UNVEILING THE DYNAMICS: EXPLORING THE STIMULUS-ORGANISM-RESPONSE (SOR) MODEL IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER MARKETING, ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH, AND PURCHASE DECISIONS, WITH A FOCUS ON THE MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND AWARENESS

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, which were originally designed to only provide users with a means of sharing and consuming content, have emerged as major channels for marketing products and services. The exceptional growth of online users in Pakistan makes social media advertising prevalent in the country. In addition to that, the use of electronic word of mouth and social media influencers has become one of the most recent forms of advertising in response to this shift. The goal of this research was to determine if and how brand awareness influences the effectiveness of social media influencer marketing, the spread of positive product reviews online, and ultimately, customer purchases. This study used the SOR Model to analyze how social media influencer marketing, brand awareness, electronic word of mouth, and consumer decisions are related. Quantitative methods were used since they were thought to be the most effective way to complete the study. In addition, 385 responses from those who utilize social media were gathered for this analysis. Using a convenience sampling technique, online questionnaires were used to collect data. Furthermore, data were analyzed through SPSS V- 21 for statistical analysis and Smart PLS-SEM for modeling and hypothesis testing. Considering the study's objectives, the measuring model, structural model, and mediation analysis were evaluated for validity. A significant finding of the study was that brand awareness, electronic word of mouth, and social media influencer marketing were associated with consumer purchase decisions. Additionally, the current study has filled a literature gap by identifying potential opportunities for further research on this topic in the context of online marketing and e-commerce in Pakistan.

KEYWORDS: social media influencer marketing, electronic word of mouth, brand awareness, purchase decisions, social media marketing

1. INTRODUCTION

The sudden shift in competition and its impact on organizational outcomes have propelled consumer purchase decisions into a focal point of research, particularly within the eCommerce industry (Yangkluna et al., 2022; Ye et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2021). The surging popularity of digital channels has prompted companies to adopt social media marketing strategies as a primary avenue for engaging consumers. Despite its innovative nature, this emerging brand communication channel presents both challenges and opportunities (Febrianti et al., 2022; Geyser, 2022; Naranjo-Zolotov et al., 2021). Through the utilization of social media marketing, businesses can establish their brand presence online and offer continuous customer support, comprehensive product descriptions, as well as exclusive discounts (Purnamawati et al., 2022; Raharja & Dewakanya, 2020). Both brand awareness and social media marketing wield considerable influence over consumer decisions (Purnamawati et al., 2022; Audi et al., 2021; Raharja & Dewakanya, 2020). Additionally, (Ayuningtyas & Sijabat, 2022) propose that influencer marketing on social media can significantly enhance brand awareness, subsequently fostering heightened interest in purchasing from the company. Increased familiarity with a company often correlates with higher levels of customer trust. As indicated by (Febrianti et al., 2022), marketers recognize the advantages and opportunities presented by social media within their marketing campaigns.

In addition to online marketing and social media, customers also wield influence over a brand's perception (Upadana & Pramudana, 2020). For instance, a brand might become recognizable through its logo, color scheme, or tagline, even in the absence of direct exposure to the brand itself (Purnamawati et al., 2022; Audi et al., 2022; Raharja & Dewakanya, 2020). Shojaee and Azman (2013), along with Syahtidar et al. (2022), propose that familiarity with a brand enhances the likelihood of customers making a purchase. To impact consumers' purchasing decisions, information and perspectives are disseminated

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through the internet and other digital media, a phenomenon referred to as "electronic word of mouth" (eWOM). The term "electronic word of mouth" (eWOM) encompasses "the exchange of comments related to a product or company, posted on the internet by individuals who are currently using, considering purchasing, or have already bought the product or service" (Chen et al., 2022; Prasad et al., 2017). Trust between consumers and fellow buyers tends to outweigh trust in advertisements. Rather than placing blind faith in marketers' assertions about a product, consumers are more inclined to believe the experiences and benefits recounted by individuals who have firsthand experience with it (Suharyanto & Rahman, 2022; Syahtidar et al., 2022). Within the realm of consumer psychology, brand awareness holds a significant position as a potent psychological phenomenon (Ardiansyah & Sarwoko, 2020; Febrianti et al., 2022). Exploring this matter is crucial to uncover the reasons behind our purchasing behavior.

Given that influencers instill a sense of trust among their followers, the impact of influencers on consumer purchasing decisions comes as no surprise (Vrontis et al., 2021; Yangkluna et al., 2022). While some progress has been made in researching these matters, it is important to recognize that several questions remain unanswered. Some studies have explored the influence of influencer marketing on consumer behavior. Nevertheless, the majority of research has centered around the general utilization of social media rather than its specific applications (Gopinath, 2021; Laksamana, 2018; Naranjo-Zolotov et al., 2021; Yaqub et al., 2022).

The interplay between social media influencer marketing, electronic word of mouth (eWOM), and purchase decisions has received substantial attention in marketing literature. However, the mediating role of brand awareness in this relationship has not been extensively investigated. Most studies have primarily delved into the direct connection between social media influencer marketing, eWOM, and purchase decisions, often neglecting to explore the intermediary role of brand awareness (Koay et al., 2022). The necessity for cross-cultural studies emerges to probe the mediating influence of brand awareness in the link between social media influencer marketing, eWOM, and purchase decisions (Ardiansyah & Sarwoko, 2020).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND FORMULATION OF HYPOTHESES
2.1. DRIVERS OF CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISIONS

Digital marketing tools, encompassing social media marketing, email marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), mobile marketing, and emerging tools such as social media influencer marketing and electronic word of mouth, have ushered in a revolutionary transformation in the way businesses engage with consumers, profoundly shaping consumer purchase decisions. Social media marketing has emerged as a potent mechanism for businesses to connect with consumers, effectively influencing their purchase choices. Singh and Sonnenburg's (2012) study discovered a positive correlation between social media marketing and consumer purchase intentions, with platforms like Facebook and Twitter significantly molding consumer attitudes and behaviors. Email marketing has similarly demonstrated its efficacy in driving consumer purchase decisions. Kim and Han (2014) revealed in their research that email marketing exerts a positive impact on consumer purchase intentions, particularly when emails are personalized and targeted, thereby amplifying their effectiveness in driving sales. SEO has assumed a pivotal role in swaying consumer purchase decisions, bolstering brand visibility and credibility within search engine results. Putri's (2021) study affirmed the positive influence of SEO on consumer purchase intentions, highlighting that businesses occupying higher ranks in search engine results are more likely to spur sales. The domain of mobile marketing, spanning mobile advertising and mobile apps, has also emerged as a primary catalyst for consumer purchase decisions. Hashim et al. (2018) established through their study that mobile advertising significantly affects consumer purchase intentions, with consumers exhibiting a greater propensity to make purchases through mobile devices.

Social media influencer marketing and eWOM have emerged as powerful tools for brands to reach and engage with consumers, ultimately influencing their purchase decisions. The role of brand awareness in this process has also been widely acknowledged, as it enhances consumers' recognition and recall of a brand, leading to greater trust and loyalty. In their study, Ali and Alqudah (2022) found that social media influencer marketing has a stronger effect on brand equity than eWOM, highlighting the power of influencer marketing in building brand image and reputation. (Ali & Alqudah, 2022) investigated the mediating role of brand awareness in the relationship between social media influencer marketing and purchase intention, finding that brand awareness partially mediates this relationship.

In addition to social media influencer marketing, eWOM has also been found to play a significant role in influencing consumer purchase decisions. (Erkan & Evans, 2018) found that social media marketing, including eWOM, has a positive impact on consumers' online purchase intentions, with eWOM having a stronger effect than traditional marketing. Overall, these studies demonstrate the critical role that digital marketing tools play in shaping consumer purchase decisions. However, there is still a need for further research to understand the specific factors that drive purchase decisions through different digital marketing tools, as well as the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that influence these decisions.

2.2. SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER MARKETING AND CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISIONS

social media influencer marketing has emerged as a popular and effective tool for businesses to reach and engage with consumers, ultimately influencing their purchase decisions. Several studies have investigated the relationship between social media influencer marketing and purchase decisions, and have found a positive correlation between the two.

In their study, Masuda et al. (2022) found that social media influencer marketing positively influences consumer purchase intentions, with the perceived credibility and trustworthiness of the influencer being critical factors in driving sales. Similarly,

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in their study, Lou and Yuan (2019) found that social media influencer marketing positively impacts consumer purchase decisions, with consumers being more likely to purchase products recommended by influencers they follow on social media platforms.

Moreover, social media influencer marketing has been found to be particularly effective in influencing the purchase decisions of younger consumers. In their study, Andreani et al. (2021) found that social media influencer marketing has a significant impact on the purchase decisions of Generation Z consumers, with the perceived authenticity and relatability of the influencer playing a critical role in driving sales.

Overall, these studies demonstrate the positive relationship between social media influencer marketing and consumer purchase decisions. However, there is still a need for further research to understand the specific factors that drive purchase decisions through social media influencer marketing, as well as the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that influence these decisions.

2.3. ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH (EWOM) AND CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISIONS

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), according to the Suharyanto and Rahman (2022), refers to a marketing strategy in which a wide audience of consumers as well as companies can communicate with each other via the internet. Researchers (Chen et al., 2022; Prasad et al., 2017; Sharifpour et al., 2016), classified "word-of-mouth" into three dimensions. Meanwhile, the number of consumer reviews posted on social networking sites is the first indicator of eWOM intensity. Second, it is imperative to obtain customer feedback, which includes reviews of products, services, and brands. Feedback from customers may be positive or negative. Lastly, there is content, which refers to product and service-related information that is shared on networking sites. It is based on the credibility of the sender that eWOM is able to influence consumers' purchasing decisions. In an effort to generate word-of-mouth online, marketers are increasingly relying on influencer marketing (Rosário & Loureiro, 2021). As suggested by Chen et al. (2022), eWOM is driven by the ease of use of the platform, and positive eWOM has a substantial effect on product sales.

Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has emerged as a popular and effective tool for businesses to reach and influence consumers. eWOM refers to the exchange of product or service-related information among consumers through digital channels, such as social media, online reviews, and forums. Several studies have investigated the relationship between eWOM and purchase decisions, and have found a positive correlation between the two.

In their study, Xiao et al. (2022) found that eWOM has a significant impact on consumer purchase intentions, with online reviews and social media posts playing a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions of a product or service. Similarly, in their study, (Kurdi et al., 2022) found that eWOM positively influences consumer purchase decisions, with the perceived credibility and trustworthiness of the source being critical factors in driving sales. Moreover, eWOM has been found to be particularly effective in influencing the purchase decisions of younger consumers. In their study, Karabulut and Bulut (2016) found that eWOM has a significant impact on the purchase decisions of Generation Y and Z consumers, with social media being the most popular platform for sharing and receiving eWOM.

Overall, these studies demonstrate the positive relationship between eWOM and consumer purchase decisions. However, there is still a need for further research to understand the specific factors that drive purchase decisions through eWOM, as well as the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that influence these decisions.

2.4. SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER MARKETING AND BRAND AWARENESS

Social media influencer marketing has been found to have a significant impact on brand awareness, which is a critical factor in driving sales and customer loyalty. Several studies have investigated the relationship between social media influencer marketing and brand awareness, and have found a positive correlation between the two.

In their study, Bonus et al. (2022) found that social media influencer marketing positively influences brand awareness, with the perceived authenticity and relatability of the influencer playing a critical role in increasing brand visibility. Similarly, in their study, Lou and Yuan (2019) found that social media influencer marketing positively impacts brand awareness, with the perceived credibility and trustworthiness of the influencer being critical factors in building brand reputation. Moreover, social media influencer marketing has been found to be particularly effective in increasing brand awareness among younger consumers. In their study, Vukmirović et al. (2020) found that social media influencer marketing has a significant impact on brand awareness among Generation Y and Z consumers, with Instagram being the most effective platform for influencer marketing.

Overall, these studies demonstrate the positive relationship between social media influencer marketing and brand awareness.

2.5. BRAND AWARENESS AND WORD-OF-MOUTH (E-WOM)

There is a close correlation between brand awareness and word-of-mouth (e-WOM), as suggested by the Integrating Marketing Communications Model (Shojaee & Azman, 2013) Several studies have investigated the relationship between eWOM and brand awareness, and have found a positive correlation between the two. In their study, Farzin and Fattahi (2018) found that eWOM positively influences brand awareness, with online reviews and social media posts playing a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions of a brand. Similarly, in their study, Krasila (2021) found that eWOM has a significant impact on brand awareness, with the perceived credibility and trustworthiness of the source being critical factors in building brand reputation. Moreover, eWOM has been found to be particularly effective in increasing brand awareness among younger consumers. In

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their study, Pauliene and Sedneva (2019) found that eWOM has a significant impact on the brand awareness of Generation Y and Z consumers, with social media being the most popular platform for sharing and receiving eWOM.

Overall, these studies demonstrate the positive relationship between eWOM and brand awareness. However, there is still a need for further research to understand the specific factors that drive brand awareness through eWOM, as well as the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that influence these outcomes.

On the basis of this literature review, the following hypotheses have been generated:

H1: Social media influencer marketing has a positive relationship with purchase decisions

H2: Electronic word of mouth has a positive relationship with purchase decisions

H3: Social media Influencer Marketing has a positive relationship with Brand Awareness.

H4: Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has a positive relationship with Brand Awareness.

2.6. BRAND AWARENESS AND CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISIONS

Brand awareness has long been recognized as a critical factor in driving purchase decisions. Consumers are more likely to purchase products or services from brands that they are familiar with and perceive as trustworthy. Several studies have investigated the relationship between brand awareness and purchase decisions, and have found a positive correlation between the two. In their study, Ansari et al. (2019) found that brand awareness positively influences purchase decisions, with consumers being more likely to purchase products or services from brands that they are familiar with. Similarly, in their study, Sivaram et al. (2019) found that brand awareness has a significant impact on purchase decisions, with consumers being more likely to purchase from brands that they perceive as reputable and trustworthy. Moreover, brand awareness has been found to be particularly important in driving purchase decisions among younger consumers. In their study, Supiyandi et al. (2022) found that brand awareness positively influences the purchase decisions of Generation Y and Z consumers, with social media being a critical platform for building brand awareness.

Overall, these studies demonstrate the positive correlation between brand awareness and purchase decisions. However, there is still a need for further research to understand the specific factors that drive purchase decisions through brand awareness, as well as the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that influence these outcomes.

From this synthesis of existing research, the following hypotheses emerged:

H5 There is a positive correlation between brand awareness and purchase decisions

2.7. MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND AWARENESS BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER MARKETING, ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH (EWOM) AND PURCHASE DECISIONS

Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has become an increasingly popular marketing tool for businesses to build brand awareness and drive purchase decisions. However, the relationship between eWOM and purchase decisions is not a direct one, and several studies have found that brand awareness mediates this relationship. In their study, Widjaya (2022) found that brand awareness mediates the relationship between eWOM and purchase decisions, with eWOM positively influencing brand awareness, which in turn leads to increased purchase intentions. Similarly, in their study, Aljumah et al. (2023) found that brand awareness plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between eWOM and purchase decisions, with eWOM positively influencing brand awareness and subsequent purchase intentions. Moreover, the relationship between eWOM, brand awareness, and purchase decisions has been found to be particularly strong among younger consumers. In their study, Yodpram and Intalar (2020) found that eWOM positively influences brand awareness, which in turn has a significant impact on the purchase decisions of Generation Y consumers. Overall, these studies highlight the critical role of brand awareness in mediating the relationship between eWOM and purchase decisions

Social media influencer marketing has become a popular marketing tool for businesses to build brand awareness and drive purchase decisions. However, the relationship between social media influencer marketing and purchase decisions is not a direct one, and several studies have found that brand awareness mediates this relationship. In their study, Saima and Khan (2020) found that brand awareness plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between social media influencer marketing and purchase intentions, with social media influencer marketing positively influencing brand awareness, which in turn leads to increased purchase intentions. Similarly, in their study, Nurhandayani et al. (2019) found that brand awareness mediates the relationship between social media influencer marketing and purchase intentions, with social media influencer marketing positively influencing brand awareness and subsequent purchase intentions. Moreover, the relationship between social media influencer marketing, brand awareness, and purchase decisions has been found to be particularly strong among younger consumers. In their study, Lou and Yuan (2019) found that social media influencer marketing positively influences brand awareness, which in turn has a significant impact on the purchase decisions of Generation Y consumers.

Overall, these studies highlight the critical role of brand awareness in mediating the relationship between social media influencer marketing and purchase decisions. However, there is still a need for further research to understand the specific mechanisms through which brand awareness mediates this relationship and the contextual factors that influence these outcomes.

From this synthesis of existing research, the following hypotheses emerged,

H6: Brand Awareness mediates the relationship between electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and Purchase decisions.

H7: Brand Awareness mediates the relationship between social media influencer marketing and Purchase decisions.

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3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Figure 1 presents a conceptual model based on the stimulus organism response (SOR) model. To simplify, the conceptual model suggests that eWOM and social media influencer marketing are the independent variables that have a direct effect on brand purchase decision and brand awareness. Moreover, brand awareness performed the mediating role between EWoM and SMIM.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

The study was conducted in Punjab, Pakistan, and the sample size was determined based on the projected population size. For the current study, a random population was selected, and questionnaires were administered to them. The study used the rule of thumb to determine the sample size, which suggests multiplying the total number of survey questions by 10 (Hair Jr et al., 2014). As the study used 31 different measurements, a sample size of 310 respondents was necessary for reliable results. However, due to a poor response rate, a usable sample size of 420 questionnaires was determined. Due to time constraints, the study used convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method (Saunders et al., 2015). A self-administered survey was distributed to the general public, with a focus on social media users and online shoppers as the primary target audiences. SPSS and Smart PLS were used to analyze the data.

A total of 420 questionnaires were distributed, and approximately 400 of them were returned. Fifteen questionnaires were discarded prior to analysis due to errors or missing information. The response rate for the study was satisfactory, resulting in adequate data collection and analysis. Importantly, the scale used in this study was developed based on previous research.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
4.1. CONVERGENT VALIDITY

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, a convergent validity test was conducted using the PLS algorithm, as shown in Figure 2. Table 1 summarizes the Cronbach's alpha values of all variables, which were found to be above the 0.70 threshold (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). For each measurement, the factor loading values were required to be greater than the minimum threshold of 0.60 (Hair et al., 2007), and this requirement was met in the current study. According to Ringle et al. (2015), the CR threshold is 0.70, and the AVE threshold is 0.50. In the current investigation, both thresholds were met, which supports the validity and reliability of the study. In conclusion, the results of the current research are reliable and valid based on the convergent validity test and the thresholds met for factor loading, Cronbach's alpha, CR, and AVE values. Necessary citations have been included in the passage.

4.2. DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY - FORNELL AND LARCKER CRITERION

For external consistency, discriminant validity analysis is also necessary; the relationship between the variables was the basis, but variable values were compared with the square root of AVE's (Ab Hamid et al., 2017). As a general rule, all correlations between the variables should be are less than square root averages (AVEs), otherwise indicated by cross-bolding.

4.3. DIRECT EFFECT AND HYPOTHESES TESTING

The results of the direct hypotheses are summarized in Table 4. It was found that H1, which stated that EWoM has a significant impact on PD i.e., (β = 0.233, t = 2.428, p = 0.015), was supported. H2, which stated that SMIM has a significant impact on PD i.e., (β = 0.242, t = 2.435, p = 0.014), was also supported. H3, which stated that BA has a significant impact on PD i.e., (β = 0.484, t = 6.380, p = 0.000), was supported. Similarly, H4, which stated that EWoM has a significant impact on BA i.e., (β = 0.395, t = 4.817, p = 0.000), was supported as well. Finally, H5 which stated SMIM has a significant impact on BA i.e., (β = 0.570, t = 6.902, p = 0.000)

In order to achieve one of the research objectives of this study, the indirect effects of BA on the relationship between EWoM and PD (β = 0.191, t = 3.746, p = 0.000) and between SMIM and PD (β = 0.276, t = 4.732, p = 0.000) were also analyzed, and the results are summarized in Table 5.

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

Construct	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Brand Awareness	BA1	0.858	0.958	0.964	0.749
	BA2	0.858			
	BA3	0.868			
	BA4	0.854			
	BA5	0.887			
	BA6	0.870			
	BA7	0.870			
	BA8	0.870			
	BA9	0.853			
Electronic Word of Mouth	eWOM1	0.847	0.924	0.943	0.767
	eWOM2	0.880			
	eWOM3	0.888			
	eWOM4	0.874			
	eWOM5	0.889			
Purchase Decision	PD1	0.848	0.922	0.942	0.763
	PD2	0.864			
	PD3	0.873			
	PD4	0.888			
	PD5	0.894			
Social Media Influencer Marketing	SMIM1	0.814	0.963	0.968	0.713
	SMIM2	0.854			
	SMIM3	0.861			
	SMIM4	0.857			
	SMIM5	0.867			
	SMIM6	0.850			
	SMIM7	0.865			
	SMIM8	0.834			
	SMIM9	0.834			
	SMIM10	0.828			
	SMIM11	0.830			
	SMIM12	0.835			

Table: 2: Discriminant Validity - Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Brand Awareness	Electronic Word of Mouth	Purchase Decisions	Social Media Influencer Marketing
Brand Awareness	0.965			
Electronic Word of Mouth	0.933	0.976		
Purchase Decisions	0.930	0.913	0.974	
Social Media Influencer Marketing	0.943	0.942	0.919	0.944

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

Figure 2: PLS Measurement Model
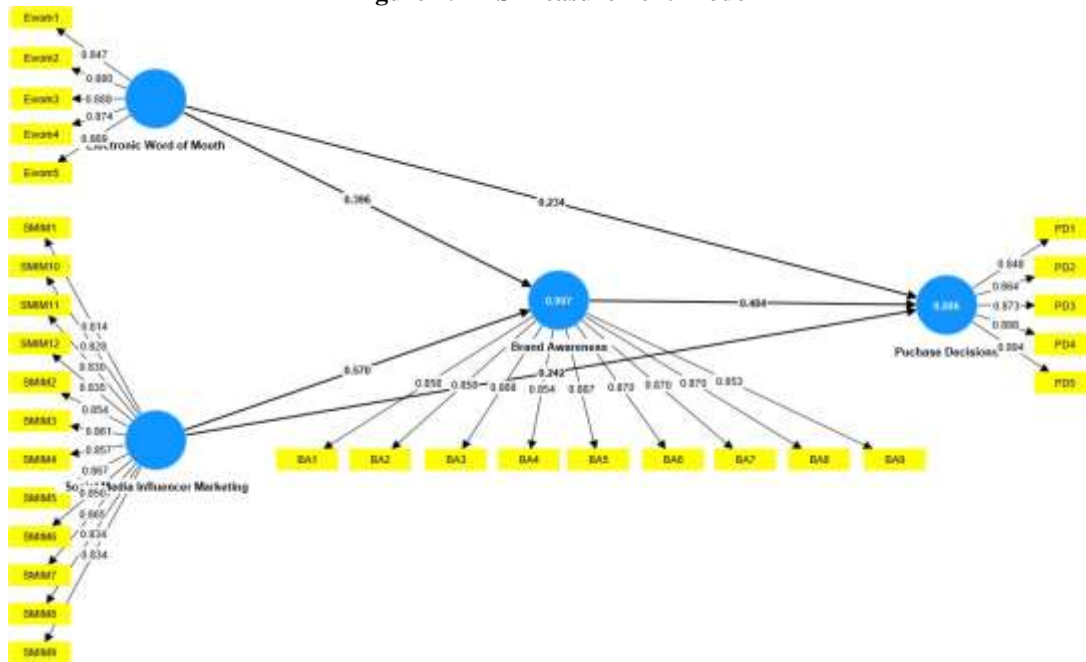
Table 3: Direct Relationship

Paths	Beta	SD	T Value	P values	Decision
EWoM -> PD	0.233	0.096	2.428	0.015	Supported
SMIM -> PD	0.242	0.099	2.435	0.014	Supported
BA -> PD	0.484	0.076	6.380	0.000	Supported
EWoM -> BA	0.395	0.082	4.817	0.000	Supported
SMIM -> BA	0.570	0.082	6.902	0.000	Supported

Figure 3
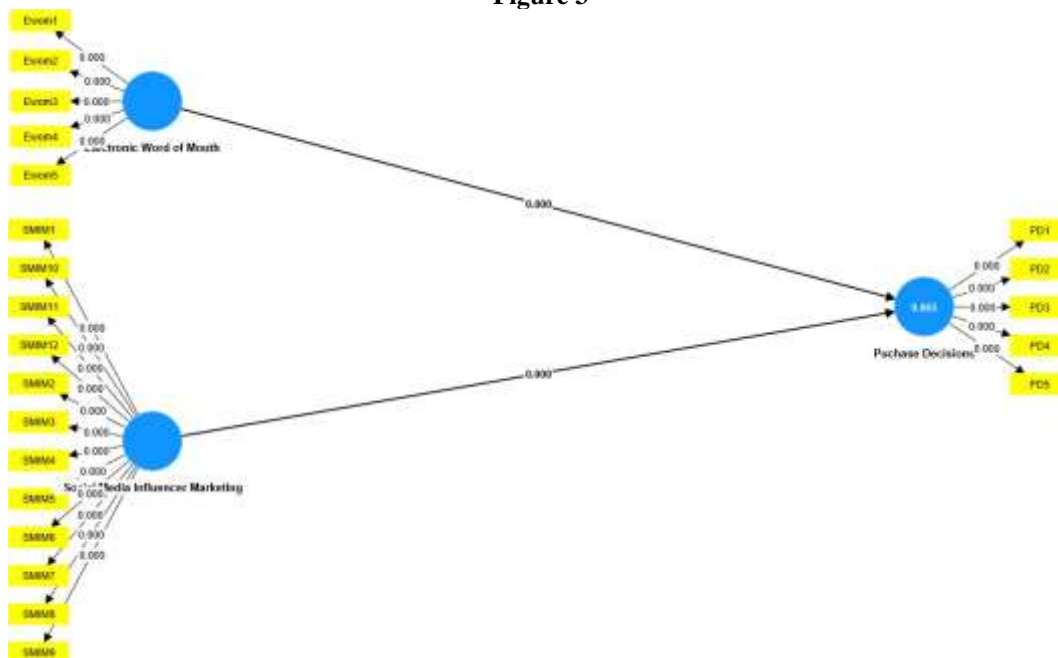
Table 4: Mediating Analysis

	Beta Coefficient	Standard deviation	T Values	P values	Decision
eWOM -> BA -> PD	0.191	0.051	3.746	0.000	Supported
SMIM -> BA -> PD	0.276	0.058	4.732	0.000	Supported

Figure 4
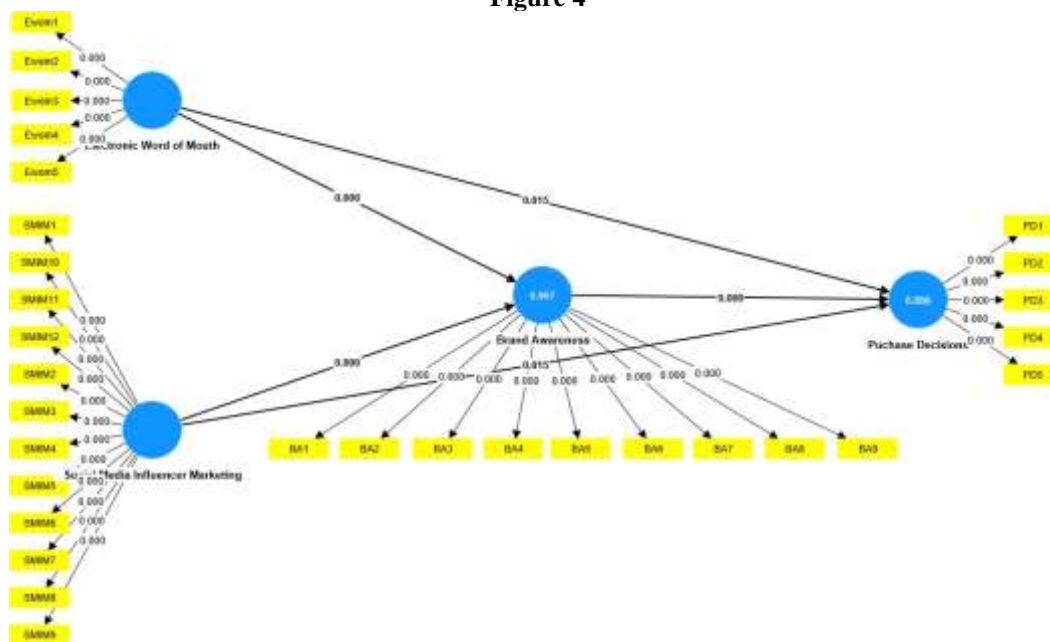
5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of the study suggest that there is a positive association between electronic word of mouth (eWOM), social media influencer marketing (SMIM), brand awareness (BA) and customer purchase decisions (PD) in Pakistan. These results are consistent with previous research conducted in other countries and provide further evidence that these factors are important in shaping consumers' purchase decisions.

H1: Social media influencer marketing has a positive relationship with purchase decisions

According to the findings of this study, social media influencer marketing plays a significant role in purchasing decisions. This is consistent with previous studies, such as Ye et al. (2021), which have shown that social media influencer marketing supports the primary objective of increasing revenue for a company by influencing customers to buy specific brand's products. Kwiatek et al. (2021) concluded that the credibility of social media influencers is critical for the success of a business, which further emphasizes the importance of social media influencer marketing in driving purchasing decisions. Taking into consideration the results of this study (t = 5.150, β = 0.520, p < 0.001), it can also be concluded that social media influencer marketing is one of the most cost-effective ways to increase the likelihood of a consumer making a purchase. Both practitioners and academics have paid close attention to the correlation between social media influencer marketing and final purchasing decisions. The findings of this study provide empirical evidence to support the use of social media influencer marketing as an effective marketing strategy in Pakistan.

H2: Electronic word of mouth has a positive relationship with purchase decisions

The findings of this research suggest that electronic word of mouth has a sizable effect on consumers' propensity to make purchases. In previous studies, electronic word of mouth has also been documented as an influential factor in influencing purchase decisions (Chen et al., 2022). Additionally, Suharyanto and Rahman (2022), suggests that eWOM plays a critical role in improving an organization's reputation and revenue. According to this study, electronic word of mouth has a positive association with purchase decisions with the given results **(β = 0.424, t = 4.157, p < 0.001).** As well, results from previous research indicate that electronic word-of-mouth is effective in establishing relationships by positively impacting the long-term orientation of consumer purchases (Sharifpour et al., 2016).

H3: Social media Influencer Marketing has a positive relationship with Brand Awareness

According to the findings of this study, social media influencer marketing plays a significant role in building brand awareness for any organization (β = 0.520, t = 5.150, p < 0.001). This is consistent with previous studies that have also found social media influencer marketing to be an effective way to increase brand awareness (Kwiatek et al., 2021). However, Vrontis et al.

(2021) also noted that the effectiveness of social media influencer marketing can be influenced by the context of the company, which affects the main objective. Nonetheless, the results of this study suggest that using social media influencers to promote a company can be an effective strategy for boosting brand visibility.

H4: Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has a positive relationship with Brand Awareness

Several individuals and institutions in the marketing industry heavily rely on the concept of "electronic word of mouth," which involves potential, actual, or former customers transmitting their feedback over the Internet about a product or service to a broad audience. In this study, electronic word-of-mouth appears to be positively correlated with brand awareness, which is consistent with previous research (Sharifpour et al., 2016). Febrianti et al. (2022) also found a positive association between internet word of mouth and brand awareness. Prasad et al. (2017) suggested that electronic word of mouth is the most effective method of increasing brand awareness among organizations.

H5 There is a positive correlation between brand awareness and purchase decisions

This research concludes that there is a positive and significant relationship between brand awareness and consumer behavior. Several studies have suggested that brand awareness influences the purchase decisions of consumers (Purnamawati et al., 2022). In accordance with Upadana and Pramudana (2020), brand awareness is the perception and image of a brand that a consumer has of an organization or the psychological mental state that connects the consumer to that brand. Based on the results of the study as well as the results of the previous studies, it was found that brand awareness and purchase decisions are positively correlated **($\beta = 0.484$, t = 6.380, p < 0.001).**

H6: Brand Awareness mediates the relationship between electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and Purchase decisions.

After studying the effects of direct contacts, the purpose of this study was to establish the role of Brand Awareness as a mediator between eWOM and customer purchase decisions. As a result of this research, it was found that brand awareness to a large extent mediates the relationship between electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and purchase decisions, as indicated by the results (**t = 3.746, $\beta = 0.191$, p < 0.001**). Previous research shows that electronic word of mouth is significantly influenced by brand awareness when it comes to making purchases (Purnamawati et al., 2022).

H7: Brand Awareness mediates the relationship between social media influencer marketing and Purchase decisions.

As a capstone, this research analyzed the correlation between social media influencer marketing and consumers' perceptions of the brand and their subsequent purchasing behavior. The results of the investigation indicate that (**t = 4.732, $\beta = 0.276$, p < 0.001**), social media influencer marketing and purchase decisions are associated with brand awareness. Essentially, brand awareness plays a meditative role in influencing purchase decisions through social media influencer marketing. The probability of being influenced by an influencer is higher when the consumer already has a keen knowledge of the brand. One possible reason for the positive association between eWOM and PD could be the trust that consumers place in the opinions and recommendations of their peers. In Pakistan, where social relationships and networks are highly valued, eWOM may play an even more important role in shaping consumer behavior. The findings also suggest that SMIM has a significant impact on PD, which could be attributed to the persuasive power of social media influencers and their ability to reach a large and engaged audience. Moreover, the study found that both eWOM and SMIM have a significant impact on BA. This suggests that these marketing techniques are effective in increasing brand awareness and visibility among consumers. In turn, BA was found to significantly mediate the relationship between eWOM/SMIM and PD. This suggests that a strong brand image and recognition are crucial in driving consumer purchase decisions. This study's findings also suggest that companies should ramp up their use of electronic word-of-mouth marketing and marketing via social media influencers in an effort to sway consumers' purchasing decisions. By utilizing social media influencer marketing and the electronic word, businesses can boost both their brand awareness and their revenue. This is a double win for any organization.

Overall, the findings of this study have important implications for businesses and marketers in Pakistan. Companies that invest in eWOM and SMIM campaigns, and build strong brand awareness, are likely to see positive impacts on their sales and revenue. Therefore, companies should consider incorporating these strategies into their marketing plans to reach and engage with their target audiences effectively.

6. IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

This research not only makes a contribution to the existing body of literature on topics such as the role of electronic word of mouth, brand awareness, social media influencer marketing, and purchase decisions, but it also provides a number of valuable insights into the aforementioned topics. Recent studies have shown that people who have a large following on social media can significantly impact consumers' decisions to buy (Kim & Kim, 2021). As a result of the current research, independent variables and dependent variables have positive correlations (Syahtidar et al., 2022). Consequently, the mediator seems to be associated with IV and DV in a positive manner. Recent research has ramifications for companies in a variety of ways. In the first place, organizations can now allocate budgets for the marketing of upcoming products. To increase sales, enterprises should allocate budgets for social media influencer marketing, electronic word-of-mouth (Stimulus), and brand awareness (Organisms) in order to increase purchase decisions (Response).

7. LIMITATIONS

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a) The sample's size and quality depended on how cooperative the participants were during the study. In light of this limitation, the study is not capable of drawing broad conclusions.

b) An internet survey questionnaire was used by the researcher to gather information. Even though the survey included instructions, some respondents may still have difficulty completing the survey online.

c) The present study's research instrument was self-administered, and as individuals tend to conceal their true nature by presenting more favorable images, informant-based instruments should be employed.

d) As the sampling frame for the current study was restricted solely to social media users residing or belonging to Pakistan, future research should focus on other countries and other regions to increase the generalizability of this study.

e) " There are caveats to the study's generalizability due to the study's focus on a small number of people."

f) Lastly, this is a quantitative study, and the researcher analyzed the results solely based on the data gathered from the questionnaire.

8. RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

a) To begin with, this study is primarily a quantitative study. For statistical analysis, the researchers relied solely on the data drawn from the questionnaire. This data was of a quantitative nature. It is possible that future research in Pakistan may employ a qualitative or mixed-mode approach to studying consumer purchase decisions.

b) Consequently, despite the conclusion of the study that brand awareness was a significant factor in mediating the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables, it is not yet clear to what extent it is playing a role in mediating this relationship. In the future, researchers may use longitudinal and experiential methods of collecting data. It may be possible to use the second mediator point of intersection.

c) A third focus of the current study was on a mediator factor such as brand awareness. A factor like this contributes to a positive relationship between electronic word-of-mouth, purchase decisions, and social media influencer marketing. Various factors should be examined further, including the effect of social media influencer marketing or electronic word of mouth as moderators. In addition, they must consider factors such as brand image and product quality.

d) Lastly, since all variables were evaluated using a single survey instrument, there is the possibility of common method variation, since each variable was measured with a self-report questionnaire. According to Avolio et al. (1991), it is more difficult to analyze connections between attitudinal or behavioral data received from a particular respondent at a specific or discrete time. As part of this research, perceptions are used to gather information about both independent and dependent variables. Thus, future studies should incorporate a technique that can reduce the variability of common methods, such as the use of objective measurements rather than perception-based data, as well as a technique that can reduce the range of common methods.

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