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Brand Engagement in Self Concept (BESC) among Millennials in the United States

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ABSTRACT

“We are what we have.” This argument was forwarded by Belk (1988) in his exploration of peoples’ use of material objects to form, reflect and reinforce their identities. This concept is one that continues to be explored today. This paper examines Brand Engagement in Self Concept (BESC), consumers’ tendency to include important brands in their self-concept. BESC has potential for furthering our understanding of consumer behavior as it provides even greater psychological insight into why and how consumers relate to brands. This will allow researchers and practitioners alike to better understand and predict consumer behavior in various contexts. This study explores how BESC varies by age and across ethnic groups in a specific generation. It specifically compares BESC levels in millennials versus non-millennials as well as among millennials from different ethnic groups. It also explores BESC among millennials for a very popular product, smartphones

Results indicated that millennials displayed higher levels of BESC than non- millennials. It also examined whether the relationships observed for the general measure of BESC would remain the same when examining BESC for a specific product category or brand. It was found that some relationships were consistent but there were also marked differences. In addition, this study compared differences in BESC and BESC for smartphone in millennials across ethnic groups. While findings of study one indicate that minority ethnic groups may display higher levels of BESC than Non-Hispanic Whites, there may be a great deal of similarity in BESC among millennials from these minority groups. Study two suggests that ethnic group differences in BESC may change over time. There were no ethnic group differences in BESC for smartphones.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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