Mediating Role of Customer Experience in Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention: A Case Study

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https://doi.org/10.37575/h/edu/2047

ABSTRACT

In today's dynamic business environment, the idea of customer experience gained significant importance among practitioners as well as academics. Many managers and service researchers are interested in customer experience. However, research on customer experience about social media marketing role on building purchase intention appears to be scarce. This work investigates the mediating role of customer experience in social media marketing and customer purchase intention in lifestyle products. Data for the study were collected from 279 Indian consumers using a survey by personal visiting and contacting prospective respondents located at different places in Lucknow city, India. The study found that customer experience mediate social media marketing activities and purchase intention relationship. Customer experience and social media marketing are correlated, and both of them together affect purchase intention of customer. The current study model confirms that social media build up customer experience, which in turn affects purchase intention. It is surprising that the effect of social media on purchase intention was insignificant. This study recommends that marketers should use social media marketing to enhance customer engagement and relationships, provide valuable information, reinforce their brand choice, and subsequently strengthen customer experience.

Key Words: Customer Experience, Purchase intention, Social media marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The fast changing technology and its extensive use increased the competition and increased sophistication of consumer, resulting in more demanding customer and declining customer loyalty (Kandampully *et al*., 2001). The consumer has become more important asset for companies in this contemporary business scenario. Companies has to focus on its customer, as customer are the only determining factor for the success of firm. Consequently, every organization put emphasis on creating its market with the objective of creating product offering that meet customer need and expectation, and encouraging customer experience. Companies focus on delivering service that create value for the customer, enhance customer loyalty, and in turn contributing long-term profitability of the firm (Sahaf et. al, 2011; Kala and Chaubey, 2018a). In the present scenario, marketers facing with the ever increasing challenge of developing effective communication techniques that will effectively reach their targeted audience. In this Information and Communication Technology (ICT) era, various means of communications are available for marketers to reach effectively current and potential customers. The rise and wide spread of Internet and computer-mediated communication has increased consumers' opportunities to obtain information about products or services on a multitude of platforms and enhanced the possibilities to gather large amount of information promptly (Kala and Chaubey, 2018b).

The Internet as an infrastructure and a user friendly multimedia space of information, transformed not only the way people and organizations pass information and communication, but also how they use information and interact in an infinite sort of their daily routine activities. The rapid development of the Internet, especially Web 2.0 tools (such as social network sites, online discussion forums, consumer review sites, weblogs, etc.) has considerably increased the degree and extent of online communication and has revolutionized the way users interact with other people, organizations, and information (Park *et al*., 2007; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). The term 'social media' is the platform that enable interaction on internet for customers who share and exchange information through

user communities and Web 2.0 technologies. Social Media Marketing is a marketing concept that utilize social media platforms as marketing tool. It is an innovative process for empowering individual users to promote their websites, products, and services through online social network. It also helps them interacting with, and tapping into a much larger community that may not have been available via traditional advertising channels (Weinberg, 2009).

Social media marketing provides interactive communication between customers and organizations without any limitation in time and place. Apart from this, customers share their experiences about the products and services with organizations as well as their friends and relatives. As a result, organizations can establish long-term relationships with customers than before, which in turn gain customer's loyalty (Kim and Ko, 2012). At the beginning of marketing phase, all marketing activities was initiated for the success of product in the market place by evaluating physical aspect of product and /or service like product quality, product quantity, marketing function, availability of product, and customer support. Recently, focus has been changed and marketing managers emphasize on creating value for their customer and create positive and unique experiences for the customers (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Gilmore and Pine, 2002). In a study conducted by Shaw and Ivens (2002), they found that almost 85% of business leaders disapprove those traditional elements like price and delivery as an effective business strategy. Nowadays, customer experience is considered an important differentiator in creating value. This concept of customer experience is extensively used as an important strategy for online marketing and helps a lot in gaining competitive advantages. Therefore, this study intended to examine the impact of customer experience on social media marketing and encouraging purchase intention within the context of online communities.

Rationale of the Study

Social media emerged as an important online communication medium that facilitate multidimensional interaction among consumers, producers, and partners. It also helps in resolving many issues related to product/services. Today, a large number of consumer are communicating with brands via social media. Every communication are important for the success of business. Business cannot afford to ignore even a single consumer as this will cause negative effect on customer experience and it will adversely affect bottom-line. From the managerial perspective, customer experience is "the internal and subjective response that customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company" (Meyer and Schwager, 2007). In the last few years, consumer experience gained significant importance among academic as well as marketer and become a topic of interest. Many researchers are showing interest in measuring customer experience. Customer experience is a psychological concept including objective as well as subjective response evolved from customer interaction. According to Forbes (2018), 71% customers share brand experience on social media and recommend product to others, and 45% customers share their bad service experiences via social media. Further, 93% of consumers acknowledge that product reviews influence their purchasing decisions, and 85% trust online reviews as much as they trust personal recommendations. It is significant to note that consumer spend 20 to 40% more when companies engage and respond to customer service requests over social media. According to a Hubspot report (2012), consumers are 71% more likely to make a purchase based on social media referrals. According to the study by Accenture (2015), improving customer experience received the most number one rankings when executives were asked about their top priorities for the next 12 months. Pine and Gilmore (1998) indicated that application of customer experience and opined that it is used to enhance competitive

advantage, which is difficult to be imitated. Based on this background, understanding customer experiences, and their mediating role in social media marketing and influencing purchase intention, should to be analyzed.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Social Media Marketing and Customer Experience

Large number of research has been carried out to explore the relationship between customer experience towards social media and in influencing purchase intention. Shankar *et al*. (2011) examined social media and stated that it is a place for consumer learning about companies and product they sell. Exponential growth of search engine technologies, mobile devices, internet, as well as intranet devices and online social network has enabled marketers' ability to reach target customer through new touch point. Experience is described as a particular incident, feeling, and similar other things that a person has undergone. Origin of customer experience was explained by Gentile *et al*. (2007). According to their opinion, customer experience is originated from a set of interactions between customer, product, manufacturing product companies, and other stakeholder inciting a reaction involving rational, emotional, sensorial, physical, and spiritual involvement of customer at different levels. Moreover, Meyer and Schwager (2007) had the opinion that customer experience is the internal feeling derived from subjective response that customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company. Verhoef *et al*. (2009) define customer experience related to retail involve the customer's cognitive, affective, emotional, social, and physical responses to the marketers.

Social media has a significant impact on forming customer experience, which enhances the relationship with the company (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2002). Singh *et al*. (2008) argued that new technologies such as social media have improved customer relationships. Erat *et al*. (2006) suggested that a company can enhance customers' knowledge via social media in an effective way. Islam and Rahman (2016) explored the role of social media marketing activities such as customer engagement in enhancing customer trust, experience, and word-of-mouth. Their results reveal that all these social media marketing activities lead to customer trust, favorable experience, and word-of-mouth activities. Marketers believe that customers just do not visit the social media platforms and buy the product within few minutes. The most important is how the organization, brands, and information are available on social media, which shape the overall experience of the customers. Social media marketing, particularly those using advance technologies, is a powerful communication medium to enhance customer experience, develop the relationships, earn trust, and build brand awareness. Therefore, it is proposed that:

H1: Social Media Marketing has a significant impact on Customer Experience.

Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention

Social Media Marketing is the collective activities of using social media to make customer aware of the value of the products and services of the firm. Social media are practical program, platforms, and on-line media for the purpose of facilitating interaction, cooperation, and sharing content. Social media are a group of internet-based tools created based on ideological construction and technical construction of the web that act to create and exchange user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Social media provide a chance to reduce misunderstanding and prejudice toward brands and to raise the brand equity intention indicates the severity of the willing and intention for the target behavior. The relation between behavioral intention and behavior indicates that individuals tend to be involved in behaviors to benefit from them (Yaghoubi *et al*., 2010.) Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) considered intention as a factor

determining action in a definite route. They have defined behavior intention as the mental probability shaping a specific behavior. For example, the purchase intention for a specific product was recognized as a good predictor of real behavior in product purchasing.

Customer purchase decisions are highly influenced by the information and opinions decisions of acquaintances. This form of information is more valid and reliable source of product information. As compare to traditional form of promotion, electronic word-of-mouth is considered more effective in influencing purchase intention. Prasad *et al*. (2017) found that social media usage and internet-mediated word of mouth communication have a favorable impact on customer purchasing behavior. Kala and Chaubey (2018b) also found that electronic word of mouth communication influences the purchase intention towards lifestyle products in India. Elwalda *et al*. (2016) examined the influence of online social media reviews on consumers' purchase intentions, and confirmed quality, perceived usefulness, and credibility of reviews influence customer purchase intention. A recent study of Shah *et al*. (2019) also empathized that social media has become a preferred means of direct communication with young customers and the rapid proliferation of such form of information significantly influence their purchasing behavior. Chen and Lin (2019) examined the effects of social media marketing activities on continuance intention, participation intention, and purchase intention. Using an online survey on 502 social media users, their results indicated that social media marketing activities affect customer satisfaction and purchase intention. Thus, it can be hypothesized that:

H2: Social Media Marketing has a significant impact on purchase intention.

Customer Experience and Purchase Intentions

In recent years, an understanding of different means of managing customers' experiences has become critical to the success of any business organization. Customers' cognitive, affective, emotional, social, and physical responses formulate the total customer experience that comes from a set of interactions between a company and its customers (Gentile *et al*., 2007). The customer experience derived from such sources play a basic role in shaping their preferences toward product or services offered, and manipulate their purchase decisions. The outcome of delightful shopping experience gives many positive outcome like repeat purchase, brand loyalty, word of mouth, recommend the product to other friends and families, and thus results in building relationship between customer experience and purchase intentions. Results of the study of Boyer and Hult (2006) indicated that behavioral intentions will differ based on customer experience level. They further explained that customer intentions to repurchase the products and services would be much stronger if the customers gain better shopping experience. Gupta and Vajic (2000) in their study argued that a consumer experience derived from sensation or knowledge acquisition from some level of interaction with different elements of a context created by the service provider. Gobe (2001) in his research work argued that objectives of customers' sensory experience is to help individual to promote identification, creation, self-fulfillment, and self-image that makes the sensory experience in itself a service to customers. Lindstorm (2005) suggested that companies could use a sensory marketing technique to gain interaction among five senses for better sensory experience.

Several authors worked on consumer behavior intention toward online purchasing. Boyer and Hult (2006) carried out research on customer behavioral intentions for online purchasing in a survey of 2100 customers and found that behavioral intention varies depending on customer experience level. As a result, if the customers increase their positive shopping experience, then their chances of intention to purchase the products and services would be higher. Yang and He

(2011) found that experience did influence customers' preferences, which subsequently affect their purchase decision. They empirically evaluated the direct impact of sensory experience, emotional experience, and social experience on purchase intention.

Customer experience has a direct and positive impact on customer's willingness to purchase a product, and customer willingness forms the basis for customer satisfaction, loyalty, and customer retention (Khandekar and Deshmukh, 2012). Shamim and Butt (2013) and Zarantonello and Schmitt (2010) indicated that customers are willing to prefer one brand to others for its experiential benefits. They further argued that a positive or negative evaluation of these experiences could affect their perceptions about the credibility of a brand and thus influence purchase intention. Hence, it can be argued that:

H3: Customer Experience has a significant impact on purchase intention.

To conclude the existing literature review related to study variables and hypothesize the relationship among social media marketing, purchase intention, and customer experience, a conceptual framework was drawn to illustrate the proposed relationships among the variables (Figure 1).

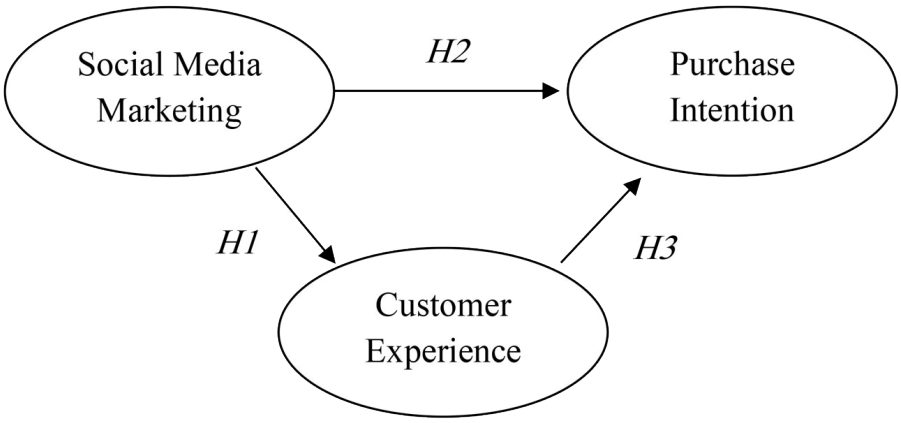

Figure 1: The conceptual framework

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research work is descriptive is nature. The primary data for the study was collected from Indian consumers using a survey by visiting personally and contacting prospective respondents located at different places in Lucknow. As the population for the study is very high, non-probability convenience sampling technique was used for collecting data. Cross-sectional perspective of population and researchers' judgment were employed to remove the biasness of the convenience sampling method. A structured questionnaire was designed covering the demographic characteristics of respondents, different dimension of customer experience, purchase intention, and social media marketing based on review of related literature. Consumer response was rated on Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Validity of the construct was tested with the help of a panel of experts. A pilot test of 30 respondents were carried out to check the reliability. The Cronbach's alpha(α)was found to be 0.823. The value suggested a highly acceptable level of reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to 320 consumers of Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh) in personal visits at different locations. Out of 320 questionnaires, 279 valid ones were received and used in this study. The excluded 41 response were unreliable or insincerely answered. The data thus received was systematically arranged, tabulated, and analyzed. SPSS software and AMOS was used to analyze the data and carry out structural equation modeling for model fitness.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile

The information presented in table1 summarize the demographic characteristics of respondents. It was found that 13.6% of respondents were from the age group of up to 20 years, majority of the respondent(38.4%) were in the age group of 21-30 years. The table indicates that more than one fourth (29.4%) respondents were from age group ranging from 31-40 years. Remaining 18.6% respondent were in the age group of 41 to 50 years. The table also indicates that males dominate the sample with 64.9% of them included in the survey. As regards to education level, 13.3% respondents interviewed were under graduate, 38.4% were up to graduate, 48.4% were postgraduate. The sample income level distribution indicates that the majority of respondents receive a monthly income range of INR 20000- INR 40000 (38.7%), 28% were having up to INR 20000 and only 5.4% were earning more than INR 100000 per month. The majority (61.3%) of respondents were service class employees.

Table 1: Demographical Profile (N= 279)

Demographical Characteristics		Frequency	%
Age	Up to 20 Years	38	13.6
	21 – 30Years	107	38.4
	31 – 40Years	82	29.4
	41 – 50Years	52	18.6
Gender	Male	181	64.9
	Female	98	35.1
Educational Qualification	Under Graduation	37	13.3
	Up to Graduation	107	38.4
	Post Graduation	135	48.4
Income Level	Up to INR20,000 Per month	78	28.0
	INR20000 – INR40000 Per month	108	38.7
	INR40000 – INR60000 Per month	55	19.7
	INR60000 – INR100000 Per month	23	8.2
	More than Rs100000PM	15	5.4
Profession	Student	46	16.5
	Business	39	14.0
	Service	171	61.3
	Professionals	23	8.2

INR stands for Indian National Rupees; 1 USD = INR70.12 as on December 26, 2018.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

The interrelatedness of various independent factors and their impact on dependent factor of the proposed model was tested with the help of Structural Equation Modeling by combining multiple regression with confirmatory factor analysis. There are two models in SEM. First, the measurement model and the second is the structural model. For ensuring the reliability and validity of the variables, the measurement model is drawn where as the structural model is concerned with the relationship among the latent variable. Maximum likelihood (ML) method is used for estimations and overall fit index of the measurement model. To test the measurement model, a confirmatory factor analysis is conducted using AMOS. Figure 1 shows the measurement model which consists of three constructs -social media marketing, customer experience, and purchase intention.

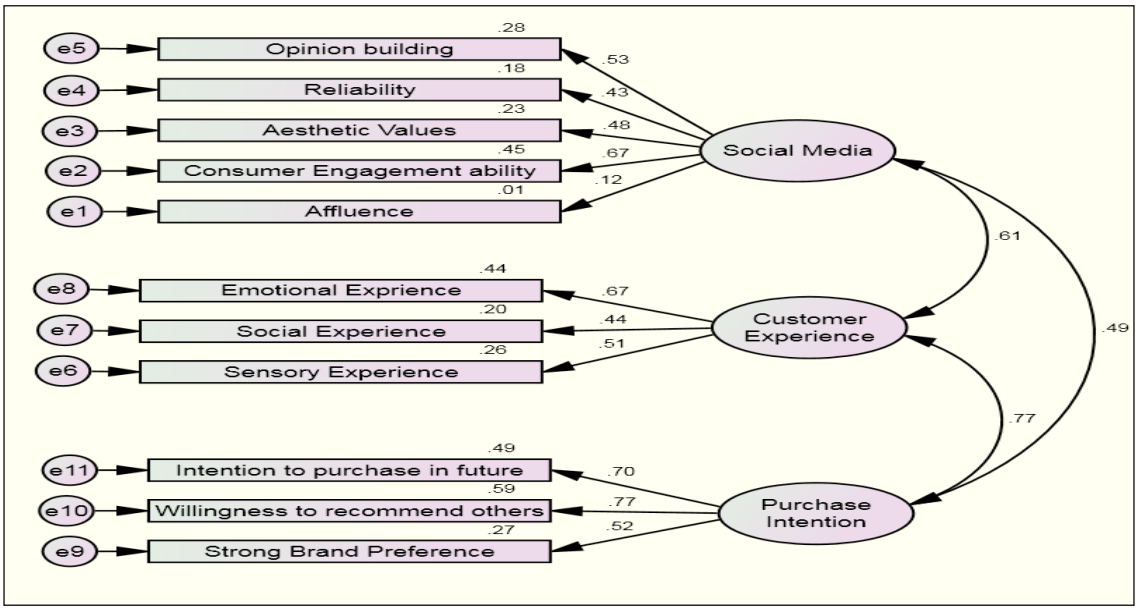

Figure 1: Measurement Model

The reliability of the measurement as presented in table 2 was tested using Cronbach's *α*. The Cronbach's (*α)* value ranged from 0.659 to 0.792 and indicated acceptable internal consistency for each construct.

Table 2: Item Loading and Reliability

Construct and Item	Standardized Loading	Mean	SD	α
Social Media Marketing (CR = 0.676, AVE = 0.285, ASV = 0.203)				
Affluence	0.763	3.83	0.685	0.704
Consumer Engagement Ability	0.797	3.70	0.973	
Aesthetic Values	0.656	3.86	0.746	
Reliability	0.571	3.73	0.808	
Opinion Building	0.497	3.82	0.743	
Customer Experience (CR = 0.640, AVE=0.512, ASV=0.407)				
Emotional Experience	0.699	3.89	0.740	0.659
Social Experience	0.646	3.60	0.935	
Sensory Experience	0.678	3.67	1.126	
Purchase Intention (CR = 0.802, AVE=0.627, ASV=0.356)				
Strong Brand Preference	0.735	3.49	0.873	0.792
Willingness to recommend others	0.698	3.71	0.791	
Intention to purchase in future	0.615	3.78	0.805	

The measurement model presented in figure 1 and table 2 indicated the Composite reliability (CR) which is the better method of judging overall reliability determining the consistency of the construct itself (Hair *et al*., 2010). The composite reliability of social media marketing was 0.701, customer experience ass 0.740, and purchase intention was 0.802. These values indicate that all construct have good reliability in measurement model. Next outcome was the Convergent validity which is measured by standard regression weight (standard factor loading). The table depict that all the measurement items have standardized loading estimates of 0.5 or higher (ranging

from 0.497 to 0.797 at the alpha level of 0.05, indicating acceptable value of convergent validity of the measurement model. Discriminant validity was tested to assess the extent to which a construct is actually different from other constructs (Hair *et al*., 2010). The discriminant validity is confirmed as data presented in the table 2 shows that AVE of the particular constructs is more than the ASV. In conclusion, all data of measurement model were appropriate to proceed with the evaluation of the structural model.

Structural model

Table 3 presented the output of structural equation model. The model fit was assured by calculating some indices including CFI, GFI, NFI, TLI, RMSEA as suggested by Hair *et al*. (2010). All values presented in table 3 indicated that the structural model fit the data reasonably well.

Table 3: Goodness-of Fit Statistics

Model fit Statistics	Structural Model	Cut-off Value
χ^2/df	2.660	1.0 – 3.0
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	0.924	> 0.90
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	0.904	> 0.90
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.927	> 0.90
TLI (Tucker Lewis Index)	0.908	> 0.90
RMR	0.034	< 0.50
RMSEA (Root Mean Square of Error Approximation)	0.077	< 0.08 Good Fit

Table 4 presens the values standardized estimates, standard error, t statistics and p value of the individual tests of the significance of the relationship between the variables. The impact of social media marketing on the customer experience (β= 0.606, t = 1.605, and p = 0.108) was found insignificant at 0.05 α level, indicating that social media marketing does not lead to creating favorable customer experience. For the relation of customer experience and purchase intention the critical ratio (t-statistic) is 4.010 > 1.96 which indicates that the link is significant at 5% level of significance. This shows that customer experience has a significantly positive impact on purchase intention and customer experience are important precursor of purchase intention. Result indicates that social media marketing have no significant impact on purchase intention (β= 0.033, t = 0.767, and p = 0.809) indicating no significant relationship between social media marketing purchase intention.

Table 4: Maximum Likelihood Estimates for Model (N = 279)

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Standardized Estimate	Standard Error	t-statistic	p-value
Social Media Marketing	Customer Experience	0.606	1.759	1.605	0.108
Social Media Marketing	Purchase Intention	0.033	0.767	0.241	0.809
Customer Experience	Purchase Intention	0.748	0.227	4.010	***

*** Highly significant link

To test the proposed relationships, a structural equation model was developed, as shown in Figure 2. Only the statistically significant relationships are described (P < .05). The numerical scores on all lines indicate standardized regression coefficients (beta). The overall model fit was tested using several indices as presented in table 3 and table 5a and b. The model fit values were CMIN 2.666 and Comparative fit index (CFI)

0.927 implying that the model had a very good fit. Additionally, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), with a value of .077, also indicated that the model had a good fit. Test statistics as summarized in table 5 from figure 2 did not support first and second hypothesis and support the third hypothesis i.e. Customer Experience has a significant impact on purchase intention.

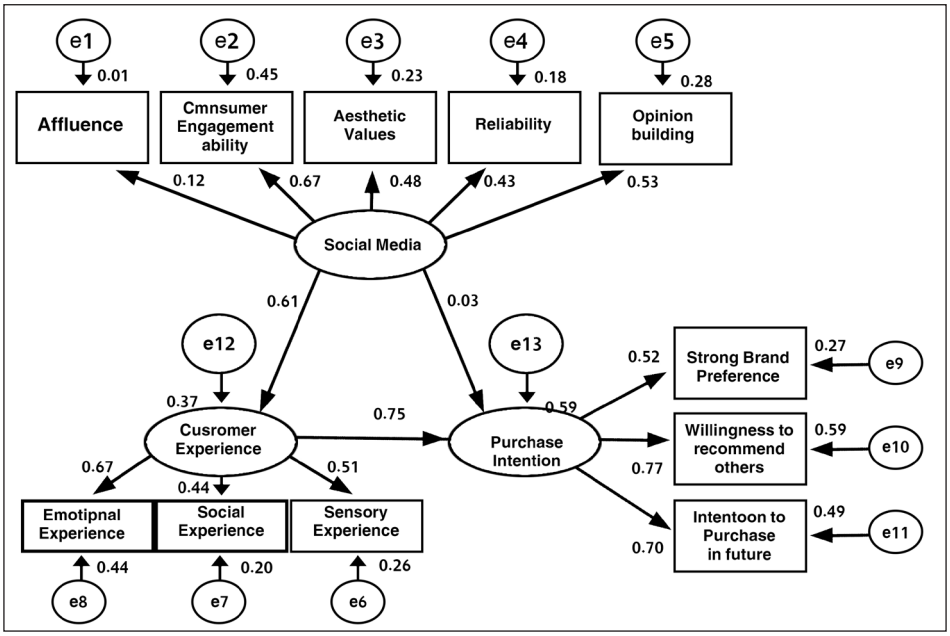

Figure 2: Standardized Regression Coefficients – Proposed Model

Table 5A: Influence of Mediating Variable using Sobel Test (A)

.	Input		Test Statistics	Standard Error	P-Value
a	0.606	Sobel test	0.33584637	1.34968855	0.73698672
b	0.748	Aroian test	0.32151426	1.40985351	0.74782071
Sa	1.795	Goodman test	0.35228357	1.28671343	0.72462561
Sb	0.227				

Table 5B: Influence of Mediating Variable using Sobel Test (B)

	Input			
t_a	1.605	Sobel test	1.49007692	0.13620401
t_b	4.010	Aroian test	1.45167854	0.14659101
		Goodman test	1.53169294	0.12559823

Table 5 revealed the results of Sobel test, Aroian test, and Goodman test that were conducted to evaluate the effect of mediating variable (customer experience) of a given independent variable (social media marketing) on a given dependent variable (purchase intention). In general, mediation may occur if: (1) the IV significantly affects the mediator, (2) the IV significantly affects the DV in the absence of the mediator, (3) the mediator has a major unique effect on the DV, and (4) the influence of the IV on the DV shrinks when the mediator is applied to the model. Such principles can be used to informally determine whether mediation is taking place or not. Sobel test indicated that p-values is more than 0.05 assuming a two-tailed z-test is less than 1.96 and hence null hypothesis is accepted (table 7).

Table 7: Hypotheses Test Results

Hypothesis	Standardized Estimates	Results
Social Media Marketing has a significant impact on Customer Experience.	0.606	Not accepted
Social Media Marketing has a significant impact on purchase intention.	0.033	Not accepted
Customer Experience has a significant impact on purchase intention.	0.748	Accepted

DISCUSSIONS

Growing popularity of social media platforms is changing the way by which consumers search product information, evaluate possible alternatives, and make final choices of the product. The social media acts as a platform where consumers position themselves in today's market. The motive of the research was to study how consumer behavior has changed in the digital age specifically through social media. With the substantial growth in social media usage in the Indian context, this study investigates the impact of social media marketing on customer experience and consequently creats purchase intention within the context of online communities. Social media in the present business environment has forced marketers to change their old philosophy of mass media marketing and bring new initiatives that enhance customer interactivity.

It was found that consumers generally search for information about products online, and these online information and reviews are helpful in making more informed and confident purchase decision. The results of the study indicate that, although usage of social media marketing is growing among consumers, social media marketing does not lead to purchase intention. Present study also reflects that social media marketing does not have significant impact on customer experience. This relationship indicates that, despite the growth of internet users in India, social media marketing through web 2.0 tools are not enough to create unique understanding and familiarity among customers. The reasons may be the difference in the role of social media in building customer awareness and conviction in favor of purchase intention. The customer experience is a mix of many elements capable of connecting with the customer emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually (Mossberg, 2007). The findings show that customers are searching information about products in social media platforms but don't trust these platform while making final purchase decision. Therefore, market must focus on building trust in social media marketing strategies to strengthen customer purchase. Previous studies confirms that consumer like organizations to treat them uniquely, and to know their personal preferences and purchase history. Accenture (2015) confirmed that 75% of customers admitted that they are more likely to buy the product from a company that recognizes them, know their purchase history, and recommends products based on their past purchases. The consumer looks for relevant and reliable content on the web to build their intention and use it during the whole purchase process. Customers consider these sites only as a way to collect necessary information about products features and application. The study reveals the significant relationship between customer experience and purchase intention. Enhancing customer experience is more useful in building purchase intention as compared to social media marketing. As a result, consumer experience is having more decisive role in encouraging purchase decision.

Growing but low penetration of internet, changing demographical characteristics, more importance of aesthetics of products, environment of purchase especially state-of-art infrastructure, low degree of trust on information available on social

media platforms, and significance of past experiences may be the reasons for the poor relationship between social media marketing, customer experience, and purchase intention. It is believed that as the penetration of internet increases, definitely, and social media platforms will be the prime source of searching and evaluating the information, creating favorable customer experience and subsequent purchase of products. This research also brings several new insights for organizations to use the social media marketing as part of their marketing strategies to gain new consumers and creating favorable customer experience. Particularly, favorable customer experience is highly regarded as the driving factor of purchase intention. Therefore, marketers must identify the dimensions of customer experience in order to maximize brand awareness that consequently will influence consumers' purchase decision. These findings is consistent with past research from Zhu and Zhang (2010) and Hutter *et al*. (2013). The favorable experiences of customers can also improve the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies and thus produce desirable results for organizations. In addition, managers can improve the customer experience with brand through improving product features and quality, developing price-value trade-off, attractive schemes, better customer services, efficient salespersons, and adequate after-sale services. These improvements directly increase the purchase intention of the products.

Managerial Implication, Limitations, and Future Scope of Study

The findings of this study provide new insights for the consequences of both science and management. First, customer experience is affected by social media marketing. This is in support of Kim and Ko (2010) and Hutter *et al*. (2013) previous studies. Social media allows communication between consumers and marketers. Consequently, its presence has a positive impact on the purchasing of a product (Zhu and Zhang, 2010). In addition, research showed that social media marketing actually affects the mindset of customers and the desire to buy. The management should concentrate on productive two-way communication using social media platforms, which are highly interactive, customized, and entertaining.

There are certain limitations to this research. The sample in this analysis is Uttar Pradesh State's social media users in Lucknow city. Because the sample size is small, generalizations are misleading for the entire population of social media users. Analyzing whether the results are the same when performing the analysis through countries or regions would be important. Also, the respondents were from different age groups and levels of education. Future studies may explore the model with a sample based on a specific level of education or age. To refine the model, it is possible to include other factors influenced by social media marketing activities. Moderating variables such as gender, age, and time spent on social media can be investigated further in the model. The study can be applied to specific industries and specific goods model. More work to analyze the relationship between these variables is needed.

Social media has opened a window for advertisers to track consumers' first-hand cognitions, perceptions, habits, and lifestyles. Rapid increase in business ability to collect and cross-reference user-generated demographic, psychographic, geodemographic, physiological, and other personal information about its users is evident with the continued introduction of new digital technologies, such as smart watches, into the consumer market. While this scenario sounds like a marketing intelligence bonanza, more work is needed in the future on consumer confidence in social media. Future research on social media marketing should carefully consider corporate social responsibility and ethical implications on consumer welfare and public interest.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, this study projects that social media is gaining importance among contemporary society. It is being used extensively for marketing products and to influence the user towards its market offerings. Finding of the research suggest that social media marketing should be used to strengthen customer experience so that it can bring better result in building purchase intention. Social media is no longer just about marketing gimmick, but it is all about the building and managing of customer experience. Strengthening consumer experience is a complex task. The innovative technology such as multiple touch-points across a number of devices and channels need to be incorporated, and marketers are required to understand all these touch-points in order to offer excellent customer experiences. In case of web 2.0 applications, identifying and improving these areas requires the potentially complex integration of technology, data, and behavioral aspects of customers. In order for organizations to take advantage of social media to manage customer experience, marketers should use social media to entice conversation with customers, to provide information of product applications, develop the relationship, reinforce their brand choice, create, and build brand visibility. In the Indian context, social media marketing and its innovative application offer great opportunities for marketers as well as brand managers to improve the brands' performance. If customer experience and social media marketing were managed well, marketers would have a pool of satisfied customer share and an advantage over competitors in contemporary business environment.

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دور خبرة التسوق من خلال وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي كوسيط لنزعة العملاء للشراء دراسة حالة

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https://doi.org/10.37575/h/edu/2047

الملخص

في بيئة الأعمال المتغيرة، نالت خبرة العملاء أهمية معنوية بين الممارسين والأكاديميين. يهتم عدد متزايد من الإداريين وباحثي الخدمة بمجال خبرة المستهلكين، إلا أن البحوث عن خبرة العملاء في مجالات التسوق من خلال وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي وأثرها في تكوين النزعة للشراء قليلة. يبحث هذا العمل دور الوساطة الناتج من خبرة العملاء في التسوق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في تطوير رغبتهم في شراء المنتجات الحياتية. تم جمع بيانات الدراسة من 279 مستهلكًا هنديًّا باستخدام المسح عن طريق الزيارة الشخصية والاتصال بالمستجيبين المحتملين الموجودين في أماكن مختلفة في مدينة لكناو(الهند). وجدت الدراسة أن خبرة العملاء تنظم أنشطة التسوق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي والنزعة إلى الشراء. إن خبرة العميل والتسوق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي بينهما علاقة ارتباط، وكلاهما يؤثر على رغبة العميل في الشراء. يؤكد نموذجنا أن وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تعزز خبرة العملاء، وتؤثر بدورها على نية الشراء. واتضح أن تأثير وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على نية الشراء غير معنوي. أوصت الدراسة المسوقين باستعمال التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لتحسين اندماج المستهلك وعلاقته معهم، وتوفير معلومات قيّمة عن المنتجات، وتقوية فرص اختيارها، وبالتالي زيادة خبرات المستهلكين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تجربة العملاء، التسويق عبر الشبكات الاجتماعية، نية الشراء.