International Journal of Social Science and Entrepreneurship ***(IJSSE)*** ***Vol 6, Issue 1***
ISSN (Print): 2790-7716, ISSN (Online): 2790-7724 ***January to March 2026***

A User Gratification Theory Approach to Social Media Marketing: The Impact of Brand Engagement and Awareness on Purchase Intention

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Abstract

The use of social media has become a part of our lives. As technology is becoming more sophisticated, individuals are spending more time on social media to achieve various objectives. Digital age social media is one of the vital areas that define the behavior of customers and has become an important element of marketing. As the volume of consumers soars dramatically, marketers are moving into social media networking sites to be creative in establishing their brand in social media and reach more people through social media. Through the User Gratification Theory that states that people use social media to fulfill their needs and wants, this paper will explore the direct correlation between social media marketing and consumer purchase intent and effects of brand awareness and brand engagement as mediators. In this Study, to realise this end, the research paper applies deductive reasoning through a quantitative research design. It is gathered using an online questionnaire in the form of an e-questionnaire, with the help of a Likert scale, from a sample of Pakistani social media users across various platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, and others. With the objective of a cross-section of time, a non-probability (non-random) convenience sampling design was utilized in which 473 Pakistani individuals were surveyed. The data that were collected were then analyzed using SmartPLS (Partial Least Squares). This paper proposes that social media marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchase intention, and brand awareness is the most significant mediator of this association. Although the impact of brand engagement was somewhat smaller, the research still shows that social media marketing is a vital element in attracting the target audience and influencing the decision to make a purchase.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing, Brand Engagement, Brand Awareness, Consumer Purchase Intention.*

Introduction

The modern digital age has seen social media transform how companies communicate, advertise and interact with their consumers in the global markets. Through the ability to directly communicate, co-create, and micro-target segments, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and X (Twitter) have redefined the traditional platforms of communication by offering alternative to mass-media advertising wherein a single campaign and message can target a large audience. This change has brought about democratization of the marketing process such that both large and small companies have the capability of reaching the customers equally and with fewer barriers of entry. With recent studies, social-media marketing (SMM) has a positive impact on consumer purchase intention, brand trust, and brand engagement all over the world (Zeqiri et al., 2024; Tiwari et al., 2025; Barari et al., 2025; Chen, 2025; Laradi, 2024). Furthermore, the digital analytics implementation of all global companies will enable companies to track the engagement level, content popularity, and customer feelings in real-time enhancing their capabilities to respond dynamically to consumer preference (Filippou et al., 2025).

The role of SMM in emerging economies is even more intense. With the increasing internet adoption, mobile access and digital literacy in Asia, companies are leaving traditional mass media and migrating to data-driven, interactive media that encourage customer discussion and brand development based on community. Research indicates that SMM-specific practices like storytelling, influencer cooperation, and user-generated content enhance brand awareness (BA) and brand engagement (BE) and result in increased purchase intentions (Deepika et al., 2025; Mir et al., 2024; Pan et al., 2025; Poirier et al., 2024; Saternus et al., 2024). However, consumers are not passive receivers of the information anymore but co-creators of values, where likes, shares, and commenting can be viewed as proxies of endorsement and trust. Digital community formation around brands allows the establishment of emotional and psychological contacts, which do not hinge on functional product characteristics (Ali et al., 2025; Wang, 2025; El-Shihy and Awaad, 2025; Habib et al., 2025; Zeqiri et al., 2024).

In Asia and fast-growing digital economies such as India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam, SMM has become a part of competitiveness. Asian social-media users reached more than 2.6 billion users in 2024 and the marketing spending on social sites in the region grew by more than 18 percent (Statista, 2024; ASEAN Digital Report, 2025). The empirical study proves that the engagement-based brand communities improve consumer trust and purchase intent based on the continuous exposure to branded messages (Pan et al., 2025; Barari et al., 2025; Deepika et al., 2025; Chen, 2025; Laradi, 2024). Influencer marketing generates an attentive response from the consumers in Asia while vertical videos and real-time shopping broadcasts are resulting in greater behavioral intention and brand attachment. (Tiwari et al., 2025; Ali et al., 2025; Saternus et al., 2024; Wang, 2025; El-Shihy and Awaad, 2025). This implies that effectiveness in SMM in Asia relies on cultural resonance, active-interactivity and community correspondence but not sheer advertising intensity.

Pakistan has offered a high-growth rate social-media environment with over 82 million internet users and 46 million active social-media users in the year 2025 which constitute 36 percentage of the population within the South-Asian setting (DataReportal, 2025). The Pakistani consumers, in particular the younger generations are becoming more dependent on the social networks in discovering products, peer endorsement and brand communication. Research indicates that the use of social media has a positive effect on brand awareness and purchase intention in the retail sector, the fashion sector, and the service sector in Pakistan (Hakro et al., 2023; Manzoor et al., 2020; Mazeed and Kodumagulla, 2019; Toor, Husnain and Hussain, 2017; Afzal et al., 2024). Tools like TikTok, Facebook and Instagram have the most successful impact on consumer perceptions. Promotions of perceived trust and authenticity have been displayed to be efficacious in influencer-based campaigns. (Ali et al., 2025; Mir et al., 2024; Habib et al., 2025; Wang, 2025; Tiwari et al., 2025). With the Pakistani companies shifting to digitalization, the convergence of analytics-based and content-oriented approaches is transforming the model of consumer engagement.

Altogether, the recent literature constantly emphasizes the fact that SMM is a critical factor that determines brand awareness, brand engagement, and purchase intention in both global and emerging markets. The marketer is now able to create brands in real time, using data analytics, influencer collaboration, participatory content design, and other tools, in a manner that aligns digital presence with consumer demands (Zequiri et al., 2024; Barari et al., 2025; Pan et al., 2025; Chen, 2025; Filippou et al., 2025). Brand awareness and brand engagement are mediating factors that are essential in this relationship since they describe the way exposure to SMM activities is converted into purchase behavior (Deepika et al., 2025; Mir et al., 2024; Tiwari et al., 2025; Ali et al., 2025; Laradi, 2024). Based on this, the current study aims at challenging a mediated approach in which social-media marketing affects purchase intention by brand awareness and consumer engagement with particular focus on the emerging Asian economies and Pakistani market.

Problem Statement

In contemporary society, consumers are faced with a dilemma of selecting the brand out of the myriad brands in the market. This study aims to fill this research knowledge gap that is in the effect of social media marketing on the consumer behavior of the consumers, but more specifically, the effect of brand awareness and brand engagement. By so doing, it will be able to implicate both theoretical and practical implications of the businesses that would like to enhance and maximize their social media marketing strategies. Despite the existing literature on social media covered on consumer perception and behavior, it does not provide adequate reviews that marketers can implement. (Ansari, Ansari, Ghori, & Kazi, 2019). Previous studies have examined the effect of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior. However, this paper will seek to explore this gap regarding this specific reaction of Pakistani consumers towards social media marketing. (Manzoor, Baig, Hashim, & Sami, 2020). Even though brand awareness and brand engagement are thought to be critical issues in marketing, the role of mediation variables in buying decisions has not been addressed adequately. This paper aims to identify the underlying factors that may influence social media marketing and consumer purchase intentions, as well as the direct impact

of social media marketing on consumer purchase intentions. The relationship between social media marketing and consumer purchase intentions may have other underlying reasons; the research focuses on mediating the effects of brand awareness and brand engagement on the two.

Research Objectives

1 To explore the hypothesis of whether the Consumer Purchase Intention depends on Social Media Marketing.
2 To determine how Social Media Marketing affects Brand Awareness.
3 To analyze how Social Media Marketing affects Brand Engagement.
4 To establish the correlation among the Brand Awareness, Social Media Marketing, and Consumer Purchase Intention.
5 To establish the latent influence of Brand Engagement between Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Consumer Purchase Intention.

Literature Review

Theoretical Underpinning

The behavioral basis of explaining the influence of social media marketing (SMM) on brand awareness (BA), brand engagement (BE), and consumer purchase intention (CPI) comes in the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). And, as UGT states, individuals do not passively receive the information but actively fulfill their cognitive, affective, and social needs through media, and such gratifications determine the way people would engage with brand content (Katz et al., 1973; Zeqiri et al., 2024; Tiwari et al., 2025; Chen, 2025; Laradi, 2024). In today's fast-paced digital era, consumer's brand awareness and interactions have been evaluated by branded social media to satisfy their informational, entertainment and social-integration needs. (Deepika et al., 2025; Mir et al., 2024; Barari et al., 2025; Poirier et al., 2024; Filippou et al., 2025). Also, for a stronger engagement-intention relationship, Asian markets are indulged in influencer relationships, collectivism and social interaction. (Ali et al., 2025; Pan et al., 2025; Saternus et al., 2024; El-Shihy and Awaad, 2025; Habib et al., 2025). In Pakistan where more than 46 million active social-media users prefer to receive information and entertainment via digital channels, young consumers would like to express themselves and receive credibility and a feeling of belonging to the brand through brand interaction, thereby strengthening the engagement and purchase intentions (Hakro et al., 2023; Afzal et al., 2024; Toor et al., 2017; Manzoor et al., 2020; Mazeed and Kodumagulla, 2019). Thus, under the guidance of UGT, this paper hypothesizes that SMM is a source of stimulus that satisfies psychological and social needs of users that consequently results in gratifications, which, in its turn, mediate a way towards consumer purchase intent in new digital economies.

Purchase Consumer Intention and Social Media Marketing.

It has been found that social media networking and marketing have a significant effect on consumer purchase intention within the Pakistani audience, as well as on the CPI (Toor, Husnain, and Hussain, 2017; Ahmad, Rauf, and Asngar, 2024). Social media influences customer purchase intention, which is also high as compared to the influence of the print media, hoardings, e-word of

mouth or other traditional forms of advertisement and the research of Mazeed and Kodumagulla (2019) supports the argument that social media marketing is also a predictor of purchase intention in the airline industry. It has also been found that the importance of social media content marketing has reached high levels in the modern technological age, where the quality of content determines the choice of consumers to buy a product (Ansari, Ansari, Ghori, and Kazi, 2019; Islam, 2024). The studies report that social media on consumer purchase intention is significant and social media marketing influences the purchase intention more than consumer trust (Manzoor, Baig, Hashim, and Sami, 2020; Deepika, Raut, and Gardas, 2025). Lastly, the positive indirect influence on the purchase intention characterizes the social media marketing (Emini and Zeqiri, 2021; Xia et al., 2024), which signifies. that the correlation between social network marketing utilization and consumer buying behavior is strong and stable.

H1. Social Media Marketing has a significantly positive effect on Consumer Purchase Intention.

Social Media Marketing and Brand Awareness.

Through social media marketing, individuals can sell their products or services and target a significantly larger audience by utilizing online social media sources (Yong & Hassan, 2019; Islam, 2024). The more frequent users of social media are exposed to marketing efforts aimed at developing a positive online image and developing a holistic perception of social media, the more they become prone to the effects of online marketing (Maria, Pusriadi, Hakim, and Darma, 2019; Xia, Li, and Zhang, 2024). It has also been proven that brand awareness is directly and positively correlated with the effectiveness of advertising and social media marketing (Maria et al., 2019; Deepika, Raut, and Gardas, 2025).

H2. Social Media Marketing has a significantly positive impact on Brand Awareness.

Social Media Marketing and Brand Engagement.

The social network platform has enormous potential as a marketing tool for promoting consumer relationships with brands (Vukasovic, 2013; Islam, 2024). Toor, Husnain, and Hussain (2017) also confirm the mediating role of consumer engagement in the relationship between social media marketing and consumer purchase intention, a finding supported by Deepika, Raut, and Gardas (2025). Research has further shown that customer involvement is a fundamental characteristic of motivated purchase intentions among consumers (Nawaz & Kaldeen, 2020; Xia, Li, and Zhang, 2024). Speaking of which, research has shown that social media marketing is the aspect that is most frequently linked with consumer purchase intention; what is more, it is considered massively successful in increasing brand engagement among consumers (Nawaz and Kaldeen, 2020; Kothari, Sharma and Gupta, 2025). The other recent research by Anjorin, Raji, and Olodo (2024) also suggests that social media marketing is a good business tool, and it can increase consumer interaction dramatically, which is supported by Shaheen (2025).

H3. Social Media Marketing has a significantly positive impact on Brand Engagement.

Brand Awareness between Social Media Marketing and Consumer Purchase Intention.

The intent to purchase is indirectly increased based on the successful application of winning advertising and social media marketing (Maria, Pusriadi, Hakim, and Darma, 2019; Islam, 2024). Shabbir, Kaufmann, Ahmad, and Qureshi (2010) also examined how marketing campaigns affect consumer purchase intentions. It showed that there was a significant relationship, and brand awareness was found that acts as a mediator. The recent findings also prove that the association between marketing communication and purchase intention is also mediated by brand awareness, especially in the online environment, which exposes consumers to huge volumes of targeted social media advertisements (Kothari, Sharma, and Gupta, 2025; Deepika, Raut, and Gardas, 2025). Moreover, scholars have stressed that powerful digital narratives, influencer-made campaigns, and social media engaging posts can greatly contribute to brand awareness which subsequently results in consumer purchase intention (Xia, Li, and Zhang, 2024; Shaheen, 2025). These results indicate that the role of brand recognition is not mediated, but also positively influences the overall effect of social media and advertising on consumer decisions in the developed and emerging markets.

H4. Brand Awareness has a significant mediating effect on the relationship between social media marketing and Consumer Purchase Intention.

Brand Engagement between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention of Consumers.

The implications of social media marketing on consumer buying intentions are dependent on the extent of engagement of the brand (Toor, Husnain, and Hussain, 2017; Islam, 2024). As a matter of fact, brand involvement was found to mediate all the relationships, between social media marketing and purchase intention (Emini and Zeqira, 2021; Deepika, Raut and Gardas, 2025). Furthermore, other scholars have shown that brand involvement as well as purchase incentives may be regarded as important in mediating the association between social network marketing and the purchase intention (Imtiaz, Kazmi, Amjad, and Aziz, 2019; Xia, Li, and Zhang, 2024). The role of customer engagement as a partial mediating force between social network marketing and consumer purchase intention, which was also disclosed by Toor, Husnain, and Hussain (2017), is also backed by more recent findings highlighting the mediating nature of customer engagement concerning the way consumers make purchasing decisions (Kothari, Sharma, and Gupta, 2025). Social media use enhances customer interaction, which in turn boosts the intention to purchase among customers (Nawaz & Kaldeen, 2020; Shaheen, 2025).

H5. Brand Engagement has a significant mediating effect on the relationship between social media marketing and Consumer Purchase Intention.

Brand Awareness and Consumer Purchase Intention

As a few previous studies on the subject have stated, the purchase aspects and brand recognition are positively interconnected (Novansa & Ali, 2017; Islam, 2024). The same claim was also made by Siali, Jiayi, Shakur, and Ya'kob (2016), which argued that any increase in brand awareness leads to an increase in the likelihood of customers considering the brand during the process of making purchases, which was confirmed by more recent data that revealed that brand awareness

is a significant factor that improves consumer buying intention in the digital market (Kothari, Sharma, and Gupta, 2025). In the same vein, Emini and Zeqiri (2021) reasoned that the relationship between purchase intention and social media marketing is entirely mediated by brand awareness, which, like recent studies with awareness mediation effects in online advertising frameworks, has been found (Deepika, Raut, and Gardas, 2025). Lastly, the results of Ansari, Ghori, and Kazi (2019), which suggest that well-acquainted consumers have a higher chance of purchasing a brand, are also supported by Xia, Li, and Zhang (2024), who found that brand choice diminishes awareness in service industries and enhances the likelihood of purchase.

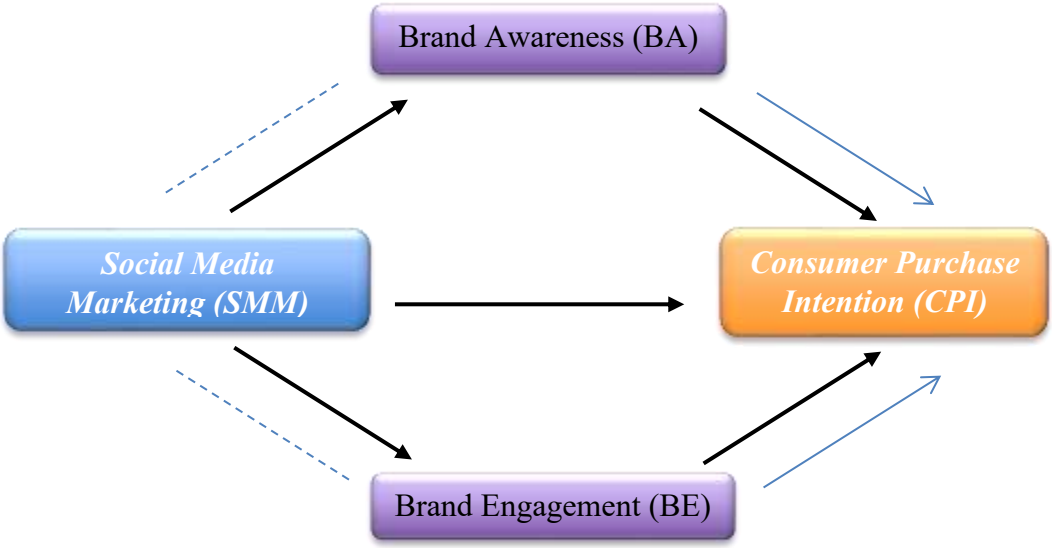
H6. Brand Awareness significantly influences Consumer Purchase Intention.

Brand Engagement and Consumer Purchase Intention

The research by Toor, Husnain, and Hussain (2017) found that the level of consumer involvement has a direct impact on consumer purchase intention. Additionally, they discovered a significant relationship between social media marketing and purchasing intention (Islam, 2024). Similarly, Aziz and Ahmed (2023) observed that the influence of brand engagement is positive on consumer's intention to buy. According to the recent findings suggests that the brand engagement intensifies the relationship between purchase decision and social media marketing. (Deepika, Raut, and Gardas, 2025; Kothari, Sharma, and Gupta, 2025).

H7. Brand Engagement significantly influences Consumer Purchase Intention.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



The potential of Social Media Marketing (SMM) as a form of stimulating Brand Awareness has not been well explored in terms of platform-differentiated features in volatile markets (Hasani et al., 2025). Recent empirical studies have found That Brand awareness has inconsistent impacts on

Purchase Intention, and some moderating or mediating contingencies may be present, but have not yet been fully explored (Ben Ameur & Ben Rached, 2024). The studies on brand engagement are in the early stages of sustainable or socially minded campaigns, and this gap in knowledge concerns how engagement mediates the SMM effect on Purchase Intention (Dinana, 2025). Consumer Purchase Intention is a complex area of research that is also influenced by trust, personalization, and eWOM, implying that models need to account for both these factors and traditional antecedents (Islam et al., 2024).

Research Methodology

Research Approach

The present research is based on the deductive reasoning approach, which is supported by Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). The hypothesis is the presence of the influence of social media marketing on the consumer intentions to purchase, and the mediation of the said relationship by brand awareness and engagement. In this theoretical framework, hypotheses will be developed and tested. The target population will be used to collect the required data, and the right statistical instruments will be used to test the alternative hypothesis of acceptance or rejection (Emini and Zeqiri, 2021; Aziz and Ahmed, 2023; Anjorin, Raji, and Olado, 2024).

Research Design

The research design in the following paper is a cross-sectional, quantitative research design. The use of quantitative research is suitable as it allows a researcher to study a high amount of data to establish causal effects and offer statistical generalizability. The cross-sectional design presupposes that the participants will only be considered at one point in time and it will give the picture of how social media marketing influences purchase intention, brand awareness and engagement. (Haudi et al., 2022; Maulid, Hurriyati, and Hendrayati, 2021).

Research Philosophy

The study is a positivist one in nature, i.e. it presupposes the existence of a reality and can be quantified with the help of empirical tests. The study also supports positivism since hypotheses are verified based on statistical models, and the results could be applied in the context of the extended population (Novansa and Ali, 2017; Mahalaxmi and Ranjith, 2016).

Target Population

The target population of this study comprises Pakistani consumers who are active users of social media, specifically Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, TikTok, and Snapchat. The right respondents are these customers, as they are the direct consumers of social media marketing campaigns and can provide information about their engagement, awareness, and purchasing intentions (Imtiaz, Kazmi, Amjad, and Aziz, 2019; Toor, Husnain, and Hussain, 2017).

Sample Size

The number of the targeted respondents in this study is around 450-500. It is believed to be sufficient to guarantee the needed statistical reliability and the strength of the findings of the PLS-SEM analysis, which involves many observations to achieve the needed estimates of the path coefficients (Emini and Zequira, 2021; Nawaz and Kaldeen, 2020).

Data Source

The online questionnaire with the assistance of social media and the use of Google Forms will be the backbone of the data collection. The questionnaire will be created in accordance with a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree: 1, Disagree: 2, Neutral: 3, Agree: 4, Strongly Agree: 5). Validated measures used in previous research will be utilized to modify the validated questions, which will guarantee content validity and minimize construct deviation (Manzoor et al., 2020; Maria et al., 2019; Ardiansyah and Sarwoko, 2020).

Measurement Instrument

The research tool is a structured questionnaire that will be used to gauge the constructs of Consumer Purchase Intention, Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness and Engagement. Based on previous studies, multiple items are used to measure each construct. To illustrate, social media marketing items measure interactivity and quality content; brand awareness items will measure recall and recognition; brand engagement items will measure emotional and behavioral involvement; and purchase intention items measure willingness to purchase and recommend. This provides construct reliability as well as validity (Emini & Zeqiri, 2021; Ansari, Ansari, Ghori, and Kazi, 2019; Balakrishnan, Dahnil, and Yi, 2014).

Table 1

S. No.	Variables	Items	Sources
1	Social Media Marketing	5	(Emini & Zeqiri, 2021; Balakrishnan, Dahnil, & Yi, 2014; Anjorin, Raji, & Olodo, 2024; Haudi et al., 2022; Manzoor et al., 2020; Maria et al., 2019; Maulid, Hurriyati, & Hendrayati, 2021)
2	Brand Awareness	5	(Emini & Zeqiri, 2021; Ardiansyah & Sarwoko, 2020; Maria et al., 2019; Ansari et al., 2019; Novansa & Ali, 2017)
3	Brand Engagement	5	(Emini & Zeqiri, 2021; Aziz & Ahmed, 2023)
4	Consumer Purchase Intention	5	(Emini & Zeqiri, 2021; Balakrishnan, Dahnil, & Yi, 2014; Imtiaz et al., 2019; Manzoor et al., 2020; Mazeed & Kodumagulla, 2019; Nawaz & Kaldeen, 2020)

Results and Findings

Table 2
Demographic Profile Measurement Instrument

Demographics	Frequency (n = 473)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	241	51.0
Female	232	49.0
Age		
Less than 21	25	5.3
21 to 30	147	31.1
31 to 40	129	27.3
41 to 50	94	19.9
Above 50	78	16.5
Education		
Undergraduate	136	28.8
Graduate	124	26.2
Post-Graduate	135	28.5
Doctorate	76	16.1
Others	2	0.4
Occupation		
Student	120	25.4
Employee	162	34.2
Self-employed	102	21.6
Unemployed	89	18.8
Frequency of Social Media Use		
Less than 1 hour per day	108	22.8
1–2 hours per day	96	20.3
3–4 hours per day	87	18.4
5 or more hours per day	87	18.4

The sample size of the respondents (n = 473) was divided into categories based on gender, age, education, occupation, and frequency (Imtiaz et al., 2019; Vitasovic, 2013). Gender balance is almost equivalent with 51 and 49 percent male and female respondents respectively. Most of the respondents are between 21 and 30 years old (31.1%) than between 31-40 years old (27.3). The number of respondents that are less than 21 (5.3) and older than 50 (16.5) is lower (Toor et al., 2017; Yogesh and Yesha, 2014). Regarding education, most of the participants are undergraduate (28.8%), postgraduate (28.5%), and 26.2% are the ones with a graduate degree, 16.1% have a doctorate, and 0.4% are the others (Siali, Jiayi, Shakur, and Ya'kob, 2016; Ozcifci, 2017). Occupationally, the group consists of employees (34.2%), students (25.4%), self-employed individuals (21.6%), and unemployed participants (18.8%), with the latter being the largest group (Zhu, 2024; Mahalaxmi & Ranjith, 2016). Speaking of the use of social media, 22.8% of people spend less than 1 hour daily on this activity, 20.3% spend 1-2 hours, and equal numbers (18.4% each) spend 3-4 hours and more than 5 hours daily on it (Emini & Zeqiri, 2021; Maria et al., 2019).

This information suggests that the respondents exhibit diverse demographics and social media usage trends.

Table 3
Collinearity statistics (VIF): Outer model

Constructs	VIF
Social Media Marketing (SMM 1)	1.419
Social Media Marketing (SMM 2)	1.659
Social Media Marketing (SMM 3)	1.606
Brand Awareness (BA 1)	2.524
Brand Awareness (BA 2)	2.204
Brand Awareness (BA 3)	2.964
Brand Engagement (BE 1)	1.867
Brand Engagement (BE 2)	1.936
Brand Engagement (BE 3)	1.295
Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI 1)	2.095
Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI 2)	1.449
Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI 3)	2.408

The outer model of a study is the one that is used to extract the constructs. Constructs include Social Media Marketing (SMM), Brand Awareness (BA), Brand Engagement (BE), and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI), each with three measurement indicators. In the case of Social Media Marketing (SMM), the VIF values are 1.419, 1.659, and 1.606, which are low, indicating that there is no collinearity between the indicators. Using Brand Awareness (BA) as a case, VIF values of BA1, BA2, and BA3 are 2.524, 2.204, and 2.964, respectively. BA3 has the largest VIF of this category, although it is within acceptable levels. Brand Engagement (BE) has a VIF of 1.867 (BE1), 1.936 (BE2) and 1.295 (BE3), which indicates low multicollinearity among the indicators. Finally, the Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI) results indicate that the VIFs are 2.095, 1.449, and 2.408, which represent a reasonable degree of collinearity. In general, the VIF values of all constructs and indicators are below the generally accepted level of 5, indicating that multicollinearity is not a significant issue in this model. The findings confirm that the indicators are independent in their ability to test their constructs.

Table 4
Inner model

Structural Path	VIF
Brand Awareness → Consumer Purchase Intention	5.701
Brand Engagement → Consumer Purchase Intention	5.281
Social Media Marketing → Brand Awareness	1.000
Social Media Marketing → Brand Engagement	1.000
Social Media Marketing → Consumer Purchase Intention	2.344

The VIF of the various relationships that exist between marketing and brand-related constructs. VIF detects multicollinearity in regression models. A VIF above 5 typically indicates strong multicollinearity, which can compromise the strength of the model coefficients. The relationship between Brand Awareness and Consumer Purchase Intention has the largest VIF of 5.701, followed closely by the second relationship between Brand Engagement and Consumer Purchase Intention, with a VIF of 5.281. These values suggest that there may be issues with multicollinearity in these paths, indicating that the variables are highly correlated with other predictors in the model. On the other hand, paths, namely Social Media Marketing -> Brand Awareness and Social Media Marketing -> Brand Engagement, are not associated with multicollinearity, as their value is equal to 1.000. This implies that the impacts of social media marketing on brand awareness and engagement are not very reliant on each other. The moderate VIF of 2.344 found on the path "Social Media Marketing -> Consumer Purchase Intention" is not of immediate concern, and therefore, the relationship is not significantly influenced by multicollinearity. The table, overall, indicates locations where multicollinearity could be a concern and those where it is not, which is of great use in improving and analyzing the model.

Table 5
Reliability Analysis

Constructs	Items	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (ρA)	Composite Reliability (ρC)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Social Media Marketing	SMM 1	0.789	0.760	0.763	0.862	0.676
	SMM 2	0.852				
	SMM 3	0.824				
Brand Awareness	BA 1	0.895	0.881	0.882	0.927	0.809
	BA 2	0.882				
	BA 3	0.920				
Brand Engagement	BE 1	0.851	0.759	0.781	0.862	0.678
	BE 2	0.886				
	BE 3	0.724				
Consumer Purchase Intention	CPI 1	0.883	0.801	0.825	0.883	0.717
	CPI 2	0.749				
	CPI 3	0.901				

Constructs under assessment in the table above: Brand Awareness, Brand Engagement, Consumer Purchase Intention and Social Media Marketing. Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (r and rc), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are some of the metrics used for the above analysis. Cronbach's Alpha is used to determine the internal consistency of the constructs, and the result is satisfactory at 0.7. The above table reveals that all constructs exceed the acceptable threshold, with BA at 0.881 and CPI at 0.801, indicating good reliability. In the meantime, the Brand Engagement stands at 0.759 and the Social Media Marketing stands at 0.760, which proves to be satisfactory.

Correlated to this, Composite Reliability is used to gauge the construct reliability on a larger scale, which also helps in proving the consistency of the constructs. The rhoa of social media marketing is 0.763, followed by brand engagement (0.781), consumer purchase intention (0.825), and brand awareness (0.882). Similarly, the rho c values for consumer purchase intention, brand engagement, brand awareness and social media marketing, are 0.862, 0.862, 0.883, and 0.927, respectively. Based on the consequences of the above findings, the coherence and dependability of all the indicators are high, as none of the constructs falls below 0.7. The table above also shows that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is above the lower cutoff of 0.5 in all the listed constructs. The brand awareness of AVE is 0.809, indicating excellent convergent validity. The CPI is 0.717, SMM is 0.676, and BE is 0.678, all of which demonstrate high convergent validity. Based on such results, it can be concluded that the percentage of variance of each indicator that is accounted by its construct is above fifty percent. The overall reliability test shows that all the constructs fall into acceptable ranges of validity and reliability. The validity and consistency of the scores of BA and CPI are excellent because they are much greater than those of the other constructs.

Table 6
Path Coefficient Analysis

Hypothesis Development	Associations Development	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Results
H_6. Brand Awareness (BA) positively influences Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI).	BA → CPI	0.274	0.275	0.106	2.596	0.009	Accepted
H_7. Brand Engagement (BE) positively influences Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI).	BE → CPI	0.106	0.104	0.089	1.192	0.233	Rejected
H_2. Social Media Marketing (SMM) positively impacts Brand Awareness (BA).	SMM → BA	0.748	0.748	0.026	29.202	0.000	Accepted
H_3. Social Media Marketing (SMM) positively impacts Brand Engagement (BE).	SMM → BE	0.724	0.724	0.027	26.636	0.000	Accepted
H_1. Social Media Marketing (SMM) positively affects Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI).	SMM → CPI	0.426	0.426	0.051	8.344	0.000	Accepted

The path coefficient of the first hypothesis (H6) has the T-statistic value of 2.596 and a path coefficient of 0.274 that has a significant P-value of 0.009. These results support the first hypothesis (H6), according to which BA positively influences CPI. Instead, path coefficient of

the second hypothesis (H7) has value 0.106, T-statistic of 1.191, and P-value 0.233, which is way above the significance level. The second hypothesis (H7) that BE positively influences CPI, is therefore not supported by the data analysis. These results imply that BE does not cause significant change on CPI in this model. Hypothesis three (H2) investigates the effect of SMM on BA. The path coefficient is very high (0.748), T-statistics are 29.202 and the p-value is very significant (0.000), which proves this hypothesis. Likewise, it is also possible to find solid support in the fourth hypothesis (H3), which examines the correlation between SMM and BE. The T-statistics of 26.636 and the P-value of 0.000 with path coefficient of 0.724 prove that the role of social media marketing on brand engagement has a significant positive influence. Finally, the positive impact of SMM on CPI is explored in Hypothesis 1 (H1). Strong support for this relationship is found with a path coefficient of 0.426, a T-statistic of 8.344, and a significant P-value of 0.000, indicating that Social Media Marketing has a direct and positive influence on the CPI.

Table 7
Mediating Analysis

Hypothesis Development	Associations Development	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Results
H_6. Brand Awareness (BA) mediates the relationship between Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI).	SMM → BA → CPI	0.274	0.275	0.106	2.596	0.009	Accepted
H_7. Brand Engagement (BE) mediates the relationship between Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI).	SMM → BE → CPI	0.106	0.104	0.089	1.192	0.233	Rejected

Analysis of (H6), the relationship between SMM and CPI is significantly mediated by the BA, as evidenced by the values of the path coefficient of 0.274, T-statistic of 2.596 and P-value of 0.009. This implies that brand awareness is positively influenced by social media marketing, and consequently, consumer purchase intentions are also positively affected. The results do not support the hypothesis that BE mediates SMM and CPI; however, H7 suggests otherwise. The path coefficient of 0.106, T-statistic of 1.192, and P-value of 0.233 indicate that BE is not a strong mediator in the specified situation.

Table 8
Discriminant validity

Construct Pair	Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)
Brand Engagement ↔ Brand Awareness	1.078
Consumer Purchase Intention ↔ Brand Awareness	0.810
Consumer Purchase Intention ↔ Brand Engagement	0.844
Social Media Marketing ↔ Brand Awareness	0.911
Social Media Marketing ↔ Brand Engagement	0.938
Social Media Marketing ↔ Consumer Purchase Intention	0.898

Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) values of various pairs of constructs. The scale used to measure discriminant validity is HTMT, which assesses whether two constructs that are intended to be distinct are indeed different. Lower HTMT values suggest greater discriminant validity; a value of 0.90 is commonly used. When the HTMT value exceeds this gateway, this could mean that the fabrication is not clearly different from each other. The relationship has an HTMT value of 1.078, which is above the recommended threshold, suggesting that there may be a problem with discriminant validity between the Brand Engagement and Brand Awareness constructs. This implies that brand engagement and brand awareness may have much overlap, and thus, it becomes a matter of concern whether these two are different. The other construct pairs have HTMT values less than 0.90, such as Consumer Purchase Intention <| Brand Awareness" (0.810), Consumer Purchase Intention <|Brand Engagement`(0.938), Social Media Marketing <| Brand Awareness|>Others have HTMT values of less than 0.90, including Consumer Purchase Intention <| Brand Awareness" (0.810), Consumer Purchase Intention <| Brand Engagement|>Other construct pairs have HTMT less than 0 Of these, the two "Social Media Marketing <| Brand Awareness" are slightly above 0.90 which can be an indicator of slight overlap. The rest of the values, however, reflect satisfactory discriminant validity.

Table 9
Fornell-Larcker criterion

Construct	Brand Awareness	Brand Engagement	Consumer Purchase Intention	Social Media Marketing
Brand Awareness	0.899			
Brand Engagement	0.897	0.823		
Consumer Purchase Intention	0.687	0.660	0.847	
Social Media Marketing	0.748	0.724	0.707	0.822

This criterion ensures that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of the constructs (values along the diagonal) is larger than the correlations among the constructs (values along the off diagonal). This shows that every construct has a greater relationship with its standard than with other constructs, which supports divergent validity. The other off-diagonal values represent the correlations between constructs. Here, the correlation between Brand Awareness and Brand Engagement is 0.897, and the correlation between Brand Awareness and Consumer Purchase Intention is 0.687. According to the table, Brand Awareness (0.899) has a marginally higher AVE than its correlation with Brand Engagement (0.897), meaning marginal discriminant

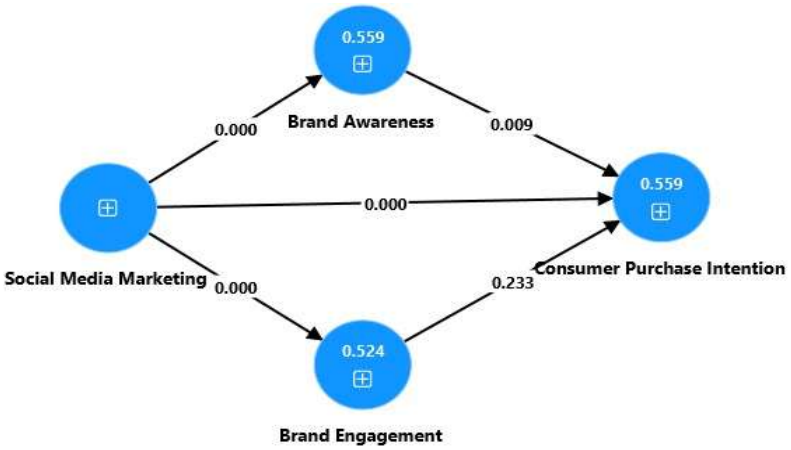
validity. In the same manner, the AVE of Brand Engagement (0.823) is greater than the correlation with Consumer Purchase Intention (0.660), which is evidence of discriminant validity. The AVE of Social Media Marketing (0.822) also has a higher value than that of other constructs, which supports validity. All in all, most constructs satisfy the Fornell-Larcker criterion; however, the correlation between Brand Awareness and Brand Engagement (r = 0.897) is very high, which may lead to overlap. Therefore, additional research is needed to demonstrate that the two constructs do not overlap.

Table 10
Predictivity of the Model

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Brand Awareness	0.559	0.558
Brand Engagement	0.524	0.522
Consumer Purchase Intention	0.559	0.556

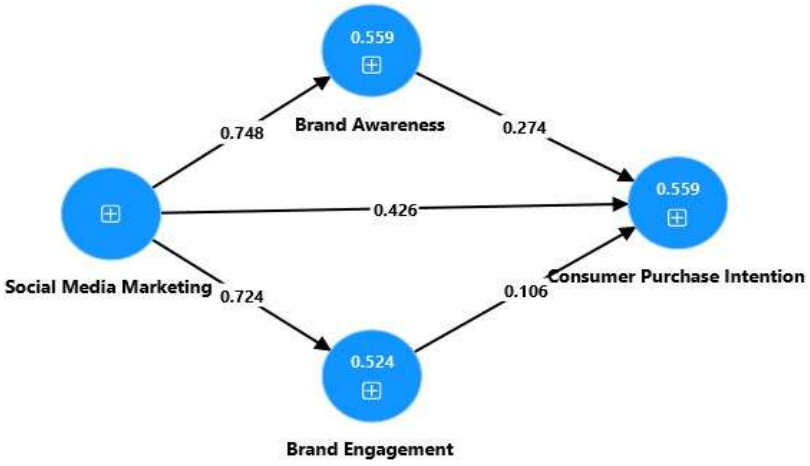
R-squared and an adjusted R-squared of three variables, namely Brand Awareness, Brand Engagement and Consumer Purchase Intention. R-Sq (R2) is used to measure the amount of variance that has been accounted for by the independent variables in the model on the dependent variable. Adjusted R-squared corrects for the number of predictors in the model, providing a more precise estimate by controlling for overfitting. Brand Awareness: The R-squared value of the predictors is 0.559, with an adjusted R-squared value of 0.558. This means that the predictors in the model have explained 55.9% of the variance in Brand Awareness. Brand Engagement has a correlation of 0.524 and an adjusted R-squared value of 0.522, indicating that the model explains 52.4% of the variance. $R^2 = 0.559$ and adjusted $R^2 = 0.556$ of the models imply that it accounts for 55.9% of the variance in Consumer Purchase Intention. The small difference between the adjusted R^2 and R^2 values of all the constructs suggests that the model provides a good fit to the data without becoming overly complicated. This indicates the model's good predictive capacity and its ability to reliably detail the relationship between the constructs.

Figure 1



Social Media Marketing (SMM), Brand Awareness (BA), Brand Engagement (BE) and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI) are operationalized and validated in this study. Attributed to indicators of content quality, interaction frequency, and trendiness, Social Media Marketing exhibits a high path coefficient to the measurements of Brand Awareness ($b = 0.559$, $p < 0.001$) and Brand Engagement ($b = 0.524$, $p < 0.001$). Recognition, recollection, and familiarity items measure brand awareness, which is a significant predictor of consumer purchase intention ($b = 0.009$, $p < 0.05$). Brand Engagement ($b = 0.233$, $p < 0.05$) has a considerable impact on CPI, with most of the impact being influenced by SMM, and is significantly measured by emotional connection, sharing behavior, and active content seeking. Finally, Consumer Purchase Intention, which has a direct and strong relationship with SMM ($b = 0.559$, $p < 0.001$), is measured through intentions to buy, recommendation intention, and brand preference. To measure such structural paths, the model ensures reliability (Cronbach's alpha > 0.7, composite reliability > 0.8), convergent validity (factor loading > 0.7, AVE > 0.5), and divergent validity (Fornell-Larcker or HTMT) to demonstrate construct validity. This methodology aligns with the latest studies, which attribute social media marketing to influencing awareness and engagement in consumer behavior (Saputra & Wardana, 2023). Indeed, the effect of SMM on purchase intention is mediated by brand awareness and brand engagement, as supported by "The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention, Brand Awareness and Engagement."

Figure 2
Measurement Model



The correlations among social media marketing, Brand Awareness, Brand Engagement, and Consumer Purchase Intention. The coefficients of the paths indicated by the numbers beside the arrows show the magnitude and direction of the association among constructs. The circles represent the R^2 values, which indicate the portion of variance in each dependent variable that the model explains. Social media marketing influences brand awareness and brand engagement, having a strong positive effect (path coefficient = 0.748 and path coefficient = 0.724). The path coefficient of Consumer Purchase Intention is also directly affected by social media marketing, with a path coefficient of 0.426, indicating a moderate direct effect. Brand Awareness has a path coefficient of 0.274 on Consumer Purchase Intention, whereas Brand Engagement has a lesser

influence on Consumer Purchase Intention (path coefficient = 0.106). The R2 values reveal that Brand Awareness explains 55.9% of the variance (R2 = 0.559), Brand Engagement explains 52.4% of the variance (R2 = 0.524), and Consumer Purchase Intention has R2 = 0.559, which implies that 55.9% of the variance is due to the collective effect of Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness and Engagement. The model proposes that SMM is a major contributor to both Brand Awareness and Engagement, which further mediates its influence on Consumer Purchase Intention to some extent. Nonetheless, the direct effect of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Purchase Intention is high, indicating that social media activities have a direct influence on consumer buying behavior, even though brand-related constructs are also positively affected.

Table 9
Cross loadings

Indicator	Brand Awareness	Brand Engagement	Consumer Purchase Intention	Social Media Marketing
Social Media Marketing (SMM 1)	0.549	0.535	0.649	0.789
Social Media Marketing (SMM 2)	0.674	0.665	0.568	0.852
Social Media Marketing (SMM 3)	0.616	0.578	0.530	0.824
Brand Awareness (BA 1)	0.895	0.725	0.614	0.656
Brand Awareness (BA 2)	0.882	0.886	0.596	0.702
Brand Awareness (BA 3)	0.920	0.807	0.643	0.658
Brand Engagement (BE 1)	0.790	0.851	0.501	0.604
Brand Engagement (BE 2)	0.882	0.886	0.596	0.702
Brand Engagement (BE 3)	0.502	0.724	0.530	0.457
Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI 1)	0.661	0.615	0.883	0.687
Consumer Purchase Intentio (CPI 2)	0.484	0.509	0.749	0.485
Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI 3)	0.583	0.545	0.901	0.603

The cross-loadings in Table 8 represent the factor loadings of indicators across four constructs: Brand Awareness, Brand Engagement, Consumer Purchase Intention, and Social Media Marketing. Cross-loadings indicate the degree to which each indicator correlates well with the construct in relation to other constructs and form a vital criterion for testing discriminant validity. Indicators such as SMM 1, 2, and 3, which represent Social Media Marketing, load the highest within the Social Media Marketing construct (0.789, 0.852, and 0.824, respectively), indicating their correspondence with the target construct. Under Brand Awareness, the highest loadings are observed in Brand Awareness BA 1, 2, and 3 (0.895, 0.882, and 0.920), indicating good convergent validity. Brand Engagement (0.851, 0.886) is heavily influenced by the "Brand Engagement BE 1, 2" load and is also slightly influenced by the "BE 3" load (0.724), although the latter is still acceptable. The highest loadings are associated with their construct of consumer purchase intention (CPI), specifically under "Consumer Purchase Intention CPI 1, 2, 3" (0.883, 0.749, 0.901). Since

the loading pattern demonstrates that all indicators are more related to their corresponding constructs than to other constructs, it is possible to say that the model is discriminately valid. This guarantees that the constructs are different and measure various underlying factors thus making the measurement model robust.

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

This paper has discussed how social-media marketing (SMM) can impact consumer purchase intention (CPI) mediated by brand awareness (BA) and brand engagement (BE). The empirical findings justify the claim that SMM has a great impact on CPI, and brand awareness is a mediator in the given interaction. A more informed and experienced consumer of a brand due to regular exposure to it online will have a better purchase intention, which reveals the usefulness of the awareness-based approach to online advertising. On the other hand, brand engagement was not statistically significant in mediating effect which indicates that interactive participation may not necessarily result in purchase behaviour. These results suggest that engagement results are pre-caused by awareness and that the impact of cultural, demographic, or industry-specific factors might moderate the use of engagement. The findings are consistent with the current evidence that demonstrates that, even though engagement leads to community and loyalty, in different contexts it can have mixed effect on immediate purchases decisions. In general, the research supports the argument that SMM is a critical strategic tool in the creation of consumer intention, mainly because of its ability to build and maintain brand awareness in competitive online markets.

Conclusion

The results of this study find that the social-media marketing has a considerable positive impact on consumer purchase intention, which is mainly achieved by increasing the brand awareness. Though brand engagement did not provide a significant mediating effect, the entire model adheres to the assumption that a specific, properly designed digital communication enhances brand recognition and, subsequently, buying behaviour. These understandings point to the fact that successful SMM must be based on creative engagement as well as strategic content continuity to develop cognitive familiarity and trust. Moreover, the differences in the degree of engagement between demographics and cultures demonstrate the necessity of context-dependent marketing plans that change the meaning of messages, the platforms, and the type of interaction based on the audience specifics. The research will add to the academic and managerial knowledge since the awareness-based methods prove to be better predictors of purchase intention than engagement themselves. This therefore implies that marketers must combine the awareness-based digital branding strategies and selective engagement efforts to optimize consumer conversion and brand equity in dynamic online ecosystems.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretical Implications.

The study is a significant addition to the literature review on the interaction of social media marketing (SMM) and consumer buying intentions (CPI) in the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) scheme. The research establishes that brand awareness (BA) is a powerful mediating factor between SMM and CPI thus furthering the theoretical knowledge on how social-media content fulfills the informational and hedonic needs of consumers, which in turn determine their buying behavior. The study makes it clear that awareness is the cognitive channel through which SMM marketing stimuli drive intention by confirming empirically that BA as a critical mechanism as opposed to SMM as a direct determinant. Conversely, brand engagement (BE) was not identified as an important mediator, which underscores the situational reliance of interaction behaviours on cultural, demographic, and industry-specific variables. The discovery creates novel directions in terms of refining the theory because it motivates theorists to investigate situational moderators that can increase or weaken the role of engagement. Additionally, the localisation of the theory that has been theoretically proven globally and the appropriateness of UGT to non-Western emerging-market environments is achieved by testing it in the Pakistani context, thus, making the study relevant.

Practical Implications.

The findings as managerial can give actionable advice to the digital performance optimisation of the marketers and brand strategists. These findings indicate that consumer purchase intention in response to investment in brand-awareness programs with consistent, informational and visually stimulating social-media messages- is stronger than is that in response to solely interactive or engagement-based actions. Managers ought to thus focus more on content that will boost brand recall and credibility with help of storytelling and collaborations with influencers that will strengthen the brand identity. The engagement activities (likes, shares, and comments) are, as much as they are still effective in maintaining relationships, not directly sales-related without the support of an awareness-focused message. The evidence also calls on practitioners in the emerging markets to embrace segmentation based on data, by adapting the digital strategy to cultural and demographic orientations as opposed to duplicating the marketing model in the western countries.

Future Research Recommendations

This research may be furthered in several ways to enhance this study in the future. To start with, longitudinal or experimental research design must be used to analyze the effects of brand engagement and awareness with time and their impact on long-term purchase behaviour. Second, to improve the generalizability of the results, researchers are advised to use probability or stratified sampling methods. Third, it would be valuable to include the qualitative or mixed-methods method (interviews or focus groups or to conduct netnography) to get more information about the psychological reasons of online interaction. Fourth, further research, more mediators/moderators such as trust, perceived value, electronic word-of-mouth, cultural orientation, and consumer

innovativeness, should be included to enhance the conceptual framework. Fifth, comparative studies across platforms, industries or countries of social media might show contextual variations in how consumers react and cultural forces. Finally, the use of advanced analytics, including structural-equation modelling using longitudinal data or machine-learning-based sentiment analysis might enhance the accuracy and predictive validity of digital-marketing research models. Such guidelines would contribute to future studies in terms of their better theoretical coverage, methodological soundness, and cross-market relevance.

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