Social Media Influence on Online Shopping of Durables: The Mediating Effect of Brand and Trust on Purchase Decision

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Abstract

This paper assesses the impact that social media marketing makes on brand association, customer confidence, as well as purchase intention in the market of consumer durable goods. The aim is to grasp how marketers should design engagement strategies targeting online consumers. Purposive sampling was employed to gather information from 145 social media users who had used social media for buying consumer durables in the last one year. The study's results suggest that marketing activities on social media greatly boosts brand association and trust which, in turn, leads to stronger purchase intentions and actual buying behavior. The study details how brand perception and credibility mediate consumers' decisions. The strategic implication is that brands need to improve their efforts in social media marketing to build trust with engagement, hence increase conversion rates. This is a unique contribution because it fills a gap identified in the reviewed literature, specifically the association of social media brand association, trust, as well as consumptions of durable goods in the online marketplace.

Keywords: Brand Perception; Social Media Marketing; Brand Association; Customer Confidence; Purchase Intention

Introduction

The emergence of social media has significantly reformed the business landscape, ushering in a new era comparable to other influential information and communication technologies. Its omnipresence has profoundly affected the sales and distribution strategies of retailers, compelling them to adapt to an increasingly digital environment. The merging of e-commerce with social networking platforms is now viewed as a crucial component of retail strategy, with online marketing efforts heavily influenced by their social media engagement (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Retailers are transitioning from traditional one-time transactions to embracing customer-centric approaches powered by advanced mobile technologies, fostering ongoing relationships with an expanding customer base. The success of these retailers is increasingly dependent on active customer engagement, which can be enhanced through building social connections, executing sales promotions, managing information, and educating consumers online. Notably, mobile technologies have become the primary means through which consumers access social media, further underlining its impact on retail success (Bolat, Kooli & Wright, 2016).

The constant movement of consumers is part of what makes the e-commerce industry what it is (Amit & Zott, 2017). New consumers come in every year because of the engaging social media ads that draw in their attention. When consumers bond with a brand through engagement and positive experiences, they tend to disseminate their thoughts and experiences with their social circle. This promotes a conversation that entices prospective clients to further explore the retailer's e-commerce site. Constructive criticism and positive reviews along with word of
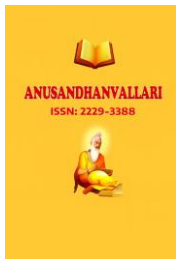
mouth builds a lasting relationship and connection between the retailer and consumers, creating an important loyalty and retention cycle that is crucial for lasting success.

The e-commerce companies in today's world that do not take social media seriously are losing a big chunk of potential customers, as buyers turn to social media to get info. Among the consumers, there are the disengaged ones, who may be impressed through sophisticated advertising or some positive encouragement (Sobande, 2024). Therefore, it is of utmost importance that retailers practice patience and the best techniques to answer requests, provide information, respond to questions quickly, and have their shopping sites optimized for mobile to improve the experience and the satisfaction of the consumer.

In online shopping, consumer behaviour often reflects an instantaneous decision with a lot of deep thinking, and the decisions are often made after discussions with trusted others, instead of having direct contact with the retailers. According to Suherland (2023) studies, social media's role is fundamental to online buying behaviour. Social media affects customers in many ways, and Brand trust and Purchase Decision are part of that effect. Social media helps retailers build relationships and increase sales.

Research on the effect of social media on e-commerce shows that Brand Trust and Purchase Decision facilitate the effect of social media (Lin, Wang, and Hajli, 2019). Retailers and customers get to appreciate the value of social media marketing, going beyond the point of having many followers on social media. It is essential to have real strategies, otherwise, the marketing efforts or advertising won't really have significant impact. The need to research social media advertising on consumer behaviour shows that retailers must be vigilant and quickly change (Mahoney and Tang, 2024). What is unique about this research is the focus on social media impact, brand trust, and purchasing decisions. Understanding how modern marketing can develop in the digital world helps to ensure how the continuous research in these areas helps retailers stay relevant, competitive, and adaptive to the ever-changing market landscape.

Review of Literature

The use of media varies according to consumer social presence, trust, and credibility, according to the theoretical insights into online purchasing behaviour for durable items. Word-of-mouth and social media greatly impact brand perception, which in turn affects consumers' decisions to buy products. (Siddiqui et al., 2021). The effect of brand attributes and trust on purchase intention is a well-explored area within consumer behaviour. For instance, trust has been shown to affect word-of-mouth communication, which in turn impacts e-loyalty intentions in virtual communities.

Moreover, the communication of products within blogs and vlogs is essential in determining the consumers' perception of the products. Signals in the social networks are very often capable of triggering brand attributes which relates strongly to one another. These signals have the potential of drawing attention and therefore increasing awareness and interest. In addition, a high degree of trust helps to fulfill a moderating role between social commerce metrics of engagement and the intentions to purchase as it reveals more on consumer behaviour (Wang et al., 2022). Hence, there is one common factor in the analysis of brand and trust, which affects the decisions of consumers on what to purchase.

Theoretical frameworks provide an understanding of consumer behaviour. One of these frameworks, socio-genesis theory, explains the origins of beliefs, attitudes, and decisions, influenced by the cultural, social, interpersonal, and emotional dimensions. It especially considers the impact of cultural and individual differences, social factors, and psychological attributes on how consumers use social networks. The impact of the use of social networks on their purchasing decisions relates to psychological triggers and associative learning; social contact

with others and the communication they have with others influence their purchasing decisions (Kimmel & Kimmel, 2018).

Trust, satisfaction, and commitment to a brand, as well as intention and loyalty to the brand are of pivotal importance to explain the customer-brand relationship. Trust and loyalty are most important because of the impact they have on buying behaviour, or purchasing a product (Yeon, Park & Lee, 2019). This is consistent with the theory of reasoned action, which posits two determinant factors that shape behavioural intention: attitude and subjective norm. Here, an individual consumer's attitude is formed by their belief, which includes trusting the brand, and that, in turn, affects their intention to buy. The interplay of brand trust as well as brand attitude with consumer behaviour reinforces the psychological dimensions of trust and attitude underlying purchasing decisions.

Trust acts as an anchor point within the framework of theory of reasoned action which describes the relationships between social media interactions and purchase behaviour (Farivar, Turel, & Yuan, 2017). Trust can lead to behavioural commitment, word of mouth, behaviour contagion and web visitation, link clicking, and purchase intention forecasting. The association of a brand and trust is particularly important when it comes to online shopping as it still remains an uncomfortable experience for many consumers.

Also, understanding the relationship of trust and brand perception on consumer behaviour improves social media marketing strategies (Ebrahim, 2020). It shows the driver which makes emotional and psychological aspects of consumer behaviour important for the buying decision and also makes it predictable for the future buying behaviour.

Social media has reshaped the dynamics of marketing from traditional mass marketing to customer-oriented individual communication (Yang, 2021). It offers a rich platform for understanding consumer preferences. Thus, this inspires various studies to explore how social networking sites influence online shopping or purchase decisions. The purchase decision considered in many studies is on day-to-day products; no one has studied the existing relationships in the context of making buying decisions for durables.

According to a study on the social media's impact on purchase decisions, social media has an indirect impact on buying decisions through purchasing intention. Positive attitude, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norm all have a large impact on buying intention, which then has a crucial impact on purchase. Trust and brand are the most studied independent variables that have been shown to influence consumer purchase intentions (Armon, 2018). Thus, the combination of two studies on brand and trust served as the foundation for a researched model designed to investigate the channel impact of social networking sites on online buying decisions.

The majority of the studies reveal brand and trust effects after the interaction with purchase intentions. For example, some studies reveal that brand loyalty mediates consumer trust and commitment, while it mediates between perceived value and purchase intention (Dam, 2020). Although the importance of website image is recognized, no research has empirically tested the establishment of a relationship between website image and trust. Few studies argue and examine how social networking site presence affects the acceptance of website information and customers, as well as the indirect effect on those two aspects through purchase intentions.

From previous studies, it is observed that the presence of social networking sites has both a direct and indirect association with the purchase decision of durable goods in the presence of superior attributes of products or services. Although the behaviour of consumers regarding online shopping has been adequately studied, there is still a deficiency in comprehending the effect of social media marketing on brand connection, brand trust, and buying behaviour for consumer durable products. Most existing literature concentrates on common e-commerce activities and ignores the influence of focused social media communication, influencers, and brand advocates on consumer perception (Rabi, 2023). There also seems to be a lack of detail regarding the correlation between
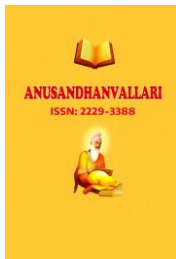
purchase intention and purchase decision in a setting where social media marketing is employed. Filling these gaps is crucial for understanding the changing digital market.

In response, this research carried out an investigation to accomplish the below-mentioned objectives:

- To identify the influence of social media marketing on brand association, customer trust, and purchase intention in the consumer durable market.
- To analyse the mediating role of brand association and customer trust in influencing online purchase decisions.
- To suggest effective social media marketing strategies to enhance consumer engagement, trust, and conversion rates for durable goods.

Social Media Marketing

The retailing of consumer durables is greatly impacted by brand association and trust which is conveniently developed through social media marketing. Brands use targeted ads, influencer marketing, and user-generated content to increase engagement, which also proves beneficial to the brand through enhanced perceived value and increased credibility (Lariba, 2023). To a greater extent, personal recommendations, real-time communications, and customer reviews have made consumers more decisive helping to build trust towards the brands. Thus, social media marketing transforms the shopping experience and creates greater value with the indirect consequence of purchase decisions, which is crucial for driving online sales of consumer durables.

Brand Association

Brand Association involves feelings and thoughts consumers associate with a brand due to its marketing, reputation, and experiences. Using influencer marketing, targeted consumer content, and customer interactions on social media platforms, marketers strengthen the associations of the brands (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Consumers develop positive associations towards the brands when they feel the brands to be trustworthy, quality, and values that are important to them, and this is further enhances with reviews, testimonials, and ads. These associations not only improve brand recognition but also affect consumers' choice and loyalty, which increases their willingness to select the brand over others when purchasing durable goods over the internet.

Customer Trust

Customer trust significantly helps in the decision for purchasing products online, particularly in the consumer durable segment. It is created by consistent brand communication, satisfactory prior customer experiences, and trustful engagement on social sites. Marketing on social media builds trust through real user testimonials, influencer marketing, and contact marketing (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Trust is built by honesty, dependability, and quick response in tackling customer issues. Research shows that trust influences decision making of consumers positively. If consumers have confidence in a brand, it significantly increases the chance that they will opt to purchase that brand's products online for durables.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention indicates the likelihood of a consumer purchasing a product and is greatly influenced by the value, trust, and prior experiences associated with the brand. In the online consumer durable sector, social media

marketing has favourably influenced purchase intention through content marketing, and user-generated content (Pasaribu et al., 2024). The more trustworthy a brand is compared to others in the minds of consumers, the more confident the consumer becomes in making the purchase. The intention to purchase is augmented further with interactive campaigns, personalized advertisements, and an effortless online experience which makes a consumer more willing to select and purchase a durable good from a reputable company.

Association between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention

Social media marketing is very important in shaping a person's trust and engagement towards a brand which contributes a great deal in their willingness to purchase. Brands build a strong digital presence through engaging content, influencer marketing, and interactive social media campaigns which improves brand recall and trust. People that receive these engaging social media communications tend to have higher confidence in the brand, thus increasing the likelihood of purchase. Lastly, customized ads, online reviews, and social validation also boost purchase intention, increase perceived value, and lower the expected risk for the buyer. Consequently, social media marketing acts as the bridge that links consumer interest with an actual buying decision in the online consumer durable market.

H_1: Purchase Intention is positively and significantly impacted by social media marketing in the online consumer durable market.

Influence of Social Media Marketing on Brand Association

Social media marketing enables businesses to improve the association of consumers towards their brand, which affects their perceptions and relations towards the brand at hand. Targeting social media users with advertisements and brand sponsorships reinforces the brand identity they seek to build (Kennedy & Guzman, 2016). User-generated messages to tweets and even endorsements raise the level of brand trust, quality, and value. Social media allows users to strengthen brand acknowledgement while building a positive image of consumers ready to use their products, even when it comes to online shopping for durable goods.

H_2: Social Media Marketing has a direct and positive influence on Brand Association.

Effect of Brand Association on Purchase Intention

It is evident that brand connections influence consumers' buying intentions, which in turn influence how the brand is used. If a brand is associated positively with its quality, reliability, and value, it is likely to be used. Social media marketing further builds those associations due to appealing advertisements, endorsements by online personalities, and reviews from users on social networking sites (Knoll, 2016). Further, if the brand associations are strong, the confidence of the consumer is more resulting to high probability of the purchase of online consumer durables.

H_3: Brand Associations have a significant effect on the Purchase Intention of the consumers.

Impact of Social Media Marketing on Customer Trust

Social media marketing encourages customer confidence in a brand due to the meaning of the brand being built through image, transparency and interaction. As brands create accounts on social networking sites, they are now able to reach consumers through influencers and relatable content (Glucksman, 2017). Brand testimonials and
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social media customer care has turned more personalized, improving the brand's perception. As the brand gives more valuable information while communicating, trust increases and therefore, the willingness and confidence to buy consumer durables online increases.

H₄: Social Media Marketing has a significant impact on Customer Trust

Impact of Customer Trust on Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is also remarkably shaped by customer trust in the target online consumer durable market. Consumers who trust a brand feel more comfortable to purchase hence these shifts in decision making cuts perceived risk and uncertainty. Social media marketing has also created or rather strengthened customer trust by positive user reviews, endorsements from brand advocates, and unfiltered advertisement of the brands (Ojha & Joshi, 2024). Consistent brand consumer interactions address concerns and strengthen relationships making the consumers more likely to engage in purchase. As trust builds, consumers are more willing to choose and spend on a brand when purchasing durable goods online.

H₅: Customer trust directly influences the Purchase Intention of the Customers.
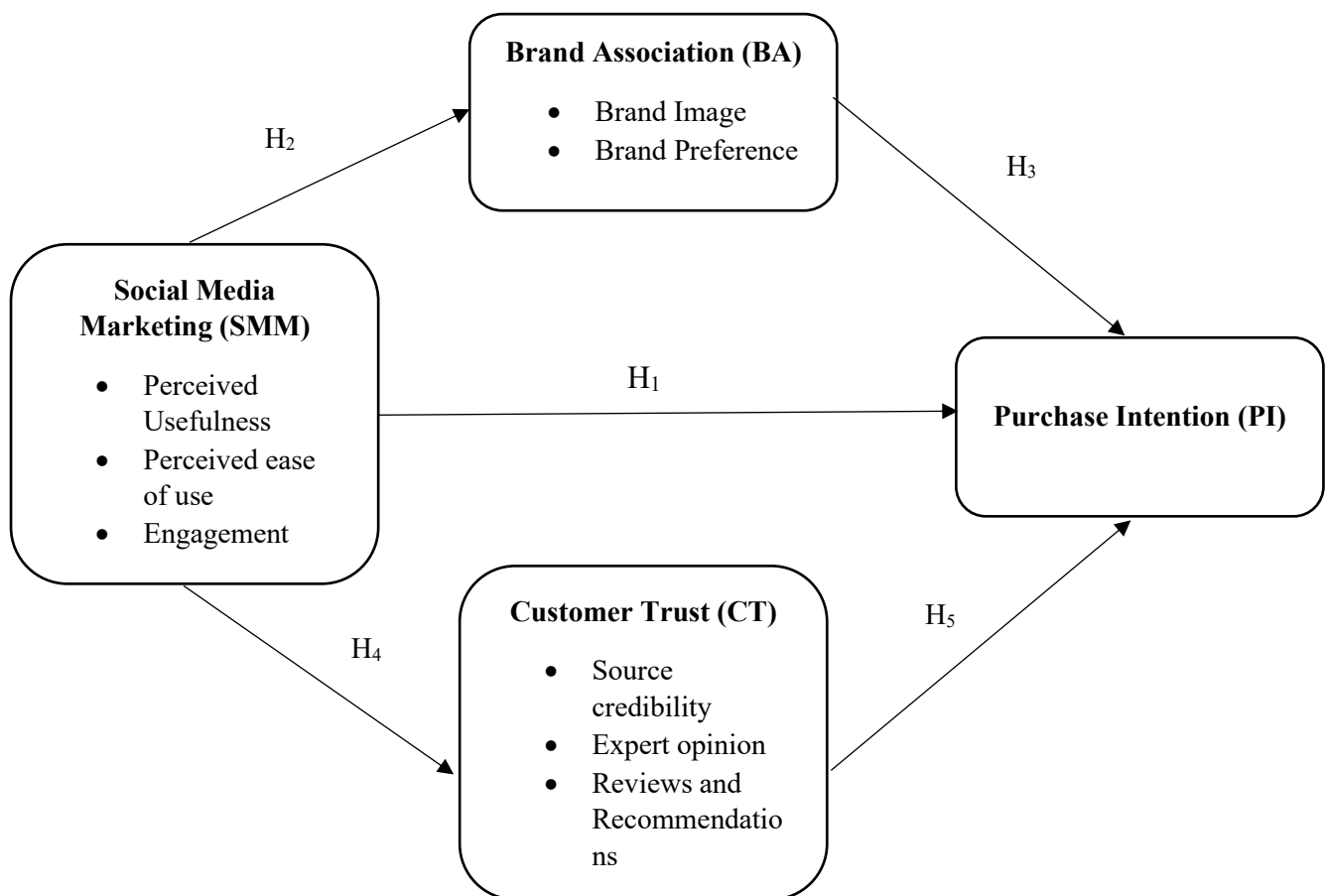
Figure 1: Hypothesized Research Model

Research Methodology

Social media marketing is studied in regard to its effect on brand association, brand trust and purchase decisions in the consumer durable industry by determining the perceived value benefits and usefulness. This study used a combination of purposive and convenience sampling techniques to acquire respondents with the following criteria; active social media users on, aged 18 and above, and had an online purchase of consumer durables within one year of the study. The research tried to find out the most important determinants of these users' purchases, as well as what they look for in the medium they want to be satisfied with.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

The study employed SEM to analyze the relationships between SMM, BA, CT, and PI. The analysis included validity tests, reliability tests, and hypothesis testing to determine the strength and significance of the proposed relationships.

The KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy for this study is 0.878, which shows that the dataset is very appropriate for factor analysis. The KMO value has a minimum of 0 and maximum of 1, with anything above 0.8 considered meritorious. This implies that the dataset has strong common variance, meaning that the factors can be validated through factor analysis. This means the dataset has strong underlying structures that can be tested and verified using exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis.

As for the details, Bartlette's test of Sphericity claims the correlation matrix gives an Approx. Chi-Square amounting to 8969.662 alongside 190 degrees of freedom (df) and a level of significance of 0.000, indicating the existence of interrelations amidst the variables. The Significant Bartlette's Test ($p < 0.05$) validates the data set is not merely random noise, rather it has systematic relationships confirming the application of factor analysis, hence it ensures there is some structure. Therefore, a KMO value greater than 0.800 with Bartlett's test KMO of 0.878 and negative p value of 0.000, confirms the data set is good for other multivariate analysis such as factor analysis or structural equation modeling (SEM) along with confirming noise containment from random sampling.

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test results

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.878
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	8969.662
	df	190
	Sig.	0.000

The commonality values in Table 2 represent the percentage of variance in each variable that is accounted for by the extracted factors resulting from PCA. In the beginning, all variables have a commonality value of 1.000, meaning that they have 100% of their own variance. After factor extraction, the extraction values reveal the degree of representation of each variable by the underlying factors. If the extraction value is high, this means those variables strongly contribute to the factor structure whereas low values indicate a weaker contribution.

PEOU1 (0.849), PU1 (0.843), PI1 (0.813), SC1 (0.818), and RR2 (0.818) illustrate high communality values. This indicates that these extracted variables are well explained by the extracted factors which means they are significant in the model. On the contrary, EG2 (0.682) and PI3 (0.689) are relatively low thus they have some unexplained variance left by the extracted components. Furthermore, all variables display reasonable communality values where the majority are over 0.7 which demonstrates considerable factor loading and suitability of factor analysis to the data set. This increases the credibility of the study and confirms that the dataset is appropriate for more advanced multivariate analysis like SEM.

Table 2. Communalities of Study Variables

Items	Initial	Extraction
BI1	1.000	.758
BI2	1.000	.790
BP1	1.000	.798
BP2	1.000	.743
PI1	1.000	.813
PI2	1.000	.809
PI3	1.000	.689
EO2	1.000	.731
RR1	1.000	.784
RR2	1.000	.818
SC1	1.000	.818
SC2	1.000	.721
EO1	1.000	.790
PEOU2	1.000	.735
PEOU3	1.000	.700
EG1	1.000	.714
EG2	1.000	.682

PU1	1.000	.843
PU2	1.000	.763
PEOU1	1.000	.849

Table 3 shows the overall variance accounted for by the extracted factors, indicating how much each principal component contributes to the total variance in the dataset. The first factor alone has an eigenvalue of 7.126 which explains 35.63 % of the total variance, so it is the most important component. The second factor explains 12.58% of the variance, and the total cumulative variance reached is 48.21%. Likewise, the third and fourth factors explain 9.10% and 8.99% of the variance, contributing to the cumulative variance of 66.31%. The fifth and sixth factors account for 5.38% and 5.04%, respectively, which accumulate to 76.74%. This value is considered satisfactory for factor analysis since it captures a reasonable amount of the original information in the dataset.

The Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings with Varimax Rotation lowered the value of the first factor and enhanced the others. The first factor accounts for 15.59% of the variance and rests account for 14.32%, 12.46%, 11.78%, 11.35%, 11.22% from the second to the sixth factor. The variance is now better split among the explanatory factors in the structure of the dataset. The cumulative total variance is 76.74% which indicates that the rotated solution is able to retain important information while providing better clarity to each extracted component.

Table 3. Total variance explained by the extracted factors

Compone nt	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Tota l	% of Varianc e	Cumulati ve %	Tota l	% of Varianc e	Cumulati ve %	Tota l	% of Varianc e	Cumulati ve %
1	7.12 6	35.630	35.630	7.12 6	35.630	35.630	3.11 9	15.597	15.597
2	2.51 7	12.585	48.215	2.51 7	12.585	48.215	2.86 4	14.319	29.915
3	1.82 0	9.102	57.317	1.82 0	9.102	57.317	2.49 3	12.463	42.378
4	1.80 0	8.998	66.314	1.80 0	8.998	66.314	2.35 6	11.782	54.160
5	1.07 7	5.383	71.697	1.07 7	5.383	71.697	2.27 1	11.354	65.514
6	1.00 8	5.042	76.739	1.00 8	5.042	76.739	2.24 5	11.225	76.739

After performing Varimax rotated Principal Component Analysis, the Rotated Component Matrix in Table 4 displays the factor loadings for each item. This rotation method allows for the interpretation of data to be user-friendly by making sure that the components extracted are orthogonal and the maximum variance is captured by each one. The matrix displays the six components along which various factors can be grouped and the corresponding dimensions of the data set which those components form.

The first component is mainly loaded by Brand Association (BA) because BP1 (0.840), BI1 (0.834), BI2 (0.824), and BP2 (0.814) all combine on this component strongly indicating that these factors cumulatively account for the large part of variation relating to the brand. Elements of Engagement and PEOU are described by PEOU2 (0.804), EG1 (0.785), PEOU3 (0.766), and EG2 (0.752) and thus form the second component. The third component is mainly with PU, having PEOU1 (0.887), PU1 (0.877), and PU2 (0.807) and therefore it strongly loaded.

RR are the fourth component, where exponents RR2 (0.865), RR1 (0.851), and EO2 (0.836) stress the external opinion factor in building consumer trust. SC as the fifth component is loaded by EO1 (0.839), SC1 (0.823), and SC2 (0.761). Purchase intention (PI) is associated with the sixth component and is exemplified by PI1 (0.836), PI2 (0.832), and PI3 (0.718), indicating that these set of variables in totality captures the consumers' intention to buy. The identified strong loadings (mostly above 0.7) indicates that the chosen variables are valid within the context which makes it appropriate for other statistical procedures like Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze and validate the proposed constructs within the research.

Table 4. Rotated component matrix

Items	Component					
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
BP1	.840					
BI1	.834					
BI2	.824					
BP2	.814					
PEOU2		.804				
EG1		.785				
PEOU3		.766				
EG2		.752				
PEOU1			.887			
PU1			.877			
PU2			.807			
RR2				.865		
RR1				.851		
EO2				.836		

EO1					.839	
SC1					.823	
SC2					.761	
PI1						.836
PI2						.832
PI3						.718

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Assessing common method bias

Martinko, Harvey & Mackey (2014), indicate that CMB is liable to cause high measurement error which leads to confounding data during the empirical testing. This study followed Guillen et al. (2016) in attempting to minimize CMB during the first stage of data collection. In addition, the empirical analysis to estimate CMB applied Harman's single-factor test (Harman, 1976; Byrne, 2010) and this study also examined the entire scale for possible duplicate items. The CMB estimation process should be designed in consideration that the bias, if any, will be lost if the respondents are not assured of anonymity and confidentiality. All these procedures were necessary in order to alleviate the effect of methodological bias on the study data.

Harman's single-factor test

Prior empirical studies have suggested that CMB be evaluated using Harman's Single Factor Test (HSFT) for the study dataset. In this regard, the present study used EFA (Exploratory Factor Analysis) that extracted several factors (including first-order and second-order factors). The extracted factors were filtered using the eigenvalue criteria which is set greater than one which signifies the absence of a single domain factor.

Moreover, the extracted factors account for a total of 76.739% of the variance in the dataset, in which the first factor accounts for 15.597% of the total variance. Therefore, this result complies with the variance criteria which is less than 50% as suggested by Harman (1976). This means that the dataset is mostly free of CMB that affects the empirical findings and results. The CV (Coefficient of Variation) measures a rate in which the given item of a given construct has a high degree of common variance. Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt (2015) stated that the identified constructs have to exhibit std. loadings that are greater than .5.

The validity measures for discriminant validity and convergent validity contained in Table 5 evaluate the credibility and identity of the study's variables. Convergent validity argues that items in a construct are expected to be positively correlated, while discriminant validity distinguishes between a construct and others. These measures assist in confirming the reliability of the research model.

In case of convergent validity measurement two principal criteria are considered: CR and AVE. A construct can be regarded as reliable if its CR is above 0.7 and its AVE is more than 0.5. In this study, all constructs met these limits with CRs ranging from 0.851 to 0.901 and AVEs from 0.605 to 0.725. The highest CR (0.901) and AVE

(0.695) was noticed for BA which suggests the highest internal consistency within this construct. PI also shows strong validity with CR = 0.851 and AVE = 0.656 which means that its items perform their intended function.

To ensure discriminant validity, each construct's items should correlate stronger to their construct rather than to other constructs. This is ensured through the square root of the AVE (displayed as diagonal values) which should always be greater than the correlation values. From the table, the diagonal values (for example, BA = 0.834, SMM1 = 0.852, CT1 = 0.815, and PI = 0.810) appear to be greater than their correlations with other constructs, hence validating discriminant validity. This is also validated with SMM2's correlation with BA where 0.526 is indeed lower than the square root of the AVE which is 0.778. This means Social Media Marketing (SMM2) and Brand Association (BA) are indeed separate constructs.

These results indicate that the measurement model is reliable and valid which guarantees that the constructs in the study capture specific theoretical dimensions and are not mixed with one another. Due to this validation, the data is now open to more complex statistical tests which include SEM for the hypothesized relationships within the study.

Table 5. Convergent and Discriminant Validity Measures of the Study Constructs

Constructs	CR	AVE	BA	SMM2	SMM1	CT2	CT1	PI
BA	0.901	0.695	0.834					
SMM2	0.859	0.605	0.526	0.778				
SMM1	0.888	0.725	0.327	0.212	0.852			
CT2	0.857	0.667	0.355	0.345	0.339	0.817		
CT1	0.855	0.664	0.398	0.666	0.259	0.284	0.815	
PI	0.851	0.656	0.484	0.395	0.573	0.341	0.434	0.810

Results stemming from hypothesis testing done through SEM analysis can be found in Table 6. The table assesses SMM's relation to BA, CT, and PI, on the basis of standardized beta, t-values, and levels of significance. The findings reveal that H1 (SMM → PI) has a good positive relationship (β = 0.426, p < 0.001) which means that social media marketing has an effect on the consumers' purchase intentions.

At the same time, H2 (SMM → BA) is also in support (β = 0.119, p < 0.001), which confirms that social media marketing has a vital influence on brand association. This finding suggests that an increase in effective social media engagement by brands increases the image and preferences for the brands. Also, H3 (BA → PI) is in support (β = 0.247, p < 0.001) which means that strong brand association positively affects purchase intention. This means that consumers who have a positive perception of a brand and have an emotional or cognitive brand association tend to purchase the branded products.

The analysis performed above highlights that H4 (SMM → CT) is significant (β = 0.034, p < 0.001). This means that social media marketing does have a small impact on customer trust. This emphasizes the role that captivating and reliable content plays when it comes to brand trust. On the other hand, it is clear that H5 (CT → PI) is not supported (β = 0.012, p = 0.157), which shows that customer trust in this case does not have a stronger impact on purchase intention. Although trust is important in making decisions, brand image, and actual interaction may be much stronger.

As demonstrated, social media marketing does, directly and indirectly, affect purchase intention mostly through the brand association. It is evident that marketing through social media does help in building trust; however, it does not help in the direct increase of purchase intention in this model. Hence, more focus should be directed towards building favorable brand associations in the eyes of consumers while remain credible and engaging through social media platforms.

Table 6. Hypothesis testing results

Hypothesized Relationships	Standardized Beta values	t-value	Decision
H1: SMM→PI	.426	***	Supported
H2: SMM→BA	.119	***	Supported
H3: BA→PI	.247	***	Supported
H4: SMM→CT	.034	***	Supported
H5: CT→ PI	.012	.157	Not Supported

In Figure 2, the SEM of the validated research model is shown which describes the relationship between the constructs SMM, BA, CT, and PI along with their path coefficients. This model demonstrates the effect of social media marketing on consumer behavior, particularly in buying durable goods online.

The SMM construct has been separated into two dimensions SMM1 and SMM2 which stand for PU and PEOU and EG respectively. The factor loadings for these items are high, between 0.74 and 0.88 revealing that these variables define the construct. The direct effects of SMM1 and SMM2 on BA and CT are positive, with values of 0.49 and 0.64. This indicates that social media marketing is able to improve brand image and customer trust.

BA works actively and intensively in a model as the key mediator and influences PI at a high impact level. In this context the brand image and preference are at high loading of purchase intention. The path from CT to PI is weaker (0.19), suggesting that while trust contributes, many other factors might also be influential regarding intention to purchase. At last, the extract from the model structure regarding PI is highly loaded as proved by PI1 (0.84), PI (0.84), and PI3 (0.73). The direct path from BA to PI (0.43) is stronger than the path from CT to PI (0.19), indicating that brand association plays a more important role in influencing consumer purchase intention than trust does.
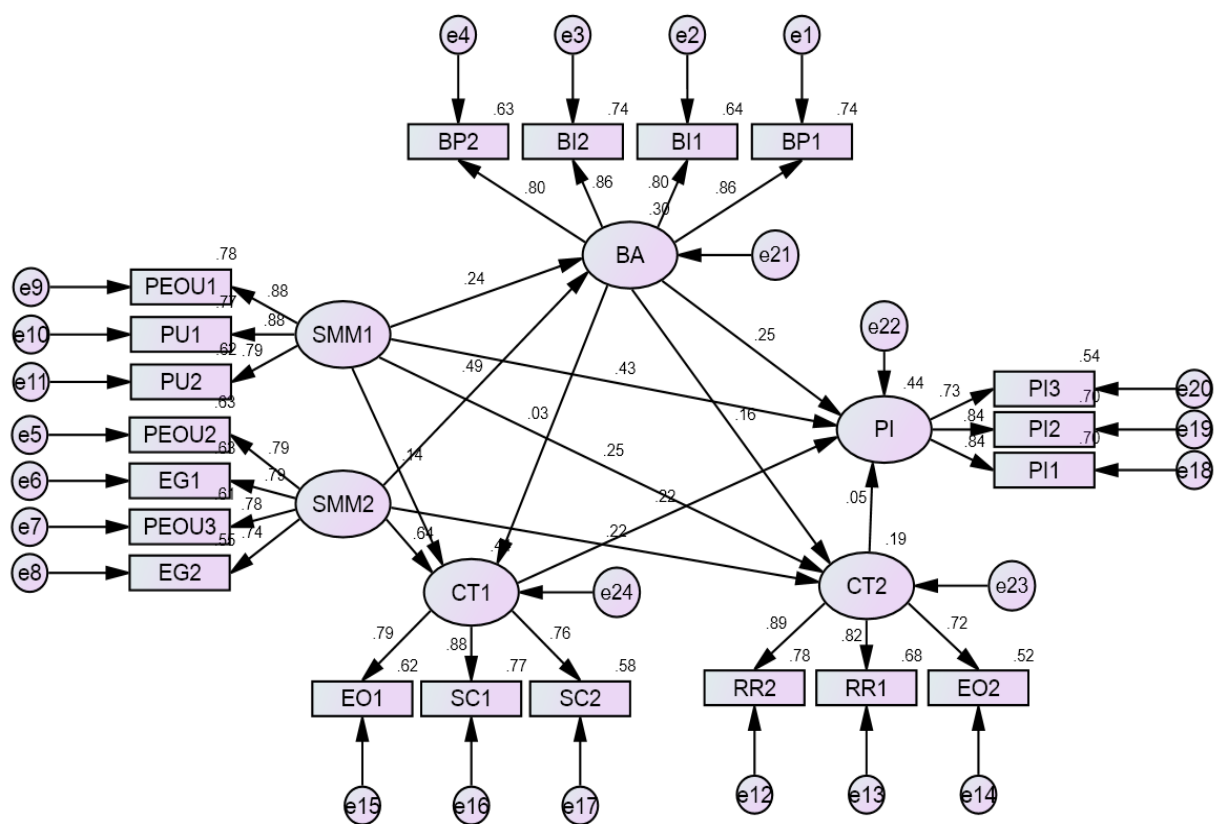

Figure 2. Validated research model with path coefficients

In summary, the validated model confirms that SMM has both direct and indirect effects on PI. The findings emphasize the importance of enhancing brand image and fostering trust through credible sources, expert reviews, and consumer engagement on social media platforms to drive purchase decisions. This model provides a strong theoretical foundation for future research and practical implications for digital marketers aiming to optimize their social media strategies.

Discussion & Conclusion

The results underscore the importance of social media marketing on customer trust and brand selection. Brands have learning and promotional tools through social media pages just as consumers have social media pages to socialize. These platforms are regarded as useful in interacting, reviewing products, and giving referrals thus

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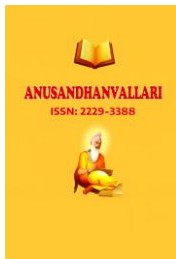
aiding in the decision-making process. The result demonstrates that marketing through social media is beneficial to the behavioral aspects of consumers through marketing the brand more and making it more trustworthy. As technology increases, businesses need to understand these platforms as important means of influencing buying behavior and maintaining customer relationships. The results also support the developed hypothesis, thus proving that social media marketing activities enhance brand trust and consumer loyalty.

This research examines how marketing communication tools, such as social media, can enable businesses to build consumer trust and facilitate preference for the brand. It elaborates on how various strategies in digital marketing can affect the decision-making process of consumers, especially within consumer durables. Considering the nature of the e commerce, these findings can be used by companies for developing effective social media marketing techniques. It is important to note, however, that this study is limited in scope only to durable goods which suggests future research examining the impact of social media on consumption behavior in the services sector. Furthermore, as the sample is geographically limited, future researches can study the effects of social media marketing at other levels, especially among the millennial and other new internet users.

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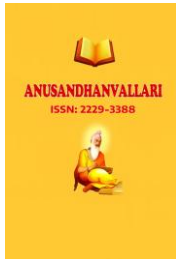
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