
Social Media vs Traditional Media on Consumer Buying Behavior: The Mediating Role of Consumer Brand Perception

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Abstract

Consumer brand perception is important for a brand and sustainable growth. Both social media and traditional media affect consumers' buying behavior and brand perception. Unlike past studies, we have examined the effect of traditional and social media on consumers' attitudes, behavior, and brand perception. The focus of the study was the textile and apparel industry of Karachi. The study has used a closed-ended questionnaire and the mall-intercept method for collecting the data. We had intercepted 400 customers and received feedback from 375. The response rate aligns with other studies that have used the mall intercept method to collect the data. For statistical analysis, we have used Smart PLS version 3.2. The results suggest that it promotes consumer buying behavior and consumer brand perception. The study also found that traditional media stimulates consumer buying behavior and brand perception. The study also found that consumer brand perception stimulates (1) social media and consumer buying behavior and (2) traditional media and consumer buying behavior. Social media usage has increased significantly, but it has not decreased the importance of traditional media. The impact of traditional and social media on consumers is not the same. Thus, marketers, while selecting media, must keep in mind the target consumers and products. The study recommends that firms use conventional and social media to increase brand perception and stimulate positive buying behavior.

Keywords: *Social Media, Traditional Media, Consumer Brand Perception, Consumer Buying Behaviour.*

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Introduction

Consumer brand perception promotes brand image and equity and is a key component of marketing strategy (Augusto & Torres, 2018). Recent studies, such as Khadim et al. (2018), Géci, Nagyova and Rybanska (2017), and Jain (2021), found that social media significantly affects consumer brand preference and buying behavior. Therefore, most companies have shifted their marketing strategies to social media marketing as it is more effective and less expensive than conventional marketing strategies. A substantial literature is available either on the impact of social media on consumer perceptions or the association of traditional media on consumer perception. But a few studies have examined the impact of social media and traditional mediums on consumers' brand perception (Yu & Yuan, 2019).

While branding through social media or traditional media have been considered as one of the required methods in optimizing perceptions of consumers, studies like Hayes et al. (2021), Bruhn, Schoenmueller, and Schafer (2012), and Orji et al. (2017) have also focused on the impact of brand perception on the buying behavior of consumers. According to Cheung, Pires, and Rosenberger (2020), the global market has experienced a significant shift from conventional media towards social media in the past decade. Due to the internet and social media, consumers have more empowerment. They can retrieve brand and product information globally, which helps their buying decision process (Chung & Kim, 2020; Visser, Schoormans, & Vogtlander, 2018).

Cheung, Pires and Rosenbergre (2020) found that consumers spend excessive time on various social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube. These forums help consumers in updating entertainment and educational information and exchanging their experiences with others. Extant literature suggests that consumers in the present era prefer to receive information from social media than conventional sources, including magazines, television, and radio (Morra et al., 2018; Zollo et al., 2020). Social media forums allow consumers to share their brand and other experiences with users. The interactive nature of social media increases consumers engagement and brand perception. Gauns et al. (2018), Sangroya and Nayak (2017), and Schnurr (2017) believe that social media is crucial for establishing and maintaining consumer brand perception.

Similarly, Jibril et al. (2019) assert that the brand-related messages communicated through social media are stronger than traditional media messages. Thus, many firms now spend significant resources on social media for building brand image and perception. Since consumers also share their brand-related experience, therefore their options and experience also contribute to building brand image and brand perception

(Chung & Kim, 2020; Qalati et al., 2019). Traditional media is more feasible in mass marketing communication and social media for target marketing (Khadim et al., 2018; Sharma, Ahuja, & Alavi, 2020; AUF et al., 2018).

Social media platforms have empowered consumers to share their experiences, opinions of brands, and products which are challenging for a brand. Marketers cannot control consumers' voices and opinions. At the same time, extant literature suggests that consumers pay more attention to consumers' generated information than firm-generated information (Helbling, 2018; Tarabieh, 2017). Past studies have examined the effect of social media on the consumer buying behavior and brand perception or the impact of traditional media on "consumer buying behavior and brand perception." We also found insignificant studies on the mediating role of consumer brand perception. Thus, to fill the above gap, we have formulated the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of social and traditional mediums on consumer buying behavior and consumer brand perception?
2. What is the effect of consumer brand perception on consumer buying behavior?
3. What is the mediating effect of consumer brand perception on (1) social media and consumer buying behavior, and (2) traditional media and consumer buying behavior?

Structure of the Research

The article consists of an introduction that gives an overview of the paper, followed by a literature review that helps develop hypotheses and a conceptual framework that illustrates the relationship between different variables used in this research. Subsequent sections are methodology, results discussion, and conclusion.

Literature Review & Hypotheses Development

The interaction pattern between consumers and brands depends on information shared by the brand and how consumers respond to it (Suhaily & Darmoyo, 2017). According to Popp and Woratschek (2017), consumers' perception of a brand depends on the information accessible to consumers and their brand experience. The mediums can be traditional (i.e., magazines, television commercials, placements, and flyers) or forums like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others (Vişelar, 2019). Some of the major differences between the two mediums are as follows. First, the reach of social media is large. Consumers across the world can access social media. Comparatively, the reach of the conventional medium is small and targeted (Lund, Cohen, & Scarles, 2018). Second, communications and messages in social media have flexibility. The senders can change the messages or delete them, but it is impossible in the conventional medium (Kamboj,

Sarmah, Gupta & Dwivedi, 2018). Third, social media is two-way communication between senders and receivers. At the same time, communication in the traditional medium is passive and one way (Glucksman, 2017). Fourth, demographic users' data in social media is comparatively less accurate than conventional media (Ebrahimi, Hajmohammadi, & Khajeheian, 2020).

Due to social media access through mobile and other gadgets, consumers spend considerable time on it. They use social media for seeking information, sharing their experiences about a brand or service (Khajeheian & Ebrahimi, 2020). Firms realizing the importance of social media now spend considerable resources on it. Also, now many top universities provide degrees via social media. Social media would not completely replace traditional media, but its share would significantly increase in subsequent years (Al-Zyoud, 2018).

Social Media and Consumer Buying Behavior

Extant literature suggests that social media has different platforms which marketers can use for enhancing brand image and stimulating positive buying behavior (Bilgin, 2018). Social media helps businesses increase their sales volume, as they can quickly communicate and interact with a large audience. Thus, social media helps increase the customer base that promotes a sustainable relationship with consumers in the long run. Social media, compared to other conventional media, is highly interactive. Social media increases consumer interaction, promoting involvement and stimulating a positive attitude towards brands (Gao, Tate, Zhang, Chen, & Liang, 2018). Social media allows consumers to access relevant information and share their experiences about goods and services (Hanna et al., 2011). Social media has become user-friendly; therefore, about 25% of social media users actively share their brand and experiences with others (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011).

Based on empirical research, Miller and Lammas (2010) found that social media marketing plays an influential role in changing the attitude of online consumers. The study found that 70% of online users visit different sites and forums for collecting information about a product and service. Of these online users, 49% of consumers purchase based on information accessed from different social media forums. The study also found that 60% of consumers use social media to share their experiences.

H1: Social media significantly affects consumer buying behavior.

Social Media and Consumer Brand Perception

Personalization and target specificity are the two key aspects of social media in

branding a product or an organization (Pütter, 2017). Past studies, such as Yu and Yuan (2019), found that social media influence on consumer brand perception is stronger than conventional media. Social media allows the marketer to post interesting content, due to which consumers access the shared information and share it with others. Thus, it enhances consumers' engagement and involvement, leading towards a positive brand perception. Firms have different options to communicate with consumers, but most organizations use Facebook to improve brand perception. Facebook is user-friendly, allowing consumers to share pictures, messages, and videos (Bilgin, 2018). A sustainable relationship between a brand and consumers is necessary for improving brand perception. Extant literature suggests that a strategic online presence must interact with consumers, improve brand perception, retain existing clients, and attract new ones. A strong brand perception gives a competitive edge to a brand (Forbes, 2013).

H2: Social media significantly affects consumer brand perception.

Traditional Media, Consumer Buying Behavior and Brand Perception

The emergence of social media has increased its significance to change consumers buying behavior. Despite its importance, many researchers believe that traditional media is still important for changing consumer attitudes and behavior (Jain, 2021; Cheung, Pires, & Rosenberger, 2020). Trust is essential in communicating messages. Researchers believe that despite the popularity and usage of social media, consumers generally have more confidence in messages communicated through traditional media (Morra et al., 2018). Consumers' expectations from social and traditional mediums are different. Ertemel and Ammoura (2016) argue that media affects consumers differently. For example, TV can display high-quality audio-video content. Therefore, it is more suitable for products that require physical demonstration.

Similarly, radio is more suitable for marketing products to local markets. TV advertisement has a strong and significant effect on consumers, but it does not stay in their minds for a longer period. At the same time, an advertisement in a magazine initially has a weaker but persistent impact on consumers' minds (Ioanas & Stocia, 2020). Extant literature suggests that advertisements promote brand preference and motivate consumers to purchase advertised brands (Coelho, Rita, & Santos, 2018). Based on a comparative study, Shanahan, Tran, and Taylor (2019) concluded that traditional media has a higher competency than social media to create awareness about a brand.

H3: Traditional media significantly affects consumer buying behavior.

H4: Traditional media significantly affects consumer brand perception.

Brand Perception and Consumer Buying Behavior

Prasath and Yoganathen (2018) advocate that consumers' brand perception significantly depends on trust in a brand. Thus, a higher level of trust promotes a strong brand image leading towards positive buying behavior. Besides communicating brand features, a brand also carries intangible attributes, including brand personality, emotional benefits, and image. All these attributes promote the purchase and repurchase intentions. In the present competitive era, a firm cannot have sustainability based on tangible features of brands. It is only possible through intangible aspects such as brand image, personality, and emotional attachment. A strong brand motivates consumers to develop a sustainable relationship. Consumers generally buy those brands whose personality aligns with their personality. An advertising tycoon believes that products, like people, have personalities, making them or breaking them in the marketplace (Haygood, 2007).

H5: Brand perception significantly affects consumer buying behavior.

Consumer Buying Behavior, Social Media and Consumer Brand Perception

Many firms prefer social media over conventional media to change consumers' brand perception because social media maintains consumers' browsing history, past purchases, and personal preferences (Yu & Yuan, 2019; Pradhan, Israel, & Jena, 2018). Extant literature also found that many firms use social media by offering discounts and engaging consumers in different brand activation activities. This strategy helps in improving consumer brand perception (Sreejesh et al., 2018; Bilgin, 2018). Similarly, Prasath, and Yoganathen (2018) also found that consumers and brand interaction on social media enhance consumers' brand perception. Positive interaction between a brand and consumers stimulates positive buying behavior, while negative social interaction adversely affects consumers' brand perception (Rungtornsupavan, Joemsittiprasert, & Jermittiprasert, 2019).

H6: Consumer brand perception mediates the association between social media and consumer buying behavior.

Impact of Traditional Media on Consumer Brand Perception

Advertising through social media has increased significantly in the present technology diffusion era. However, social media has not yet completely replaced the traditional mediums. Some researchers believe that social media augments traditional media market strategies, while others believe that social and conventional media are part of integrated market advertising strategies (Meraz, 2009). Many researchers suggest that both of them are highly related. However, consumers' buying responses on conventional and social media are different. It varies from one consumer to another depending on

their attitudes towards social or conventional media (Dewan & Ramaprasad, 2014; Popadynets, Shults, & Barna, 2017).

Prasath and Yoganathen (2018) suggest that advertisements aligned with consumers' values promote consumer relevance and attachment. It does not matter whether the medium of advertisement is conventional or social media. Cheung, Pires, and Rosenberger (2020) suggest that the notion of credibility in traditional media has multiple dimensional effects on consumer brand perception, such as increased attractiveness, similarity, expertise, and trustworthiness.

H7: Consumer brand perception mediates the association between traditional media and consumer buying behavior.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the above theoretical discussions, we have proposed a model presented in Figure 1 containing four variables and seven relationships, including two mediating ones.

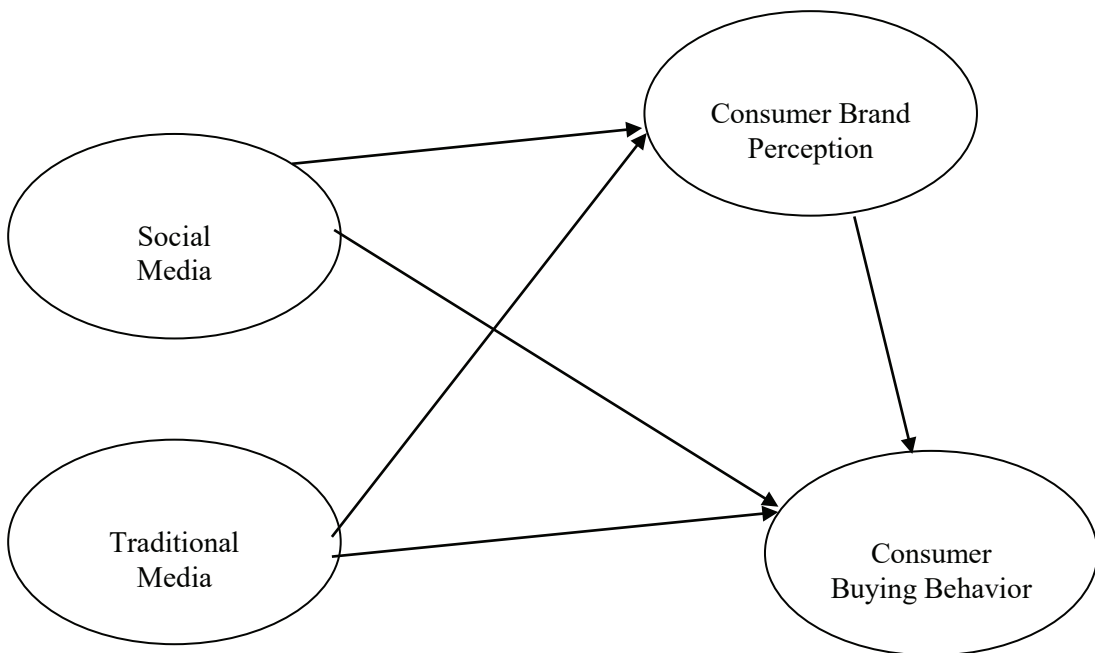


Figure 1: Framework for Social media Vs Traditional media

Methodology

Sample

This study has investigated the impact of social media and traditional media on consumer buying behavior. Thus, this study has focused on the textile and apparel industry of Karachi. We have focused on this segment because it extensively promotes brands through social media and traditional media. Also, consumers, while purchasing textile and apparel products, give importance to brand image. This study has used the mall intercept method for collecting the data. The authors visited the top five malls in Karachi on weekdays and weekends. We intercepted 400 customers, and 375 customers responded. The study has used a closed-ended questionnaire for collecting the data.

Respondent's Profile

The study found that of the total respondents, 63% were female, and 37% were males. We found that 68% of the respondents were married and 32% single in terms of marital status. We also found that 40% of the respondents were in the age bracket of 18 to 30 years, 35% in the age group 31 to 40 years, 20% in the age group of 41 to 50 years, and 5% were in the age group of 51 years and above. Income stratification shows that 10% of respondents' income was up to Rs. 50,000/ per month, 50% of the respondents' income ranged from Rs. 50,000/ to Rs. 100,000/ 20% respondents income ranged from Rs. 100,000/ to Rs. 200,000/, and 20% of respondents' income was more than Rs. 200,000/ per month. Education segmentation suggests that 30% of the respondents had an intermediate education, 50% were graduates, and 20% were postgraduate.

Scale and Measurement

The study has adapted the questionnaire from earlier studies. It has four constructs and 16 items, all based on the five-point Likert scale, where one suggests strongly disagree and five suggests strongly agree. Table 1 shows the summary of the adapted scales.

Table 1: Summary of Scales

Constructs	Sources	Items
Social Media	Cheung, Pires and Rosenbergre (2020)	4
Traditional Media	Suhaily and Daroyo (2017)	4
Consumer Brand Perception	Jasmani and Sunarsi (2020)	4
Consumer Buying Behavior	Putter (2017)	4

Results

This study has examined the impact of social media and traditional media on the consumer buying behavior and the association of brand perception with consumer

buying behavior. It has also examined the mediating roles of brand perception on consumer buying behavior. The results are presented in the following sections.

Descriptive Analysis

The study has examined internal consistency based on Cronbach's alpha values and univariate normality based on Skewness and Kurtosis. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	Std .Dev	Skewness	Kurtosis
Social Media	0.867	3.63	1.01	1.32	-0.83
Traditional Media	0.775	3.47	1.34	1.7	-1.89
Consumer Brand Perception	0.910	3.69	1.69	-0.82	-0.91
Consumer Buying Behavior	0.868	3.76	1.54	2.13	2.3

The summary of results shows that Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.910 to 0.867. It is highest for consumer brand perception ($\alpha=0.910$), followed by consumer buying behavior ($\alpha=0.868$), social media ($\alpha=0.867$), and traditional media ($\alpha=0.775$). Since these values are greater than 0.70, suggesting acceptable internal consistency of the constructs used in the study (Rackwitz, 2001). The range of Skewness values is from -0.82 to 2.13, and Kurtosis values range from 0.83 to 2.3. These values are between ± 3.5 , suggesting that the constructs fulfill univariate normality requirements (Henderson, 2006).

Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity

The study has assessed the convergent validity based on AVE and composite reliability (Cunningham, Preacher, & Banaji, 2001) and discriminant validity based on Fornell & Larcker's (1981) criteria. The summary of the results is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Convergent Validity

Constructs	Composite Reliability	AVE	SM	TM	CBrP	CBB
Social Media	0.909	0.715	0.846			
Traditional Media	0.858	0.606	0.818	0.778		
Consumer Brand Perception	0.937	0.788	0.841	0.861	0.888	
Consumer Buying Behavior	0.910	0.717	0.830	0.839	0.926	0.847

The results show that the values of AVE are "greater than 0.60, and composite reliability values are greater than 0.70." Thus, we have inferred that the constructs based on the

data set collected from the consumers of Karachi fulfill the requirements of convergent validity (Cunningham, Preacher, & Banaji, 2001). We have also inferred that all the constructs used in the study are “unique and distinct since the square root of AVEs is greater than the Pearson correlation values” (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The study has used confirmatory factor analysis to examine the association between indicator variables and latent variables. Table 4 below presents the results related to confirmatory factor analysis.

Table 4: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

	Social Media	Traditional Media	Consumer Brand Perception	Consumer Buying Behavior
SM1	0.898			
SM2	0.915			
SM3	0.73			
SM4	0.827			
TM1		0.814		
TM2		0.803		
TM3		0.812		
TM4		0.858		
CBP1			0.828	
CBP2			0.928	
CBP3			0.909	
CBP4			0.882	
CBB1				0.849
CBB2				0.859
CBB3				0.817
CBB4				0.862

The results show that the factor loadings of all the indicator variables are greater than 0.70, suggesting a theoretical association between constructs and their respective indicator variables (Cunningham, Preacher, & Banaji, 2001).

SEM Results

The study has used the bootstrapping technique for testing the proposed hypotheses. Table 5 summarizes the results, followed by the measurement model (Figure-2) and structural model (Figure-3).

Table 5: Path Coefficients

Hypotheses	Beta	T-stats	P Values	Results
Direct Hypotheses				
Social Media-> Con. Buying Behavior (H1)	0.143	2.32	0.02	Accepted
Social Media-> Con. Brand Perception (H2)	0.412	7.677	0.00	Accepted
Traditional Media -> Con. Buying Behavior (H3)	0.110	2.006	0.04	Accepted
Traditional Media -> Con. Brand Perception(H4)	0.524	9.768	0.00	Accepted
Con, Br.Perception -> Con.Buying Behavior (H5)	0.714	12.191	0.00	Accepted
Indirect Hypotheses				
Social Media-> Con. Br. Perception-> cons. Buying Beh(H6)	0.294	6.297	0.000	Accepted
Trad. Media-> Con. Br. Perception-> cons. Buying Beh(H7)	0.374	7.678	0.000	Accepted

The results show that all the t-values range between ± 1.96 , and p-values are less than 0.05. Thus, we have accepted five direct hypotheses and two indirect hypotheses.

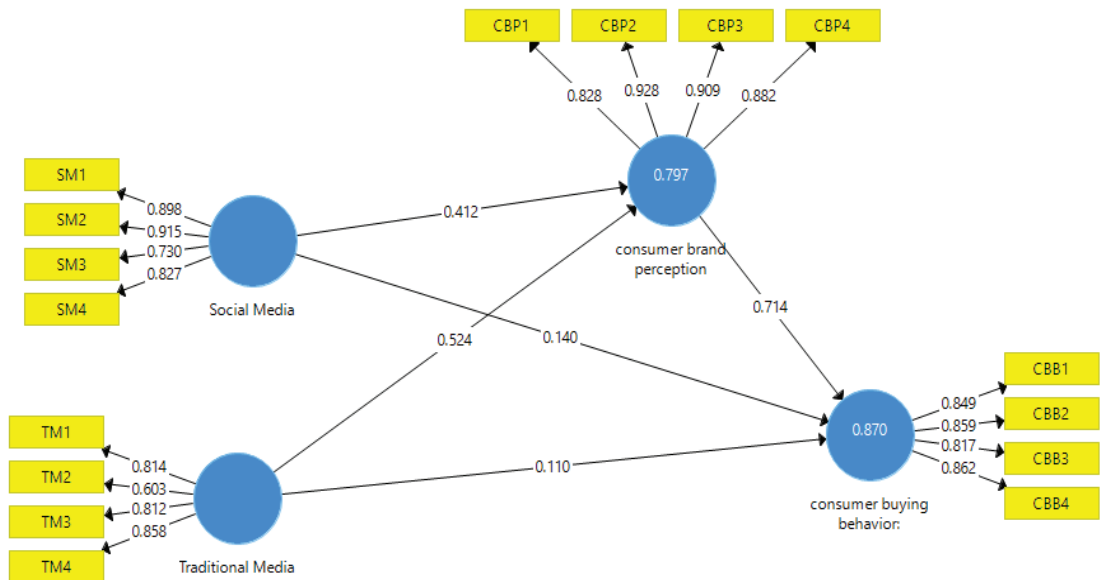


Figure 2: Measurement Model

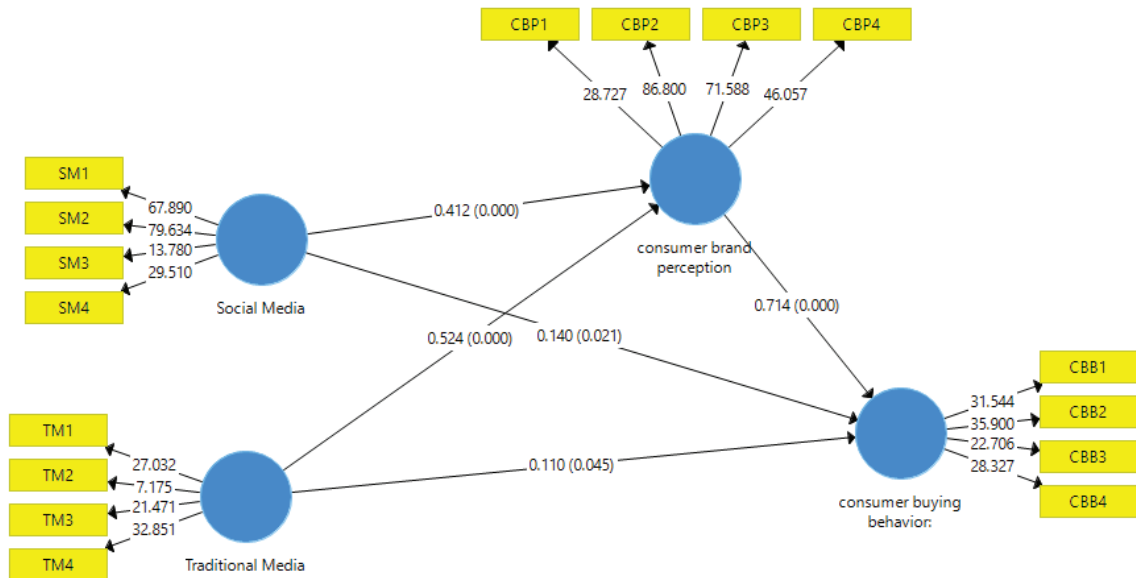


Figure 3: Structural Model

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The results suggest that social media “significant effects consumer buying behavior” (H1). The result is in line with earlier studies that found that social media platforms help firms engage consumers, promoting the purchase and repurchase intentions (Coelho, Rita, & Santos, 2018). Based on empirical evidence, Chung and Kim (2020) have concluded that social media effectively increases brand perception, brand image, and buying behavior.

Our results support the hypotheses on the association between social media and consumer brand perception (H2). Extant literature suggests that many organizations now use social media to interact with consumers. The interaction promotes a sustainable relationship between the brand and consumers. Consequently, they write good reviews on the social media platform, enhancing the brand image (Putter, 2017; Shanahan, Tran, & Taylor, 2019).

Our results also suggest that traditional media positively affects consumer buying behavior and brand perception (H3 and H4). The emergence of social media has increased

its significance to change consumers buying behavior. Despite its importance, many researchers believe that traditional media is still important for changing consumers' attitudes and behavior (Jain, 2021; Cheung, Pires, & Rosenberger, 2020). An element of trust is an essential factor in communicated messages. Researchers believe that despite the popularity and usage of social media, consumers generally have more confidence in the messages communicated through traditional media (Morra et al., 2018).

The fifth hypothesis states that consumer brand perception significantly impacts consumer buying behavior, which our results support. Extant literature suggests that intangibles such as brand perception and emotional attachment have a stronger effect than tangible features. Thus, firms spend considerable resources to improve their brand image and consumer brand perception (Putter, 2017; Jain, 2021).

The results suggest that brand perception mediates social media and consumer buying behavior (H6). The study found that brand perception mediates traditional media and consumer buying behavior. Parsath and Yoganathen (2018) suggest that advertisements aligned with consumers' values promote consumer relevance and attachment. It does not matter whether the medium of advertisement is conventional or social media. Cheung, Pires, and Rosenberger (2020) suggest that the notion of credibility in traditional media has multiple dimensional effects on consumer brand perception, such as increased attractiveness, similarity, expertise, and trustworthiness.

The study found that brand perception mediates the association between traditional media and consumer buying behavior (H7). Extant literature also found that many firms use social media by offering discounts and engaging consumers in different brand activation activities. This strategy helps in improving consumer brand perception (Sreejesh et al., 2018; Bilgin, 2018). Similarly, Parsath and Yoganathen (2018) also found that consumers and brand interaction on social media enhance brand perception. Positive interaction between a brand and consumers stimulates positive buying behavior, while negative social interaction adversely affects consumers' brand perception (Fernandes & Moreira, 2019).

Conclusion

The results suggest that social media promote consumer buying behavior and consumer brand perception. The study also found that traditional media stimulates consumer buying behavior and brand perception. Furthermore, consumer brand perception stimulates (1) social media and consumer buying behavior and (2) traditional media and consumer buying behavior. Social media usage has increased significantly, but it has not decreased the importance of traditional media. The impact of traditional and

social media on consumers is not the same. It varies from one consumer to another and from one product category to another. Thus, while developing market strategies, firms should keep the target audience and product category in mind. For example, if a firm intends to market products requiring a physical demonstration, it should use television media to allow high-quality audio and video.

Consumers' expectations from social media and traditional media are different. Rajendran and Thesinghraj (2014) argue that media affects consumers differently. For example, TV can display high-quality audio-video content. Therefore, it is more suitable for products that require physical demonstration. If a firm's market strategy involves and engages consumers, it should use social media since it allows two-way communication.

Limitations and Future Research

The study has focused on the textile and apparel sector of Karachi. The reason we have targeted this sector is that it uses both traditional and social media for marketing. Future studies may select other sectors and other cities. We also recommend researchers to do a comparative study between two different product categories. For example, they may select one high involvement and one low involvement product. Cultural values are important in countries like Pakistan. We in the study have not considered the impact of social values, which future researchers can use in their studies. From the consumers' perspective, brand personification is critical, which was beyond the scope of the study. We strongly recommend others to use it in their studies. Consumers' motivational level significantly depends on their level of trust in a medium. Thus, future studies may examine the moderating effect of trust on the association between traditional and social media.

Annexure

Constructs and Items in the Questionnaire

Social Media

SM1. I have purchased the product after watching it on social media.

SM2. I got relevant information on social media.

SM3. I follow brands I recognize on social media.

SM4. Social media helps me build a perception of their brand service.

Traditional Media

TM1. Advertisement on newspaper attracts me to visit the store and buy brand.

TM2. I get sufficient information about the product on the television commercial.

TM3. The brand advertised through television commercials are trustworthy.

TM4. TV commercials are the easiest way to create spread awareness of a product.

Consumer Brand Perception

CBP1. I pay attention to advertisements and sponsored ads on different media.

CBP2. The number of likes and share on a store makes me perceive the brand.

CBP3. The number of followers makes me perceive the brand as good or bad.

CBP4. The brand content creates an image that identifies for me as a brand personality.

Consumer Buying Behavior

CBB1. Positive reviews help me in buying products.

CBB2. Discounts offered exclusively influence my buying decision.

CBB3. Constant reminders about brands through media influence my buying decision.

CBB4. Commercial feel relatable to me and influence my buying decision.

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