promotions has been a regular happening over online social networks. It consists of a picture of the brand or product or company or logo of the company with some text to induce people to click on it. Sponsored advertisements are clearly tagged as advertisements on social networking sites and are hyperlinked generally to some parent site of the brand or the product. A major difference in between brand based games and sponsored advertising is that sponsored advertisements are

clearly indicated as advertisements whereas brand based gaming merges in between the game and become a part of it. These advertisements are mainly based on the pay per click model for the advertisers (Zimmerman, 2011).

Brand page is the profile of the brand on the social networking site like that of a person. As when someone creates a profile on Facebook, people who are interested to be friends with the same person, joins that person as friend, on the other hand when some brand profile is created on Facebook, people who want to be linked to the brand are called as fans. So people have friends and brand have fans on Facebook. Creation of brand pages or brand profiles by companies on social networking is a common activity these days. Brand pages help and support companies to give an added option to people to talk to the brand. People who join or follow these brand pages get updated news about the company and there are companies like Starbucks which are using the platform of social sites to collect suggestions and idea of new products and services from the customers (Gembariski, 2014). Starbucks using this channel is able to reach more audience in less of time and is able to talk to its followers/fans on daily basis, thus creating an engaging brand.

Once people become fans of any brand they will also start getting the posts made by brands. These posts intends to keeps followers or fans informed about happenings or exposing audience to marketing efforts of the brand or company. These posts lead to organic reach. The more the number of fans or followers, the more organic reach would be there. Brand posts appear within the regular posts of the users and appear as posts from friends only. There are marketing messages in these posts which appear along with regular posts and are difficult to ignore. The golden rule of engaging well with audience and on social networks is to be responsive to the queries of people on social networks. The company also needs to be consistent in posting and sharing content with the audience (Facebook, 2014).

Brands on social networking sites in order to inform audience or to induce the audience keep on adding marketing videos. The idea could be to engage audience or to reach a wider number of people at a low cost. Whenever brands share these kind of videos, the same would appear in the feed of people following these brands also. Now it is at the discretion of the people to share the content with others or not. Sharing videos by brands on social networking sites have become a common activity and even advertisements which are run on television are also shared by companies on social networks to gain deeper reach. If videos created by

brands are interesting then audience makes such videos a viral, leading to a then effort less activity for the marketer (Cooper, 2013).

Social polling is the new phenomenon which is emerging as a major form of social network advertising. It has been found that brands are understanding that the primary purpose of people for using social networks is not buying brands, so brands are now using this medium to remind people or take their opinion about different parameters of a brand. Companies can associate their brands with current events and ask intriguing questions to audience. During these polling events, companies do create touch points for their brands. These kind of polling by brands help brand to increase their visibility among the audience in the market (Waxman, 2012).

Grounded on literature review to study users engagement towards the different social media advertising types, display advertising or banner advertising, brand based gaming, polling activities by brands and brand posts will be considered as the form of advertising to understand the level of liking for each of these advertising types. This liking can portray the felling of engagement, audience have towards the different form of mass communication on social networking pushed by an identified sponsor and can be used to compare the user engagement across social network advertisement types.

Borrowing from past literature, it is summarized that the usage rate of social media is increasing both for consumers as well as marketers. In a short period of time, online social networking has developed into a sensation, through which a massive number of people using internet are linked. A significant number of studies on online social network usage pattern have been carried out in the United States (Lin & Bhattacharjee, 2010) but relatively few studies have been completed in India and no published literature was found on studies focused specially upon Punjab. Social network website users demonstrate behavioral differences in usage of such sites due to varying acceptance in different regions of the world (Rubin, 2002; Harden & Beayeyz, 2012). A culture is recognized as being more individualistic in behavior, so user pattern in terms of frequency, site preferences, time of use, kind and number of contacts, access devices, topics discussed and activities performed etc. needs to be studied by marketers to create tailored options for users of online social network sites and to become more efficient in their targeting activities across different geographies. On similar lines one cannot ignore the superseding effect of cultural norms and sanctions on motivations to use online social network sites across different parts of the world

(Recabarren, Nussbaum, & Leiva, 2008). Cultural differences makes it important to understand underlying motivations for people to join a social networking site for both marketers as well as for online social site service providers across geographies. When an effort was made to trace out the user motivations to indulge in online social networking, no supporting literature was found from India especially from the region of Punjab highlighting the motivations of people to join social networks. Given the notion that there are diverse reasons behind online network usage, a gap has been identified to assess the underlying motives of social networkers in the state of Punjab to use online social network websites.

Brand personification helps in changing attitude of people toward brands and also in motivating consumers to purchase or use the product or service (Hassanein & Head, 2004). With large of marketers shifting to online social networking sites for promotion of their products, it is of dire importance to understand perceived personality of social network sites from perspective of consumers. No research was traced when it comes to finding the personality of social networking sites in India from perspective of users. To address the existing gap in literature, there is need to explore the brand personality perception among audience for different social networking sites.

Businesses understanding the huge potential of social networking sites have started to make investments in this medium to connect with customers directly to promote products/services. A question arising out of this is that do these investments help in creating or sustaining brand advocacy and loyalty. There is a requirement to study the momentum effect in relation to advocacy and loyalty towards the brands in social networking sites. Value creation through momentum effect in social networks, highlight the need to understand nitty-gritties of online user engagement and reasons behind such engagements. This makes social network consumer engagement a vital area of study. For this purpose there is need to study value creation process for brands in social networking sites w.r.t to momentum effect. Value would be considered to be created for the brand if loyalty and advocacy is happening over social networks due to momentum effect, because consumer engagement aims to generate value for both customer and company by extending brand experience throughout all phases of relationship i.e. from need to loyalty to advocacy (Digital ingredients, 2009).

Word of mouth through online social networks have hyper boosted degrees with which people talk amongst groups. WOM in online networks is deemed to depend upon different kinds of social relationships existing between community members. On the same lines

considering the population of Punjab, a need is found to reconfirm the association between social relationships and eWOM (electronic word of mouth) in Social Networking Sites. This study on social ties, social capital, homophily, trust and interpersonal influence with electronic word of mouth will help in identifying the strength of social relationships with variables of electronic word of mouth. Results will assist marketers in understanding association of social relationship variables with variables of electronic word of mouth across demographics of Punjab. Identification of variables which influence eWOM flow in online social networks will also support marketers to focus on nurturing social relationships in social networking sites which may result in improving marketing ROI.

Growth in online social network usage and cooperative advertising technology have led to opening up of new avenues for advertisers. Online social network service providers have realized that people do look for products/services on their sites. Based on the massive amounts of user's data, online sites are helping businesses in marketing to right persons. Different types of social network advertisements call out for the need to clarify whether audience or users of social networks responds to all advertisement types in the same way or user level of liking towards advertisement types differ. Varying advertisement liking by users can portray the feeling of engagement that audience have towards different form of mass communication on social networks, pushed by any identified sponsor. Results can be used to compare user engagement (in form of liking) across social network advertisement types of display advertising or banner advertising, brand based gaming, polling activities by brands and brand posts.

Keeping this gap in mind the present study had intended to add to the body of knowledge in management education considering the perspective from India and particularly Punjab. The results of this study will provide a first step toward the understanding of social networking sites usage pattern, usage motivations, personality perceptions and influence on brands considering the population of Punjab. Finding of the study will be of the interest to all firms which plan to or are already using online social networks to reach potential and existing consumers.