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NEXUS BETWEEN INSTAGRAM MARKETING, CONSUMER RESPONSE AND CUSTOMER BASED BRAND EQUITY: A DEVELOPING COUNTRY PERSPECTIVE

DR. RANA MUHAMMAD SHAHID YAQUB[1], EHTISHAM[2], FAWAD WASEEM[3], MUHAMMAD AQEEL ATIF[4]

ABSTRACT

Consumer response in the digital marketing era has become increasingly important. With the rise of social media and other digital platforms, consumers now have access to more information and options than ever before. Therefore, this study explores Relationship of Instagram Marketing Activities with Consumer Response by building Customer Based Brand Equity. After the measurement of relationship of Instagram marketing activities, CBBE as a mediator with these relationships was also measured. In order to comply with the research objectives, a quantitative research approach was used by using a close-ended questionnaire. The data was collected from 327 respondents by using purposive sampling technique. Furthermore, Data was analyzed by using Smart PLS-SEM Approach. The outcomes of the research revealed that consumer response can be changed by 66.3% by other variables. The results show that the Instagram Marketing revealed significant relationship with Consumer Response. Importantly, Customer Based Brand Equity successfully mediates relationship between Instagram marketing and Customer Response. The current study has proposed several practical implications in consumer behavior domains for the policy makers and Academicians. At the end, the current study has proposed several recommendations for the future research in digital marketing domain.

KEYWORDS: Instagram Marketing Activities, Consumer Response, Customer Based Brand equity

1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer response in the digital marketing era has become a topic of great interest to marketers and businesses alike. With the rise of the internet and social media, consumers now have more access to information and choices than ever before. This has created a need for businesses to engage with their customers in new and innovative ways in order to capture their attention and build relationships. According to a survey by Pew Research Center, 81% of Americans now own a smartphone, and 72% of them use social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. This means that businesses have an opportunity to engage with a large portion of their target audience through social media and other digital channels (Pew Research Center, 2021). One of the key factors influencing consumer response in the digital marketing era is the use of personalized marketing. According to a survey by Epsilon, 80% of consumers are more likely to do business with a company if it offers a personalized experience. This includes personalized emails, product recommendations, and promotions (Epsilon, 2020).

Social media marketing has also become a key strategy for businesses looking to engage with their customers online. According to a report by Hootsuite, 54% of consumers use social media to research products and services before making a purchase. This highlights the importance of having a strong social media presence and engaging with customers through these platforms (Hootsuite, 2021).In addition to social media, influencer marketing has also become a popular tactic for businesses looking to increase consumer response. According to a report by Influencer Marketing Hub, businesses earn an average of $5.20 for every $1 spent on influencer marketing. This shows that partnering with influencers can be an effective way to increase brand awareness and drive sales (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021).

Consumer response in the digital marketing era has become increasingly important. With the rise of social media and other digital platforms, consumers now have access to more information and options than ever before. This has made it more challenging for businesses to stand out and capture consumers' attention. Digital marketing has provided businesses with new opportunities to engage with their customers and create personalized experiences. By leveraging data and analytics,

[1] Corresponding Author, Department of Marketing and International Business, Institute of Business Management and Administrative Sciences (IBMAS), The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan, shahid.yaqub@iub.edu.pk
[2] M.Phil Research Scholar, Department of Marketing and International Business, Institute of Business Management and Administrative Sciences (IBMAS), The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan, its4ehtisham@gmail.com
[3] PhD Research Scholar, Department of Marketing and International Business, Institute of Business Management and Administrative Sciences (IBMAS), The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan, fawad.waseem2010@gmail.com
[4] M.Phil Research Scholar, Department of Marketing and International Business, Institute of Business Management and Administrative Sciences (IBMAS), The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan, aqeelatif143@gmail.com

businesses can better understand their target audience and tailor their marketing efforts to meet their specific needs and preferences. Nowadays the world has become advance and fast, the use of social media is growing up day by day this is the most important platform for users in their everyday life. This is the platform where people can interact with each other and share their thoughts and experiences. The competition between traditional media and social networking sites for customers' attention, engagement, and involvement is intense. (Upadhyay et al., 2022). We are living in the advanced world and we know that almost everyone is connected with social media. As social media becomes more widely adopted, new social and economic consequences are arising. This shift is making traditional methods of obtaining information and making purchases obsolete. Due to its increasing popularity and usefulness, many businesses are utilizing social media for various purposes such as public relations, advertising, customer service, and internal communication. (Weber, 2021). As in the COVID-19 pandemic situation, individuals are utilizing social media more frequently and their interest in it is growing daily. As a result, businesses are also utilizing social media platforms for their marketing and sales efforts.

Currently, Instagram is the most widely used social media platform in Pakistan. Therefore, this study is significant as it assists businesses in understanding how to enhance customer loyalty and brand recognition through effective customer engagement strategies. The current study contributes to the understanding of how companies can increase sales through Instagram marketing efforts and build customer-based brand equity to drive repeat purchases. It is one of the first studies in Pakistan to examine the relationship between Instagram marketing activities and customer response, with the mediating role of customer-based brand equity. Moreover, a significant portion of the research is lack of proper conceptual framework without the support of appropriate underpinning theories. Furthermore, customer-based brand equity has only been examined as a mediating variable in the realm of digital marketing.

The nexus between Instagram marketing and consumer response is an important area of research in the field of digital marketing. Although some studies have been conducted on this topic, there are still some research gaps that need to be addressed. Although many studies have examined the impact of Instagram influencers on consumer behavior, there is still a need for research on the specific factors that influence the effectiveness of influencer marketing on Instagram. Some studies have suggested that the credibility of the influencer and the authenticity of the sponsored content are important factors that affect consumer response (Cho et al., 2019; Khamis et al., 2017). Visual content is a key feature of Instagram marketing, but there is a need for research on how different types of visual content (e.g., photos, videos, Stories) affect consumer response. Some studies have suggested that visual content can enhance brand awareness and engagement, but more research is needed to understand the mechanisms underlying these effects (Jin et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2017). Social media metrics such as likes, comments, and shares are often used to measure the effectiveness of Instagram marketing campaigns, but there is a need for research on how these metrics actually influence consumer response. Some studies have suggested that social media metrics can enhance brand credibility and trust, but more research is needed to understand the relationship between these metrics and consumer behavior (Kim et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2019). Although there is evidence that Instagram marketing can enhance brand awareness and engagement, there is limited research on its impact on customer-based brand equity. Scholars have called for more research on how Instagram marketing influences customers' perceptions of a brand's quality, credibility, and loyalty (Batra & Keller, 2016; Chen, 2018). Most studies on Instagram marketing and customer-based brand equity have been conducted in developed countries, particularly the United States. There is a need for more comparative studies that examine the effects of Instagram marketing on customer-based brand equity in emerging markets (Yang et al., 2020). Influencer marketing has become an integral part of Instagram marketing. However, there is limited research on how influencer marketing affects customer-based brand equity. Scholars have called for more research on the effectiveness of different types of influencers in enhancing customer-based brand equity (Khamis et al., 2017; Hu et al., 2020). User-generated content (UGC) is a key feature of Instagram marketing. However, there is limited research on the impact of UGC on customer-based brand equity. Scholars have called for more research on how UGC influences customers' attitudes and behavior towards brands (Brodie et al., 2013; Alalwan et al., 2017).

There is currently a lack of research specifically examining the impact of Instagram marketing strategies on building customer-based brand equity and eliciting desired consumer responses in Pakistan. Previous studies have only evaluated the relationship between social media marketing and brand equity. (BİLGİN, 2018) Investigated how social media marketing efforts affect brand loyalty, brand perception, and brand awareness in Turkey. His collected data showed the result that implementing social media marketing strategies greatly influenced the perception of the brand in terms of awareness, image, and loyalty. In contrast, another research by (Erdoğmuş & Çiçek, 2012) focused on the geographical region of Egypt and investigated how social media marketing strategies impact brand loyalty through brand trust and brand equity in telecommunication companies. Brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and market behaviors are the five primary elements of customer-based brand equity. Most of the studies analyzed consumer response based on their level of brand choice, brand loyalty, and/or readiness to pay a premium price. Social media activities had a remarkable effect on brand equity and purchasing behavior of luxury fashion brands, Hanif, (2022) found that brand equity had a small mediation effect between social media marketing and customer response in the mobile industry. There are many similar studies exist in the foreign countries but there is no specific study has been done in the Asian region.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. CONSUMER RESPONSE IN DIGITAL MARKETING ERA

Consumer response in the digital marketing era is a complex and dynamic phenomenon that has been the subject of extensive research in recent years. In this literature review, we will examine some of the key findings from recent studies on consumer response in digital marketing, including the factors that influence consumer behavior, the role of social media and mobile technologies, and the implications for marketing strategy. One of the key factors that influence consumer response in digital marketing is trust. Consumers are more likely to engage with brands and make purchases when they perceive the brand to be trustworthy and reliable (Casalo et al., 2018; Verma et al., 2019). Another important factor is perceived value, which refers to the benefits that consumers perceive to be associated with a particular product or service. Consumers are more likely to engage with brands and make purchases when they perceive the value to be high (Chaffey et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2020). Social media and mobile technologies have transformed the way that consumers engage with brands and make purchase decisions. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram provide consumers with access to a wealth of information about products and services, as well as opportunities to engage with brands and other consumers (Hollebeek et al., 2019; Laroche et al., 2019). Mobile technologies such as smartphones and tablets have also played a significant role in shaping consumer behavior, enabling consumers to research products, compare prices, and make purchases from anywhere at any time (Liang et al., 2019; Verhoef et al., 2015).

3. LITERATURE REVIEW AND FORMULATION OF HYPOTHESES

3.1. INSTAGRAM MARKETING ACTIVITIES AND CUSTOMER RESPONSE

Instagram has become one of the most popular social media platforms, with over a billion monthly active users. As a result, businesses have started to use Instagram as a marketing tool to promote their products and services. The purpose of this literature review is to explore the relationship between Instagram marketing activities and consumer response. Several studies have investigated the relationship between Instagram marketing activities and consumer response. According to Alalwan et al. (2018), Instagram marketing activities have a positive impact on consumer engagement. The study found that businesses that use Instagram to market their products and services can increase customer engagement, which can lead to positive word-of-mouth marketing. Similarly, Hadiwidjojo et al. (2019) found that Instagram marketing activities have a significant and positive association with consumer purchase intention. The study found that Instagram marketing activities such as visual appeal, interactivity, and social influence have a significant impact on consumer purchase intention. Another study by Lee and Kim (2018) found that Instagram marketing activities have a significant and positive impact on brand loyalty. The study found that businesses that use Instagram to market their products and services can increase brand loyalty among their customers. In addition, a study by Tang et al. (2020) found that Instagram marketing activities have a significant and positive impact on consumer trust. The study found that businesses that use Instagram to market their products and services can increase consumer trust, which can lead to positive purchase intentions.

In conclusion, the literature suggests that Instagram marketing activities have a significant and positive association with consumer response. Businesses that use Instagram to market their products and services can increase customer engagement, brand loyalty, purchase intention, and consumer trust. Therefore, it is recommended that businesses include Instagram in their marketing strategy to enhance their online presence and increase consumer response.

Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Instagram Marketing Activities has a positive relationship with Consumer Response.

3.2. INSTAGRAM MARKETING AND CUSTOMER BASED BRAND EQUITY

According to Keller's (1993) definition, customer-based brand equity is the value that a brand adds to a product beyond its functional benefits. It is the set of brand associations that a customer has in their memory which influence their response to a brand's marketing activities. Instagram marketing activities refer to the strategies and techniques used by companies to promote their brand and products on Instagram. These include posting images and videos related to the brand, using hashtags to increase visibility, collaborating with influencers, running sponsored ads, and creating user-generated content campaigns.

A number of studies have found a positive relationship between Instagram marketing activities and customer-based brand equity. For example, Kim and Ko (2019) found that Instagram marketing activities positively influence brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty, which are key components of customer-based brand equity. Similarly, Lee et al. (2019) found that Instagram marketing activities have a positive impact on perceived brand quality, brand trust, and brand loyalty. They also found that customer engagement on Instagram is positively related to brand loyalty, which in turn is positively associated with customer-based brand equity. Moreover, Balakrishnan and Khong (2019) examined the relationship between Instagram marketing activities and customer-based brand equity in the context of fashion e-commerce. They found that Instagram marketing activities, such as using hashtags and collaborating with influencers, have a positive impact on brand loyalty and customer-based brand equity.

Overall, the literature suggests that Instagram marketing activities have a significant positive association with customer-based brand equity. Companies that invest in Instagram marketing activities are likely to see an improvement in brand

awareness, brand image, brand quality, brand trust, and brand loyalty. By building customer-based brand equity, companies can differentiate themselves from competitors, create brand value, and achieve long-term success in the marketplace. Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Instagram Marketing Activates Have a Positive relationship with Customer Based Brand Equity

3.3. CUSTOMER BASED BRAND EQUITY AND CUSTOMER RESPONSE

Customer-based brand equity (CBBE) is a critical aspect of brand management, and it involves the perception of customers towards a brand. The term CBBE refers to the value and strength of a brand that a customer holds in his or her mind. The strength of CBBE can have a significant positive association with consumer response, which includes customer loyalty, purchase intention, and positive word-of-mouth. A study by Yoo and Donthu (2001) examined the impact of CBBE on consumer response in the automobile industry. The results indicated that CBBE had a significant positive effect on customer loyalty and purchase intention. The authors concluded that a strong brand equity could lead to increased loyalty and purchase behavior among customers.

Another study by Chen, Hung, and Wang (2015) explored the relationship between CBBE and customer behavior in the context of smartphone brands. The study found that CBBE had a positive impact on purchase intention, customer loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth. The authors suggested that companies should focus on building strong brand equity to increase customer loyalty and purchase behavior. In a study by Zhang, Chen, and Chen (2016), the authors examined the relationship between CBBE and customer response in the hotel industry. The results showed that CBBE had a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth. The authors suggested that hotel managers should focus on building strong brand equity to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

A study by Huang, Chuang, and Chen (2019) explored the impact of CBBE on customer behavior in the context of e-commerce platforms. The study found that CBBE had a positive effect on customer trust, satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention. The authors concluded that e-commerce companies should focus on building strong brand equity to increase customer loyalty and purchase behavior.

Finally, a study by Rajagopal (2015) examined the relationship between CBBE and customer behavior in the context of fast-food restaurants. The study found that CBBE had a significant positive impact on customer loyalty, purchase intention, and positive word-of-mouth. The author suggested that fast-food restaurants should focus on building strong brand equity to increase customer loyalty and purchase behavior.

In conclusion, the studies reviewed in this literature review show that there is a significant positive association between CBBE and consumer response. The studies suggest that building strong brand equity can lead to increased customer loyalty, purchase intention, and positive word-of-mouth. Companies should focus on building strong brand equity to increase customer loyalty and purchase behavior, regardless of the industry they operate in.

H3: Customer based brand equity has significant positive association with consumer response

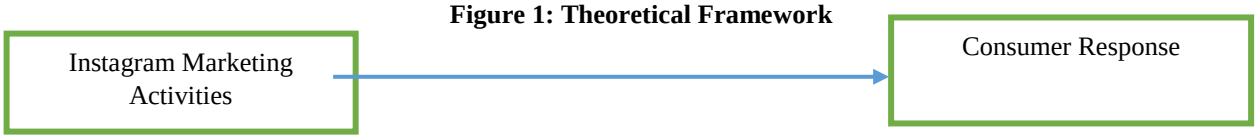
3.4. MEDIATING ROLE OF CUSTOMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY

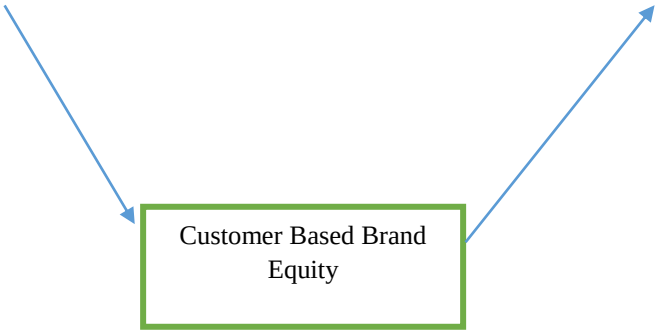
Customer-based brand equity refers to the value that a brand has in the minds of its customers. This value can be measured by factors such as brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. A study by Ma, et al. (2018) found that customer-based brand equity positively influences consumer loyalty. Customer-based brand equity can mediate the relationship between Instagram marketing activities and consumer response. A study by Khan, et al. (2020) found that customer-based brand equity mediates the relationship between Instagram marketing activities and consumer purchase intentions. Similarly, a study by Iqbal, et al. (2020) found that customer-based brand equity mediates the relationship between Instagram marketing activities and brand loyalty.

In conclusion, Instagram marketing activities can positively influence consumer response, and customer-based brand equity can mediate this relationship. Brands should focus on developing their customer-based brand equity to increase consumer loyalty and purchase intentions. Future research could examine the specific Instagram marketing activities that are most effective in building customer-based brand equity and influencing consumer response.

H4: Customer Based Brand Equity mediates the relationship between Instagram Marketing Activities and Consumer Response

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework





4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study, three variables were analyzed: Consumer Response as the dependent variable, Instagram Marketing Activities as the independent variable, and Customer-Based Brand Equity as the mediator. The sample size was determined based on the population, and a quantitative approach was used to determine the relationships among the variables. The study had an explanatory purpose, and non-disclosure behavior could have affected the response rate and the accuracy of the data obtained. Comery and Lee (1992) provided guidelines for determining the appropriate sample size for a population, and 300 participants were selected for this study. Convenience sampling, a type of non-probability sampling, was used to collect data from members of the target population who were easily accessible. The study population consisted of social media users and online shoppers in Pakistan. The study utilized validated scales from previous research. The data was collected through a close-ended questionnaire that used a five-point Likert scale.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the study, a convergent validity test was conducted using the PLS algorithm, and the Cronbach's alpha values for all variables were above the 0.70 threshold. The factor loading values for each measurement were also above the minimum required threshold of 0.60, and both the CR and AVE thresholds were met, indicating that the study's results are reliable and valid.

5. FINDINGS

5.1. CONVERGENT VALIDITY

The present study utilizes "PLS-SEM" for data analysis, employing three techniques, namely PLS-Algorithm, PLS-Bootstrapping, and PLS-Blindfolding, to confirm the theory, validate the measurement tool, test the hypotheses, and assess the predictive relevance of the research framework. Before examining convergent validity, the authors scrutinize the loadings and cross-loadings of all the constructs of the variables to address the issues that serve as a preliminary requirement of the measurement model. According to Hair Jr, Sarstedt et al. (2014), convergent validity is achieved when the factor loadings of all items are greater than 0.5, and none of the items' loadings from other constructs are higher than the ones intended to measure. As shown in the table below, all loadings exceed the 0.5 threshold, indicating composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs.

5.2. DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY - FORNELL AND LARCKER CRITERION

Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Hair Jr, Sarstedt et al. (2014) recommend that AVE values should be at least 0.50, while the Composite Reliability value should be at least 0.70. As the table below illustrates, all variables demonstrate high reliability, with AVE exceeding the threshold value of 0.50, indicating the measurement model's reliability. The value of Cronbach's Alpha is calculated to assess the data's internal consistency. Additionally, George and Mallery (2003) suggest that a value of alpha > 0.9 is excellent, alpha < 0.8 is good, and alpha < 0.7 is acceptable. However, the findings' results indicate that the Cronbach's Alpha value for all indicators is approximately 0.8, indicating good consistency for the variables (see table below).

Therefore, the study's findings demonstrate that the measurement model exhibits good internal consistency and reliability, and the variables have satisfactory convergent validity.

Table 1: Factor Loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, CR and AVE

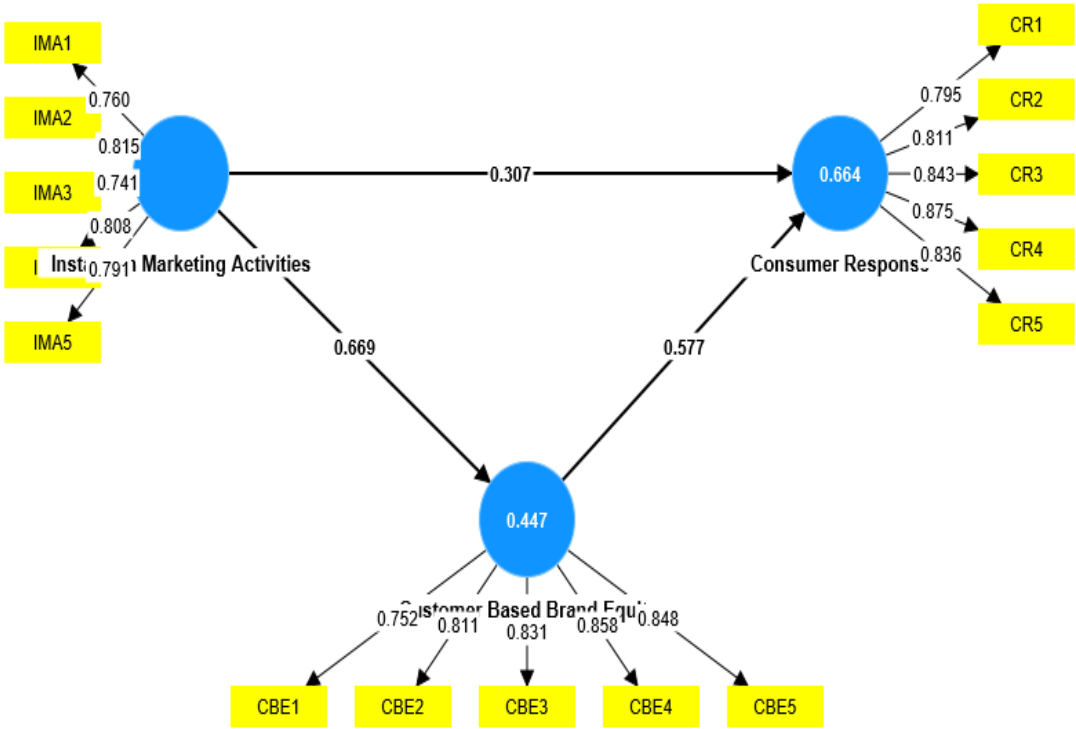
Variables	Items	Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Customer Based Brand Equity	CBE1	0.752	0.878	0.912	0.674
	CBE2	0.811			
	CBE3	0.831			
	CBE4	0.858			
	CBE5	0.848			
Consumer Response	CR1	0.795	0.889	0.919	0.693
	CR2	0.811			
	CR3	0.843			
	CR4	0.875			
	CR5	0.836			
Instagram Marketing Activities	IMA1	0.760	0.842	0.888	0.614
	IMA2	0.815			
	IMA3	0.741			
	IMA4	0.808			
	IMA5	0.791			

Table 2: Discriminant Validity - Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Consumer Response	Customer Based Brand Equity	Instagram Marketing Activities
Consumer Response	*0.832*		
Customer Based Brand Equity	0.782	*0.821*	
Instagram Marketing Activities	0.693	0.669	*0.784*

Bold Values are the R2 of AVE, so that's why Discriminant Validity is Exist.

Figure 1: PLS Algorithm Measurement Model



5.3. DIRECT EFFECT AND HYPOTHESES TESTING

While using Smart-PLS, the "structure model" provides an "analysis of the inner model" of the direct linkages among the determinants of the research, including "t-values and path coefficients" (Henseler, Ringle et al., 2009). According to these authors, "The path coefficients are similar to regression analysis and standardized beta coefficient. Wherever the beta values are the coefficients of regression and t-values are analyzed to decide the significance level of the constructs".

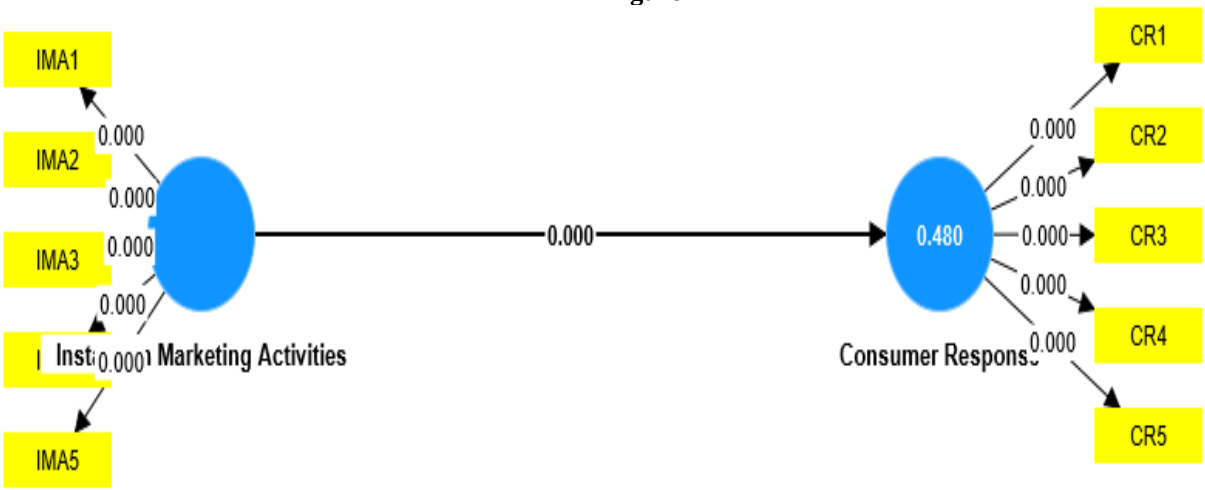
Furthermore, the "Bootstrapping Method" was performed using the "rule of thumb" proposed by Hair Jr, Sarstedt et al. (2014), with 500 sampling iterations for 300 cases/observations, to determine the beta-values of the regression coefficients. For the t-values, it is necessary that they are approximately equal to 1.64 for the acceptance of a hypothesis. If the t-value is below the 1.64 threshold value, then the hypothesis or relation is considered insignificant. Table 4.3 displays the "P-values & T-values" used to determine the acceptance or rejection of hypotheses (Henseler, Ringle et al., 2009).

Table 3: Direct Relationship

Path	Beta Coefficient	Standard deviation	T Value	P values	Decision
IMA -> CR	0.693	0.031	22.025	0.000	Supported
CBE -> CR	0.576	0.052	10.888	0.000	Supported
IMA -> CBE	0.668	0.036	18.213	0.000	Supported

The results of the direct hypotheses are summarized in Table 4. It was found that H1, which stated that IMA has a significant impact on CR i.e., ($\beta = 0.693$, $t = 22.025$, $p = 0.000$), was supported. H2, which stated that CBE has a significant impact on CR i.e., ($\beta = 0.576$, $t = 10.888$, $p = 0.000$), was also supported. Similarly, H3, which stated that IMA has a significant impact on CBE i.e., ($\beta = 0.668$, $t = 18.213$, $p = 0.000$), was supported as well.

Figure 2



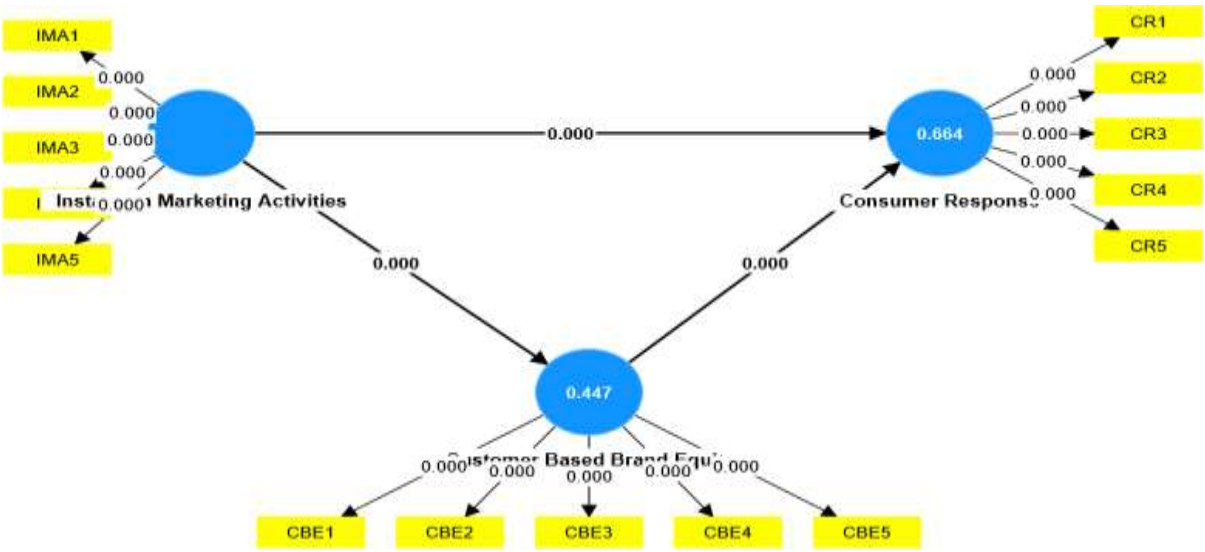
5.4. MEDIATING ANALYSIS

PLS-SEM method was used for the mediation test, which is widely used for mediation and moderation tests in PLS research (Nick Bontis, 2007; Chin, 2010; Joseph F. Hair., 2013; Hayes, 2017). A single-step approach was used to evaluate the indirect effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable through mediation using the PLS approach (Xinshu Zhao, 2010). The results of the mediating impact of customer-based brand equity on the relationship between Instagram marketing activities and consumer response are shown in Table 5. According to the results in Table 5, hypothesis H2, which predicted the mediating role of customer-based brand equity in the relationship between Instagram marketing activities and consumer response, is supported (S.D = 0.043, $t = 8.95$, $p = 0.000$)

Table 4 : Mediating Analysis Results

	Beta Coefficient	Standard deviation	T Values	P values	**Decision**
IMA -> CBE -> CR	0.386	0.043	8.950	0.000	Supported

Figure 3



5.5. QUALITY CRITERIA

For the purpose of testing and checking the quality criteria, the PLS algorithm was executed which produced an R-square value. This value shows how much a criterion variable is affected by the latent variables or how much change is brought about in the dependent variable (DV) by the independent variable (IV). The R-square value indicates that the DV is influenced by the IV by 66.2%, while the mediator is influenced by the IV by 44.6%. Table 4.5 displays the values of the path coefficients.

Table 5: Quality Criteria – R Square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Consumer Response	0.664	0.662
Customer Based Brand Equity	0.447	0.446

Its mean, DV is 66.2% influenced by IV & Mediator is 44.6% Influenced by IV

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to analyze the effect of Instagram marketing activities on consumer response by building customer-based brand equity in the fashion/clothing industry in Southern Punjab, Pakistan. The research proposes a direct relationship between Instagram marketing activities and two variables, namely consumer response (CR) and customer-based brand equity (CBBE). The study tests three hypotheses related to the precursors of Instagram marketing activities: H1 proposes a direct relationship between IMA and CR, H2 suggests a positive relationship between IMA and CBBE, H3 proposes a positive relationship between CBBE and CR, and H4 suggests that CBBE mediates the relationship between IMA and CR. The first hypothesis Instagram Marketing Activities has a positive influence on Consumer Response which is represented by H1. This study forecast that H1 is supported.H1 in the current study is found to significantly relate to Instagram Marketing Activities and Consumer Response. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have found a positive relationship between social media marketing activities and consumer response. For instance, a study by Sernovitz (2013) found that social media marketing activities, including those on Instagram, can increase consumer engagement and lead to increased sales. Similarly, a study by Taiminen and Karjaluoto (2015) found that social media marketing activities can positively influence consumer attitudes and behavior. In terms of the specific relationship between Instagram marketing activities and consumer response, a study by Chen et al. (2017) found that Instagram marketing activities can positively impact consumers' attitudes toward a brand, leading to increased purchase intention. This supports the findings of the current study, which found a positive relationship between IMA and CR. Additionally, the current study found that Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) mediates the relationship between IMA and CR. This is consistent with previous research that has found that brand equity can play a mediating role in the relationship between marketing activities and consumer response (e.g., Keller, 1993).

Overall, the results of this study add to the growing body of literature that supports the effectiveness of social media marketing activities, particularly on Instagram, in influencing consumer response in the fashion/clothing industry.

The second hypothesis of Instagram Marketing Activities has a positive relationship with Customer Based Brand Equity which is represented by H2. This study reveals that H2 is supported. There is a growing body of literature that supports a significant relationship between Instagram marketing activities and customer-based brand equity (CBBE). For instance, Alalwan et al. (2017) found that Instagram can significantly contribute to building brand equity, as it enables companies to engage with customers, create brand awareness, and enhance customer loyalty. Similarly, Kim and Ko (2012) argued that social media, including Instagram, can enhance brand equity by creating a positive image of the brand, building trust, and increasing customer loyalty. Moreover, research has shown that Instagram marketing activities such as posting product photos, running promotions, and engaging with customers through comments and direct messages can positively influence customer perceptions of brand quality, brand loyalty, and brand awareness (Chu et al., 2017; Laroche et al., 2013). This, in turn, can lead to improved customer-based brand equity. In a recent study conducted by Hussain et al. (2021) on Pakistani fashion brands, Instagram marketing activities were found to have a significant positive relationship with customer-based brand equity. The authors argued that fashion brands can use Instagram to showcase their products, interact with customers, and create a unique brand identity, which can enhance their customer-based brand equity.

Overall, the literature suggests that Instagram marketing activities can significantly contribute to building customer-based brand equity. Companies can leverage Instagram to engage with customers, increase brand awareness, and enhance customer loyalty, leading to a positive impact on brand equity.

By H3, the third hypothesis of Customer Based Brand Equity has a positive significance on Consumer Response. According to this study, this hypothesis is supported. The data does support hypothesis H3, which argues that a strong connection exists between Instagram Marketing Activities and Consumer Response. Several studies have established a significant relationship between customer-based brand equity (CBBE) and customer response. For instance, Aaker (1991) argues that CBBE plays a critical role in influencing consumer behavior and creating customer loyalty. Similarly, Keller (1993) suggests that a strong brand with high CBBE can lead to customer loyalty and positive attitudes towards the brand. Moreover, several empirical studies have found a positive relationship between CBBE and customer response. For instance, a study by Hsu and Tsai (2018) found that CBBE significantly influences customer satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention in the hotel industry. Similarly, Kim and Kim (2019) found that CBBE has a significant positive impact on customer loyalty in the mobile phone industry. Another study by Yoo and Donthu (2001) found that CBBE has a significant impact on customer response in terms of purchase intention and willingness to pay a premium price. Similarly, a study by Mishra and Chandrashekaran (2016) found that CBBE has a positive effect on customer loyalty and willingness to recommend a brand to others.

Overall, these studies suggest that there is a significant relationship between CBBE and customer response, indicating the importance of developing and maintaining strong brand equity to achieve positive consumer behavior and outcomes.

The fourth hypothesis, denoted by H4 was formed to test the relationship between Instagram Marketing Activities & Consumer Response in which Customer Based Brand Equity mediates the relationship. Current results proved the hypothesis statement to be true. Several studies have suggested that customer-based brand equity plays a significant mediating role between Instagram marketing activities and customer response. For instance, a study conducted by Kheng, Jaafar, and Saad (2021) on the fashion industry of Malaysia revealed that customer-based brand equity mediated the relationship between Instagram marketing activities and customer response. Their findings showed that the relationship between Instagram marketing activities and customer response was strengthened through the mediating role of customer-based brand equity. Similarly, another study by Alam, Kim, and Kim (2020) on the impact of Instagram marketing activities on customer response in the hospitality industry found that customer-based brand equity mediated the relationship between Instagram marketing activities and customer response. Their results showed that Instagram marketing activities positively influenced customer-based brand equity, which in turn, increased customer response. Moreover, a study conducted by Azam, Ahmed, and Ahmad (2021) on the Pakistani fashion industry revealed that customer-based brand equity fully mediated the relationship between Instagram marketing activities and customer response. They found that Instagram marketing activities positively influenced customer-based brand equity, which ultimately led to an increase in customer response.

Overall, these studies suggest that customer-based brand equity plays a significant mediating role between Instagram marketing activities and customer response. The positive relationship between Instagram marketing activities and customer response is strengthened when customer-based brand equity is taken into consideration as a mediator.

6.1. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the current study have significant theoretical and practical implications. This study evaluated the relationship between various precursors of Instagram Marketing Activities and analyzed their mediating role in the industry sector. This is the first study of its kind in the industry sector in southern Punjab, and it analyzed a variety of variables such as Instagram Marketing Activities, Customer Response, and Customer Based Brand Equity. The results of this study indicate that Consumer Response is the main determinant of Instagram Marketing Activities in the clothing sector, and the study has contributed to the existing literature on Consumer Response in the clothing sector by integrating the S.O framework. The practical implications of this study are also noteworthy for clothing department practitioners who offer

services to customers. The study shows that Instagram Marketing Activities have a positive relationship with Consumer Response, indicating that clothing departments need to improve their services to customers. However, the most relevant relationship in our study is the mediation model between Instagram Marketing Activities, Customer Based Brand Equity, and Consumer Response. This model reveals that Instagram Marketing Activities have the most impact on Consumer Response when Customer Based Brand Equity is mediated. This supports the view that employees are critical to the success of a service-related business.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights for practitioners and academics regarding the role of Instagram Marketing Activities, Customer Based Brand Equity, and Consumer Response in the clothing industry in southern Punjab. By analyzing the mediating role of Customer Based Brand Equity, this study has contributed to the existing literature on the subject and has practical implications for clothing department practitioners who aim to improve their services to customers

6.2. IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the current study show several theoretical and practical implications. Evaluating the relationship between different precursors of Instagram Marketing Activities through analysis of mediating in the industry sector. It is the first study of its kind on the industry sector in southern Punjab. In this research, a variety of variables such as Instagram Marketing Activities and Consumer Response are analyzed. In addition, Customer Based Brand Equity is examined as a mediating factor in this study. The results of this study show that Consumer Response is the main determinant of Instagram Marketing Activities in the industry sector. Additionally, the new research has contributed to the existing literature on the Consumer Response clothing sector by integrating the S.O Results of the current study reveal some practical implications. The study is useful to practitioners, especially for clotting departments offering services to customer. According to the current study of Instagram Marketing Activities is positively related to Consumer Response. So, the clothing department needs to improve its services for customer. However, the relationship between Instagram Marketing Activities and Consumer Response that arises when Customer Based Brand Equity is mediated may be of most relevance in our study. This mediation model reveals that Instagram Marketing Activities affects Customer Based Brand Equity has the most impact on Consumer Response, supporting the view that employee is critical to the success of a service-related business.

6.3. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The study examines Consumer Response within the clothing sector in Punjab, Pakistan. A detailed roadmap has been produced. The present study examined two variables and one mediating effect on Consumer Response. In this study, we engage esoterically with clothing customers in Punjab, Pakistan. As the current study limitations are concerned there was not sufficient budget and time to conduct the study because it was steered at the student level. This study was only limited to the Punjab. The local industry is targeted for data collection with a limited sample size, a vast industry may be included for further exploration of this area. This research has certain limitations. One limitation is that customer happiness is measured using a single indication as an outcome variable. Although most academics advocate for the use of several indicators to boost the measure's dependability, some service researchers have discovered that adding more items adds very little to the information acquired from the original. The study was conducted only in Punjab in Pakistan. Its results may not apply to all consumers in Pakistan. The research is limited to Punjab, Pakistan, due to budget and time constraints, with a sample size of 328 respondents. Future researchers can also combine these two variables to get a more comprehensive analysis of Consumer Response and Instagram Marketing Activities. Researchers can use the variable Consumer Response as a more focused variable to improve future research. Because these three characteristics can vary over time, the study's external validity is limited by its cross-sectional methodology. Future research should take a longitudinal approach.

The previous literature in Pakistan, did not examine Effect of Instagram Marketing Activities on Consumer Response by building Customer Based Brand Equity in the Clothing Industry. Studying those factors that affect Consumer Response is the primary objective of the current study. A study of 328 functional responses found that Consumer Response and Instagram Marketing Activities have positively impacted Customer Based Brand Equity both directly and indirectly. However, Instagram Marketing Activities does have a highly significant impact Consumer Response. In this study, Customer Based Brand Equity has played a mediating role in these variables. However, Customer Based Brand Equity did affect these variables. Based on the SOR model. The acronym S.O.R. means "Stimulus, Organism, and Response." From a psychological perspective, a stimulus is an inciting event with an accompanying message. An individual is meant by the word "organism." In addition to it, it refers to the effects, reactions, responses, and solutions. For this theory to hold, the recipient's needs, both material and non-material, must have been met by the statement sent to them. The targeted materials include things like clothing sector, brands, practitioners (service providers), and the government can utilize the findings from this study to improve customer service-related Consumer Response in the clothing sector.

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