

Study of the effect of social media on buying behavior of customers with respect to online branding and brand perception

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ABSTRACT

The social media has emerged as a dynamic tool that has influenced the consumer perceptions, the decision-making processes and the relational bridge with the brand in the digital marketplace. This paper is aimed at examining how social media marketing creates an effect on customers to buy a certain item with specific reference to the mediation effects of online brand perception and brand trust within the context of the moderating influence of the demographic and engagement variables. The study uses the most recent literature and empirical sources to present a conceptual framework based on the connection of social media content strategies engagement by the digital influencer and user-generated content with purchase intentions and loyalty. The study fills in major gaps in literature since it introduces both moderating and mediating variables in the analysis, which provides an elaborate conceptualization of the connection between social media branding and consumer behavior. Exploration is likely to present practical findings that can be utilized to guide business enterprises improve on the process of digital marketing, brand image, and consumer credibility. The proposed study will add to this expanding body of knowledge on digital marketing by coming up with an integrated framework that will be applicable to any other market circumstance, which will be implication in both academics and management practices.

Keywords: social media marketing, online brand perception, brand trust, buying behavior, digital branding strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays in the modern digital environment, social media marketing (SMM) started off as a test communication platform, but it has become a leading consumer-engagement driver, brand building, and organizational growth tool. According to statistics, by 2024, the number of active users is more than 5 billion people worldwide (Statista, 2024), which means that Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube are now unprecedented opportunities to turn businesses into influencing consumer behavior in buying decisions. Not only do these platforms make it easy to discover a product, but it also affects the way a customer thinks about the credibility of a brand, its authenticity, and how they perceive the brand to be trustworthy (Chavda & Chauhan, 2024). The contribution of social media is that it has a two-way communication model which is contrary to the one-way communication most marketing channels employ. Unlike on-demand-driven television, print, and radio advertisement, SMMs effectively use two-way communication, the content made by users (user-generated content) and personalization (Kapoor et al., 2022). This participatory culture enables the consumers to participate in the creation of brand narratives, thus passing some brand meaning control to the audience and not the company (Shao, 2009).

Theoretical foundations

The Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) model (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974) can be used to describe the connection between SMM and the consumer buying behavior. In this framework:

1. Stimulus: Content on social media, sponsored recommendations of well-known influencers, targeted ads, user reviews.
 2. Organism: Inner consumer states which include brand image, trust, emotional attachment, and purchase intention.
 3. Response: Visible behaviors such as purchase decisions, and brand advocacy as well as repeat purchase.
- Supplementing the S-O-R model, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) indicates that consumers use two channels of processing persuasive messages: the central which entails the

decision being informed by thoughtful analysis of content and the peripheral which involves influencers like attractiveness of people or popularity of brands informing the decision. Within social media scenarios, these two avenues have often become opened-often simultaneously. Another theoretical approach is offered by the COBRAs framework (Schivinski et al., 2016), that divides online brand associated behaviors of consumers into three levels:

1. Consumption – Passive engagement (e.g., viewing content).
2. Contribution -Engaging with content (e.g. likes, comments, shares).
3. Creation: The creation of brand associated content (sharing reviews, shooting videos, etc.).

These phases may affect the mediating role of the brand perception and trust between SMM and purchase behavior.

Global influence of social media marketing

Empirical studies within the past years bear that out, SMM has a strong influence in the cross-sector purchase decisions. Namely, Nabilla and Saputro (2025) performed an experiment where it was confirmed that SMM, consumer reviews, and brand image play an essential role in influencing purchases in e-commerce settings. By the same token, Ilieva et al. (2024) concluded that influencer marketing had a direct effect on consumer attitudes and brand loyalty in the cosmetics industry. This is in line with the previous research conducted by Hudson et al. (2016), who determined that brand-consumer interactions through social media may lead to emotional attachment and make people act as advocates.

Importantly, the effects of SMM are not uniform. Social media has a considerable impact on the level of influence on purchase behavior in regard to the cultural degree of context, the nature of platforms, and the demographic background of consumers (Alalwan et al., 2017). To take a more concrete example, visual-based platforms such as Instagram could lead to more of an association with the aesthetics of the brand, and discussion-based platforms such as Reddit to more of an intellectual appraisal of the quality of the product.

Mediating role of brand perception and trust

The perceptions of brands that can be referred to as the complex of associations and feelings expressed by the consumers about a brand, perform a mediating role between marketing stimulus and the purchase behavior (Keller, 2013). The field of social media introduces several additional factors to brand perception, as peer-created content, internet reviews, and influencer reliability affect the way people perceive the brand as well (Ismagilova et al., 2021). Trust is equally pivotal. With the ever-growing nature of e-commerce, customers are turning to what they hold as trustworthy about the online brands in making purchasing decisions (Gefen, 2000). Transparency, responsiveness and authenticity in brand communication are some of the sources of credibility that are generated by using social media (Erdoğan & Çiçek, 2012). In the absence of trust, SMM campaigns that are well done might not yield a translation of interest to actual sales.

Moderating influence of demographics and engagement levels

Due to the research, demographic factors like age, gender, and income have been thought to mediate SMM impact on purchasing behavior (Nabirasool et al., 2024). Later generations (younger) consumers are more likely to respond to influencer marketing whereas older consumers might focus on peer reviews and overall corporate reputation. The intensity of the interaction, including passive viewership, to content creation, also affects the delivery, and use of marketing messages (Schivinski et al., 2016).

Research gaps

Although an increasing number of studies have been devoted towards investigating the connection between SMM and buying behavior, there are still a couple of gaps to fill:

1. Comprehensive Models Not Tested Enough- The combination of both mediating and moderating variables is seldom tested in a broad picture rather than isolating the effect of one or the other (e.g. age or brand trust).
2. Platform-Specific Analyses- Most existing studies do not consider the various platforms as a homogenous medium, and do not consider audience behavior or platform-specific affordances.

3.Cross-Cultural Comparisons - Research studies are usually done in one national set up and these may not be generalized to other cultures.

4.Longitudinal Evidence- There is also not enough temporal dynamics research, most studies rely on cross-sectional data.

Contribution of the present study

The research closes the identified gaps by introducing a concept integration model that identifies the interrelationship between SMM strategies such as content creation, partnerships with influencers, UGC and consumer buying behavior through the mediator brand perception and brand trust and as a moderator, the demographics and engagement level.

The contribution has three aspects:

1.Theoretical- It expounds both S-O-R and COBRAs frameworks since it introduces the concept of mediators and moderators in the same analytical framework.

2.Methodological Inferential validity-It uses empirical testing to prove the model and thus might give a generalizable conclusion across industries.

3.Applicable-It gives practical advise to marketers to create more effective SMM campaigns that bring out maximum trust and promotion of brand image.

In short, SMM is a powerful but complicated influencer of consumer behaviour in the digital age. Through the analysis of the direct and indirect effects as well as the moderating role of the demographics and the engagement variables, this study aims to provide a more complicated picture of the online branding endeavors and their actual conversion into real purchase behavior. The results will bear contributions to the significant implications to both the scholars, marketers, and policymakers.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

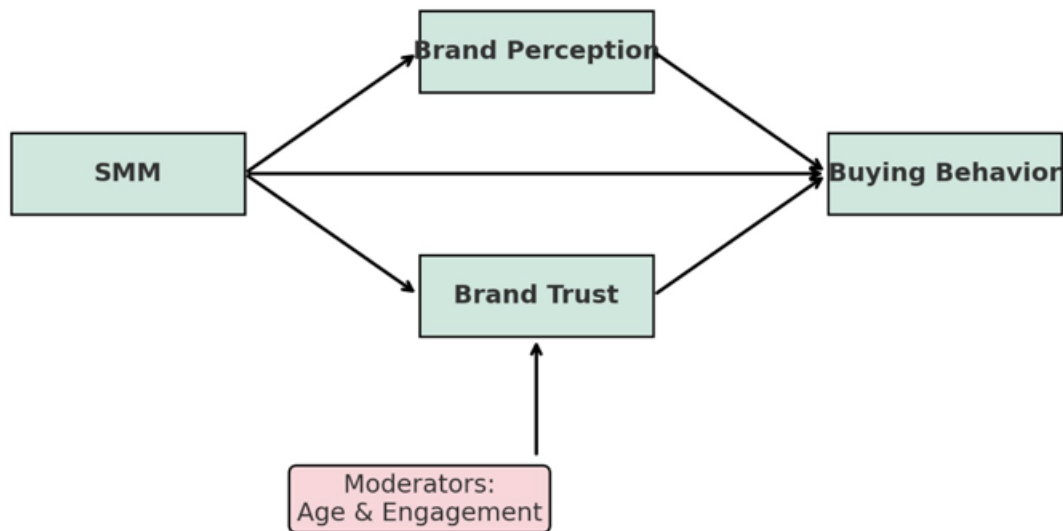


Figure 1: Conceptual model

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The following research model will be based on the Stimulus³⁷ Organism³⁷ Response (S³⁷ O³⁷ R) model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), Elaboration Likelihood Model (Elm) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), and a brand equity theory (Keller, 2013). SMM, which is the marketing of products through social media, serves as the stimulus that arouses cognitive and affective behavior (organism) in terms of online brand perception and brand trust in this study and has an ultimate effect on the response variables, which include purchase

intentions and decisions as well as consumer loyalty. Also, the model includes moderating factors to reflect the deviations in consumer responsiveness.

H1: Social media marketing has a positive significant influence on customer buying behaviour.

By use of interactive content, influencer relation and collaboration, target advertising, and user-generated media, SMM will create consumer attention and enable brand-consumer interactions (Hudson et al., 2016; Kapoor et al., 2022). Seeing a carefully produced brand content helps raise the awareness of the products, build emotional appeal, and has a direct effect on purchase intentions. Previous studies establish that social media platforms are influenceable platforms where consumers are motivated to buy through visual storytelling, tailored messages and social proof (Alalwan et al., 2017; Nabilla & Saputro, 2025).

H2: The connection between the social media marketing and customer buying behavior is mediated by online brand perception.

Brand perception is the image of a brand that is created in the mind of a consumer and formed due to the effects of brand identity, online communication, and inter-consumer contact (Keller, 2013). On the Internet, the process of constructing perception can include the exposure to branded content and recommendations by influencers as well as user reviews (Ismagilova et al., 2021). The brand perception when it is positive builds consumer confidence and is more likely to be purchased. Therefore, regardless of whether SMM manages to achieve the creation of awareness, its final impact on the purchasing process is predetermined by the way users perceive and internalize cues that relate to the brand.

H3: Customer buying behavior in relation to social media marketing is mediated by brand trust.

Trust is the readiness of a consumer to place his or her trust on the promise and integrity of a brand (Gefen, 2000). Social media is a case where consumers are exposed to numerous messages promoting various products or services as well as misleading information and trust is a crucial factor in converting interest to taking action. Online communication exhibited by the brands with the transformation of transparency, responsiveness, and consistency helps to build trust; subsequently leading to lower risk perception and increases in purchase intentions (Erdoğan & Çiçek, 2012; Nabirasool et al., 2024).

H4: The influence of social media marketing on buying behavior by customers is moderated by age.

Cognitive differences in age groups regarding processing styles, media consumption, and the type of engagement online behavior indicate that SMM performance varies by the generation (Priporas et al., 2017). Younger consumers (e.g. Millennials, Gen-Z) are more likely to react to endorsements by influencers, viral trends and interactivity content. Conversely, when comparing older consumers, more informational cues and product information and credibility signals may be needed prior to the process of developing purchase intentions. The inclusion of heterogeneity in the study with regards to age as a moderator is vital in that the concept of demographics plays a role in determining the magnitude of the effect of SMM.

H5: The online branding relationship with customer buying behavior is moderated by level of social media engagement.

Engagement is defined as a measure of the extent of these consumer interactions with social media ranging and including passive consumption of content to normal content production and content sharing (Schivinski et al., 2016). The more consumers are engaged, the faster they are likely to come across, interact, and be affected by the content which is relevant to the brand. They can also become brand advocates sharing good news to their networks. Conversely, having a low involvement in brand communication, low-engagement users might not be as affected by the SMM as other customers. This research will help bring a broader and multifaceted picture of how SMM impacts consumer buying behaviour because it will include the latent mediating mechanisms: brand perception, trust, as well as the moderating factors: age, the level of the engagement.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology of this study is conceptual in its nature because it is aimed at utilizing theoretical integration and secondary sources instead of primary empirical data. This approach is designed to develop a holistic framework that describes the way in which social media marketing affects consumer buying

behaviour through intermediary roles of online brand perception and brand trust, and in how this relationship is moderated by demographic characteristics and levels of engagement. In contrast to the practice in empirical research, where the focus is made on the collection of data, the current research surveys are planned to be used to summarize and generalize knowledge already existing, which means that much more generalizations can be made across interindustrial and crosscultural affiliations. There are a few reasons justifying the selection of a conceptual approach. To begin with, social media marketing is a dynamic field; platforms keep changing fast and strategies also keep changing. This renders longitudinal data hard to draw in real time, whereas secondary research is more flexible and up to date base. Second, whereas there is a lot of research on a particular element of digital marketing, including influencers campaigns, content strategy, or user-generated content, there is scarce literature that has offered an integrated framework by considering both mediating and moderating variables at the same time. Lastly, conceptual research is theory building and is able to produce insights that can be used in subsequent empirical research and fill existing gaps in literature.

The methodology is based on three theories which complement each other. The most general configuration is offered in the form of the Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) model (Mehrabian Russell, 1974) that links social media marketing activity to internal consumer processes and resulting behavior. External triggers comprise social media stimuli like advertisements specifically targeted, endorsements by influencers, user-generated reviews. These will touch inner states like brand image and trust perceptions that ultimately impact corresponding responses like purchase intention, brand advocacy, and brand loyalty. In order to describe consumer processing of messages, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) is incorporated where it is important to distinguish between central routes of persuasion where the consumer critically analyzes the content and peripheral routes where he/she is moved by simpler cues, i.e., popularity or credibility of an influencer. Because individuals engage with social media on various intensity levels, it is also combined with the COBRAs framework (Schivinski, et al., 2016) according to which engagement is divided into consumption (viewing), contribution (liking, sharing, commenting), and creation (producing original brand-related content). This was useful in informing the gradation of the consumer engagement that is used to moderate the impact of SMM on purchasing. The conceptual model was built in three stages. The initial approach was a comprehensive literature search of the domains of digital marketing, consumer psychology, and online trust, to determine constructs which/should be included in the study. In order to find recent and high-quality publications, particular databases including, but not limited to Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, were accessed, where the most of the sources used were first published in 2016 or later and some seminal works such as Keller (2013) on brand equity and Gefen (2000) on online trust have been integrated. The second step would be to classify the constructs into: independent variables (social media marketing activities), mediators (brand perception, trust) moderators (demographics, engagement) and dependent variables (purchase intentions and loyalty). The third phase was able to combine these constructs in one framework that is developing both theoretical and empirical knowledge. The methodological stance taken here is interpretive and integrative. Rather than directly measuring variables, the research considers the manner in which the variables have been faced in different contexts/industries, and makes inferences with regard to the relationship among the variables. The procedure is well-structured, and can be treated as a narration literature review that involves a conceptual modeling aspect. The literature was selected using certain inclusion criteria: only peer-reviewed articles that solely dealt with social media marketing and consumer behavior were included; and, they had to address at least one of the key constructs identified through the hypotheses. Veere, descriptive studies, not relating to consumer decision-making have been excluded. There is a difference between validity and reliability in conceptual research and methodological rigour is nevertheless possible. Triangulation was used as constructs were cross-checked across all the independent studies. As an example, the mediation role of trust was not only confirmed in the early-stage e-commerce studies (Gefen, 2000) but also was supported by recent empirical studies in a digital context (Ismagilova et al., 2021; Nabirasool et al., 2024). Likewise, the moderating role of demographic forces was also statistically supported by cross-generational

cohort studies, further vindicating the fact that the theoretical framework was built on a wide platform of evidence. The hypotheses development process is based on deductive reasoning of the established theories and the inductive reasoning of the emerging literature. SMM direct impact on buying behavior is proposed by SMM, and such a statement has the justification of increased awareness and emotional responses that often culminate in a purchase (Hudson et al., 2016). H3 and H2 suggest that brand perception and trust mediates this relationship, because, according to Keller (2013) brand equity influences the consumer preferences, and according to Gefen (2000), trust is the key element in online transactions. H4 and H5 further the model by taking into account moderating variables realizing that not all consumers will respond the same to the same stimulus because of age and level of engagement. Newer generations respond better to campaigns led by influencer-based messages, whereas older generations can be swayed by informational messages. Arguably, high-engagement users will be more willing to translate exposure into advocacy and purchase behaviors whereas passive users may be less affected. Last, the approach of the methodology acknowledges the weaknesses of a conceptual one. The framework is a theoretical proposal since no primary data are gathered, the suggestion has to be examined by quantitative or qualitative empirical research in the future. Nevertheless, the conceptual synthesis gives an effective theoretical and practical base since it takes into consideration multifaceted relations that have not been considered in the studies involving the single variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The situated view on the currently available literature and theoretical backgrounds enables us to assess the offered hypotheses and to paint the detailed image of the social media marketing (SMM) impact on consumer behavior. Even though there was no collection of the primary data, the analysis of findings of earlier studies in various industries and cultural settings reveals a converging pattern, disparities, and suggestions, which reinforce the truth of the given model. The first hypothesis (H1) stated that the influence of social media marketing on the customer buying behavior is significant and positive. This proposition finds a great amount of support in evidence coming in various industries. Where e-commerce was concerned, Nabilla and Saputro (2025) established that, the user-generated content and influencer-marketing strategies contributed immensely to the increase in purchase-decisions, whereas, in the cosmetics industry, Ilieva et al. (2024) confirmed that, SMM was indeed advancing not only in immediate purchase but in the long-term brand loyalty. These findings were also reflected in previous research by Hudson et al. (2016) wherein two-way communication between consumers and brands resulted in the formation of the emotion that was carried over to advocacy and subsequent purchase. These findings show SMM as not just a promotional channel, but an ecosystem in which consumers coexist, co-create meaning and reintegrate narrative brand components with their social identities. The meaning is that organizations can not use social media as a means of advertisement, but it is an interactive and relational mode of engaging consumers and therefore influences their psychology. The second hypothesis (H2), supporting the expectation that a brand perception moderates the relationship between SMM and buying behavior, the literature shows sufficiently convincing evidence. Keller (2013) proposed that the perception plays the key role in brand equity, and in the digital environment, perception is influenced both by the content generated by the brands and material created by peers. Ismagilova et al. (2021) substantiated that reviews, endorsements by influencers, and user comments produce considerable changes in the way consumers view authenticity and quality. The positive perception of your brand increases the purchase intention when you have both good peer sentiment and positive content relating to your brand on social media. On the other hand, the adverse doubts increased by the use of social media can harm the brand within a short time regardless of the contacted communication of the company. This mediating influence justifies why companies spend a lot of money on social listening and reputation management instruments: the image created online can be the decisive factor whether exposure to SMM causes purchasing or abandonment. The third hypothesis (H3) supposed that trust is another mediator of correlated relationship between SMM and consumer buying behavior. Trust is crucial in the case of digital commerce, and as information

asymmetry and perceived risk are high, it cannot be excluded. Gefen (2000) underlined trust as a condition to make online transaction whereas other works in others like that of Erdo (2012) indicated that trust is further enhanced by transparency, responsiveness and authenticity of brand communication. These findings were substantiated in more recent studies, including Nabirasool et al. (2024), that recognized that credibility is gained by brands that continuously render authentic messages in the social media and which is converted into purchases. Trust therefore answers the question on why some brands are successful in translating attention into consumptions, whereas others are unsuccessful even after incorporating refined marketing campaigns into their activities. It also explains why the credibility of the influencer is so important; when the influencer is seen as authentic, trust people place in an influencer can shift to the brand to which the influencer is selling. That is why trust is a process rather than an output that determines the performance of social media strategies. The fourth and the fifth hypothesis (H4 and H5) further extend the model due to paying attention to the heterogeneity of responses among consumers. H4 propounded that age modulates the factors of SMM on the buying behavior. Studies that support this include, generational differences when it comes to media consumption and also in processing of persuasion. Priporas et al. (2017) noted that the young generation (Gen Z and Millennials) is very responsive to interactive and visually arresting campaigns and this segment tends to be Bos of influencers and peer messaging instead of corporate messages. Older generations on the other hand, like Generation X or the Baby Boomers, are more dependent on facts and reviews as well as company image before buying. It means that SMM could be rather effective in general; the success of using it will depend on the level of influence based on cognitive and behavioral tendency differences of people depending on their age. Such a dynamic therefore requires marketers to differentiate their approaches: using influencer relations and short videos might yield results in the more youthful audience, whereas sharing information in detail, testimonies, and brand history might fit the ticket with older demographics. H5 paid attention to the moderating role of the levels of engagement, and in this case, the literature indicates that it is also well supported. A difference between passive consumers, consumers who contribute to the content, and those who actively create the content was made by Schivinski et al. (2016). Not only are highly engaged consumers more vulnerable to brand messages but there is also a higher chance that they will internalize the message, share, and become an advocate. On the other hand, the low-engagement consumers who are not expecting noticeable behavior change can become exposed to the same stimulus. Involvement consequently adds to the weight of SMM which works as a multiplier in gauging the effectiveness of stimuli to response. This is practically relevant: the brands can no longer presume similar impacts to be felt among the audiences but have to incorporate strategies to promote the highest levels of engagement including interactive polls, contests and co-creation campaigns. Another important lesson that can be applied after assessing these hypotheses is that the process of social media marketing is not that of cause-effect since it occurs via intricate indirect routes. Although H1 makes a direct connection, the explanatory power is higher when it comes to H2 and H3 whereby perception and trust are identified as the means of realization of this connection. On the same note, H4 and H5 indicate that these pathways differ on strength on the basis of various demographic and engagement factors. Such complexity explains why certain campaigns become resounding successes and others are unsuccessful even when they share the use of similar tools. A campaign that creates a positive perception and trust to highly engaged younger audiences will yield better outcomes as compared to a campaign that fails to create trust or one that targets a user that is not being engaged. These findings have great theoretical implications. They confirm the SOR model as a good framework to use in understanding digital marketing, showing that action (stimuli, social media posts) has to be processed by the organism (perception, trust) in order to translate into behavioral outcomes. They further emphasize 1) the practicality of the ELM in explaining the existence of two processing routes: younger audiences may give more weight to peripheral data like the popularity of an influencer whereas older audiences might favor central processing of complex data. Lastly, the COBRAs framework is handy in explaining engagement as a moderator that not all consumers are responsive to a given set of stimuli. Management implications cannot be left behind. The brands should not just think of social media as an advertising medium of one size fits all. Rather, they should understand

that winning is about perception management and creating trust and customizing strategies on a demographic segment as well as engagement level. This incorporates making investments in some genuine influencer partnerships, helping develop a sense of transparency in communication and providing a chance to allow active participation on the part of the consumers. Lack of consideration of such mediating and moderating factors threatens to make campaigns inefficient, no matter the magnitude of investment. Altogether, the theoretical findings validate the idea that the influence of social media marketing on the consumer buying behavior is too strong, still, it is not homogenous. It is determined by the brand perception of the consumers, their confidence in it, their age range and degree of participation. With the combination of these factors into one whole, this study presents a more extensive and truly realistic interpretation of digital branding-based efforts and the consequences thereof.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research aimed at the creation of the conceptual framework that will describe the influence of social media marketing (SMM) on consumer buying behavior, including the focus on the moderation role of the demographic and engagement variables and the mediating role of brand perception and trust. The research synthesises previous empirical researches and theoretical insights implications and thereby emphasises the point that SMM is a potent but complicated force of consumer decision-making. The results indicate that although SMM has direct effects on buying intentions and degree of loyalty to a brand, its effects are complemented by inclusion of mediators and moderators. This analysis validated the notion that brand perception plays the pivotal role towards transforming exposure to the content on social media to purchase behavior. Favourable attitudes make consumers more prepared to participate and make purchase decisions related to a brand. On the other hand, the brand equity is easily eroded by negative perceptions particularly in an online world where the opinion of peers is easily disseminated. Similarly, brand trust was identified as a critical mediator. Trust, in an environment like this, where many people are holding on to so much information, and it is misinformation, it is the gatekeeper to turning interest into real, ticking over purchasing. Trust is an essential element because, without it, the most exciting material might never be turned into sales. The moderating effects of age and engagement highlight heterogeneity of responses and consumer responses. Older consumers are more receptive to campaigns by influencers coupled with, visually, dynamic campaigns and the older consumers prioritize the credibility of information, and reputation of a corporation. Responses also vary according to the level of engagement; highly engaged users are susceptible to being influenced and turn into advocates, whereas passive consumers can be left unmoved by the marketing. These revelations indicate that the effectiveness of SMM cannot be generic but has to be interpreted based on subtle segmentation. Theoretically, the paper evidences the relevance of SOR model, the Elaboration Likelihood Model and the COBRAs framework in the explanation of online consumer behavior. Collectively, the frameworks can be used to shed light on how cognitive and affective processes filter the effect of external stimuli on a dual basis of individual and situational factors and how all this leads to overt behavior. The methodological single model argued in this paper will add value to the scholarly discourse by providing it with the multi-dimensional lens that will cover gaps in earlier studies, especially the underrepresented blend of mediation and moderation factors. The implications of the management are also important. Marketers should understand that social media cannot be viewed simply as a one-way communication channel but as an environment that embodies interaction, authenticity and trust. Tactics need to be carried out toward encouraging positive brand attitude by maintaining uniform relationships, communicating freely, and giving quick responses. Cultivating and sustaining trust ought to be made a part and parcel of the goal, which is realized by involving trusted influencers, being quick in responding to concerns of customers, and maintaining originality of the content. In addition, campaigns can target differences in demographics since younger crowds might be responsive more to interactive short-form videos and use of influencers, whereas older customers might be more responsive to more detailed product features and reviews. It can supplement the above with activities to encourage participation by the user through contesting, co-creativity and interactive campaigns to transform

consumers into active brand advocates. To sum up, social media marketing is commonly regarded as a disruptive power in consumer conduct, and still, its effect depends on other factors than exposure. It is perception and trust-based and its power is formed by demographic and engagement factors. Putting these dynamics into a deeper perspective through a comprehensive framework, this study can serve both the purpose of adding to the knowledge base and give usable recommendations to practitioners. It would be good to test empirically this model across different industries and cultures with the use of longitudinal designs so that the changing nature of consumer reactions may be assessed. This will further substantiate and streamline the framework, with the business to ensure that they are well prepared to face the fast-growing dynamic digital environment.

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