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The Impact of Social Media Marketing Medium toward Purchase Intention & Brand Loyalty, A Study of Generation Y's Perception of an Outfitters Brand in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, the rapid proliferation of digital platforms has fundamentally altered the marketing landscape, shifting the focus from traditional channels to dynamic social media environments .Social Media Marketing (SMM) has emerged as a critical determinant of consumer behavior, offering brands unprecedented opportunities to engage with audiences through personalized and interactive content. In Pakistan ,Generation Y (Millennials) represents a significant demographic powerhouse characterized by high digital literacy and a strong presence on social media. Despite the growing investment in digital campaigns, there is a need for more empirical evidence regarding how the specific mediums of social media marketing influence the purchase intentions and brand loyalty of Pakistani Millennials, particularly within the competitive fashion retail sector. This study investigates the impact of social media marketing mediums on consumer perceptions of Outfitters ,a leading clothing brand in Pakistan. Drawing upon the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework and the Uses and Gratifications Theory ,the research examines key SMM dimensions—such as advertisement vividness, influencer endorsements, and community engagement—to determine their effects on the cognitive and emotional responses of Generation Y. The study also assesses moderating factors, including brand trust and perceived trendiness, which shape how social media interactions translate into long-term loyalty and immediate buying behavior .A mixed-method approach was employed to ensure robust findings. Quantitative data were gathered via structured online surveys from Generation Y consumers residing in major urban hubs, including Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. To complement this, qualitative insights were obtained through thematic analysis of focus group discussions and interviews with digital marketing experts and loyal Outfitters customers .Findings indicate that social media marketing mediums significantly and positively influence both purchase intention and brand loyalty. Specifically ,influencer credibility and interactive storytelling were found to be the strongest predictors of brand advocacy among Millennials. However, challenges such as content saturation, perceived intrusiveness of ads, and the "authenticity gap" were identified as potential barriers. The research suggests that while Outfitters enjoys strong digital visibility, maintaining loyalty requires a shift from transactional marketing to value-driven engagement .The study contributes to the burgeoning body of knowledge on digital marketing in emerging economies and provides actionable insights for Pakistani retail brands. It underscores the necessity for marketers to tailor their social media strategies to the unique psychological and cultural traits of Generation Y to foster sustainable brand-consumer relationships.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing (SMM), Purchase Intention, Brand Loyalty, Generation Y, Millennials, Outfitters, Pakistan, Consumer Perception, Digital Marketing, Retail Sector.*

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital era, marketing communication has evolved from one-way broadcasting to interactive, two-way engagement facilitated by social media platforms. Social media has become a dominant interface for brand–consumer interaction, particularly within the retail fashion sector, where visual appeal, peer influence, and rapid trend diffusion play a central role. For Generation Y (Millennials), social media is not merely a networking tool but a primary source of product information, social validation, and shopping inspiration (Duffett, 2017; Hajli, 2019). Consequently, fashion brands increasingly rely on digital channels to shape consumer perceptions and influence behavioral outcomes.

In Pakistan, the fashion retail industry has undergone a rapid digital transformation, with local apparel brands investing heavily in social media marketing to engage younger consumers. Brands such as Outfitters have established a strong presence across platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, utilizing electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), online brand communities, and targeted advertisements to attract and retain customers. However, maintaining an active social media presence alone does not guarantee consumer commitment. The key challenge lies in understanding how these specific digital touchpoints influence consumers' internal brand beliefs, which ultimately determine purchase intention and long-term brand loyalty.

Despite substantial managerial interest, there remains a significant gap in understanding the psychological mechanisms through which social media marketing translates into brand loyalty, particularly in emerging markets such as Pakistan. Generation Y consumers are characterized by high brand awareness, reliance on peer reviews, and a tendency toward brand switching when expectations are unmet (Bilgihan, 2016). While existing literature confirms a positive relationship between social media marketing and purchase behavior, limited empirical attention has been given to brand beliefs as a mediating cognitive mechanism, especially in the context of Pakistani apparel brands (Yadav & Rahman, 2018; Ismail, 2017). Moreover, marketers often struggle to identify which specific social media medium—E-WOM, online communities, or paid online advertisements—is most effective in building trust, credibility, and favorable brand perceptions.

Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how social media marketing activities influence Generation Y consumers' purchase intention and brand loyalty through the formation of brand beliefs. Drawing on relationship marketing and consumer behavior theories, brand beliefs are conceptualized as consumers' cognitive evaluations of brand attributes, reliability, and value, which serve as a psychological bridge between marketing stimuli and behavioral outcomes (Keller, 2013). By focusing on Outfitters as a representative Pakistani apparel brand, this research provides context-specific insights into how digital marketing strategies resonate with local cultural and consumption patterns.

This study contributes to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it extends social media marketing literature by empirically testing brand beliefs as a mediating construct, offering a more nuanced explanation of how digital engagement translates into loyalty. Practically, the findings provide actionable guidance for fashion marketers in Pakistan by identifying the most influential digital channels for strengthening brand equity and consumer retention. Overall, the study enhances understanding of Generation Y's digital consumption behavior and supports the development of more effective, trust-based social media marketing strategies in the retail fashion industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Generation Y

The transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 has fundamentally altered the relationship between brands and consumers, shifting power from firm-controlled messaging to interactive, user-driven communication. Social Media Marketing (SMM) has consequently evolved from a supplementary promotional tool into a central strategic mechanism for brand building, particularly within the fashion retail sector (Duffett, 2017; Hajli, 2019). Unlike traditional media, social media platforms enable real-time interaction, peer influence, and visual storytelling—features that are especially influential for Generation Y (Millennials).

Generation Y consumers are frequently described as "digital natives" who rely heavily on online platforms for information search, social validation, and consumption inspiration (Bilgihan, 2016). Prior studies suggest that Millennials place greater trust in social cues, peer opinions, and community interactions than in firm-generated messages alone (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Within the fashion industry, where symbolic value, identity expression, and trend alignment are critical, SMM plays a decisive role in shaping perceptions and behavioral intentions.

In the Pakistani context, the rapid diffusion of smartphones and social networking platforms has transformed consumer–brand interactions. Apparel brands such as Outfitters have leveraged social media not only to showcase products but also to project a modern, aspirational lifestyle aligned with urban youth culture. However, while SMM visibility is high, consumer commitment remains volatile, indicating the need to examine deeper psychological mechanisms such as brand beliefs that mediate social media effects.

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) refers to positive or negative statements made by consumers about a brand or product that are disseminated via digital platforms (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Unlike traditional advertising, E-WOM is perceived as more credible and trustworthy because it originates from fellow consumers rather than the brand itself (Ismail, 2017). For Generation Y, peer-generated reviews, comments, and social media stories serve as critical "trust signals" during the decision-making process.

Extant literature consistently demonstrates that E-WOM reduces perceived risk, enhances confidence, and positively influences brand evaluations (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). In fashion retail, where product quality and style are difficult to assess prior to purchase, E-WOM plays an especially influential role. Observing peers endorse a brand—through comments on Instagram posts or shared outfit images—directly shapes consumers' cognitive beliefs about brand quality, trendiness, and reliability. In Pakistan, where collectivist cultural norms emphasize social approval, E-WOM is likely to exert an even stronger influence on brand beliefs.

Online Communities

Online brand communities provide interactive spaces where consumers exchange experiences, express opinions, and develop shared meanings around a brand (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). These communities may take the form of Facebook groups, Instagram hashtag networks, or informal comment threads. Research suggests that participation in such communities fosters emotional attachment, trust, and a sense of belonging (Hajli, 2019).

For fashion brands like Outfitters, online communities function as digital "hangout spaces" where consumers collectively negotiate brand meanings and identities. Active participation reinforces beliefs about brand authenticity, social status, and reliability. Scholars argue that repeated interaction within brand communities strengthens internal brand beliefs by transforming the brand from a transactional entity into a social symbol embedded in consumers' daily lives (Bilgihan, 2016). This communal reinforcement is particularly relevant for Generation Y consumers, who value shared experiences and peer alignment.

Online Advertisements

Unlike E-WOM and communities, online advertisements represent brand-controlled communication. On platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, advertisers use advanced targeting algorithms to deliver personalized content based on users' demographics, browsing behavior, and interests (Duffett, 2017). For fashion brands, visually rich advertising is a crucial tool for conveying brand personality, aesthetic appeal, and lifestyle positioning.

Empirical studies show that well-designed online advertisements positively influence brand image and perceived innovativeness (Ismail, 2017). In the fashion sector, high-quality visuals, influencer collaborations, and narrative storytelling enhance the symbolic value of the brand. These cues shape brand beliefs by convincing consumers that the brand aligns with their self-concept and social identity. However, advertising alone is often insufficient to build loyalty unless reinforced by peer validation and community engagement.

The Mediating Role of Brand Beliefs

Brand Beliefs refer to the cognitive associations and evaluations that consumers hold regarding a brand's attributes, value, and credibility (Keller, 2013). Consumer behavior literature suggests that marketing stimuli rarely lead directly to purchase or loyalty; instead, they first influence internal cognitive structures that guide decision-making (Yadav & Rahman, 2018).

Within the proposed model, brand beliefs act as a critical mediating mechanism linking social media marketing activities to behavioral outcomes. E-WOM, online communities, and advertisements shape consumers' mental schemas by reinforcing beliefs that a brand is fashionable, trustworthy, or socially approved. Once these beliefs are established, they serve as the psychological foundation for purchase intention and long-term loyalty. This mediating perspective offers a more nuanced understanding of how SMM influences consumer behavior, particularly in digitally saturated markets.

Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty

Purchase intention reflects a consumer's likelihood of buying from a brand in the future and is widely recognized as a strong predictor of actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Prior research demonstrates that favorable brand beliefs significantly enhance perceived value and reduce hesitation, thereby increasing purchase intention (Bilgihan, 2016).

Brand loyalty, however, represents a deeper and more enduring outcome. It reflects a consumer's commitment to repeatedly purchase and advocate for a brand despite competing alternatives (Keller, 2013). In Pakistan's highly competitive fashion market, loyalty is difficult to achieve due to price sensitivity and frequent trend shifts. Nonetheless, literature suggests that consistent reinforcement of positive brand beliefs through social media interactions can gradually transform transactional buyers into loyal brand advocates.

Synthesis and the Pakistani Context

Although global research on social media marketing is extensive, limited empirical work has examined these relationships within the Pakistani fashion industry. Pakistan represents a unique context characterized by rapid digital adoption alongside strong cultural norms emphasizing authenticity and peer influence. Outfitters, as a pioneer of western-wear fashion in Pakistan, occupies a distinctive market position that makes it an ideal case for examining Generation Y's digital consumption behavior.

Existing studies suggest that for Pakistani Millennials, the authenticity and relevance of social media interactions are more influential than posting frequency alone. By empirically testing the mediating role of brand beliefs, this study addresses a critical gap in the literature and provides context-specific insights into how social media marketing transforms internal consumer perceptions into sustainable purchase intention and brand loyalty.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Direct Impact of Social Media Marketing on Brand Beliefs

Social media marketing provides multiple interactive touchpoints through which consumers form cognitive evaluations of brands. Among these, Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) is considered highly influential because it originates from fellow consumers rather than firms, enhancing credibility and trust. Prior studies demonstrate that E-WOM significantly reduces perceived risk and strengthens consumers' beliefs about brand quality, reliability, and trend relevance, particularly among Generation Y consumers who rely heavily on peer validation in digital environments (Ismail, 2017; Yadav & Rahman, 2018).

Similarly, Online Communities enable consumers to interact, share experiences, and co-create brand meanings. Participation in brand-related communities fosters psychological attachment and reinforces favorable beliefs by embedding the brand within a shared social identity. Research suggests that such communal engagement strengthens perceptions of authenticity and social value, especially in fashion contexts where identity expression is central (Hajli, 2019; Bilgihan, 2016).

In contrast, Online Advertisements represent firm-controlled communication. Digital advertisements particularly those using rich visuals and personalized targeting—play a critical role in shaping brand image and perceived innovativeness. Empirical evidence indicates that aesthetically appealing and relevant online ads positively influence consumers' cognitive brand evaluations (Duffett, 2017; Keller, 2013).

- ***H1:*** *Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) has a significant positive impact on Brand Beliefs.*

- ***H2:*** *Participation in Online Communities has a significant positive impact on Brand Beliefs.*
- ***H3:*** *Online Advertisements have a significant positive impact on Brand Beliefs.*

Brand beliefs reflect consumers' internal assessments of brand attributes, value, and credibility. Positive brand beliefs reduce uncertainty and enhance perceived value, leading to stronger **Purchase Intention** (Ajzen, 1991; Bilgihan, 2016). Over time, consistently reinforced beliefs foster emotional attachment and commitment, resulting in **Brand Loyalty** (Keller, 2013).

- ***H4:*** *Brand Beliefs have a significant positive impact on Purchase Intention.*
- ***H5:*** *Brand Beliefs have a significant positive impact on Brand Loyalty.*

Consumer behavior literature suggests that marketing stimuli influence behavior indirectly through internal cognitive mechanisms. Brand beliefs therefore act as a central mediator, transmitting the effects of social media marketing activities to behavioral outcomes (Yadav & Rahman, 2018; Hajli, 2019).

- ***H6:*** *Brand Beliefs significantly mediate the relationship between Social Media Marketing mediums and Purchase Intention.*
- ***H7:*** *Brand Beliefs significantly mediate the relationship between Social Media Marketing mediums and Brand Loyalty.*

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research design with a descriptive and causal-comparative approach to examine the influence of social media marketing stimuli on consumer behavioral outcomes. The proposed research framework investigates the relationships between Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), Online Advertisements, and Online Communities as exogenous variables, Brand Beliefs as a mediating construct, and Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty as endogenous outcomes. Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized relationships among the study variables.

A deductive research strategy was employed to test theoretically grounded relationships within the Pakistani retail fashion context. The research procedure followed four structured stages. First, the conceptual model was developed based on established social media marketing and consumer behavior literature and adapted to the local context of Outfitters, a leading apparel brand in Pakistan. Second, a structured questionnaire was designed to operationalize six latent constructs: E-WOM, Online Communities, Online Advertisements, Brand Beliefs, Purchase Intention, and Brand Loyalty. Third, data were collected through an online survey distributed to the target population. Finally, data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS, employing a two-stage approach: evaluation of the measurement model followed by assessment of the structural model.

The study primarily relies on primary data, collected directly from Generation Y consumers in Pakistan who follow or interact with Outfitters on social media platforms. A total of 100+ usable responses were obtained, meeting the minimum sample size requirements for PLS-SEM analysis. Secondary sources, including academic journals, prior empirical studies, industry reports on Pakistan's digital retail landscape, and publicly available brand information, were used to support the theoretical foundation.

SmartPLS software was selected as the main analytical tool due to its suitability for complex mediation models, predictive research objectives, and relatively small sample sizes without strict normality assumptions.

A non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed to access digitally active Generation Y consumers aged approximately 25–40 years. The questionnaire was administered via Google Forms and distributed through WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook, ensuring alignment between the data collection channels and the social media marketing constructs under investigation. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

PLS-SEM analysis was conducted in two stages. First, the measurement model was assessed to ensure indicator reliability and construct validity using outer loadings, outer weights, and residual analysis. Second, the structural model was evaluated by examining path coefficients, total effects, and specific indirect effects. Mediation analysis was performed to determine whether Brand Beliefs significantly transmit the effects of social media marketing activities to Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty, thereby validating the proposed research framework.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table # 1: *Summary of Variable and Expected Result*

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Expected Relationship
H1	E-WOM	Brand Beliefs	Positive
H2	Online Communities	Brand Beliefs	Positive
H3	Online Advertisement	Brand Beliefs	Positive
H4	Brand Beliefs	Purchase Intention	Positive
H5	Brand Beliefs	Brand Loyalty	Positive

Consolidated Bootstrapping Results Table (Direct & Indirect Effects)

Path Type	Hypothesis / Path	Original Sample (O)	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
Direct Effects	**H1:** EM -> BB	0.196	2.394	**0.017**	**Supported**
	H2: OC -> BB	0.464	5.297	**0.000**	**Supported**
	H3: OA -> BB	-0.035	0.588	0.556	**Rejected**
	H4: BB -> PI	0.359	3.257	**0.001**	**Supported**
	H5: BB -> BL	0.446	4.874	**0.000**	**Supported**
Indirect Effects	**H6a:** OC -> BB -> PI	0.166	2.443	**0.015**	**Significant**
(Mediation)	**H6b:** EM -> BB -> PI	0.070	1.646	0.100	Not Sig.
	H6c: OA -> BB -> PI	-0.013	0.559	0.576	Not Sig.

	H7a: OC -> BB -> BL	0.207	3.166	**0.002**	**Significant**
	H7b: EM -> BB -> BL	0.087	1.880	0.060	Not Sig.
	H7c: OA -> BB -> BL	-0.016	0.569	0.569	Not Sig.

The bootstrapping analysis provides robust empirical evidence regarding the direct and indirect relationships proposed in the research framework. Overall, the results demonstrate that Brand Beliefs (BB) play a central explanatory role in translating selected social media marketing activities into consumer behavioral outcomes.

The results show that Electronic Word of Mouth (EM) has a significant positive effect on Brand Beliefs ($\beta = 0.196$, $t = 2.394$, $p = 0.017$), supporting H1. This finding indicates that peer-generated content such as reviews, comments, and recommendations enhances Generation Y consumers' cognitive evaluations of the Outfitters brand.

Similarly, Online Communities (OC) exhibit a strong and highly significant positive impact on Brand Beliefs ($\beta = 0.464$, $t = 5.297$, $p < 0.001$), providing strong support for H2. This suggests that interactive community participation plays a dominant role in shaping trust, credibility, and perceived brand value.

In contrast, Online Advertisement (OA) does not significantly influence Brand Beliefs ($\beta = -0.035$, $t = 0.588$, $p = 0.556$), leading to the rejection of H3. This implies that firm-controlled advertising messages alone are insufficient to shape positive brand beliefs among Pakistani Generation Y consumers, particularly when compared to peer-driven and community-based interactions.

With respect to behavioral outcomes, Brand Beliefs significantly predict both Purchase Intention (PI) ($\beta = 0.359$, $t = 3.257$, $p = 0.001$) and Brand Loyalty (BL) ($\beta = 0.446$, $t = 4.874$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H4 and H5. These findings confirm that favorable cognitive perceptions of the brand directly translate into both short-term buying intentions and long-term relational commitment.

The mediation analysis further clarifies the role of Brand Beliefs as a transmission mechanism. The indirect effect of Online Communities on Purchase Intention via Brand Beliefs is significant ($\beta = 0.166$, $t = 2.443$, $p = 0.015$), supporting H6a, while the corresponding indirect effect on Brand Loyalty is also significant ($\beta = 0.207$, $t = 3.166$, $p = 0.002$), supporting H7a. These results confirm partial mediation, highlighting that online communities influence consumer outcomes primarily by shaping internal brand beliefs.

However, the indirect paths involving Electronic Word of Mouth (H6b, H7b) and Online Advertisement **(**H6c, H7c) are not statistically significant. This indicates that while E-WOM has a direct effect on Brand Beliefs, its indirect influence on behavioral outcomes is comparatively weaker, and online advertising fails to exert meaningful indirect effects altogether.

All indicators demonstrated strong reliability, with outer loadings exceeding 0.70 and significant p-values. Online Communities emerged as the dominant predictor of Brand Beliefs, followed by E-WOM, while Online Advertisements were insignificant. Brand Beliefs strongly influenced Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty, mediating only community-driven effects.

Consolidated Structural Model Results

Table 2

This table summarizes the relationships between constructs (BB, BL, PI, EM, OA, and OC).

Path (Relationship)	Direct Effect (Path Coeff.)	Total Indirect Effect	Total Effect
BB -> BL	0.446	-	0.446
BB -> PI	0.359	-	0.359
EM -> BB	0.196	-	0.196
EM -> BL	-	0.087	0.087
EM -> PI	-	0.070	0.070
OA -> BB	-0.035	-	-0.035
OA -> BL	-	-0.016	-0.016
OA -> PI	-	-0.013	-0.013
OC -> BB	0.464	-	0.464
OC -> BL	-	0.207	0.207
OC -> PI	-	0.166	0.166

Measurement Model: Outer Loadings

These values represent the reliability of your indicators (items) in measuring their respective constructs.

Construct	Indicator	Loading
BB	BB3, BB4	0.718, 0.886
BL	BL1, BL4	0.809, 0.883
EM	EM3, EM4	0.812, 0.915
OA	OA4	1.000
OC	OC1, OC4	0.751, 0.788
PI	PI4	1.000

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The empirical results of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of how social media marketing activities influence consumer behavior in the Pakistani fashion retail context, with specific reference to Outfitters. By employing PLS-SEM, the study confirms that the effectiveness of social media marketing is not uniform across platforms or tactics; instead, it is contingent upon the extent to which these activities shape consumers' internal brand beliefs, which subsequently drive behavioral outcomes.

Key Empirical Insights

The results indicate that Online Communities (OC) are the most influential social media marketing mechanism in shaping Brand Beliefs (BB), with a strong and statistically significant path coefficient ($\beta = 0.464$, $p < 0.001$). This finding underscores the importance of interactive and community-based digital environments, where consumers engage in shared discussions, peer validation, and collective meaning-

making. Consistent with prior research, such environments foster trust, authenticity, and emotional attachment, which are particularly salient for Generation Y consumers (Hajli, 2019; Bilgihan, 2016).

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) also exerts a significant positive impact on Brand Beliefs ($\beta = 0.196$, $p = 0.017$), confirming the role of peer-generated content in reducing perceived risk and enhancing credibility. Millennials tend to rely on reviews, comments, and shared experiences when forming brand evaluations, especially in fashion markets where symbolic value and trend relevance are critical (Ismail, 2017; Yadav & Rahman, 2018).

In contrast, Online Advertisements (OA) demonstrate a weak and non-significant relationship with Brand Beliefs ($\beta = -0.035$, $p = 0.556$). This finding suggests the presence of an "advertising fatigue" or trust deficit toward paid promotions among Pakistani Generation Y consumers. The result aligns with emerging evidence that digitally savvy consumers increasingly ignore or discount firm-controlled advertising in favor of peer-endorsed and community-driven content (Duffett, 2017).

Role of Brand Beliefs in Driving Consumer Outcomes

The structural model further reveals that Brand Beliefs are a powerful predictor of both Purchase Intention (PI) **(**$\beta = 0.359$, $p = 0.001$) and Brand Loyalty (BL**)** ($\beta = 0.446$, $p < 0.001$). These findings validate established consumer behavior theories, which posit that cognitive evaluations of brand attributes, value, and reliability serve as the foundation for both short-term purchasing decisions and long-term relational commitment (Keller, 2013; Ajzen, 1991).

The mediation analysis provides additional explanatory depth. Brand Beliefs significantly mediate the relationship between Online Communities and both Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty, with the strongest indirect effect observed for the path OC → BB → BL ($\beta = 0.207$, $p = 0.002$). This indicates that community participation influences consumer behavior primarily by reshaping internal perceptions of the brand rather than through direct persuasion alone. While E-WOM contributes to Brand Beliefs directly, its indirect effects on behavioral outcomes are comparatively weaker, and Online Advertisements fail to demonstrate meaningful indirect influence altogether.

Measurement Quality and Model Robustness

The reliability and validity of the measurement model are well established. All outer loadings exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.718 to 1.000, confirming strong indicator reliability and internal consistency (Hair et al., 2023). These results support the robustness of the structural findings and enhance confidence in the proposed mediation framework.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that, for Outfitters Pakistan, peer-driven interaction and community engagement are substantially more effective than traditional paid advertising in shaping consumer perceptions and behavior. Brand Beliefs emerge as the central psychological mechanism through which social media marketing translates into Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty. The findings highlight a strategic shift from broadcast-style digital advertising toward relationship-oriented, community-based engagement models tailored to Generation Y consumers.

From a managerial perspective, fashion retailers should prioritize community building and user-generated content initiatives, reallocating budgets from conventional online advertisements toward interactive

platforms that encourage dialogue and shared identity. Marketing messages should focus on reinforcing cognitive brand attributes—such as quality, trend leadership, and authenticity—rather than relying solely on price promotions.

From a theoretical standpoint, the study reinforces the importance of Brand Beliefs as a mediating construct in social media marketing research. Future studies should validate this framework across different platforms (e.g., TikTok vs. Instagram), expand the demographic scope to include Generation Z, and employ longitudinal designs to examine how brand beliefs evolve over time. Incorporating additional mediators such as Brand Trust or Perceived Risk may further enrich understanding of digital consumer behavior in emerging markets.

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