

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON BRAND AWARENESS, BRAND ENGAGEMENT, AND PURCHASE INTENTION; MODERATING ROLE OF CONSUMER BELIEF

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ABSTRACT

In this research Gratification Theory (UGT) the theory of Consumer Brand engagement (CBE) was used, the researcher explores the impact of Social Media Marketing on Brand Awareness, Brand Engagement, and Purchase Intention; Moderating the role of Consumer Belief. In this current research, the non-probability sampling method was used for data collection, and the survey method was used. Data was collected through an online Google form. In this current research, the researcher used a five-point Likert scale. The total response was 318, and all respondents were social media users. Two software was used in this current SPSS and Smart-pls. This study promotes the brand through social media marketing and providing brand-related information to the consumers. Concentrating on the motivations for brand engagement in social media and the type of content consumers in each country prefer is necessary due to the varying levels of consumer brand awareness and their respective impacts on purchase intention. The primary is to provide valuable insight into the social media marketing platform, and this study is distinctive in that it investigates how social media marketing affects Pakistani consumer behavior. Additionally, it investigates consumer belief as a moderator that impacts social media marketing and brand awareness.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, Brand Engagement, Consumer Belief

INTRODUCTION

In this era, social media plays an important role, without social media, life is very complex. In the past decade, social media has facilitated customer brand awareness and brand engagement (Li et al.,

2021). As a collaboration platform, it encourages consumers to connect with multiple brands. The extensive use of social media has also allowed consumers to share their opinions about different

companies' products and services (Cheung et al., 2022). As a result of these growing trends in businesses, many companies have invested counted-able effort and resources in social media to facilitate consumers (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020).

By exploiting opportunities by using social media to persuade customers to engage with an online brand through activities like contributing, creating, and consuming (Muntinga et al., 2011), many businesses can enhance brand engagement and positive customer behavior (Cheung et al., 2021). Among the several effects social media marketing strategy has on customer's reactions, like word of mouth, brand equity, and value co-creation (koay et al., 2022; Cheung et al., 2021), this study investigates the direct effect of brand awareness and brand engagement on customer purchase intention the boundary condition consumer belief. Consumer engagement is an imperative point of business. Consumer belief refers to the perceptions, attitudes, and assumptions that individuals hold about a product, service, or brand, often shaped by personal experiences, marketing messages, social influences, and cultural norms. These beliefs significantly influence purchasing decisions, as consumers tend to favor products that align with their expectations or values (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Solomon, 2020).

Consumer brand engagement demonstrates how consumers relate to engaging businesses (Beckers et al., 2018). Assessing technology like social media has added complicity to the customer organization relationship (Steinoff et al., 2019). Despite this, social media activities are important in consumer brand engagement and purchase intention (Cheung et al., 2020). Social media is also important for any kind of business to engage customers for their products. According to Evans et al., (2021), brand awareness is an important part of any business, if consumers have don't idea or awareness about they cannot purchase it. Previous research shows that interpersonal relationship and attachment are very essential because a potential consumer develops confidence on a brand, and they have a belief in the brand which in turn makes them

more loyal company brand (Shams 2017; Bigne et al., 2023).

The population of Pakistan stood at 242.8 million in January 2024. The data shows that Pakistan's population increased by 4.7 million (+0.2%) between early 2023 and the start of 2024 (Datareportal, 2024). Datareportal stats show that, regarding the users of social media, 71.70 million active social media users were identified in Pakistan in January 2024. The number of social media users in Pakistan at the start of 2024 was equivalent to 29.5% of the total population (Datareportal, 2024). Still, it is important to stress that social media users may not be unique. At that time, 25.9% of Pakistan's social media users were female, while 74.1% were male. The data shows that only 29.5% of people used social out of the total population.

According to Hollebeek et al., (2014), consumer brand engagement is very necessary in different cultural contexts. Previous research shows that social media marketing has a positive effect on brand equity, which includes brand image and brand awareness (Seo & Park, 2018; Hafez, 2022)- there is a rare of cross-cultural studies that explore these studies. Furthermore, Godey et al., (2016) collected data from four countries that included only luxury products. Using social media marketing previous research shows that the cultural differences among countries in shaping consumer behavior (Godey et al., 2016; Cheung et al., 2020). In our research, we collect data from social media users in Pakistan's twin cities Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The objective of this current research investigate the social media marketing on brand awareness, brand engagement and purchase intention; and the boundary condition consumer belief.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Purchase intention

Purchase intention refers to customers' transaction behavior after evaluating products and services (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Purchase intention is a consumer's likely behavior of making a purchase, and a greater buy intention indicates a higher possibility of making a purchase, claim (Alford & Biswas, 2000). Every time a customer wants to purchase a product, they do pertinent research and

compile data about it based on their experiences and surroundings. Once they have enough data, they compare, assess, and create opinions about the items (Wang et al., 2012). According to Kotler (2003), a person's buying intention is influenced by their conduct, attitude, and unforeseen situations, the key idea in marketing is purchase intention. It acts as a key indicator in consumer behavior studies and marketing strategies, often shaped by external variables like advertising, peer recommendations, and pricing (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Price and marketing boost purchase intention (Alford & Biswas, 2000), as does brand awareness (Dodds et al., 1991) and customer familiarity with the brand (Johnson & Russo, 1984).

2.2 Theory

In this current research the researcher considered two theories first one is Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) and second one is Consumer Brand Engagement theory (CBE). The finding of the previous study shows that UGT and CBE allow to identify with the use of social media how consumers engaged with the brand and how their engagement generates marketing outcomes (Dolan et al., 2016), as well as that people actively engaged with media to achieve a certain kind of objectives (Cheung et al., 2014). UGT is a useful paradigm for marketing researchers in social media platforms with high engagement (Kujur and Singh, 2020). Research suggests that understanding the reasons for social media platform use (Sheth and Kim, 2017; Bazi et al., 2020), identifying the factors that drive consumer engagement with brand pages (Dolan et al., 2016), and analyzing the impact of various types of social media content on online engagement (Cheung et al., 2021; Buzeta et al., 2020) are all useful. Theories about CBE originated in the relationship marketing literature (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Previous research on social media's influence on brand engagement has mostly examined the reasons and drivers of CBE (Bazi et al., 2020). We hypothesize that the rewards of utilizing social media correlate with certain CBE motives and outcomes, which are then reflected in purchase intention.

2.3 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing (SMM) has emerged as a crucial tool for enhancing brand awareness, engagement, and purchase intentions, particularly through its ability to shape consumer beliefs. Research highlights that SMM significantly boosts brand awareness by increasing visibility and accessibility, fostering a deeper connection between brands and consumers (Tafesse & Wien, 2018). Furthermore, active engagement on social media platforms enables brands to interact with their audience in real-time, cultivating trust and loyalty (Cheung et al., 2020). Consumer beliefs act as a moderating factor, as positive perceptions about a brand, shaped by consistent and authentic social media messaging, directly influence purchase intentions (Godey et al., 2016). This highlights the need for strategic SMM efforts to not only promote products but also resonate with consumer values and expectations. Consequently, leveraging social media effectively can transform consumer-brand relationships, enhancing brand performance and competitiveness in the digital landscape. Previous research shows that SMM has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness and brand engagement (Barreda et al., 2015; Dabbous & Barakat, 2020). Hence, based on previous research the hypotheses were proposed.

H1: Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness.

H2: Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand engagement.

2.4 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to the extent to which consumers recognize and recall a brand under various conditions, which is pivotal in influencing purchasing decisions. It represents the strength of a brand's presence in the minds of potential customers, often measured through metrics such as aided or unaided recall (Keller, 2020). This research also tests the relationship between two variables brand awareness and purchase intention in an online environment. Kapferer (2008) says that brand awareness is the most important factor and necessary step in any search for a brand, as it directly affects the decision to buy. Moreover, companies can promote their brands on social media and raise awareness, which leads to buying

behavior (Evans et al., 2021). For example, the brand is available in any marketplace and consumers don't know about the brand- Of course, they did not purchase our brand that's why brand awareness is very important and plays a critical role in any kind of brand. According, to Dabbous and Barakat (2020) Brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. Hence, based on previous research, the hypothesis is proposed.

H3: Brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention

2.5 Brand Engagement

Brand engagement significantly influences purchase intention by fostering emotional connections and enhancing consumer trust through social media (Li et al., 2020). High levels of brand engagement often lead to stronger brand loyalty, as engaged consumers are more likely to perceive value in a brand's offerings and recommend them to others. The correlation between consumer engagement and brand use intent has been examined more extensively than the association between other brand-specific characteristics (Vander Schee et al., 2020). Studies show that consumers with high engagement exhibit a greater willingness to purchase, driven by positive associations and deeper involvement with the brand's identity and values (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Additionally, interactive and personalized brand experiences amplify this effect, as they cater to individual preferences and create memorable interactions (Kumar & Pansari, 2016). As a result, brand engagement serves as a critical driver of both immediate and long-term purchase intentions. Harrigan et al. (2018) demonstrated a significant

relationship between consumer brand engagement and brand usage intention in the realm of tourism brands on social media. Hence based on previous research, this hypothesis was developed.

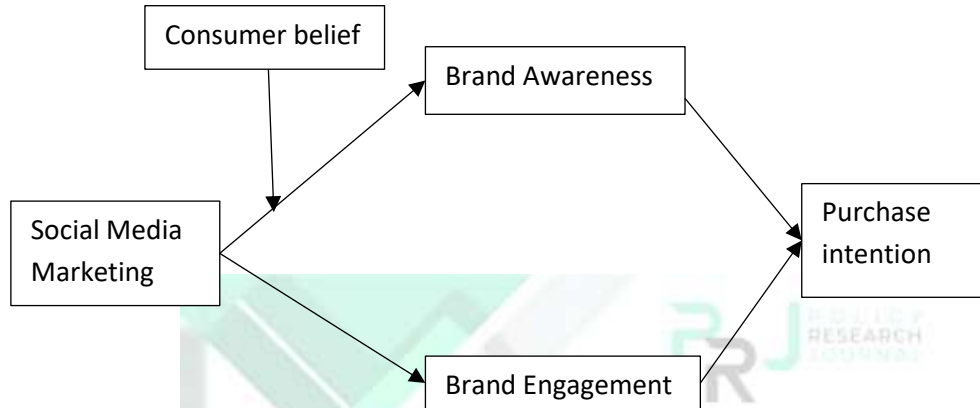
H4: Brand engagement has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase intention

2.6 Consumer belief

When the link between two variables is not constant, a third variable may either enhance, hinder, or even invert the direction of that relationship. The third variable is referred to as the moderating variable about that particular connection. When a buyer perceives a brand as extremely respectable, trustworthy, reliable, and dependable, they are inclined to make a favorable purchasing choice for that good (Selnes, 1998). Various studies indicate that interpersonal relationships and attachments among potential customers are essential for the creation of trust, which fosters brand dependability (Shams, 2017; Bigne et al., 2023). Consumers' belief in a brand influences their purchasing decisions (Karimi et al., 2018; Raškovič et al., 2020). Moreover, Consumers develop trust and believe in a brand after receiving positive feedback from others (Riley et al., 2013). The research found that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) may alter customer beliefs about a brand, influencing their purchasing choice (Baker et al., 2016). In this current research, consumer belief plays a moderating role between social media marketing and brand awareness. Hence, on the base of past studies, the hypothesis was proposed.

H5: Consumer belief as a moderating effect on social media marketing and brand awareness

Figure 2.1: Framework



3. Methodology

3.1 Instrument of measurement

Every research has instruments of measurement. In this research, the researcher collected data through an online Google form, and a survey method was used for data collection. All of the instruments of measurement adopted from different articles social media marketing, brand awareness, and brand engagement adopted by Emini and Zeqiri (2021), consumer belief adopted from the article (Shams et al., 2024), and the last purchase intention adopted form (Muça & Zeqiri 2020). The close-ended question was included in this study; the questionnaire was based on a 5-point Likert Scale. The five-point Likert scale consists of 1 equal to strongly disagree and 5 equal to strongly agree.

3.2 Sampling and data collection

The sampling method plays an important role in any kind of research. In this current research

Primary data was collected through a non-probability purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling method the other name is judgmental method; on the base of judgment the data was collected. The data was collected from Pakistan's twin cities Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The sample size was 312; until the unit of analysis was the user of social media.

3.3 Data analysis tools

In this current research, the researcher used two types of software first one is SPSS and the second one is smart-pls. SPSS used for demographics analysis and smart Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Smart-pls (SEM) is a modern data analysis tool. Pls-SEM is used for measurement and structural model. Data analysis is the most important part of any research. Table 3.1 shows all of the demographic variable results.

Table 3.1 Demographics Analysis

Profile	Distribution	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-25	136	42.7%
	26-35	97	30.5%
	36-45	48	15.09%
	46-55	22	6.91%
	Above 55	15	4.71%
Gender	Female	112	35.2%
	Male	206	64.7%
Marital Status	Married	141	44.3%
	Single	177	55.6%
Education	Matriculation	15	4.7%
	Intermediate	106	33.3%
	Under Graduate	168	52.8%
	Post Graduate	29	9.1%

Profile	Distribution	Frequency	Percentage
Income level	50,000 and below	142	44.6%
	51,000-100,000	83	26.1%
	101,000-150,000	39	12.2%
	151,000-200,000	42	13.2%
	201,000 and above	12	3.7%
Pakistan	Islamabad	197	61.9%
	Rawalpindi	121	38.0%
SOC-Experience	1-2	97	30.5%
	3-4	73	22.9%
	5-6	111	34.9%
	7 Above	37	11.63%

4. Results

4.1 Measurement Model

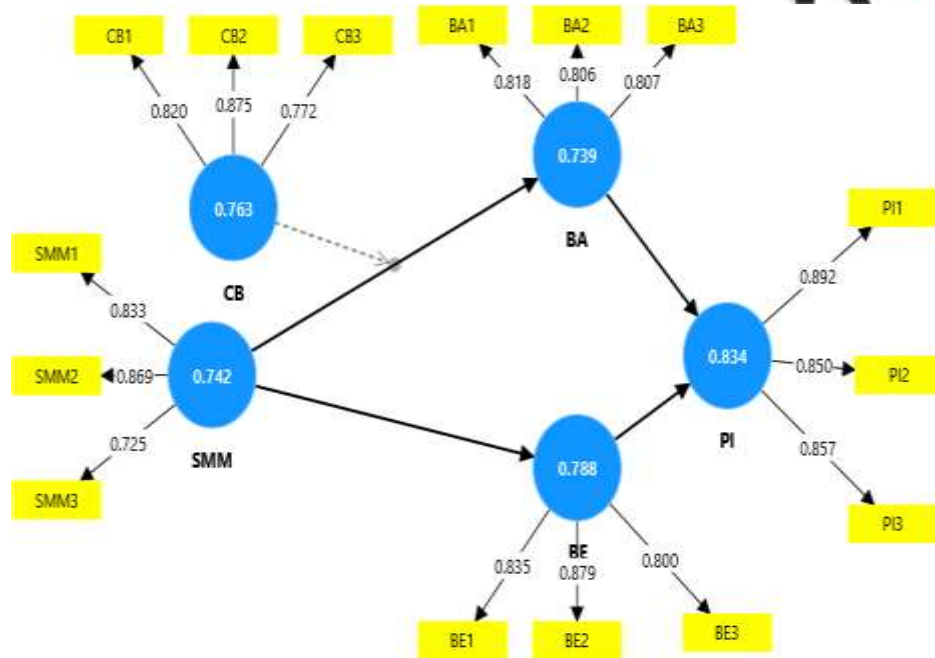
The measurement model demonstrates strong reliability and validity for the constructs of brand awareness, brand engagement, consumer belief, purchase intention, and social media marketing.

All of the factor loading values, Cronbach alpha, and composite reliability values are greater than 0.7, and the AVE is above 0.5. According to Hair et al. (2014), all the values are within the acceptable range, and all of the values are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Validity and Reliability

Constructs	Indicators	Factor Loading	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Brand Awareness	BA1	0.841	0.739	0.740	0.657
	BA2	0.852			
	BA3	0.773			
Brand Engagement	BE1	0.835	0.788	0.790	0.703
	BE2	0.879			
	BE3	0.800			
Consumer belief	CB1	0.809	0.763	0.784	0.678
	CB2	0.797			
	CB3	0.810			
Purchase intention	PI1	0.892	0.834	0.838	0.751
	PI2	0.850			
	PI3	0.857			
Social Media Marketing	SMM1	0.833	0.742	0.767	0.658
	SMM2	0.869			
	SMM3	0.725			

Figure 4.1



4.2 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity, assessed through the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), is a critical metric in structural equation modeling and factor analysis, ensuring that constructs are distinct from one another. HTMT measures the degree of overlap between two constructs by comparing the average correlations of items across constructs (heterotrait-heteromethod) to those within the

same construct (monotrait-heteromethod). HTMT values should ideally fall below a threshold for strong discriminant validity, commonly set at 0.85 or 0.90, depending on the context. If HTMT values exceed these limits, it suggests that the constructs may lack sufficient distinctiveness, necessitating a reevaluation of the model or measurement items to avoid potential multicollinearity issues. All of the values are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Heterotrait-Monotrait

	BA	BE	CB	PI	SMM	CB*SMM
BA						
BE	0.796					
CB	0.825	0.764				
PI	0.614	0.685	0.668			
SMM	0.300	0.326	0.362	0.310		
CB*SMM	0.210	0.266	0.307	0.270	0.393	

4.3 Direct Effect

Table 4.3 shows that BA has a positive effect on PI (H_1 $BA \rightarrow PI$ $\beta = 0.226$, $t = 3.572$, and P -value 0.000). So, the H_1 hypothesis was accepted. BE has a positive effect on PI (H_2 $BE \rightarrow PI$ $\beta = 0.419$, $t = 6.442$, and P -value 0.000). So, the H_2 hypothesis

was accepted. SMM has a positive effect on BA (H_3 $SMM \rightarrow BA$ $\beta = 0.218$, $t = 3.364$, and P -value 0.000). So, the H_3 hypothesis was accepted. SMM has a positive effect on BE (H_4 $SMM \rightarrow BE$ $\beta = 0.253$, $t = 4.335$ and P -Value 0.000). So, the H_4 hypothesis was accepted.

Table 4.3 Direct Effect

Path	Beta (β)	SD	T statistics	P values
BA -> PI	0.226	0.063	3.572	0.000
BE -> PI	0.419	0.065	6.442	0.000
SMM -> BA	0.218	0.046	3.364	0.000
SMM-> BE	0.253	0.058	4.335	0.000

4.4 Moderation effect

Graphically, moderation can be represented by different slopes for the independent variable and dependent variable relationship, depending on the

level of the moderator. In this research, Consumer belief positively affects Social media marketing and brand awareness.

Table 4.4 Moderation Effect

Hypothesis	Beta (β)	SD	T statistics	P values
CB x SMM -> BA	0.416	0.062	6.438	0.000

5. Discussion

The research objective is to the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness, brand engagement, and purchase intention moderating the role of consumer belief in Pakistan. Previous research supports our research (Barreda et al., 2015; Dabbous & Barakat, 2020). Social media platforms improve brand engagement, leading to higher satisfaction, loyalty, trust, and word-of-mouth (Tsai and Men, 2017; Brodie et al., 2013). The findings confirm the premise that perceived social media marketing affects consumer brand engagement (CBE). These findings are consistent with prior research by (Hollebeek, 2011; Bazi et al., 2020).

Our findings align with previous research on UGT and CBE theories, highlighting the impact of perceived social media advantages and incentives on consumer brand engagement. The study emphasizes how customer brand involvement and perceived social media marketing affect brand outcomes, including awareness and purchase intention.

6. Implications

6.1 Theoretical implication

The theoretical implication of this research lies in integrating the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) and Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) theory to better understand consumer behavior in social media contexts. The findings of this study align with previous research (Dolan et al., 2016; Cheung et al., 2014) that emphasize how UGT

explains consumer motivations for using social media, while CBE provides insights into how these interactions generate marketing outcomes such as purchase intention. By combining these frameworks, this research highlights Social Media Marketing on Brand Awareness, Brand Engagement, and Purchase Intention; Moderating the role of Consumer Belief.

Specifically, UGT serves as a foundational paradigm for identifying consumer objectives when engaging with social media platforms (Sheth and Kim, 2017; Kujur and Singh, 2020), while CBE focuses on the relational and behavioral outcomes of these engagements (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Moreover, consumer belief plays an important role. If consumers have belief in a product they will ultimately purchase the product. If they don't believe in product they will not buy the product. In this current research, the theoretical contribution is consumer belief moderating impact on social media marketing and brand awareness. The empirical evidence highlights the critical role of consumer brand engagement as a primary driver of purchase intention, with brand awareness emerging as a secondary but significant factor. These findings align closely with the conclusions of previous research, such as the work of Hollebeek et al. (2014), reinforcing the established understanding of these relationships in consumer behavior.

6.2 Practical implications

This research offers valuable managerial insights for online branding campaigns. Our findings indicate that social media marketing (SMM) campaigns effectively enhance brand awareness, encompassing both brand recognition and recall. Additionally, SMM campaigns foster user engagement with brands, which, in turn, positively impacts purchase intentions. Furthermore, the study highlights the role of consumer beliefs as a moderating variable, showing significant effects: consumer beliefs influence the relationship between social media marketing and brand awareness. These insights suggest that tailoring SMM campaigns to address consumer beliefs can maximize their impact on branding outcomes. This research also helps to the social media marketers.

7. Limitation and Future Research

Every research has some limitations. Moreover, this research was conducted on consumer purchases. This study focused exclusively on samples drawn from the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi in Pakistan. While the findings provide valuable insights into the role of social media marketing on consumer engagement in this specific context, the results cannot be generalized to all regions or cultural settings. The limited geographic scope may not capture the diversity of consumer behaviors, preferences, and social media usage patterns in other parts of Pakistan or globally. These constraints highlight the need for broader studies to fully understand the nuances and complexities of social media marketing's impact across different regions and demographics.

Future research could address these limitations by conducting cross-sectional studies using multigroup analyses. Such studies could compare the role of social media marketing in both emerging and developed economies, providing a comprehensive understanding of its effects across diverse contexts. By examining similarities and differences in consumer engagement patterns, researchers could uncover region-specific strategies and universal trends. These findings would offer firms valuable insights for tailoring their social media marketing approaches, enabling them to optimize engagement strategies and effectively reach their target audience in varying economic and cultural environments.

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