"Examining the influence of social media marketing on purchase intention: The mediating role of brand image"

AUTHORS	Imran Ali (iD) Mohammad Naushad (iD)

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BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES

Imran Ali, PhD., Assistant Professor,
Department of Management,
Faculty of Business Administration,
Noida Institute of Engineering and
Technology, India.

Mohammad Naushad, Ph.D., Associate
Professor, College of Business
Administration, Prince Sattam Bin
Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia.
(Corresponding author)

Imran Ali (India), Mohammad Naushad (Saudi Arabia)

EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON PURCHASE INTENTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND IMAGE

Abstract

Social media has revolutionized how businesses connect with consumers, going beyond product promotion to understanding consumer preferences. It is undeniable that social media plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer purchase decisions, as more individuals turn to these platforms to seek advice and opinions from peers. The current study engaged 410 Indian consumers, employing a quantitative approach backed by rigorous statistical methods, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and structural equation modeling (SEM) using AMOS software. The goal was to unravel the intricate dynamics between social media marketing, brand image, and purchase intentions. The findings highlight a significant and positive relationship between social media marketing efforts and brand image perception. Moreover, it was discovered that brand image significantly influences consumers' purchase intentions. Surprisingly, it did not find a direct and significant impact of social media marketing on purchase intentions.

Notably, the study revealed a crucial insight: the influence of social media marketing on purchase intentions is fully mediated by the perception of brand image. In light of these results, businesses are encouraged to establish a strong presence on social media platforms to effectively promote their products and services. Organizations can effectively steer consumer purchase intentions by harnessing the synergy between social media marketing and brand image.

Keywords	social media, digital, brand image, purchase intention, customer satisfaction
JEL Classification	M14, M31, M38

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital landscape, social media has emerged as a predominant channel for exchanging information, sharing experiences, and shaping opinions. The traditional media, once paramount, has been steadily losing its relevance as consumers increasingly gravitate toward the dynamic realm of social media. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram have become integral to consumers' daily lives, commanding a significant portion of their time and attention. The escalating consumer preference for social media has spurred businesses to establish a robust online presence for marketing, sales, branding, and product promotion. Organizations seek to engage with their customers on these platforms to gain insights into their preferences, thereby facilitating the development of tailored products and services. The interactive nature of social media enables businesses to understand evolving consumer behaviors and solicit valuable feedback on both existing and upcoming offerings (Alalwan, 2018).

Numerous studies have demonstrated the advantages of social media marketing, including its cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and ability to target specific consumer segments. This personalized approach contrasts starkly with traditional mass media, which struggles to address the specific needs of distinct customer groups (Alalwan et al., 2017). Consequently, businesses reallocate their resources from traditional media to social media marketing. In the wake of technological advancements, businesses have been compelled to explore innovative ways of leveraging technology to enhance operational efficiency and customer-centricity. Technology has revolutionized e-commerce, social commerce, advertising, retailing, and sales promotion, providing organizations with direct customer access, eliminating intermediaries, and facilitating online product promotion to a vast audience (Quelch & Jocz, 2008). Both industry practitioners and academic researchers emphasize the pivotal role of technology in enhancing profitability and customer engagement. Technology enables customers to thoroughly assess products, compare prices and features, and seek peer feedback through platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Quelch & Jocz, 2008). Simultaneously, companies are capitalizing on the vast reach of social media to promote their products, interact with customers, and build enduring relationships.

Today, social media marketing plays a pivotal role in influencing purchase intentions due to its ubiquity among consumers. These platforms provide essential information that guides purchasing decisions, simplifying decision-making. Businesses leverage social media to reach vast audiences cost-effectively, not only for product and service promotion but also for disseminating ideas and concepts (Karimi & Naghibi, 2015). Furthermore, social media marketing transcends transactional interactions, focusing on cultivating enduring customer relationships that foster trust and loyalty. In an era of intensifying competition, companies aspire to expand their customer base and enter new markets, with social media marketing offering vital consumer insights. A strong social media presence garners customer trust and significantly influences purchase intentions. In conclusion, the ascendancy of social media marketing reflects its indispensability in contemporary business landscapes. Businesses recognize that an active presence on these platforms is instrumental in gaining consumer trust and driving purchase intentions in an increasingly interconnected world.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media refers to various internet-based applications that permit users to create and exchange their content, opinions, and experiences with others. Popular social media platforms consumers use regularly are Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Social media has drastically changed the method of interaction between consumers and marketers. Consumers are reviewing the products and post their experiences on social media platforms. Other consumers use these posts to decide whether to buy these products. Social media has enabled consumers to share their experiences, views, and opinions quickly and creatively.

On the other hand, companies use social media for consumer research, product research, and for understanding consumers' preferences and products toward a particular brand. Companies are highly interested in engaging customers on online platforms since these are easily accessible and information can be shared anytime. Several forms of social media include Twitter, Facebook, podcasts, weblogs, and wikis (Yazdanparast et al., 2016). Social media provides considerable opportunities for interaction between business organizations and consumers (Harrigan & Miles, 2014). Social media marketing refers to using social media for marketing, selling, and advertising products and services. Both researchers and managers have paid much attention to social media marketing because of its ease of use and convenience of access. Companies can analyze consumer behavior using analytical tools available on various social media platforms. Companies can predict consumer preferences and market products accordingly. Companies can track the performance of discounts offered, advertising campaigns, and sales. Social media data help firms understand consumers' changing tastes and preferences and develop new products suitable for the current environment.

Purchase intention refers to the likeliness of buying a product or service (Martins et al., 2019). Purchase intention exhibits the possibility of buying a product or service online or offline (Kim & Ko, 2010). Social media facilitate the exchange of information, ratings, and opinions on products, instilling confidence among consumers and resulting in positive consumer buying behavior (Bong, 2017). Consumers exchange their experiences on social media platforms, which motivates others to buy and have the same experience (Shaouf et al., 2016; Elwalda et al., 2016; Lu et al., 2016). Consumers want to gather all possible information related to products or services that they want to obtain from various sources like friends, relatives, and social media platforms. Among all these sources of information, social platforms are more relevant and preferred by consumers since consumers share their personal experiences here. As the number of consumers using social media is increasing rapidly due to the higher adoption of smartphones and intensive use of mobile Internet, consumers can access social media platforms quickly and share their information.

Another important aspect of the study is social media marketing. Kim and Ko (2012) viewed that communication methods with consumers have drastically changed since many individuals have adopted the Internet. Social media has forced individuals and organizations to change communication strategies, interact with consumers, build brands, and promote products. Consumers can gather information related to products on social media platforms easily. The ease of using social media enables consumers to select products of their choice (Blackshaw & Nazzaro, 2004). Martin and Ramsaran-Fowdar (2013) revealed that social media marketing is very effective in managing long-term relationships with consumers and engaging them by facilitating consumers to exchange information online. This clearly confirms that social media marketing makes consumers satisfied and loyal. Anjum et al. (2012) mentioned that social media marketing helps organizations attract and retain customers. Consumers can also benefit by interacting with companies on social media platforms, such as getting discounts, clarifying their doubts, negotiating prices, and viewing product reviews and ratings. Kim and Ko (2012) mentioned the significant and positive impact of

social media marketing on consumers' buying intention. Similarly, Gautam and Sharma (2017) tested the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention with customer relationship as a mediating variable.

The mediation variable, i.e., brand image, helps consumers to identify producers of products and assure them about products' quality and durability. Branding intends to create a distinguished image of each product so that consumers can easily differentiate between them. They are not confused among brands while purchasing them. Branding enables consumers to decide whether they should buy a product (Keller & Kotler, 2015). Nowadays, there is intensive rivalry among companies. Every company wants to distinguish itself from competitors by building a unique brand image for its products. Brand image indirectly influences consumers' purchase intention. Brand image impacts consumers' purchase intention positively (Malik et al., 2016). Brand image is the most critical determinant influencing consumers' purchase intention. Without a strong brand image, organizations can not have maximum market share. A strong brand image impacts customer satisfaction and the organization's profitability. A strong and positive brand image helps not only to stand in competition but also to motivate consumers to buy products (Porter & Claycomb, 1997). A positive brand image makes consumers satisfied and loyal to the brand (Johnson et al., 2001). Social media plays a pivotal role in creating a solid brand image. Social media platforms enable a company to build a brand image and exchange information online, which can be easily shared among a large group of consumers. Further, social media is beneficial in creating a positive brand image and loyalty, indirectly influencing purchase intention (Pozin, 2014).

2. AIM AND HYPOTHESES

The research objective is to conduct a comprehensive examination of the impact of social media marketing on purchase intention, with a particular emphasis on the mediating role of brand image. While previous studies have explored the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention (Ismail, 2017; Hinz et al., 2011; Kim & Ko, 2012), none have specifically investi-
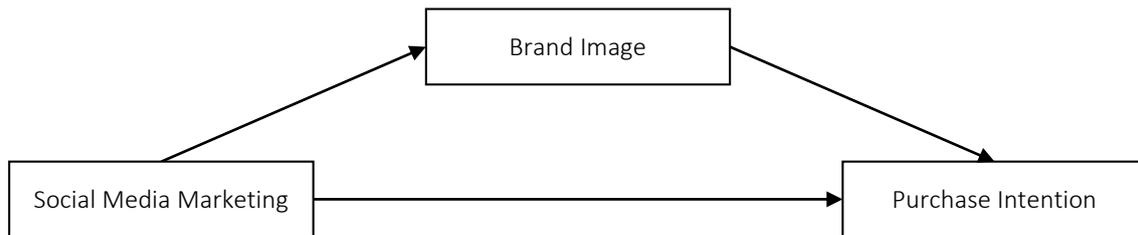
Figure 1. Research model

gated this relationship within brand image mediation. To address this research gap, this study formulates the following hypotheses:

H1: *Social media marketing has a significant and positive relationship with purchase intention.*

H2: *Social media marketing has a significant and positive relationship with brand image.*

H3: *Brand image mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention.*

These hypotheses aim to provide a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics among social media marketing, brand image, and purchase intention, contributing valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge in this field (Figure 1).

3. METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative research design to rigorously examine the relationships among social media marketing, brand image, and purchase intention. The chosen design allows for a structured and systematic investigation, well-suited to testing the formulated hypotheses. Data are primarily collected through surveys, a widely employed method consistent with Preibusch's (2013) observation that surveys are a prevalent tool in data collection. Surveys are favored for their efficiency and effectiveness in eliciting information from respondents (Nagengast et al., 2014). The survey approach is instrumental in gauging respondents' opinions, attitudes, and knowledge, which aligns with the objectives of this study (Monette et al., 2005). The questionnaire consists of two distinct sections. The first section is dedicated to gathering demographic information, encompassing gender, income, education, marital status, and work experience. The subsequent section delves into the core research constructs: social media marketing, brand image, and purchase intention. To foster unbiased responses, the survey environment was deliberately designed to be neutral, allowing respondents to express their opinions without undue influence (Auka et al., 2013).

The study's sampling strategy focused on a specific group of respondents: individuals of all genders who actively engage in information-sharing activities across various social media platforms. The geographical scope was the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR) of India, a region selected strategically due to its high levels of education and active social media participation. Delhi NCR boasts an estimated total population of 200 million, with approximately 1.5 million individuals aged 18 and above actively participating in social media information-sharing. A pivotal consideration was the sample size, adhering to established research practices (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2018). The selected sample size, between 30 and 500 respondents, adhered to prior research guidelines (Abranovic, 1997; Sekaran, 2003).

Data collection spanned from August 2022 to October 2022, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the research objectives. To maximize outreach and response rates, 500 questionnaires were distributed through diverse channels, including online platforms, SMS, mail, and in-person delivery. To maintain data quality, incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the study, resulting in a final sample size of 410 fully completed questionnaires. Convenience sampling was chosen to facilitate broad access to a diverse cross-section of the intended respondents. This approach ensured flexibility and ease of data collection. Emphasizing candid responses, data were collected in an envi-

ronment encouraging respondents to express their opinions openly. Utilizing both online and offline ways for questionnaire distribution further bolstered the study's reach and inclusivity.

4. RESULTS

Several statistical tools, such as SPSS, AMOS, and Excel, were used for data analysis. The demographic profile of the respondents was analyzed using SPSS and Excel. This study used structural equation modeling using AMOS to validate the research and structural models. Structural equation modeling is done in two stages. In the first stage, the research model must be validated through validity analysis, reliability analysis, and confirmatory analysis. The structural model is validated in the second stage by assessing the relationship between dependent and independent variables. In order to examine the effect of a mediating variable on the dependent and independent variables, a bootstrapping technique using AMOS was used. The study tested the impact of social media marketing on purchase intention in the presence of a mediating variable – brand image. The data analysis process starts with analyzing the demographic profile of respondents.

Table 1. Demographic profile

Particular	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	102	24.87
Female	308	75.13
Age		
18-30	328	80
31-40	54	13.17
41-50	14	3.41
51-60	14	3.42
More than 60	0	0.0
Marital Status		
Single	352	85.85
Married	58	14.15
Annual Income		
More than 3 lakh	152	37.07
3-5 lakh	180	43.90
5-20 lakh	58	14.15
More than 20 lakh	20	4.88
Education		
Undergraduate	0	0
Graduate	200	48.78
Postgraduate	200	48.78
Any other	10	2.44

Particular	Frequency	Percentage
Work Experience		
Less than 5 years	258	62.92
5-10 years	135	32.92
11-15 years	4	0.98
16-20 years	13	3.18
More than 20 years	0	0.00
Total	410	100.0

Table 1 reveals the respondent's demographic profile for this study. This study has 24.87% male and 75.13% female. 80% of the respondents are in the age group of 18-30 years, 13.17% are in the age group of 31-40 years, 3.41% are in the age group of 41-50 years, and 3.42% are in the age group of 51-60. Next, 85.85% of the respondents are single, whereas 14.15% are married. Regarding annual income, 37.07% earn less than 3 lakh, 43.90% of total respondents earn 3-5 lakh, 14.15% earn 5-20 lakh, and 4.88% earn more than 20 lakh. Furthermore, 48.78% of respondents are graduates, 48.78% are postgraduates, whereas 2.44% of respondents have other educational qualifications. 62.92% of the respondents have less than 5 years of experience, 32.92% have 5-10 years of experience, 0.98% have 11-15 years of experience, and 3.18% have 16-20 years of experience.

Exploratory factor analysis is a statistical method to reduce data and find the underlying variables in the dataset. It helps to explore the most suitable factors for the current study based on the available dataset. Table 2 explains the value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of Sphericity. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value examines the adequacy of data available for the study. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of less than 0.5, but Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of more than 0.8 is highly recommended. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value for the present study is 0.920, which is excellent as per the research standard. Therefore, data are adequate for the current study. Table 2 also reveals that Bartlett's Test of Sphericity value is .000, which is significant and justifies that data are sufficient for further analysis.

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.920
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1203.991
	df	105
	Sig.	.000

Initially, the research questionnaire had 19 items under three constructs: independent, dependent, and mediating variables. Based on the results of the exploratory factor analysis, 4 items were omitted because of poor factor loading. Consequently, 15 items were selected for further study.

In order to evaluate the quality of the research questionnaire and to improve confidence in the quantitative research, reliability and validity tests are used. The term 'reliability' indicates the ability of the research questionnaire to produce accurate and consistent results. Cronbach's alpha measures the internal consistency of the questionnaire and whether it measures what the questionnaire is intended to measure. Cronbach's alpha value must be greater than 0.6 (Hair et al., 1998) to examine the scale reliability. In this study, all constructs have Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.6. This indicates that the questionnaire scale is highly reliable and can produce consistent and accurate results. In order to calculate convergent validity, the average variance extracted is calculated. A score of greater than 0.5 indicates adequate convergent validity (Zikmund & Babin, 2015). In this study, the social media marketing construct's AVE value is 0.61, the purchase intention's AVE value is 0.66, and the brand image's AVE value is 0.62.

Previous research studies have indicated that factor loading for each item must be greater than 0.5 for better and consistent results (Truong & McColl, 2011; Hulland, 1999). Chen and Tsai (2007) also confirmed that the factor loading value must ex-

ceed 0.5. Additionally, Ertz et al. (2016) confirmed using factor loading of 0.4 and above. Therefore, a minimum threshold of 0.7 for factor loading has been used in this study. All items have factor loading greater than 0.7, which is much above the threshold limit of 0.6 and above of what is suggested by Chin et al. (1997) and Hair et al. (2013).

Discriminant validity measures how different the constructs are from each other. It is required because each construct measures a different dimension. In order to fulfill the set criteria of discriminant validity, the square root of the factor of AVE should be greater than the inter-factor correlation (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 4 exhibits that the square root of the average variance extracted is greater than the inter-factor correlation. Thus, it confirmed that discriminant validity exists.

Table 4. Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

	SMM	PII	BII
SMM	0.78		
PII	0.392	0.81	
BII	0.567	0.585	0.79

Note: SMM = social media marketing; PII = purchase intention; BII = brand image.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed using IBM AMOS. CFA is performed to examine the model fitness. Various indices are used to validate the measurement model. A few indices used to validate the measurement model in this paper are CMIN/df, Comparative Fit Index

Table 3. Construct reliability and validity

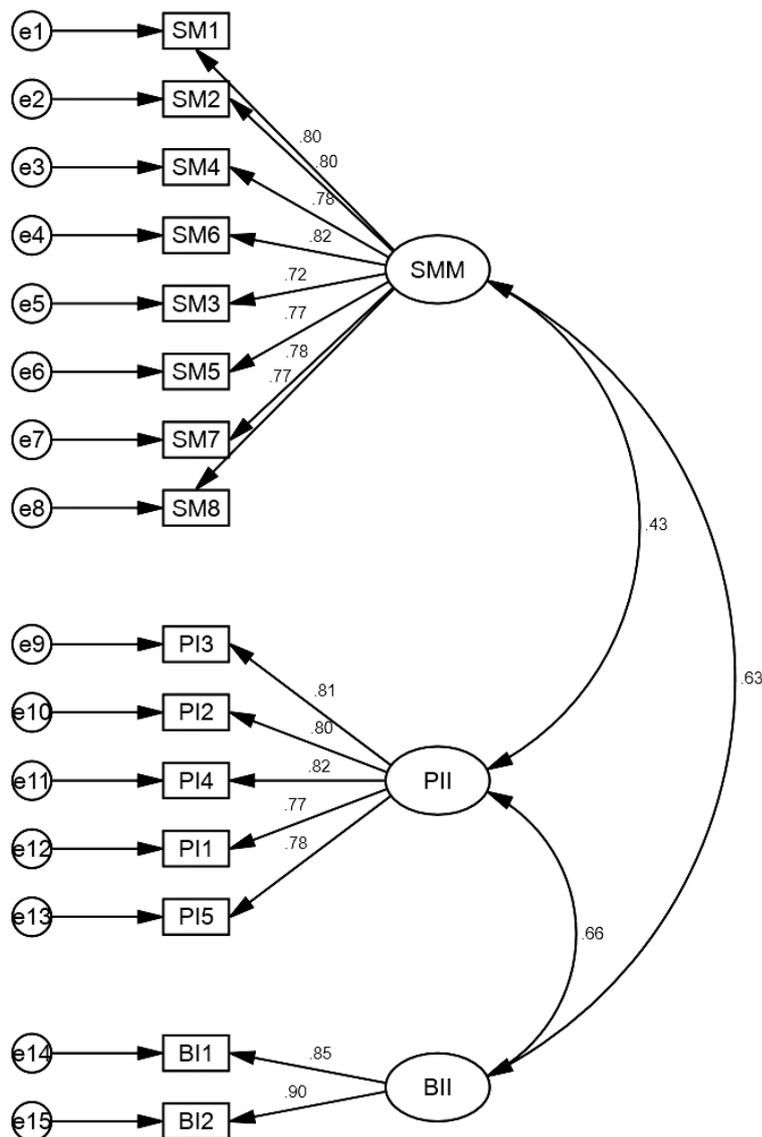| Constructs	Items Code	Loadings (≥ 0.5)	AVE (≥ 0.5)	Alpha (≥ 0.6)	CR (≥ 0.7)
Social Media Marketing	SM1	.839	0.61	0.93	0.93
	SM2	.816			
	SM4	.792			
	SM6	.784			
	SM3	.776			
	SM5	.771			
	SM7	.735			
	SM8	.729			
Purchase Intention	PI3	.850	0.66	0.90	0.91
	PI2	.825			
	PI4	.814			
	PI1	.804			
	PI5	.760			
Brand Image	BI1	.815	0.62	0.87	0.77
	BI2	.765			

Figure 2. Model fit

Table 5. Fit indices for confirmatory factor analysis

Fit Indices	Recommended Values	Observed Values	Result
CMIN/df	Less than 5	1.154	Acceptable
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.8-0.9	.988	Acceptable
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	≥ 0.9	.901	Acceptable
AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)	≥ 0.80	0.864	Acceptable
PNFI (Parsimonious Normal Fit)	> 0.5	0.763	Acceptable
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	Less than 0.08	0.035	Acceptable

Note: SMM = social media marketing; PII = purchase intention; BII = brand image.

(CFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), Parsimonious Normal Fit (PNFI), and Parsimonious Normal Fit (PNFI). However, there are no fixed criteria to validate the measurement model. In this study, the confirmatory factor contained three constructs and 15 items. All CFA values are as per the recommended values. CFA analysis does not suggest any change in the overall research model. Table 5 exhibits values of various indices.

Table 6. Hypotheses conclusion

| Relationship			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Brand Image	←	Social Media Marketing	0.702	0.111	6.33	***
Purchase Intention	←	Social Media Marketing	0.020	0.109	0.18	0.857
Purchase Intention	←	Brand Image	0.568	0.112	5.089	***

Note: Significance level = *** P < 0.001.

To test all hypotheses, structural equation modeling was used. Figure 3 exhibits the structural model adopted for the present study. Figure 3 exhibits the final structural model for this study. The main advantage of using a structural model is that it is also useful when the sample size is very small (Shiau & Chau, 2016; Hair et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2020; Shiau et al., 2019). Researchers used structural equation modeling when the conceptual model for the study is very complex and includes two or more than two dependent variables (Shiau & Chau, 2016; Hair et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2020; Shiau et al., 2019). Table 6 revealed various values of structural equation modeling.

Table 6 reveals a significant and positive impact of social media marketing on brand (β = 0.702, t = 6.33, and p = < 0.05). Therefore, H1 is accepted. On the other hand, there is no significant and positive impact between social media marketing and purchase intention (β = 0.020, t = .18, and t = 0.857 > 0.05). Thus, H2 is rejected. Further, brand image has a significant and positive impact on purchase intention (β = 0.568, t = 5.08 and p = < 0.05). Thus, H3 is accepted.

The study assessed the mediating role of brand image on the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention. The results revealed a significant indirect impact of social media marketing on purchase intention (b = 0.399, p = .008), supporting H3. Furthermore, the direct impact of social media marketing on purchase intention in the presence of the mediator was insignificant (b = .020, p = 0.857). Hence, brand image fully mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention. The mediation analysis summary is presented in Table 7.
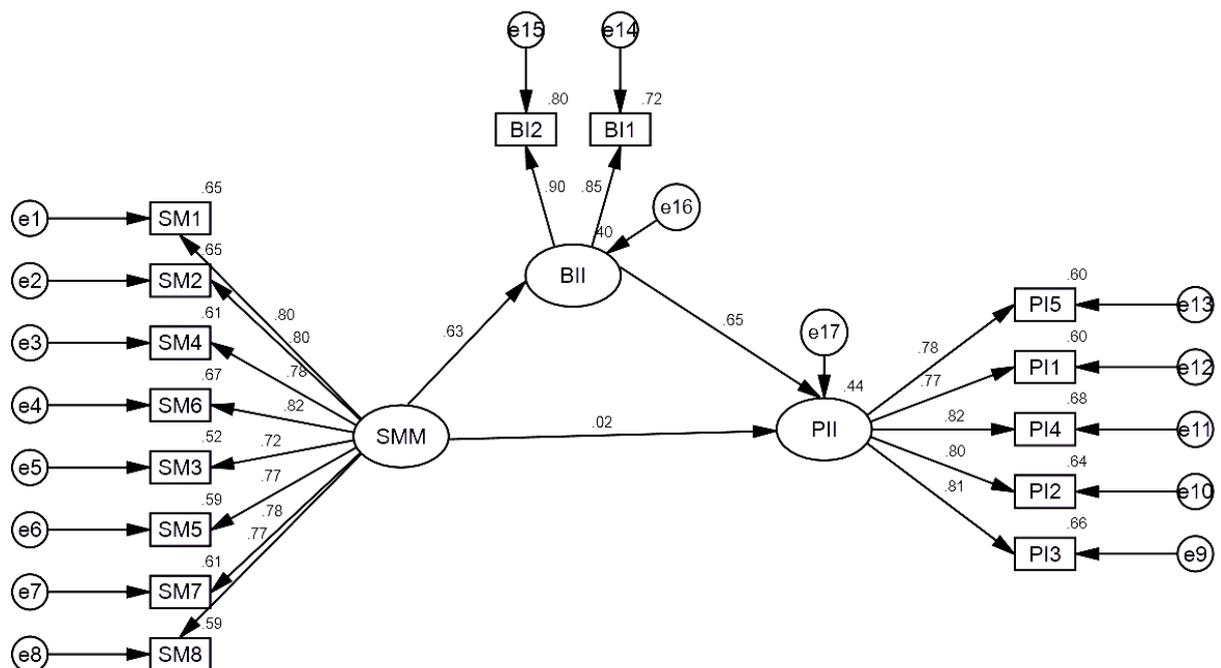
Note: SMM = social media marketing; PII = purchase intention; BII = brand image.

Figure 3. Structural model

Table 7. Mediation analysis

Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Confidence Interval		P Value	Conclusion
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
SMM → BII → PII	.020 (.000)	.399	.233	.639	.008	Full Mediation

Note: SMM = social media marketing; PII = purchase intention; BII = brand image.

5. DISCUSSION

The objective of this study is to examine the influence of social media marketing on purchase intention in the presence of brand image as a mediating variable. This study mainly consists of three factors: one dependent (purchase intention), one independent (social media marketing), and brand image as a mediating variable. Some findings of this study are in line with previous research studies. Several studies have confirmed that social media marketing influences purchase intention (Kim & Ko, 2012; Gautam & Sharma, 2017). The finding of this study advocated that social media has no significant and positive impact on purchase intention (β = 0.020, t = .18, and t = 0.857 > 0.05). In support of this finding, Moslehpour et al. (2021) found no empirical evidence that social media marketing influences purchase intention. Lodhi and Shoaib (2017) also confirmed that social media marketing positively and significantly impacts customers' purchase intention. The researchers believed that sales promotion on social media platforms is mandatory to target a wider group of customers. Social media marketing enables companies to target untapped customers. However, the findings of this study are not on the same line. The study confirmed that social media marketing does not impact the customers' purchase intention. Furthermore, Rehmani and Khan (2011) also highlighted that social media marketing with creative content impacts the purchase intention. Therefore, H1 is supported (β = 0.020, t = .18, and t = 0.857 > 0.05).

The study supported that social media marketing impacts brand image significantly and positively (β = 0.702, t = 6.33, and p = < 0.05). Gautam and Sharma (2017) confirmed that social media marketing impacts purchase intention. The study postulated that social media marketing significantly and positively impacts purchase intention. This study aligns with previous research studies that brand image impacts purchase intention (β = 0.568,

t = 5.08, and p = < 0.05). This study also confirmed that brand image positively impacts consumers' purchase intention (Malik et al., 2016).

Further, a strong brand image differentiates firms in competition and motivates consumers to buy products (Porter & Claycomb, 1997). A strong brand image satisfies consumers and impacts their purchase intention (Johnson et al., 2001). Furthermore, social media marketing positively and significantly impacts brand image and loyalty (Godfrey et al., 2011; Kim & Ko, 2012). This is because social media marketing is the most effective tool to increase brand image among customers. After all, millions of customers are connected with social media platforms and know about the recent development of various brands. The findings of this study are on a similar line.

This study has confirmed through mediation analysis that social media marketing does not impact purchase intention directly because full mediation exists in this study. This finding supports earlier research studies that confirmed that social media marketing influences purchase intention in the presence of mediation (Gautam & Sharma, 2017; Jakic et al., 2017).

There are multiple implications of this study for both firms and individuals. Social media platforms have become an essential part of social life, and individuals are spending considerable time on these platforms. The results of this study offer multiple insights to practitioners. First, social media platforms are used to exchange information and opinions, which updates consumers regularly. Managers can also use social media platforms to update consumers about available discounts, promote new products, and engage with consumers. Companies use social media platforms to promote their products, services, concepts, and ideas. Second, firms can use social media to get real-time customer feedback and improve their products if

required. Companies can conduct online surveys on social media platforms and gather opinions about various products and services. Immediate feedback is the need of the hour for making quick decisions to impact purchase intention and make customers delighted. Third, every social media platform offers analytical tools to analyze data, infer consumers' insights, and formulate policies based on these insights. Fourth, this study suggests to practitioners that social media marketing impacts brand image. Therefore, managers must use these platforms to build brands. Practitioners can use social media to build strong brand and consumer relationships. Companies intensively use popular social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to promote their brands.

CONCLUSION

The study was designed to examine the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention in the presence of brand image as a mediator. The study analysis has shown that social media marketing impacts brand image positively and significantly. Further, brand image also impacts purchase intention positively and significantly. On the other hand, social media marketing does not directly impact purchase intention. However, full mediation exists as social media marketing influences the customers' purchase intention in the presence of brand image as a mediating variable. Based on the findings, the study emphasized building strong brand-consumer relationships since social media marketing significantly impacts brand image; consequently, brand image impacts purchase intention. The study underlined no significant and positive impact of social media marketing on purchase intention. These research findings are useful for firms and individuals because firms can use social media marketing to build brands and engage with consumers. The study was a practical attempt to clarify the significant relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention.

Shortage of time, resources, and data are significant limitations of this research work. Respondents are not very keen to fill out the questionnaire and take a long time to return the filled questionnaire. Many questionnaires were not appropriately filled by respondents; therefore, they were excluded from the study. Since the sample of this study is taken from the National Capital Region (NCR), the study represents only a specific region. Future research can be conducted in other parts of India, like Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Lucknow so that findings can be generalized and applied across India. Next, this study has examined the impact of social media marketing on purchase intention with brand image as a mediator. Future researchers can include more independent and mediating variables (like customer relationship management, attitude, and trust) and examine their effects on purchase intention.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Mohammad Naushad.
Data curation: Imran Ali.
Formal analysis: Imran Ali.
Funding acquisition: Mohammad Naushad.
Investigation: Imran Ali.
Methodology: Imran Ali.
Project administration: Mohammad Naushad.
Resources: Mohammad Naushad.
Software: Imran Ali.
Supervision: Mohammad Naushad.
Validation: Mohammad Naushad.
Visualization: Mohammad Naushad.
Writing – original draft: Imran Ali.
Writing – review & editing: Mohammad Naushad.

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