



Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Purchasing Intention: Mediating Role of Consumer Engagement. Insights from the University Students

***Jameel Ahmed Khan Hakro**, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST) University, Larkana, Pakistan

Salar Hussain Shah, Sukkur IBA University, Sukkur, Pakistan

Ghalib Ahmed, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST) University, Larkana, Pakistan

Raja Sajid, Hussain, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur, Pakistan

*Corresponding author's email: jameelhakro@lrk.szabist.edu.pk

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study focuses on the topic of social media marketing's impact on consumer purchasing intentions and how it is exacerbated by consumer engagement as a mediating factor.

Methodology: The study analyzes the data gathered from 150 active respondents of social media marketing platforms in SZABIST Larkana Campus, results were analyzed and generated by using ANOVA and various other analysis tools.

Findings: Findings demonstrate the efficiency of social media marketing as well as how customer interaction affects decision-making. In the context of the SZABIST Larkana Campus, we investigate the indirect impacts of customer interaction on the link between consumer purchasing intention and social media marketing.

Implications/Originality/Value: The study broadens the scope of the existing research on social media marketing. The findings suggest that marketers should react to the rising importance of corporate actions having a significant impact on consumer purchase intentions. Businesses can implement this advice most effectively by continuously monitoring customer concerns while maintaining their digital marketing strategies.



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Introduction

One of the more recent and well-known marketing strategies that has substituted consumers for viewers as contributors is social network marketing, a subset of social media marketing. Due to

the method's benefits of a two-way connection rather than the traditional one-way connection, brands and customers are linked under this sophisticated marketing strategy without any restrictions on the time, place, or methods of contact (Kim, A. J., & Ko, E., 2012). According to (Kozinets et al., 2008), who also share this attitude, the emergence of creative communication techniques has altered consumers' perspectives since becoming social media compliant. The globe has also been influenced by the sort of extreme impression that has afflicted the entirety of Pakistan. The usage of social media in Pakistan has recently advanced quickly, with Facebook being the most popular platform for social interaction and gathering the most users nineteen Million of any other social media platform. (Kemp, S., 2015) People are eager to move their interaction to online platforms and strongly regard social media applications as essential components of their daily lives (like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram). As a result, these favorable correlations between their views and actions on all social media platforms are characterized by (Ali Abdallah Alalwan et al., 2016). Social media has received a lot of attention as a practical instrument for businesses to employ in their marketing efforts, particularly in terms of consumer involvement, preferences or intents, customer communication, and customer management (Kevin Filo, 2015). For instance, social media may strategically improve two-way connections between customers and businesses while drawing more consumers to the brands. This will increase social media's ability to provide vocal, written, or combined textual, visually, and verbal material for posting (Shintaro Okazaki, Charles R. Taylor, 2013). Businesses have been considering utilizing social media to interact with consumers in a number of ways, including by giving search information, relationships, promotions, and boosting client purchase intentions (BenxiangZeng, Rolf Gerritsen, 2014).

When a client is considering making a purchase or has an intention to make a purchase, social media is the fastest-growing and finest source of information (Hamilton et al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2016; Erkan and Evans, 2016, 2016.). Customers are actually observed utilizing social media both before and after the purchase process, when they discuss their purchasing experiences on social media sites. This includes acquiring information, weighing possibilities, and choosing the best options (Drews, W., Schemer, C., 2010, 2010). For instance, more than 20% of customers regard social media to be significant or helpful when evaluating novel products and services (Powers et al., 2012).

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products and services (Powers et al., 2012). The aim of this study is to investigate the association of social media marketing and consumer engagement on consumer purchase intentions.

Literature Review

Social Media Marketing

The rapid innovation of social media marketing is also changing the ways that businesses form associations with their potential customers. This is because social media is an impromptu, quick, and effective platform for communication that can be broadcasted anywhere there is internet access. As a result, new traditions of interpersonal communication have emerged. (2012) (L. R. Kahle et al.)

Specific social media platforms enable users to create their accounts, interact with other users on the same platform, and exchange information through social networking (Andreas, K. M. y Haenlein M, 2010) Strategic marketers are the major users of social media marketing because of social networks' widespread popularity among users, which has made them a visible platform for advertising. Despite its helpful access, the environment may be altered to suit the needs of clients with various preferences. Thus, the efficiency of social networks depends on marketers that use and improve advertising spaces with full intention to target in accordance with customer needs and wants. (2006) (Schlosser, A. E., et al). 53% of users were identified to be active contributors to social media material in 2009, according to research. However, as time has gone on, this tendency has altered as consumers have evolved into active buyers and active sellers. 2015's Vickers, N. J.

According to Yusufzai (A., 2016), internet users in Pakistan are eager to utilize social media sites like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter for government outreach programs, the entertainment sector, and business purposes. This demonstrates that Pakistan uses social media at a high rate compared to other nations, yet despite Pakistan's growing reliance on social media for several outreach efforts, only a few studies have particularly looked at how social media affects consumer purchasing. Researchers have looked at how social media affects Pakistani women's purchase decisions (Nasir, S., Vel, P., & Mateen, 2012). Their study revealed that when Pakistani women are making judgments about buying clothing, they prefer conventional advertising methods over social media advertisements for their authenticity. This study limits the generalizability of the findings even though it provides some in-depth knowledge about Pakistan employs social media, with a special emphasis on women and the clothing business. Another research looked into how social media affected the choices made by 126 respondents who worked for higher education institutions in Pakistan. According to their research, social media users' decisions are impacted by information provided by other users of social media, such as compliments and complaints.

Consumer Purchase Intentions

Contesting the idea is implausible that customers have formed a distinct inclination to select products or brands during the analysis phase in the realms of advertising, selling, and marketing (W. Dodds et al., 1991). Purchase intention stands out as a pivotal metric for scrutinizing consumer behavior, determining the likelihood of a customer considering the acquisition of a product or service. The recent study by Mirabi, V., et al. (2015) highlights those various factors such as advertisements, product quality, and brand image significantly influence customer purchase intention. These factors are imperative for businesses to strategically allocate their marketing investments, opting for innovative methods over outdated ones to enhance market shares. The emergence of social media sites like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube has given users unrivaled opportunities to share information about businesses or products and to express their opinions. As a result, customers are pickier and more knowledgeable, prioritizing learning about product details before making a purchase (Ahmed, M.A., et al., 2014). This

emphasizes how crucial social media marketing and user engagement are for educating various audiences, identifying their preferences, and influencing their purchasing behavior. Online customer reviews have a significant impact on brand perception, shaping both favorable and unfavorable views of the brand (Vij, S., & Sharma, J., 2015). Domestic businesses must navigate the demands of the digital age to effectively engage and monitor their target audiences on social media platforms as brand value increasingly depends on consumer perception.

Consumer Engagement

This study's topic of customer engagement refers to the degree to which a consumer's emotional, physical, and cognitive appearance in their connection with the firm or service. (2012) (2006) (Patterson et al). Consumer involvement and engagement may be considered to be the same thing, but Mollen et al. (2010) have distinguished the two. Whereas involvement requires consumer organization, engagement requires a live relationship with the trademark or brand, satisfying both instrumental and experiential values. The marketers initiated the deliberate imperious consumer involvement in order to keep and establish a merciless advantage over others (Sedley et al., 2008). Marketers may utilize consumer engagement as a very reliable indication of company performance. (Sedley et al., 2008). In this regard, customer involvement is a key factor that has significant implications throughout time. This is due to the fact that consumer devotion will decrease if there is media devastation brought on by the availability of several media options. Businesses must increase their marketing efforts to engage clients since loyal and fervent consumers are those who are engaged (Sorenson, 2014).

Hypothesis Development and Conceptual Framework

Social media marketing and consumer purchasing intention.

Today, whether on a physical or an online platform, there is intense competition and a readiness among businesses to engage in a market with such a high concentration of consumers. Because of this, marketers utilize a variety of techniques to maintain consumer loyalty to their brands even while many brand components are interconnected using outdated marketing strategies that can't generate enough revenue for companies. Therefore, it is necessary to research various online marketing channels, including social media marketing, direct marketing, and internet marketing. Due to its simplicity and widespread usage globally, social media has grown to be the most widely used of these channels for advertising goods and services. (P. Kotler, 2003) Because of this, businesses are eager to use social media marketing channels to interact with consumers.

***H1:** There is significant influence of social media marketing on consumer purchasing intention.*

Social Media Marketing and Consumer Engagement

Consumer engagement used to be the idea of gathering consumer feedback through emphasizing "consumer insights" whenever marketing services and goods (Lea, W., 2012). But today, with so many product options, what we meant by "media a fresh shopping understanding," "consumer engagement" is all about making committed efforts and developing sensitive bonds that can guide word-of-mouth marketing and be capable of generating the anticipated sales (Magneto, 2015). It has been determined that businesses today should leverage social media's capacity to interact with customers rather than using it as a means of robbing them. Forbes (2015). By providing them with valuable value, social media platforms may be leveraged to keep customers interested and engaged. To put it another way, it is crucial to boost social media marketing as a tool for brand promotion. Social network marketing would undoubtedly play a large part in marketing in the future, according to the claim that was presented throughout the year 2009 (Harris, L., & Rae, 2009). Social media marketing may shift customer annoyance into engagement from an external perspective, and from an inside perspective, It can change the conventional emphasis on control into one that encourages online communication and involvement. As seen by the increasing popularity of electronic devices, technology is seen by companies as a tool to organize customer

involvement that is becoming increasingly vital. 2007 (Charles) There is no denying that social media platforms provide businesses with more tools to interact with clients in original, original ways. Thus, talks rather than comparable messages followed, according to the CFO of a growing firm bonobo, "We respond promptly to questions posted on social media," the company says (Price Water Cooper House, 2013) Based on these justifications, the hypothesis is made:

H2: *There is significant influence of social media marketing on consumer engagement.*

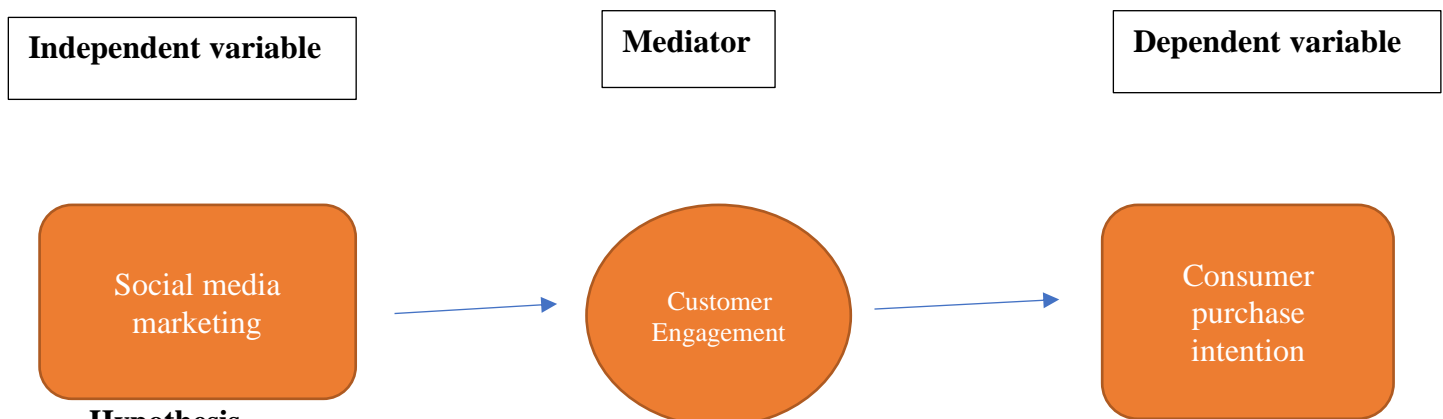
Consumer Purchasing Intention and Consumer Engagement

N. Baghmati et al. (2015), It was discovered that maintaining an emotional connection between customers and businesses (i.e., engaging customers) gives firms enormous opportunities to achieve relationship marketing goals and targets. This action plan aids in persuading customers to buy the goods and services offered by the specific businesses. Consumer engagement has gained significant attention from online merchants, who have shown that more engaged customers generate about 23% higher profits and revenues because they purchase more goods and services each transaction and utilize them more frequently. Magneto, 2015. As a result, consumer lifetime values and standards rise while expenditure to acquire new customers declines. And it is predicted that these hugely successful customers would encourage all of their friends, family members, and other loved ones to become new customers (Magneto, 2015) The hypothesis is formed in the manner described below based on prior findings:

H3: *There is significant influence of consumer engagement on consumer purchasing intension.*

Conceptual Framework

The results of the study literature indicate that social media marketing significantly improves customer engagement and purchase intent. Consumer involvement is also projected to act as a mediating factor in the link between social media marketing and consumer purchase intent, as seen in the image below.



Hypothesis

- H1:** There is impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase intention.
- H2:** There is impact of social media marketing on consumer engagement.
- H3:** There is impact of consumer engagement on consumer purchase intention.

Research Methodology

This research is explanatory in its type, it's an attempt to determine the relationship between the independent, mediator, and dependent variables. Consumer involvement is employed as a mediating variable between the independent variable of social network marketing and the dependent variable of consumer purchase intention.

The population of this research is SZABIST LARKANA University students. We tried to connect

with certain target demographic groups, such as BBA, BSCS, BSA&F, MBA MPM, MPhils, PhDs, and others. The sample size was initially selected 400 but after getting the filled data, the data and filled questionnaires were further screened and filtered and finally an appropriate number of samples was attained which is provided in the analysis tables, the whole sample represent students from SZABIST LARKANA. The authors' questionnaire, which included eight items about social network marketing as an independent variable, is used to collect data for the study (Kim et al, Ahmed et al, 2012,2014).

Six of the mediator variable's (consumer engagement) items are carried by the author (Weman, Gummerus, et al., 2011, 2012), while the remaining seven components of the dependent variable (consumer purchase intention) are carried by the researcher (McKnight et al, Wang et al, Yoo et al, would2002,2013,2001). Moreover, Data is collected via a genuine questionnaire from an official source, an internet survey form. Using the Likert scale, these characteristics are measured. Social Network Marketing is taken as an independent variable, whereas consumer purchasing intension is considered as dependent variable and finally consumer engagement is taken as mediating variable. The scale has been utilized on the basis of the respondents' demographic information. Data on age, gender, education, and the majority of social media platforms used is included.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Respondents Frequency Table and Charts Gender of Respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid male	100	61.7	61.7	61.7
Valid female	62	38.3	38.3	100.0
Total	162	100.0	100.0	

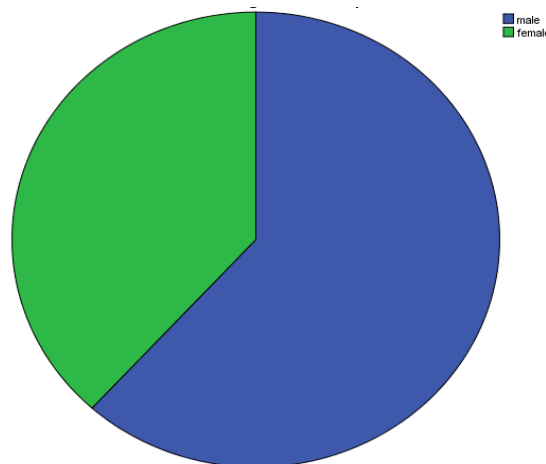


Figure 1: Gender of respondent

Gender of respondent of male frequency is 100 and female frequency is 62 and total are 162, valid percentage of male is 61.7 , female is 38.8 and total is 100 .Cumulative percent of male is 61.7 and female is 100.

Table 2: Age Of Respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18-30	73	45.1	45.1	45.1
31-40	45	27.8	27.8	72.8
41-50	32	19.8	19.8	92.6
51-60	11	6.8	6.8	99.4
60 above	1	.6	.6	100.0
Total	162	100.0	100.0	

Age of respondent of (18-30) frequency is 73, valid percent is 45.1 and cumulative percent is 45.1. (31-40) frequency is 45, valid percent is 27.8 and cumulative percent is 72.8. (41-50) frequency is 32, valid percent is 19.8 and cumulative percent is 92.6. (51-60) frequency is 11, valid percent is 6.8 and cumulative percent is 99.4. (60 above) frequency is 1, valid percent is 0.6 and cumulative percent is 100, total frequency is 162 and valid percent is 100.

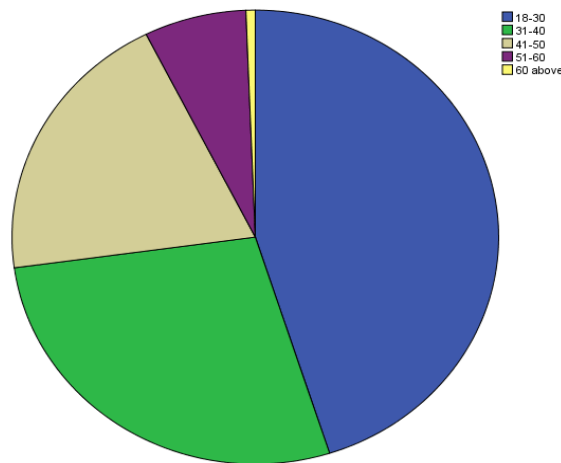


Figure 2: Age of respondent

Table3: Education of Respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid BBA	62	38.3	38.3	38.3
BSCS	38	23.5	23.5	61.7
MBA	40	24.7	24.7	86.4
MPM	19	11.7	11.7	98.1
Other	3	1.9	1.9	100.0
Total	162	100.0	100.0	

Education of respondent of BBA frequency is 62, valid percent is 38 and cumulative is 38, BSCS frequency is 38, valid percent is 23.5 and cumulative is 61.7, MBA frequency is 40, valid percent is 24.7 and cumulative is 86.4, MPM frequency is 19, valid percent is 11.7 and cumulative is 98.1, OTHER frequency is 3, valid percent is 1.9 and cumulative is 100.

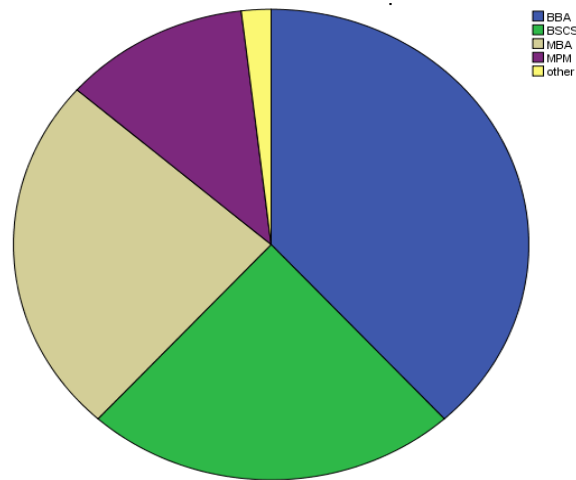


Figure 3: Education of respondent

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SMM	162	1.00	4.71	3.0203	.87498
CE	162	1.00	4.67	3.0340	.82598
CPI	162	1.25	4.75	3.2006	.79880
Valid N (listwise)	162				

Mean of 3.0203 for social media marketing, a mean of 3.0340 for customer engagement, and a mean of 3.2006 for consumer purchase intent, all respondents, on average, agreed with the Likert scale, which was based on (1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree). Compared to Consumer Engagement and Consumer Purchase Intention, which have standard deviations of 0.82598 and 0.79880, respectively, Social Media Marketing has variance of 0.87498. The variance is acceptable, though, because the standard deviation is less than 1.

Table 5: Correlations

		SMM	CE	CPI
SMM	Pearson Correlation	1	.496**	.252**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.001
	N	162	162	162
CE	Pearson Correlation	.496**	1	.302**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	162	162	162
CPI	Pearson Correlation	.252**	.302**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	
	N	162	162	162

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table No. 2 displays a correlation analysis that demonstrates the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables; if a variable's value is outside of this range (-1 to -1), they are not associated. There are three variables in this study. In table no. 02 above, social media marketing and consumer engagement are related to consumer purchasing intentions.

Social Media Marketing

Pearson correlation of social media marketing is 1, consumer engagement is 0.496 and consumer purchasing intention is 0.252. Significant (2-tailed) of social media marketing is 0, consumer engagement is 0.000 and consumer purchase intention 0.001, P-value is less than 0.05. The number of respondents is 162.

Consumer Engagement

Pearson correlation of social media marketing is 0.252, Consumer engagement is 0.302 and consumer purchasing intention is 1. Significant (2-tailed) of social media marketing is 0.001, consumer engagement is 0.000 and consumer purchase intention 0.000, P-value is less than 0.05. The number of respondents is 162.

Consumer Purchasing Intention

Person correlation of social media marketing is 0.496, Consumer engagement is 1 and consumer purchasing intention is 0.302. Significant (2-tailed) of social media marketing is 0.000, consumer engagement is 0.000 and consumer purchase intention 0.000, P-value is less than 0.05. The number of respondents is 162.

Consumer purchasing intentions and social media marketing have a correlation of 0.252, which is both positive and weak. Its p-value is less than 0.05, or 0.000. The correlation between Consumer Engagement and Consumer Purchasing Intention is 0.302, which has a positive and weak association with a significant p-value of 0.000. The overall conclusion demonstrates that independent factors have a somewhat favorable and substantial influence on the dependent variable. All variables' P-values are less than 0.05, indicating a substantial correlation between them all.

Table 6: Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.324 ^a	.105	.094	.86055

a. Predictors: (Constant), CE, SMM

The model summary in the following table illustrates the extent to which the dependent variable's independent variable is responsible for its fluctuation. The R square value in the aforementioned tables is 0.105; when it is converted to a percentage and multiplied by 100, it becomes 10.5%; however, the R square value is less than 0.6, which is indicative of a good fit for the model; however, this table demonstrates that the model is good fit for our study model. The modified R square value was 0.094, indicating that our independent variables explained 10.5% of the changes in the dependent variable or their influence, and 9.4% that there may be more factors that have an impact on consumers' intentions to buy.

Table 7: Anova

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	13.854	2	6.927	9.354	.000 ^b
Residual	117.747	159	.741		
Total	131.601	161			

a. Dependent Variable: CPI

b. Predictors: (Constant), CE, SMM

The combined influence of independent and dependent variables is what the ANOVA tells us, and it has been evaluated by significant level. The ANOVA table's significance value is 0.000, or less than 0.05, which denotes a significant effect of the independent factors on the dependent variable.

Table 8: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.243	.268		8.376	.000
	SMM	.120	.077	.135	1.565	.120
	CE	.224	.082	.235	2.723	.007

a. Dependent Variable: CPI

With the aid of the p-value, the aforementioned table demonstrated the influence of independent factors on dependent variables. A significant influence is there if less than 0.05 constitutes the p value. The independent variables' impact on the dependent variable is minimal if the p-value is less than 0.05. The independent variables social media marketing and consumer engagement, according to the above table, with p-values of 0.120 and 0.007, respectively. This proved that consumer interaction on social media and marketing had influence on consumer purchasing intent.

Results and Discussions

The finding in descriptive statistics is that the mean values of the variables are on the agreeable or neutral side. Because respondents provided collective responses, Additionally, the Skewness and Kurtosis statistic value is between -2 and +2, indicating that the data is regularly distributed.

The correlation table depicts the relationship between the variables, and the findings indicate that there is a positive, weakly correlated, and statistically significant association between the variables. There is a substantial link between the variables and a positive and weak correlation when the correlation value is less than 0.7 since all the variables have p-values less than 0.05.

According to the principle of a good fit model, the R square value in the model summary for the regression analysis is 0.105, indicating a good fit model. The dependent variable's greatest effect can be generated by other variables or factors, as indicated by the modified R square value of 0.094, which shows the independent variables are contributing 9.4% to it. The study model is significant since the p-value is less than 0.05, and the ANOVA model in the table is significant because it is on 0.000.

The impact of one variable on the other variables is estimated in this study's table of coefficients according to the p-value, and depending on the values, the hypothesis is accepted or rejected. Accordingly, the value of social media marketing and consumer engagement is 0.120 and 0.007, which demonstrates that both independent variables have significant impact on the consumer purchasing intention.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study's goals have been achieved, and issues about the relationships and impact are addressed analytically. The study discovered a significant connection between customer social media activity and consumer purchasing intention. As a result, it may be used to gauge marketing endeavors. Consumer engagement and purchase inclinations are significantly impacted by social media marketing. Social media marketing should be considered when creating a brand or business strategy for those who are determined to serve their market and want to succeed. On the basis of the main conclusions, several recommendations are made since social media marketing has become increasingly important for businesses, whether they are at the lower/local or domestic level, particularly in the Larkana area. This research is instructive and helpful for businesses planning to engage in social media marketing campaigns aimed at customers in interior Sindh. It also covered raising awareness of the tangible products (Larkana). The majority and almost all participants in this study are young, and this is because the younger group interacts well on social media platforms, and because their increased social media marketing activities could add more value to this particular field. This study also suggests that businesses should take the younger age of groups such as students and recent graduates into consideration.

Future Research Direction

It is advised to include additional cities in interior Sindh and other Pakistani provinces to broaden the study's geographic scope. To ensure diversity and thorough coverage, the research should also be expanded to several research institutes. Data collection should cover a range of time series to increase analytical depth and allow for more thorough testing of inferences. Physical interviews should be conducted because they may reveal subtle factors that affect customers' intentions to make purchases. Researchers should use qualitative research methodologies to better understand respondents' insights. This strategy will enable a deeper investigation of the variables influencing consumer behavior and offer insightful qualitative information alongside quantitative results.

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