



The Impact of Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing and Online Convenience on Consumer Buying Decision Process in Fashion Apparel Industry of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

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In today's digital age, social media marketing, content marketing, and the ease of online platforms all significantly impact customer buying decisions, particularly in the fashion apparel business. This study examines how these digital marketing methods influence customer buying behavior, emphasizing the role of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) as a mediating factor. Social media marketing influences the consumer buying decision process, fosters peer recommendations, enhance credibility through online reviews and allows marketers to connect with their targeted audience. Traditional buying habits have changed as a result of online convenience, which includes accessibility, usability, and time-saving features. A survey of 237 respondents via Google Forms revealed a strong connection between these digital marketing techniques and consumer buying preferences, with eWOM acting as a key mediator. Overall, this study highlights the increasing importance of digital marketing in influencing customer choices and behaviors and provides practical suggestions for fashion Pakistani brands on how to make the most of social media, engaging content, and seamless online shopping experiences to attract and keep customers in today's competitive market.

Introduction

In today's digital age, social media, content marketing, and online convenience have become indispensable, altering how customers discover, assess, and purchase things. Traditional marketing

is being replaced by a digital marketing approach in the current day. In Pakistan, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and e-commerce websites have made purchasing more convenient and efficient where internet access and smartphone use are fast increasing.

Digital marketing relies on various digital channels to efficiently conduct the required marketing activities, including social media, email, and other digital channels (Aasia Bibi, 2024). Recent trends reveal that more than 50% of Pakistani customers make purchasing decisions based on digital marketing content, ads, online reviews and recommendations (eWOM). With the emergence of new technologies and increasing usage of the internet, customers are getting information from the internet and hence the word Electronic Word of Mouth has come to light (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Daraz or newly introduced Temu in Pakistan and different brand websites are famous because of their convenience, variety, and time-saving benefits, especially for clothing. This growing reliance on digital platforms like social media, content marketing and e-commerce websites demonstrates their significant impact on consumer behaviour and modern purchase habits.

Social media has become the most important medium of marketing in the 21st century. The vast human interaction has increased extraordinarily with the emergence of social media and websites in modern times (Balakrishnan, Dahnil & Wong Jiunn Yi, 2014). Digital marketing can be broadly divided into two, content marketing and e-commerce. Content marketing is a marketing method that focuses on creating content to be disseminated and amplified in online media for promotion. Meanwhile, e-commerce focuses on how the buying and selling process or transactions are carried out on online media (Huang & Benyoucef, 2017). According to (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004) e-WOM is “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company which is made available to a multitude of the people and institutes via the Internet”. Word of mouth plays an important role in influencing people and also their buying behavior. (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006) suggests that word of mouth has a greater and more influential role in consumers' purchase intentions.

The growing preference for online shopping has further accelerated the shift toward digital platforms. The ability to browse, compare, and purchase products from the comfort of one's home has transformed traditional shopping patterns. According to (Ahmad et al., 2015) the fashion industry has widely used social media networking websites and other online platforms to connect to their customers. E-commerce platforms such as brands' online websites have gained popularity because of many factors like their convenience and ease of use, and secure payment methods. This convenience is very helpful for people with busy schedules and who have very high professional demands.

Additionally, (Salem and Salem, 2021) further highlighted that digital marketing offers increased opportunities for individuals to personalize the marketing message for consumers in the apparel industry. With the help of advanced data analytics and sufficient information, apparel brands can customize their communication with precise segments, emphasizing an increase in conversion and engagement levels.

Digital marketing platforms are gaining popularity, and they have a big influence on consumer purchasing decisions, particularly in the fashion business. This study will close the gap by examining how social media marketing, content marketing, and online convenience affect consumers' purchasing decisions while eWOM acts as a mediator. People rely heavily on electronic word-of-mouth to tell them what to believe, what to buy, and which websites are

reliable. As per the study of (Mahmud et al, 2020), eWOM has been witnessed to be a significant influencing factor when taking customers' purchasing intentions into account.

Literature Review

In today's world, everything is going digital. (Todor, 2016) revealed that digital marketing is an innovative approach with well-understood dynamics and distinctive characteristics, not traditional marketing driven by digital variables that it is possible to choose marketing strategies and approaches that work (Farooq, et al., 2021). According to a 2019 business news poll by Manifest, 90% of small businesses use both traditional and digital marketing techniques. 58% of small businesses utilize digital marketing. The six digital marketing channels that firms most commonly invest in include social media (73%), email marketing (57%), video (34%), content marketing (32%), and websites (73%). The tools that regulate every aspect of digital marketing are digital data and media like email, the web, and wireless media (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). The following research was examined to explore the relationship between social media marketing, content marketing and online convenience with consumer buying decisions.

Social Media Marketing

Over recent years, social media has grown to gain recognition as a pronounced and paramount marketing factor guiding the success of a product/service/business (Hawkins and Vel, 2013). SMM started to gain population in the early 2000s because of platforms like Facebook, then Instagram and Twitter. According to (Pentina and Koh, 2012), SMM triggers viral communications amongst consumers across online communities, brand and fan pages, and promotion-related content generated by companies/organizations on popular networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and many others. Social media marketing evolves around creating and sharing engaging content which includes posts, videos, reels and advertisements that create brand awareness and loyalty which also helps in connecting with a target audience and driving sales. (WebFX, 2021) reports that 93% of marketers globally utilize social media for business, while (Fatima, Khan, & Kousar, 2024; Statista, 2019) reports that 37.9% of survey participants claimed they have purchased after viewing a social media advertisement.

SMM also promotes direct customer engagement, includes influencer partnerships, and enables real-time interactions to enhance relationships. Tools such as Facebook Ads and Instagram Shopping help businesses reach targeted audiences, track campaign performance, and offer smooth shopping experiences, making SMM an essential element in today's competitive digital landscape. (Jara et al, 2014) define SMM as a new-generation marketing tool encouraging higher attention and participation from consumers through the use of social networks.

Accordingly, (Ananda, A. S., Hernández-García, Á. and Lamberti, L., 2016) the literature review on SMM and strategy provides hints of further development in this area. At the foremost, there is still a need for formalization and classification of industrial SMM strategies. In particular, empirical research needs to explore how firms develop their SMM strategy and the implications of SMM strategy on the firm's marketing activities.

Content Marketing

Content marketing is the most effective marketing tool in this era (Laudon and Laudon, 2019). It is a strategy approach that focuses on developing and distributing valuable, relevant, and authentic content to engage their target audience. This includes blogs, videos, infographics, social media

posts, and other sorts of material that inform, entertain, or meet the audience's demands. The key purpose of content marketing as identified by (Pulizzi, 2012):

- Customer perspective reinforcement;
- Sales and lead generation;
- Consumer Engagement;
- Brand awareness;
- Customer upsells

Enthusiastic Followers, fans and subscribers

People's attention and engagement can be observed through their social media profiles, where they like and share content. Content marketing refers to an invitation from businesses or marketers to undertake consumers at the right time during their buying decision process, it includes generating, allocating, sharing, and approaching content, all of that is to create an urge for consumers to purchase products or services (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016).

The optimal opportunity to regain your customers lies in creating compelling content that effectively communicates your brand's message to them. It facilitates engagement and connection with your target audience while enabling you to assess their satisfaction and conviction regarding your brand. Content that is disseminated through social media can trigger consumer engagement (Lee et.al, 2018). It establishes a distinction from your competitors, ensuring that your audience consistently chooses your offerings rather than those of your rivals. According to (Liu & Huang, 2015), content marketing is considered as a pull marketing strategy rather than pushing where it creates content that can add more value to what a consumer is searching (Firdos, Khan, & Atta, 2024).

Online Convenience

Post-Covid-19 epidemic in Pakistan, consumer shopping habits underwent a major transformation. The epidemic era was critical; individuals were isolated and had no options other than online buying. Over time, individuals become increasingly comfortable with online purchasing, prompting businesses to enhance the shopping experience for their consumers.

In recent years, online convenience has benefited several individuals in procuring groceries, medications, culinary products, and apparel. The brands swiftly transitioned to websites to enhance client convenience. As (Shaqman et al., 2022) mentioned, More and more consumers are turning to Internet shopping for its convenience since they have less time to devote to shopping and more time to pursue other interests. Over time, individuals recognized that online retailers offer greater advantages than physical ones, eliminating travel time, the need to navigate around stores, and the inconvenience of waiting in line to purchase items. They recognized that everything was as simple as a touch on their smartphones. People focus on efficiently completing the shopping experience and obtaining the product with minimum effort (Kaltcheva and Weitz, 2006). People are more drawn towards internet convenience since everyday living is getting difficult and their professional responsibilities are also rising. Retailers increase the value of their market offer, by saving customers time and energy through convenience improvement (Seiders et al., 2000). Web-based shopping removes many geographic barriers between customers and merchants, allowing new distant merchant-customer relationships to emerge (Sylke, Belanger & Comunale, 2004).

Online convenience is great for some but not a choice for many as well. If online buying is easy, there are also few restrictions (Azhar, 2024). You cannot touch and feel the merchandise; you cannot rely just on the hope that the chosen genuine product will arrive. Trust is an important factor in determining whether an individual chooses to, or not to, acquire goods or services via the Web (Quelch & Klein, 1996; Nawaz, et al., 2024).

Effective relationship management is crucial for fostering trust and awareness among customers. A few stages of consumer buying were highlighted by, (Jiang et al., 2013); access, search, evaluation, transaction, and possession/post-purchase convenience. In Pakistan, many brands do not offer post-purchase convenience; when incorrect items are sent, they do not support returns but instead mandate exchanges (Azhar, 2024). This process can be inconvenient for the consumer, requiring a visit to the physical store for product exchanges, especially if the desired item is out of stock, which may lead to additional expenses, particularly for more expensive alternatives (Yasmeen, Khan, & Imran, 2024). This procedure may be disorganized and presents a risk of customer loss. Consumers are more likely to engage in impulsive online purchases if they can easily avail the abundance of service convenience in terms of search, evaluation, transaction, relationship, possession, and post-possession convenience (Lina et al., 2022).

Electronic word-of-mouth (Ewom)

Through Web-based consumer opinion platforms (e.g., epinions.com), the Internet enables customers to share their opinions on, and experiences with, goods and services with a multitude of other consumers; that is, to engage in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication (Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K.P., Walsh, G., Gremler, D.D., 2004). The substantial growth in online social networks has vastly expanded the potential impact of (e-WOM) on consumer purchasing decisions (P. Duarte et al, 2018). A positive Wom is “the act of doing something for others without anticipating any reward in return” and a negative Ewom is “to prevent others from experiencing the problems they had encountered” (Sundaram, Mitra, & Webster, 1998).

Ewom refers to a form of communication that persuades the listener to either purchase or refrain from purchasing a particular object. Electronic word of mouth manifests in several forms and platforms, including comments on Facebook and Instagram, online and in-person reviews, suggestions, news groups, and others. Applying the work of (Engel et al., 1993, p. 158), eWOM communication on Web-based opinion platforms may be initiated because of a desire to help other consumers with their buying decisions, to save others from negative experiences, or both. EWOM has a critical role in consumer preferences and behavioural intentions (Pedersen et al., 2014; Severi et al., 2014; Torlak et al., 2014). Electronic word of mouth has a significant effect on purchasing decisions (Prasad et al., 2017).

Consumer involvement in brand-related eWOM is reflected by three sets of behaviours: Opinion Seeking (OP), Opinion Giving (OG) and Opinion Passing (OP) (Fynn et al., 1996). Many individuals just visit websites comment sections or Facebook pages to learn about other people's reviews, how they find that particular brand's products, how the quality, quantity, or if we discuss apparel then how is the fabric? (Yuliantoro et al., 2019) Reviews given by consumers based on their personal experiences after using them will be more trusted by other consumers and encourage them to make purchasing decisions. Lastly, (Nur Aisyah & Hapzi Ali, 2023), (Dian Firmansyah & Ali, 2024), (Saputra & Ali, 2024), are some researchers who found that Ewom has a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

Consumer Buying Decision Process

The buying decision is a complex process comprising several stages, including need recognition, information search, appraisal of alternatives, purchase choice, and post-purchase evaluation. When purchasing online, a buyer considers numerous factors, including what to buy and where to get it. If a buyer is brand-loyal and possesses awareness, then all is well; nevertheless, for a new customer, electronic word-of-mouth is the most critical aspect that might influence their purchasing decision (Nawaz, et al., 2024; Afzal, et al., 2019).

Every digital marketing form (e.g., Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing) or online shopping convenience affects consumer buying decisions in the modern era since after COVID- 19 everything is going digital and people are now mostly depending on online platforms rather than physically going anywhere. Brand preference refers to the inclination of consumers to choose a particular brand over its competitors when making purchasing decisions (Sjahrudin Dan Adif, 2024). Businesses aim to understand and influence this decision-making process by employing effective marketing strategies, providing relevant information, building brand trust, and creating positive customer experiences (Zhou et al., 2022). Usually, social media channels help to increase awareness even before the sales season starts so that consumers might know about their sales and visit their businesses right away. Companies should start their marketing campaigns under these online platforms and social media sites since customer impressions and moulding of buying decisions depend mostly on them.

Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing & Online Convenience- Fashion Apparel Industry of Pakistan

Social Media Marketing and Fashion Apparel

Social networking is quickly taking over the fashion industry and has shown to be a great way for customers to get information before making purchases. Nobody in the modern world doesn't utilize social media, and the fashion retail sector has rapidly expanded on platforms like Facebook pages and Instagram accounts. Every stylish clothing brand in Pakistan is active on social media, including Saya, Khadi, Gul Ahmed, and Ethnc with millions of followers.

Targeting their particular demographic and building a link between companies and consumers, social media may be seen as a quite strong weapon for businesses. Researching the value of social media, (Miller, Fabian, and Lin, 2009) concluded that it resides in the interactions between customers and society. Where companies can build a bridge, buyers can get assistance from reviews and recommendations on pages and handles about whether they should trust the brand or not.

Content Marketing and Fashion Apparel

The term "content marketing" first appeared in 1996 during a conversation for journalists at the American Society of Newspaper Editors (Dudhela, M., & Chaurasiya, H., 2020). Content can either captivate a customer or drive him away from the website or whatever he is reading. Firms in the fashion business are also adopting content marketing as a marketing approach. Content marketing requires consistency, such as regular blog entries or thorough captions that show sufficient expertise, which generates customer engagement.

Website content should be very appropriate and describe the product very clearly, (Hautz et al., 2014) stated, the websites must show the correct and appropriate material since clients will be able to compare information that was conveyed to them through diverse media. In the fashion industry, specifications are crucial, encompassing accurate size charts, fabric details, the specific size worn

by models in product images, and engaging content regarding the product's stitching, embroidery, and appeal in the respective season of launch.

Online Convenience and Fashion Apparel

Online shopping is a growing phenomenon around the world but the inclination towards online shopping in Pakistani culture is still in its nascent phase (Sajjad et al., 2012). The ease of online shopping is crucial. A beloved brand lacking an e-commerce website risks losing customer value. In recent years, following the COVID-19 pandemic, fashion brands have transitioned online, and this shift has been well-received by consumers. A dress from your favourite brand is easily accessible online, exemplifying the convenience of digital shopping.

Every aspect has its advantages and disadvantages, and online convenience is no exception. Customers frequently encounter issues such as receiving the wrong item, problems with the fabric, and sizes that do not fit. Despite the convenience of online clothing shopping, a persistent problem exists. Customers frequently struggle to correctly select their clothing size (Choon Keat, L. O. W., PHOON, G. C., & NG, Y. P., 2024). This study examines the impact of online convenience on the consumer buying decision process.

Research Model and Hypothesis

This study examines the relationship between Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing and Online convenience and the Consumer Buying Decision Process. Additionally, this study also highlights, how Electronic word of mouth acts as a mediator between all three (Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing and Online convenience) and Consumer Buying Decision process.

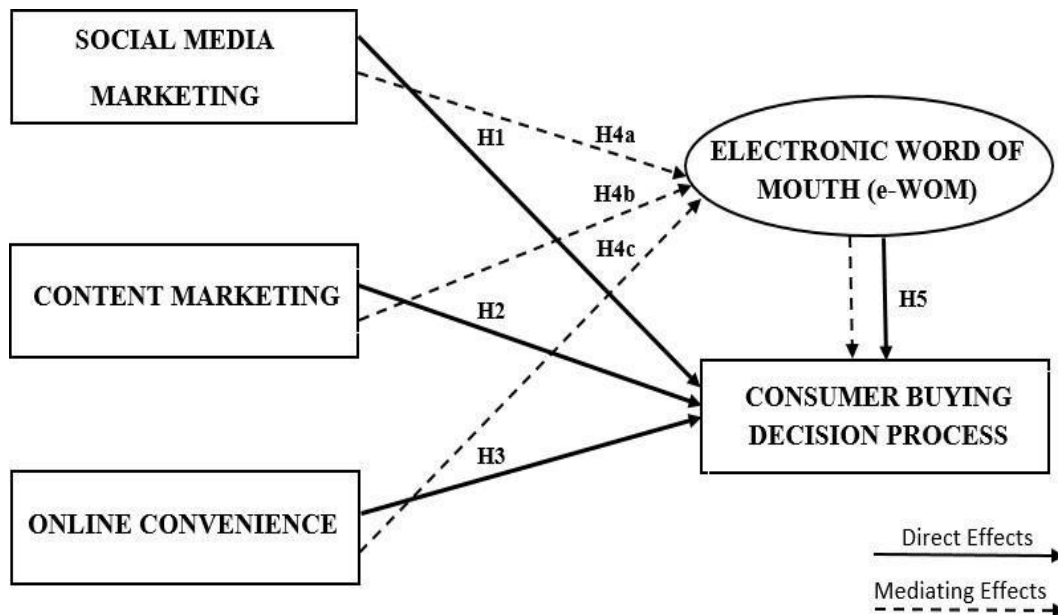


Figure 1 Proposed Research Model

Impact of Social Media Marketing

Social media, then, has a significant impact on how marketers design their strategic approach, how they deliver brand information, and how they scale advertising to enhance consumer engagement (Varghese, S., & Agrawal, M., 2021). With the increase in the use of social media, companies are now considering its value in shaping consumer perception, increasing brand value and influencing the buyer's decision (Palalic, Ramo, et al., 2021).

A good brand image on Social media platforms often leads to buying decisions. According to (Vinerean, Cetina, and Tichindelean, 2013), the internet consumer market is expanding globally, leading to cross-cultural segmentation Brands like Khadi, Ethnic, and Sapphire offer limited- time discounts on their items, incentivizing customers to make online purchases. The increasing popularity of e-commerce, augmented by social media advertisements, has become online purchasing all- embracing. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed to evaluate its effectiveness:

H1: Social Media Marketing has a positive impact on the Consumer Buying Decision Process.

Impact of Content Marketing

Online consumer behaviour in the context of content marketing refers to how consumers respond to digital brand content (Weiger et al., 2019). It could thus be argued that content marketing's interest in online consumer behaviour is therefore anchored in how consumers react to digital brand content which builds relationships, loyalty, and trust that leads to making a purchase decision (du Plessis, C, 2022). Lifestyle and styling blogs by GulAhmed are regularly published on their website like "The Ultimate Guide to the 11.11 Sale on Ideas by Gul Ahmed: Get Ready for Unbeatable Discounts!" or "Winter Collection Trends" on their website". The content not only creates awareness among customers but also builds a good brand image that leads shift in organic traffic on their websites. Therefore, the following hypotheses regarding the impact of content marketing are proposed:

H2: Content Marketing has a positive impact on the Consumer Buying Decision Process in the Fashion Apparel Industry of Pakistan.

Impact of Online Convenience

The term online shopping refers to the act of purchasing through an online store at one's convenience in the comfort of one's chosen location (Jusoh & Ling, 2012). A blog from Images, 2020 defines "Bonanza Satrangi has introduced Augmented Reality (AR) and a set of innovative features on their website. The clothing brand made this shift to acquire better technical support, eliminate downtime and introduce some interactive shopping features that empower the customer. One of the many innovative features the platform now offers is that customers can virtually try on products before placing orders." This is the power of online convenience.

Furthermore, online shopping allows the option of making brand comparisons based on the information available in one click. This helps in intelligent decision-making. (Brown, Pope, and Voges, 2003). Every potential carries inherent hazards; Pakistan is already significantly delayed in its entry into e-commerce, which presents numerous associated concerns. (Bashir. et al., 2015) stated, that the absence of a convenient payment system like PayPal in Pakistan, which ensures full security is also a major cause of reluctance to shop online. The following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Online Convenience has a positive impact on the Consumer Buying Decision Process in the Fashion Apparel Industry of Pakistan.

Mediating Effect of Electronic Word of mouth (Ewom)

The term electronic word of mouth refers to favorable or unfavorable online messages/posts about goods or services created or communicated by consumers and made accessible to a large number of people utilizing the internet ((Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004), This word has greatly facilitated consumer experience, eliminating the necessity for physical presence in stores and inquiries to sales staff; the thoughts and shared content of others is enough for comprehensive understanding. To gather and obtain information on goods or services sold by businesses that will have an impact on consumers' purchasing decisions, consumers can use e-WOM as a personal communication tool (Hendro & Keni, 2020). Following are the proposed hypothesis

H4(a-c): Electronic word of mouth acts as a mediator factor between:

H4a: Electronic word of mouth has a mediating role between Social media marketing and consumer buying decisions in the fashion apparel industry of Pakistan.

H4b: Electronic word of mouth has a mediating role between Content marketing and consumer buying decisions in the fashion apparel industry of Pakistan.

H4c: Electronic word of mouth has a mediating role between online convenience and consumer buying decisions in the fashion apparel industry of Pakistan.

H5: Electronic word of mouth has a positive impact on the consumer buying decision process.

Methodology

This study employed a survey-based approach to test its hypotheses and validate the proposed theoretical model. A structured questionnaire was designed in two sections: the first collected demographic information (gender and age), while the second assessed the influence of social media marketing, content marketing, and online convenience on consumer behavior in the fashion apparel industry using a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire included 16 items across five dimensions: social media marketing (4 items), content marketing (3 items), online convenience (3 items), consumer buying decisions (3 items), and electronic word-of-mouth (4 items). The survey was validated by marketing experts and academics, followed by a pilot test with 30 respondents to ensure clarity and relevance. It was conducted online, targeting individuals aged 16–25 actively engaging with fashion apparel brands in Pakistan. After eliminating incomplete responses, 228 valid submissions were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a method chosen for its suitability in explaining and predicting relationships within the proposed hypotheses.

Results

Profile of respondents

Table 1 shows the profile of respondents who are interested in buying online form fashion apparel brands and have a negative or positive impact of social media, content writing and online convenience on their buying decisions. A total of 237 responses were collected for this study.

Table 1:

Gender	Frequency	%age
Male	115	51.5%
Female	122	48.5%
Age	Frequency	%age
16-25	125	52.74%
26-35	86	36.28%
36-45	20	8.44%
46-55	6	2.54%

Measurement model

The goal of measuring fit in the measurement model is to study the reliability and validity of the instrument and to check its reliability and validity we perform tests of discriminant validity using smart PLS.

Internal reliability consistency was examined using coefficients like Cronbach's alpha (Usually, the first criterion which is checked is internal consistency reliability. The traditional criterion for internal consistency is Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951), which provides an estimate for reliability based on the indicator intercorrelations), composite reliability and RhoA coefficient. Convergent validity was assessed through Outer loading of observed variables and average variance extracted (AVE). The best range of Cronbach alpha coefficient, AVE, RhoA and Composite Reliability are given below.

Cronbach alpha coefficient

Range = 0-1

Poor reliability = < 0.6 Acceptable Reliability = $0.7 - 0.8$

Good/Excellent Reliability = $> 0.8 / 0.9$ (Excellent)

Average Variance Extract

Range = 0-1

Threshold = ≥ 0.5 (Constructs explains 50% of the variance in its items) Threshold = ≤ 0.5 (Re-examine indicators or model)

RhoA

Range = 0-1

Thresholds = ≥ 0.7 (Acceptable) Thresholds = ≤ 0.7 (Poor reliability)

Composite Reliability

Range = 0-1

Thresholds = ≥ 0.7 (Acceptable)

Thresholds = > 0.9 (points to redundancy among items/ too high)

Thresholds = ≤ 0.7 (Poor reliability)

The Discriminant Validity (DV) of the SEM, is understood as an indicator that the constructs or latent variables are independent from one another (HAIR et al., 2014). Cross loadings coefficient, Fornell-Larker criteria, and Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of Correlations (HTMT) are three indexes used to evaluate the discriminant validity of the scale (J. F. Hair et al., 2017). The discriminant validity is ensured thanks to the HTMT value (Table 4) less than 0.9 (Henseler et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the scale reached the discriminant value after running Bootstrap 5,000 times. Bootstrapping treats the observed sample as if it represents the population. The procedure creates a large, pre-specified number of bootstrap samples (e.g., 5,000). Each bootstrap sample should have

the same number of cases as the original sample. Bootstrap samples are created by randomly drawing cases with replacements from the original sample.

Table 2: Scale accuracy analyses

Research Construct	Items	Outer Loadings	A	C.R	Rho A	Ave
Social Media Marketing	SMM1: I recommend others about my favorite social media commerce Platform	0.738	0.735	0.766	0.847	0.649
	SMM2: I am proud to tell others about my purchase on my favourite social media commerce site	0.830				
	SMM3: I recommend others to purchase product on social media commerce site	0.844				
Content marketing	CM1. I attracted by the content in the product description	0.852	0.741	0.768	0.851	0.656
	CM2. I noticed the content in the product description	0.810				
	CM3. I like the content in the product description	0.764				
Online convenience	OC1. I can get information easily that lead to buying decision	0.786	0.738	0.746	0.851	0.597
	OC2 I can shop anytime I want	0.713				
	OC3. It is very fast to complete my buying decision process	0.781				
Electronic word of mouth	EWOM1. A comment or update about a product/brand on eWOM forms has an influence on how I	0.846	0.768	0.797	0.850	0.587

	consider that product.					
	EWOM2. I am likely to change my opinion about a product/brand, after viewing a positive or negative comment about that product on eWOM forum	0.728				
	EWOM3. Given a choice between two products, one recommended on eWOM forums and the other not, I would always choose to buy the recommended product.	0.717				
	EWOM4. eWOM forms are important sources of information for me.	0.768				
Consumer buying decision process	CBDP1. I enjoy my buying decision process through online shopping	0.817	0.747	0.761	0.824	0.611
	CBDP2. I have strong desire of buying decision for internet marketing over traditional marketing	0.822				
	CBDP3. Digital marketing affects me on my buying decision process	0.710				

Discriminant Validity-HTMT & Fornell Larcker Assessment

Table 3: Fornell Larcker

Research constructs	Social Media Marketing	Electronic word of mouth	Consumer Buying Decision Process	Content Marketing	Online Convenience
1. Social Media Marketing	0.753				
2. Electronic word of mouth	0.388	0.749			
3. Consumer Buying Decision Process	0.533	0.478	0.775		
4. Content Marketing	0.414	0.250	0.415	0.755	
5. Online Convenience	0.455	0.362	0.517	0.430	0.722

Table 3 explains the Fornell Larcker criterion of this study. The square root of AVEs is compared with their latent constructs. All the values are in the range of 0.7, which is quite significant and greater than all other variables/constructs.

Table 4: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Research Construct	Social Media Marketing	Electronic word of mouth	Consumer Buying Decision Process	Content Marketing	Online Convenience
1. Social Media Marketing					
2. Electronic word of mouth	0.461				
3. Consumer Buying Decision Process	0.707	0.644			
4. Content Marketing	0.533	0.304	0.570		
5. Online Convenience	0.615	0.473	0.739	0.584	

Table 4 explains the Discriminant value according to HTMT criterion, all the values are between 0.4 – 0.7 that means those are not close to 0.1 and less than 0.9. This table supports discriminant validity between constructs and can be accepted.

Structural model

Direct impact

R-square (Coefficient of Determination) was used to measure the predictive strength of the independent variables. The predictive levels of the variables Consumer buying Decision process and Electronic word of mouth are both considered moderate (R^2 CBDP = 0.427), and the predictive level of the variable Electronic word of mouth is considered moderate (R^2 EWOM = 0.521). The following are the examined relationships of this study.

Table 5: Hypotheses testing results

Examined Relationships	Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Supported hypothesis
H1: Social Media → Consumer Buying Decision Process	0.292	4.812	0.000	Support
H2: Content Marketing → Consumer Buying Decision Process	0.141	2.590	0.010	Support
H3: Online Convenience → Consumer Buying Decision Process	0.227	3.492	0.000	
H4a: Social Media → Electronic Word of Mouth	0.275	3.912	0.000	Support
H4b: Content Marketing → Electronic Word of Mouth	0.004	0.058	0.954	Reject

H4c: Online Convenience → Electronic Word of Mouth	0.210	2.609	0.009	Support
H5: Electronic Word of Mouth → Consumer Buying Decision Process	0.258	4.145	0.000	Support

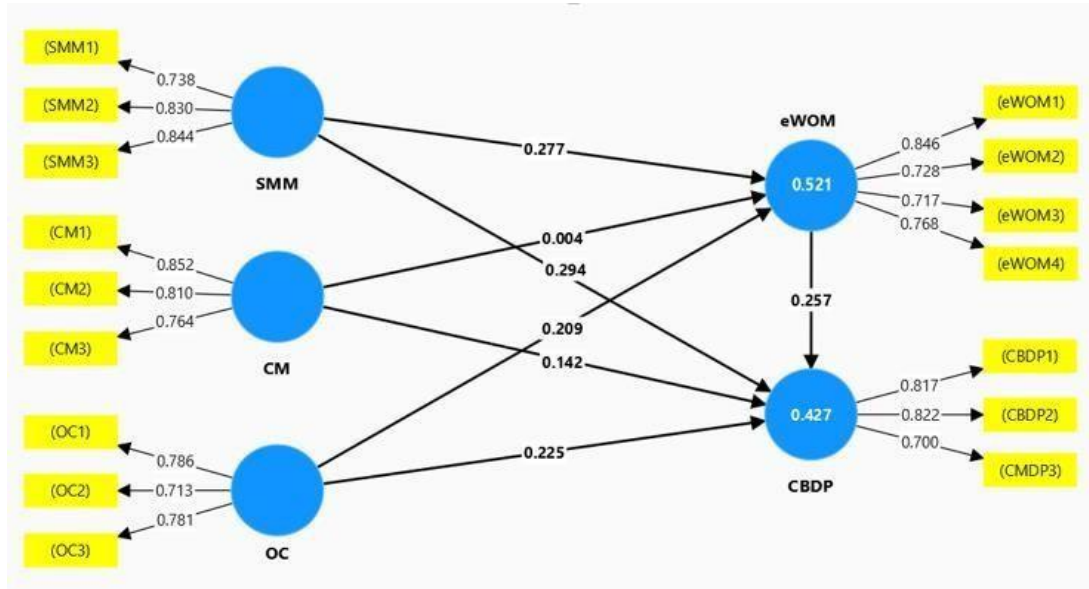


Figure 2: PLS-SEM analysis results of the theoretical model

The statistical significance of the regression coefficients was tested through the Bootstrap procedure 5,000 times. Table 5 illustrates that relationships that have a confidence level of more than 95% are H1, H2, H3, H4a, H4a, H4c and H5. The remaining relationship (H4b) is not statistically significant at the 95% confidence level

Mediating effects

A mediator is a variable that, conceptually and statistically, accounts for the relation between a predictor and a criterion variable Q (Baron & Kenny, 1986, p. 1176). One of the objectives of this study is to examine the mediating role of Electronic word of mouth between the relationship of Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing, Online Convenience and Consumer Decision Processes.

Table 6: Mediating Effects

Examined Relationships	Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Supported hypothesis
Content Marketing → Electronic Word of Mouth → Consumer Buying Decision Process	0.001	0.057	0.954	Reject H4b
Online Convenience → Electronic Word of Mouth → Consumer Buying Decision Process	0.054	2.383	0.017	Support H4c

Social Media Marketing→ Electronic Word of Mouth → Consumer Buying Decision Process	0.071	2.723	0.006	Support H4a
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Table 6 demonstrates the results as Electronic word of mouth is the mediating variable between the relationship between Social Media Marketing, Content marketing, online convenience and the consumer buying decision process.

Discussion

Interpretation of Results

This study was conducted to evaluate the impact of digital marketing strategies (Social media marketing, content marketing), online convenience on Electronic Word of mouth and consumer buying decision process. This study attempted to evaluate the results based on a cross-sectional sample of 228 people with an interest in buying from fashion apparel brands. In today's world, firms are adopting digital marketing strategies and every brand has its e-commerce website. A total of seven hypotheses are tested in this study, four of them have direct effects which include H1, H2, H3, and H5.

Social media marketing, content marketing and online convenience have a positive impact on the consumer buying decision process. That means all the direct relationships are supported. People have a positive impact on Social Media marketing, content marketing and online convenience because companies use formulas that are customized to each person's tastes. Marketing becomes more engaging and relevant to consumers. Second, content marketing that provides personal testimonials, informative blogs, and e-commerce sites that are always available so customers can get their goods delivered to their door makes things easier. Online offers, discounts, and reviews simplify decision-making.

On the other hand, electronic word of mouth is an important part of this study. H4a, H4b, and H4c are the last three hypotheses. EWOM acts as a mediator for social media marketing and the buying decision process of consumers. H4a is supported by increasing the probability that people will trust their reviews. Positive electronic word-of-mouth boosts consumer trust and confidence by showing that others like a product. Second, H4c is supported. Ewom mediates online purchasing convenience and consumer decision-making. The convenience of online buying saves time. Electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) reduces product risks and increases awareness of online platform convenience and reliability, making purchasing selections easier. It offers numerous advantages. To send a gift, locate an item from a specific clothing brand online, add it to your cart, complete the payment, and provide the recipient's address. A lengthy process was streamlined from your residence.

Last but not least, H4b is rejected, EWOM acts as a mediator for content marketing and the buying decision process of consumers. There are many reasons for this, such as spam and paid ratings. We've all been in situations where we bought something from a clothing brand's winter collection and didn't like it, but an influencer or popular person on the internet telling everyone that it's the best collection ever makes EWOM weaker. After that, there may be things in the content that don't directly affect buying, like not mentioning the quality of the product or not making the specs of the items clear, etc.

Conclusion

This study looks at how social media marketing, content marketing, and online convenience have changed over time and how that has affected people's decisions to buy. The study's goal is to look at the roles of three platforms: social media marketing, content marketing, and online convenience and how the fashion apparel marketing industry in Pakistan can use these platforms to boost sales, with eWOM as a mediating variable.

Recommendations for future Research

The present article acknowledges several limitations that might need to be fixed in further research. This study did a good job of showing how social media marketing, content marketing, and online convenience affect people's decisions to buy, but it has some limitations that should be thought about for future research.

One of the study's first limitations is its geographical strategy, which included assessing a variety of fashion apparel brands in Karachi, Pakistan. The majority of the data was gathered mostly in Karachi only and not globally, indicating that the data was merely generalized. To compare research done at different times and to track changes in the community and member participation, a longitudinal study can be done.

Another limitation lies in the limited number of digital marketing strategies developed (social media marketing, content marketing) and online convenience based on data and expert interviews. The research clearly shows that everything is getting digital these days; additional independent variables can be included as this is also evident. Therefore, it is difficult to make definitive statements about the universal applicability and effectiveness of these strategies across most industries. This, however, represents a potential direction for future research.

Finally, the suggested paradigm took advantage of electronic word of mouth as a mediator. Additional mediators include emotional attachment, brand love, and brand engagement could find a place in future models. A moderator could also be incorporated in line with brand loyalty, platform knowledge, price sensitivity, etc.

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Appendix

Research construct	Items
Social Media Marketing	SMM1: I recommend others about my favorite social media commerce platform
	SMM2: I am proud to tell others about my purchase on my favourite social media commerce site
	SMM3: I recommend others to purchase product on social media commerce site
Content marketing	CM1. I attracted by the content in the product description
	CM2. I noticed the content in the product description
	CM3. I like the content in the product description
Online convenience	OC1. I can get information easily that lead to buying decision
	OC2 I can shop anytime I want
	OC3. It is very fast to complete my buying decision process
Electronic word of mouth	EWOM1. A comment or update about a product/brand on eWOM forms has an influence on how I consider that product.
	EWOM2. I am likely to change my opinion about a product/brand, after viewing a positive or negative comment about that product on eWOM forum
	EWOM3. Given a choice between two products, one recommended on eWOM forums and the other not, I would always choose to buy the recommended product.
	EWOM4. eWOM forms are important sources of information for me.
Consumer buying decision process	CBDP1. I enjoy my buying decision process through online shopping
	CBDP2. I have strong desire of buying decision for internet marketing over traditional marketing
	CBDP3. Digital marketing affects me on my buying decision process