

Research Article

Impact of Employer Branding, Social Media Marketing & EWOM on Consumer Online Purchase Intention with Mediation of Brand Trust

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the impact of social media marketing on brand trust and online purchase intention, to determine if social media marketing and electronic word of mouth undoubtedly help customers get more and more information about the product or brand more than the conventional means i.e. word of mouth, to determine the impact of brand trust on online purchase intention as well to know the consumer's assurance in purchasing products online. The research design employed in this study is causal research, aimed at understanding the behaviour of social media users. To gather data for the study, social media platforms served as the data collection channels. A total of 219 respondents participated in an online questionnaire, and the structural equation modelling (SEM) technique was utilized to track the hypothesized causal relationships. The outcomes of this study identify that consumers exhibit more trust in social media marketing compared to social EWOM. As a result, it is advisable to prioritize hypotheses that garnered acceptance and appear more viable and dependable for generating online purchase intentions. It's important to note that this research is confined to the apparel industry, with data primarily collected from urban areas due to their higher levels of literacy, awareness, fashion sense, technology use, and income compared to rural areas, where social media device usage is limited.

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INTRODUCTION

The internet has been hailed as one of the most beneficial technologies, connecting millions of people all over the world and transforming people's lives and thinking. Brands and businesses all around the globe are always looking for new methods to

connect with their customers. The best approach for online businesses to attract customers is to provide a variety of relevant product information, good customer service, and a website that is simple to use (Cheng et al, 2011), social media has quickly risen to prominence as one of the most pivotal mediums for disseminating announcements between marketers and consumers across the world (Chu & Kim, 2011).

The growing importance of social media in today's society has changed the way businesses interact with their target audiences. Users spend time on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram, among other social media sites. This situation drives more businesses to bring forward online stores on these

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platforms to boost their sales (Zhu & Chen, 2015), Social media users may now engage with their friends as well as speed up the sharing and retrieval of information via their mobile phones and tablets, thanks to the rapid growth of social networking sites, smartphone adoption, internet speed, along with wireless network coverage. By generating consumer communication, social media sites have provided a new means of raising brand-related information and building connections with customers. Consumers are encouraged to connect with the brand, share information with prospective consumers, and produce material that represents their preferences for the brand.

Customers are more likely to recommend others to look at certain companies if they are actively engaged in this process. Many times, brands do not utilize traditional marketing advertising tactics to advertise their businesses; instead, they rely on word-of-mouth promotion (Chu & Kim, 2011). As the internet is important in convincing more purchase intents, eWOM becomes an interactive medium in this regard (Alalwan et al., 2019). Since the pandemic began, consumers have been more willing to purchase online through various platforms after learning about EWOM's feedback and reviews of the product. As a result, the effective use of social media has become an essential part of a competitive advantage in comparison to the consumer's traditional purchase intention.

Background

Prior to the development of technology as well as media, there were ways of communication that were fraught with challenges and gaps, making it difficult for people to communicate and make choices. As this era progresses, social media and eWOM help to establish the company's image as well as trust in the minds of customers, resulting in brand loyalty. With the notion of brand trust as a mediator, this study aims to investigate the impact of SMM, EWOM, and employer branding on the consumer's online purchase decision. Social networking sites have altered the advertising landscape in such a manner that customers can now readily compare and contrast the benefits and drawbacks of various brands. Individuals use the information available on the internet in a variety of ways, and it has an impact on their perspectives, thoughts, trust, and purchase intentions. Customers may see reviews and information about items provided by other purchasers who have purchased or consumed them by conducting a simple search for the product or visiting any of the sites. Customers may

go to many websites to find out what other people think about a product, an item, or a set of items, as well as compare them to other products that can suit the same need. The goal of this research is to see how EWOM, employer branding, and brand trust affect customer happiness and buy intent in the clothing industry.

Problem Statement

Currently the e-commerce has changed the way we shop. But as like everything else, the world of online shopping is not full of roses. E-commerce companies have made lots of efforts to improve them, but despite of that there are few issues and difficulties that customer have to face in shopping online (Pavlou, 2003). Keeping a customer unhappy or unsatisfied does not leading towards the loss of only one customer, but hundreds of potential of buyers could get stop due to the bad experience of one customer. As oppose to this, a satisfied buyer can increase the business as much as hundred.

Research Objectives

- To find out the impact of social media marketing on consumer online purchase intention.
- To analyse out the impact of brand trust on online purchase intention.
- To examine out the impact of EWOM on brand trust.
- To explore the impact of employer branding on brand trust.

Research Questions

- Does social media marketing have any influence on consumer online purchase intention?
- Is it necessary to develop a brand trust in consumer mind to create online purchase intention?
- Does EWOM have impact on brand trust building?
- Does employer branding has an impact on brand trust?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing helps customers to connect with other audience to build the image of brand and increase the sales. Social media marketing is a dynamic process that promotes product promotions through online social channels and websites, leveraging a broader audience compared to traditional advertising channels (Weinberg, 2009).

Moreover, it encourages consumer engagement in marketing activities via social media and fosters word-of-mouth recommendations, reflecting local wisdom and economic sharing (Subawa & Widhiasthini, 2020). It includes the circulation of the great content on the profile of social media, listening to and gets engage with the followers, and running social media advertisements. Nowadays the main social media platforms are Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Snap chat. One of the most common confusions that always arises in shopping online is, when (day and time) will the order would be delivered. Sites which have tracking systems of order don't always work accurately. The delivery man often reaches at home, when nobody is available to receive the order and there is no way to tell them the particular time slot to deliver the order. While making online transactions, the failure of digital payment system always emerges. The uncertain connection of the internet or a technical problem often results in the deduction of the charges from the customer's account without being added to the seller's account, and getting back this amount is another hassle which make the customer discourage. Most of the times it happens that customer has got to know a money saving deal on a product but when it's just a way to click, customer notice the shipping charge or any other conditional charges and even sometimes these delivery charges get add each individual product. Returning or refunding things bought online is very common. Customers can't get the idea of the product until they hold it physically. It's really very important to go through the terms and conditions of returning policies before making any purchase. The sites should clearly mention their terms and policies.

The main problem nowadays on the internet is lack of cyber security (Cheng et al., 2011). Most of the online sites used to record the customer's important data including their name, address, contact number, and details of the bank. If these sites don't apply the cyber security measures strictly, then the data is definitely at the risk of dropping into wrong hands. The customer gets attracted to complex looking site, but at the same time they also get irritated by complex and difficult site navigations, options and details which seems irrelevant to them. For making online communication a two-way street, it is important to identify that social listening is very much essential. Make customer feel valuable by replying to their messages or queries on social web. Even a shortest reply just like "thank you" can change the perception of the customer about the company. It could be work as game changer (Choshin & Ghaffari, 2017).

Set up a workflow that encourages the social team of the brand to engage with the messages of the customers they received. In the huge world of online shopping, many big companies definitely have the finest security methods to protect the details of the customer, but the smaller online shopping sites may not have the capability and proficiency to do it. But more sales could be generated and the customer will have the better experience if the sites of e-commerce could fix these issues (Doherty & Chadwick, 2010). Try to make the structure of the site easiest and informative by reducing the number of clicks it takes to reach to the products for which they are looking. Eliminate all of the extra mess that confuse the visitor and let them have a noble feeling about the goods which are displaying on the web. The navigation which takes the less effort will reduce the frustration of the shopper. To recover and solve some of these given up purchases, VWO suggested to remove the barriers like checkout registration, put the option of editing of the cart and give the ability to the customers to save and visit their carts later.

EWOM

As per Yap et al., (2013), Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) serves as a platform where customers freely share their experiences, which can encompass both positive and negative feedback about products. eWOM essentially acts as a form of buzz marketing, capable of going viral if the message is compelling or humorous. This type of marketing centres on person-to-person interactions that occur online. Daugherty and Hoffman (2014) also note that online communication extends to social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. These social media platforms provide fresh opportunities for customers to actively engage and participate in the social media landscape rather than remaining passive observers, primarily through eWOM. It changes the perspective and opinions of the consumers regarding the buying and selling, and it change the way for the marketer about how they could fulfil the needs of the customer. In simple words, it could work as double-edged sword by influencing and creating impact on buyer and seller both.

Employer Branding

Employer branding has always been widely acknowledged as an important concept in marketing (Keller, 1998). As per Mao (2010), Employer branding plays an important role in brand building. What and how the consumers and customers think about the brand is known as employer branding. In simple

words it can be define as the view of the brand in the mind of the customer. This image develops time to time and it could be based on the interactions and experience with the brand. Esch et al., (2006) had already acknowledged the direct impact of employer branding on a consumer's brand trust. On other hand, Kotler and Armstrong (2018) define employer branding as "a set of beliefs held about a particular brand". These interactions do not necessarily involve the buying or consumption of any product and service. It is sum up of ideas, beliefs and impressions that a customer has regarding the brand. Each customer can perceive the brand in the different manner. This set of beliefs assumes a critical role in the decision-making process of consumers when they assess various brands. According to Bivainiene (2007), brand image is characterized as a "multifaceted collection of both tangible and intangible attributes that enable consumers to recognize the product."

Brand Trust

Consumer's perceptions of the quality of the brand created by informational cues associated with the brand (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). The brand trust establishes by the brand awareness. In this current era, consumers have more options than ever when it comes to choose among a hundred of different brands and thousands of products and services. It can even be referred as the expectations of the customer of how the products or services of the particular brand can deliver on its promises. Brand trust can be defined as a consumer's willingness to rely on the brand in the face of risk because of expectations that the brand can cause positive outcomes (Lau & Lee, 1999). It works in a way that once a brand succeeds in being reliable and trustworthy, people purchase its products and services again and again, without any question or doubt or until something better comes along. The good impression could arise if the brand has a unique advantage (Kotler & Keller, 2012). In this respect, it is important to focus on building and maintaining brand trust since it represents the basis for long-term customer relationship (Burmann et al., 2009).

Consumer's Online Purchase Intention

Intention to purchase refers to the desire to acquire a particular product or service within a specific timeframe. As emphasized by Ling et al. (2010), a consumer's willingness to make a purchase from an e-commerce company significantly impacts online purchasing intent. Purchase intention constitutes a crucial aspect of consumer cognitive behaviour, representing an individual's intention to acquire a

specific brand. Laroche et al., (1996) suggest that variables like consideration in choosing a brand and the expectation of making a brand purchase can serve as indicators of consumer purchase intention. It can be characterized as a consumer's attitude toward a specific purchase and their level of willingness to make the purchase.

Consumers who possess knowledge and familiarity with e-commerce firms are more likely to visit online shopping platforms with the intention of making a purchase (Forsythe & Shi, 2003; Gefen & Straub, 2004). Such consumers can understand the process, reasons, and future outcomes of their actions (Gefen & Straub, 2004). In line with Pavlou's argument (2003), online purchase intention occurs when a customer is willing and intends to engage in an online transaction. Online transactions involve activities such as information retrieval, data transfer, and product purchases. Purchase intention stands as a fundamental aspect of marketing, and a consumer's purchasing decision or intent is shaped by various factors, including product quality, price, judgments, and perceived value.

Relationship between Social Media Marketing and Brand Trust

Social media is a finest and leading platform for the promotion of the products, services or any other content. It works as a two-way street for the engagement and communication of the consumer with the brand. These connections help in building trust on the brand and form a particular community around the brand. It creates a deeper relationship with the customers who in resultant boost the repetition of purchases and referrals. Because of the lack of product tangibility in the online shopping context via social media marketing, brand trust is critical among customers. The reputation of the company on social commerce activity had an impact on brand trust. Meanwhile, Zhan et al. (2016) discovered that social media activity had an impact on the community's brand trust.

On the other side, the convenience of doing business online can improve client happiness. Relationship quality is measured in terms of both trust and satisfaction (Duarte et al., 2018). Today's business environment performs their best to strengthen the trust between customer justifying the companies to see how they are responding to the brands. In the current global landscape, factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, issues related to racial injustice, and various social and political matters have become prominent. Customers often utilize social media

channels that offer direct interaction with brands as primary platforms to monitor and engage with their responses to these current events. In the present context, social media's role is more vital than ever in shaping a company's capacity to establish and uphold brand trust. Consequently, business leaders must give careful thought to the judicious use of social media to preserve and nurture their brand and customer relationships.

Relationship between EWOM and Brand Trust

Mishra and Satish (2016) describe eWOM as online communication that includes both positive and negative messages. The quality of the remarks and the platform on which they are written are what establishes trust in eWOM. Comments left on a third-party website like TripAdvisor are getting more traction than comments left on a hotel's website (Wu et al., 2011). Social networking sites helps in changed the way of marketing as now consumers could compare easily or match the different brand with the support of one other. In this case, the other users of social networking sites consider this as a review. Individuals utilize the information that is online available in the variety of ways and it also affects their suggestions, considerations, trust and intention of purchasing. Uncomplicated hunts for the item or product or visit to any of the altered sites allow the customers to check the reviews and feedback regarding the products which are posted by the other purchaser who already purchase or consume it earlier. Customer can visit the different sites and discover the distinct opinions of the product, item or group or even compare them with other alternative products that can meet the similar requirements.

Relationship between Employer branding and Brand Trust

According to Kundu and Datta (2015), trust is a key element in service quality and customer happiness. In an online purchasing study in Greece, the influence of brand trust on consumer satisfaction was shown to be positive and substantial (Pappas et al., 2014). According to Mabkhot et al., (2017), employer branding is an important factor in improving the relationship between a company and its customers. Customers may connect with companies on social media, which improves their online experience and helps brands establish their online reputation.

Relationship between Brand Trust and Consumer Online Purchase Intention

Customers who are highly pleased or even appreciate the service are devoted supporters of the firm and disseminate positive news. Another reason comes from Ganiyu (2017) customer happiness has a favourable and significant impact on brand loyalty. Previous research has found that trust influences intentions to follow purchasing intention, shop online, seek information, use social media, and accept referral agents (Sheu & Chu, 2017).

Research Hypotheses

- HI: Social media marketing has an impact on brand trust
- H2: E-WOM has an impact on brand trust
- H3: Employer branding has an impact on brand trust
- H4: Brand trust has an impact on Consumer Online Purchase intention.

Conceptual Framework

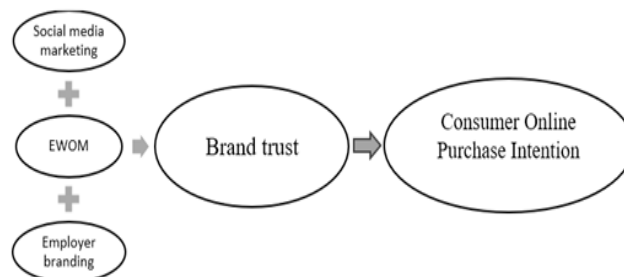


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach & Type

This research was based on the primary data and has used a quantitative deductive approach. The research is quantitative, which means it is based on a set of numerical, quantifiable, and visible data from social media marketing efforts to produce real objective outcomes for the study. This article concentrates on applied research since it is looking for a practical and specific issue that has an impact on a certain variable e.g. social media marketing influence on online purchase intention.

Research Design

This research is a causal and explanatory. The

data collected in this research is primary which have gathered through cross-sectional survey method.

Research Population

The population in this study is all people who consumes product from Apparel industry. The data was collected from social media platforms. The consumers are the population of the urban area, who are very aware of websites of social media. The audience which is targeted is social media users. The total population size is 219 consumers of apparel industry in Pakistan.

Sample Size & Sampling Technique

The research sample in this study is a group of research volunteers chosen from the general community. Customers in the apparel industry are the criterion for picking samples. The convenience sampling method was employed in this investigation. This study employs 20 indicators and a sample size of 300 individuals. It is an experiment in research and will help in determining the cause-and-effect relationship between social media marketing, brand trust, employer branding, and EWOM on online purchase intention of customer.

Research Instrument

The major data type utilized in this study is primary data, which consists of the results of respondents filling out a questionnaire using Google Forms. Respondents that fulfil the predefined sample requirements fill out the questionnaire. A questionnaire is used to obtain information from respondents in this study. The questionnaire comprises a number of elements such as Social Media Marketing (Tuten et al., 2014), EWOM (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004), Employer Branding (Hanu et al., 2021), Brand Trust, Consumer Online Purchase Intention (Ramkissoon & Uysal (2011) for respondent's responses. Questionnaire which was adopted from various scholars to analyse the results are attached in Table no 1.

Table 1
Summary of Research Instrument

Variable	Authors/Source	No. of items	Scale
Consumer's Online Purchase Intention	Lee and Lee (2015)	3	1-7
Employer branding	Hanu et al. (2021)	4	1-5
E-WOM	Reza & Samiei (2012)	4	1-5
Social Media Marketing	Tuten et al., (2015)	8	1-5
Brand Trust	Matzler et al. (2006)	6	1-5

Data Collection

Data collection for this study involved conducting a poll within the apparel sector, leveraging social networking sites like Facebook and WhatsApp. A questionnaire was employed to collect data comprehensively in a single step, and the data was quantified using a five-level Likert scale. Stringent measures were implemented to cross-verify the collected data, ensuring its accuracy.

Data Analysis Method

The data analysis method employed in this research is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM is a sophisticated multivariate statistical approach used for scrutinizing structural relationships. It delves into the structural associations between observed variables and latent constructs, melding component analysis with multiple regression analysis (Maruyama, 1997). SEM represents a potent extension of Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA), and it also incorporates validity and reliability tests when assessing measurement instruments.

RESULTS

Respondent Profile

The 219 respondents had the following demographic characteristics: 95 (43.4%) were male and 124 (56.6%) were female 16 (7.3%) were in Matric or O' Levels program, 26 (11.9%) were in Intermediate or A' Levels program, 48 (21.9%) were enrolled in undergraduate programs, 94 (42.9%) were graduated and 35 (16%) respondents were in the post graduate category; 78 (35.6%) were aged 18 to 25 years, 84 (38.4%) were aged 26 to 35 years, 36 (16.4%) were aged 36 to 45 years, 10 (4.6%) were aged 46 to 55 years, 11 (5%) was aged 55 years or more. Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 2
Respondent Profile

		Frequency	Percentage
GENDER	Female	124	56.6%
	Male	95	43.4%
EDUCATION	Matric or O' Levels	16	7.30%
	Intermediate or A' Levels	26	11.90%
	Undergraduate	48	21.90%
	Graduate	94	42.90%
	Post Graduate	35	16%
AGE	18 to 25	78	35.6%
	26 to 35	84	38.4%
	36 to 45	36	16.4%
	46 to 55	10	4.6%
	55 & above	11	5%
N = 219			

Reliability Analyses

With a 95% confidence level, the limit value of dependability using Cronbach's Alpha has been determined as 0.60 (Cronbach, 1951). The measure of the dependability of the variables included in the study is provided in Table 3.

Table 3
Summary of Reliability Analyses

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Items
Social Media Marketing	0.798	05
Social EWOM	0.829	05
Brand Trust	0.845	05
Employer branding	0.789	04
Online Purchase Intention	0.779	03

The reliability test results displayed in the table above are quite good. The result in the table was higher than the predefined standard Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.60, indicating that all of these variables are reliable.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

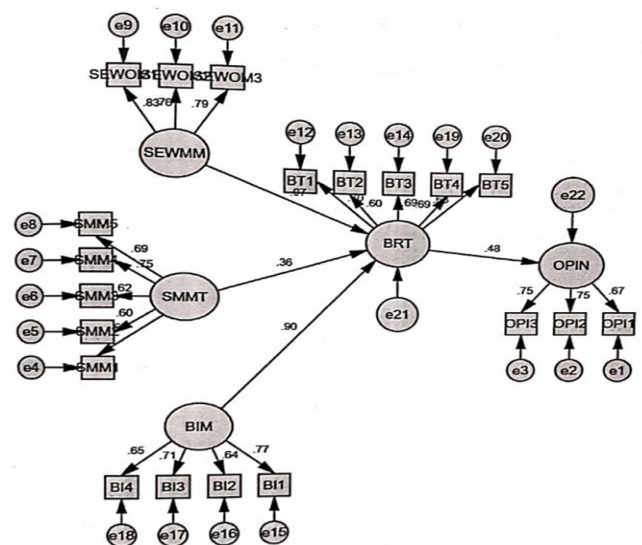
The research process commenced with the development of the CFA model, and once this model was finalized, the dataset was utilized for testing the structural model. Evaluation of the CFA model's fitness relied on various indices. The resulting values were as follows: CMIN/DF = 1.996; P < .000; CFI = 0.919; TLI = 0.905; RMSEA = 0.068. These figures collectively affirm that the model exhibits a good fit and exceeds the acceptable benchmarks. Table 2 provides an overview of the factor loadings for all items within the model. In order to gauge the reliability of the constructs, both the composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE) values were computed.

- Online Purchase Intention (Cronbach's = 0.779)
- Social Media Marketing (Cronbach's a = 0.798)
- Social EWOM (Cronbach's a = 0.82)
- Brand Trust (Cronbach's a = 0.845)
- Employer branding (Cronbach's a = 0.789)
- Structure Equation Modelling (Path Analysis)

Hypothesis	Path	Estimate	S.E	C.R	P	Results
1	SEWM has an impact on BRT	.059	1.357	.175	.175	Rejected
2	SMMT has an impact on BRT	.334	.060	5.574	...	Accepted
3	BIM has an impact on BRT	.533	.057	9.575	...	Accepted
4	BRT has an impact on OPIN	.494	.094	5.254	...	Accepted

After finalizing the CFA model, following results were obtained CMIN/DF = 1.996; p<.000; CFI = 0.919; TLI = 0.905; RMSEA = 0.068.

The results show that the first hypothesis, SEWM has an impact on BRT, has been rejected. $\beta = 0.175$; $p > .05$). This shows that SEWM does not have significant impact on BRT & cause consumers are not being able to create trust on the brand until and unless they experience it personally. The second hypothesis, SMMT has an impact on BRT, has been accepted ($\beta=.000$; $p < .05$). The results show that there is a positive correlation between SMMT and BRT, indicating that people have a positive attitude SMMT and they can easily trust the specific brand. The third hypothesis, BIM has an impact on BRT, has also been accepted ($\beta=0.00$; $p < .005$). It shows that if brand already has set their image in the market, then it could easily gain the trust of their consumers. The fourth hypothesis, BRT has an impact on OPI, has also been accepted ($\beta=.000$; $p < .005$). These outcomes reveal that consumer tends to purchase online if the image of the brand has been already set in the market which automatically leads to the consumer trust on the brand.



Hypothesis Testing

- H1: Social media marketing has an impact on brand trust – Rejected
- H2: E-WOM has an impact on brand trust - Accepted
- H3: Employer branding has an impact on brand trust - Accepted
- H4: Brand trust has an impact on Consumer Online Purchase intention. - Accepted

Discussion

The aim of this study was to identify the most important aspects of social media marketing, which can affect brand trust, employer branding, and online purchase intent. Our findings point to a number of variables that attract people to shop online. Employer branding and brand trust, which creates EWOM, as well as buy intention of current items in the Apparel sector, are among these variables. Based on the findings, social media marketing has an insignificant impact on Brand trust. Online marketing is getting hype because of COVID-19 but particularly in Apparel industry, there are numerous replicas available in the market which compelled consumers to distrust online sellers in social media platforms and prefers to purchase physically to the brand store when they are unable to trust the brand's product through social media marketing platform. On social media, customers found it difficult to trust brands (Algharabat, 2017). The findings are in line with previous research that indicated social media networks had a detrimental impact on customers' trust (Preacher et al., 2007). According to Chen and Lin's (2019) findings, social media has an indirect influence on customer brand trust.

Our finding suggests that E-WOM has an impact on brand trust. Sometimes E-WOM also plays a significant role in brand trust. If the previous customer or existing customer is satisfied with the product, they will automatically prompt or market the product unintentionally by talking about the product in a positive manner. EWOM has a favourable impact on brand trust, according to the research. H2 is supported, and the findings are similar with those of Leung et al., (2015) and Ladhari and Michaud (2015), suggesting that EWOM is an effective factor in encouraging brand trust to acquire a certain product or service.

The image of the brand has significant impact on brand trust. Employer branding plays an important part in brand trust when brand have a positive image

for a specific product. Consumers will automatically trust that brand without asking anyone. J. is a well brand because consumers have a good employer branding for them and they trust them. The image of the apparel brand has a favourable impact on brand trust (Grewal et al., 1998; Wu et al., 2011). Wu et al. (2011) discovered that employer branding may directly boost product sales volume since it is how customers perceive the quality of the brand. A positive employer branding has a greater impact on customer trust in the brand.

Brand trust has an impact on Consumer Online Purchase intention. As discussed with the help of social media marketing, EWOM and employer branding consumers trust is created that people go for online purchasing because their intentions are created through good social media marketing regularly, they have heard about the product through EWOM channel and employer branding is positive. Brand trust has a favourable and substantial influence on consumer purchase intention, according to study done by Pappas et al. (2014). Trust is a significant contributor to consumer intention, according to research. Customer impression of the brand and company is influenced by consumer trust. Customer purchase intent with a previously used brand might, of course, increase if the brand has built the customer's trustful expectations and demands (Kundu & Datta, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Online platforms facilitate effective communication among consumers, allowing them to engage with online communities, friends, family, and even strangers to share their product experiences, whether positive or disappointing. Social marketing aids brands in satisfying their customers, ultimately expanding their profit margins and fostering customer loyalty. This study concludes that an effective strategy, high-quality content, and the exchange of ideas and suggestions are key drivers that promote online purchase intention. Additionally, in the contemporary era, digital marketing has undeniably emerged as a pivotal factor with a significant positive impact on online purchase intention. Its importance lies in its ability to catalyse the intent to buy online, as consumers from various backgrounds have embraced technology and possess the requisite knowledge to navigate modern technological devices such as smartphones, tablets, computers, and other digital tools, which have become integral to their lives. The

consistent use of these devices instils consumers with confidence and a sense of adventure, encouraging them to explore new avenues and methods for online shopping.

Recommendations

The findings of this study can help apparel firms grow the potential of EWOM to their reasonable understudy by taking into account the elements that cause EWOM and brand trust. Managers and marketers in the garment sector, for example, must make extra efforts to focus on social media platforms in order to increase consumer reactions. Customers are transformed into promoters on social media, who build, modify, and share useful information about various companies and their distinctive products and services. Managers should apply focus on evoking cultural along with personal connections, as well as increasing trust, by communicating mastery, truthfulness, customer attention, and relationships through marketing mix considerations. While brand trust is a key determinant of online purchase intent, businesses must also establish a variety of reward schemes to promote and encourage consumer trust. It is critical for apparel companies to highlight every favourable review in order to promote a positive employer branding and persuade additional online shoppers to make a rapid purchase.

Limitations of the Research

This study has been limited to the apparel industry, in which all variables are interconnected such as social media marketing, online purchase intention, employer branding, brand trust and social EWOM. In this research the information has been collected mostly from the people of Karachi as it has more literacy level, awareness, sense of fashion, use of technological devices and income level as compare to other Cities like Bahawalpur, Dado and others. Whereas, there is low level of usage of social media devices in these lower cities.

Future Research

The data which has been collected right now is based on Karachi only where as in future the study will be conducted on the audience of lower cities like Bahawalpur, Dado too which would include their level of thinking regarding usage of social media to stay updated about the online marketing, online purchase intention, the image of the brand and trust on the brand prior to getting it physically.

Competing Interests

The authors has declared that no competing interests exist.

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