



Educating Consumers: The Impact of Social Media Marketing Activities on E-Impulse Buying with Purchase Intention As A Mediator

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) on the outcome Purchase Intention (PI) and Electronic Impulse Buying (EIB). Convenience sampling technique was used and a pre-tested structured questionnaire was filled by 145 participants in Karachi. The items in the questionnaire included SMMA, PI, and EIB developed in previous studies. The research results reveal that, SMMA has a significant impact on both PI and EIB. Moreover, concerning the EIB, PI assumes a critical role. But it has to be noted that there is no support for SMMA's indirect effect on the EIB through PI. These findings enhance the knowledge gap regarding how SMMA affects the customers' behavior in a given context of EIB. The research emphasizes that marketers should strive to carry out share-worthy social media campaigns that persuade consumers to buy products on planned as well as impulse bases. On the same note, legislators should put measures in place which would check unethical and unclear social media marketing. Although the present study has made efforts to select the sample conveniently, the limitations and assumptions are considered as liabilities of this research study: Convenience sampling, sample size and cultural difference. Subsequent investigations should examine SMMA's effects in various ways, for instance, with a focus on longitudinal research designs and psychological intermediaries like consumer trust and brand loyalty, as well as expanding the geographical scope of the study to enhance external validity.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing Activities, Purchase Intention, Electronic Impulse Buying, Karachi.



Introduction

Advancement in means of communication and transportation has significantly revitalized the concept of distance, stated by Iqbal and Mohiuddin (2022). According to Mohiuddin and Iqbal (2020), social business tools, such as collaboration with customers and real time information, are very useful in emerging markets. The media scenario has greatly changed in the last one decade (Aslam, Iqbal, and Zaman, 2021). It is without doubt that social media encompasses a tremendous influence on the consumers and their behavior is modifying their daily schedules and decisions (Mohiuddin et al., 2018). Consumers use social media in different capacities such as searching for the prices and taking advice on the products as well as looking at the trends. We are in a position to make unplanned purchases on social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, amongst others as noted by Khalid et al. (2022). SMMA has emerged as one of the most effective means through which customers' buying behaviors can be managed (Hanaysha, 2018). Interactive marketing communication or IMC as described by Kim and Ko (2012) as "Marketing communication that occurs through interfaces and applications that run on computers, hand-held devices, and other appliances which support interaction between individuals or groups" enables firms to offer enhanced customer experiences. Such variables can employ the direct marketing strategy to target specific demography, and interact with customers through comments and other feedback (Shanahan et al., 2019). Therefore, it can be concluded that social media has shifted consumers' buying behavior.

EIB is the unplanned buy of products motivated by the need at a certain time and coming out with a positive feeling (Verma & Singh, 2018). It is most fairly evident in the electronic settings. From research, it is proven that a high percentage, about 60% of apparel and accessories purchase, as well as 30% of fast-moving consumer goods, are unplanned (Arulalan & Field, 2021). In this case, one of the implications that consumers examine only planned purchases will mean that firms and businesses may be able to record minimal sales especially for industries like fashion and fast-moving consumer goods that rely on impulse purchases (Arulalan & Field, 2021).

To conclude, not all impulse buying is wrong or unhealthy. In the view of the above fact, Mohiuddin and Iqbal (2018) observed that it may lead to an enhanced of consumer expenditure, thereby enhancing economic growth (Verma and Singh 2018). Iqbal et al. (2024) have noted that impulse buying could actually make customers aware of innovative products to buy hence introducing a certain element of novelty to the purchases. More importantly, not all impulse purchases cause unhealthy urges to be met; some of them may refer to needs or desires that are feasible and important to consumers, and thus, while may obtain temporary hedonic benefits, may increase consumers' total psychological well-being (Moser, Schoenebeck, & Resnick, 2019). This line of reasoning grounds



impulse buying on other factors, besides its negative appraisals as a kind of erratic and irrational consumer behavior.

Consumer impulsive buying is dependent on SMMA significantly. Using social-networking sites, products' identification is visually appealing and these platforms might lead to consumer attentiveness and call on attractions (Budree et al., 2021). Low prices and pressures of products' availability encourage people to make the desired decisions without thinking too much (Van & Ly, 2022). Social media marketing aims at creating an influence in the social network hence customer imitate the purchasing behaviors of others (Aragoncillo & Orus, 2018). The following two effects relate back to impulse buying and have been identified by prior literature to be positively influenced by SMMA. PI is defined as an individual's conscious tendency or need to buy a product or use a service in the future. But when the intention to buy a particular product is quite high, customers seem to be vulnerable to emotional appeal and will be more likely to act on those intentions than engage in a lot of processing (Khalid et al., 2022).

Research has looked into the effect of SMMA on brand image (Hafeez, 2021) and brand attitude (Ibrahim, 2022). In addition, based on Customer Equity Drivers, Aggarwal and Mittal (2022) examined the effects of SMMA on PI. However, there is a noticeable research gap in the existing literature for studying the PI role in the relationship between SMMA and EIB.

Besides, the sphere of social media is ever-growing, and the consumers are inclined to adjust according to the platforms given. Analyzing online impulsive purchase, it is significant to take into account a buyer's culture as a possible influencer factor. To that end, this study will seek to close the said gap through a comprehensive and extensive literature review and, in turn, shed light on the rather under-researched area of how SMMA affects EIB through PI. In this regard, this study examines this relationship by establishing PI as the mediator between SMMA (the independent variable) and EIB (the dependent variable).

Significance of the Study

This study focuses on the complex relationship between SMMA and EIB with reference to the mediating effect of PI. Marketers should recognize the impact of SMMA on customer behavior in the electronic setting to obtain the maximized results from their approaches. Thus, revealing the direct and indirect impact of SMMA on EIB, this research contributes to the understanding of the processes that occur in the context of impulsive purchases in online stores. The information gathered in the study can also help business entities to develop ways on how they could effectively promote their products through social media sites to increase customers' responses.



Research Questions

The research offers the answer to the following questions:

1. How does SMMA affect EIB?
2. What is the influence of SMMA on PI?
3. How does PI influence EIB?
4. Does PI mediate the association between SMMA and EIB?

Research Objectives

The study is intended to reach the following objectives:

1. To study the direct influence of SMMA on EIB.
2. To examine the impact of SMMA on PI.
3. To investigate the effect of PI on EIB.
4. To determine the mediating role of PI in the relationship between SMMA and EIB.

Theoretical Foundation

The concept that underlies the current research combines many recognized theories to explore the SMMA's involvement in EIB as mediated by PI. From the perspective of the Social Exchange Theory (SET), benefits and costs of social interaction are the main factors that define social relations. Regarding SMMA, this means that customers would approach the firm's social media platforms when they believe that they are likely to gain something valuable, be it content or an exclusive deal which in turn leads to shift in attitudes and more engagement of the firm's accounts (Emerson, 1976). This engagement can have a rather significant contribution to their PI level and therefore they tend to make purchases they did not plan on. In addition, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) posits that perceived behavioral control defines the strength of an individual's intention to perform the behavior envisaged (Ajzen, 1991). These aspects can be formed through social media marketing since positive attitudes towards the brand, favorable social norms as well as perceived control over the purchase decisions build the overall framework for purchase intentions that mediate affiliation of SMMA with EIB.

In addition, the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model helps elucidate how social media content as stimuli, can cause changes in the consumers' state and their subsequent behaviors. To this effect, SMMA performs as again the consumers' psychological state to elicit responses such as impulse buying (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) expands on how the persuasion via social media affect the attitude and behaviors of the consumers by using



either the central or peripheral cues to capture the consumer's attention (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). These theoretical frameworks elucidate the interaction between SMMA and impulsive buying behaviors, with the mediation of purchase intention in the electronic setting.

Literature Review

The world of online shopping is a whirlwind of influences, with SMMA playing a pivotal role. Researchers are thoroughly working to understand how SMMA shapes our purchasing behaviors and what drives us to make impulsive buying decisions.

Moslehpour et al. (2022) conducted a study on the ride-hailing service GO-JEK in Indonesia, revealing that entertainment and word-of-mouth buzz on social media significantly impact users' trust and brand perception. This trust and enhanced perception subsequently influence their decision to choose GO-JEK. Similarly, Koay et al. (2021) focused on Instagram influencers, finding that their social media marketing tactics can lead to impulsive buying. The perceived trustworthiness and attractiveness of influencers play a crucial role in swaying consumers' online shopping behaviors. In the broader domain of online retail, Bansal and Kumar (2018) showed that social media marketing can act as a major impulsive prompting system. Their work provides an understanding of how features such as creativity, topics' attractiveness, website credibility, and the sense of novelty can be stimulated by social media marketing. Moreover, the specifics of the platform participation can create significant differences. Jakwatanatham et al. (2022) conducted research in the context of Facebook Live Streaming in Thailand and found that the level of trust in the seller is the key determinant of consumers' propensity to make a purchase after watching a live stream. This goes further to show how Thai consumers are increasingly turning to social media as a credible source of information.

High interactivity of social media networks is critical for the construction of long-term customer relationships in the smartphone industry, which was proven by Aggarwal and Mittal (2022). They, in turn, increase purchase intentions, which are adjusted by attitudinal patterns in their broadest sense. The fact that impulse buying cannot be fully attributed to one's individuality is also supported through the work of Khokhar et al. (2019), in which the authors analyzed impulse buying in Hyderabad, India. They noted a significant relationship between social media marketing and impulse buying stimulated by electronic word of mouth, the ability to gratify the urge and confidence on the seller.

In Pakistan, Shafiq et al. (2022) explored the relationship between social media marketing and customers' satisfaction and proposed that impulse buying behavior is a mediating variable of the relationship. The COVID-19 pandemic also brought to the fore the power of the social media on the



buying behavior. Kshatriya and Shah (2021) investigated impulsive and compulsive buying behavior and its correlation with the apparel and accessories selling in lockdown situation in India during COVID-19 pandemic where the influence of social media, the quest for uplifting emotions, and the situation forced by COVID-19 pandemic were revealed to affect the purchasing behavior.

This study by Nuseir (2020) questioned the orthodox approaches of the buying behavior by evaluating the impact of Facebook on the impulse buying. This research also revealed that the amount of commercials and customers' perception toward these commercials is capable of influencing impulsive buying behaviors. Akter and Rimu (2020) conducted the research to understand factors affecting online impulse buying of Bangladeshi consumers especially the social media marketers to properly use social media to provide large varieties products that consumers searching for novelty.

Modern social networks have taken on a great deal of importance with regard to promotions for businesses, with advertising affecting the consumer. Regarding the influence of social media ads on impulse and hedonic buying behaviors, Çalışkan and Özdemir (2023) carried out a survey of 992 respondents. The findings show that the social media ads have a positive relationship with both impulse and hedonic buying, and hedonic buying has partial mediation in the relationship, which offers conceptual contributions to the field. In the same way, (Safeer, 2024) focuses on the influence of social media marketing activities on consumer impulse buying through the mediating roles of brand resonance and emotional response. Looking at the specific research objectives, it establishes that social media marketing has a positive impact on brand resonance, emotional responses and impulse buying intention and that social network proneness amplifies the effects. These papers offer applied knowledge for retail managers on how social media marketing can be targeted to enhance impulse purchases on the internet which underlines why social media is a critical tool for influencing consumers' decisions in the behavioural perspective.

In sum, these studies provide an extensive review of the effects of SMMA in various domains, settings, and cultures and its substantial contribution to altering consumers' shopping behaviors and impulsiveness.

Hypothesis Design

The wide presence of social networks allows to attract the attention of a large number of people and increase the consumer awareness of products and services through advertising and appeal to celebrities (Budree et al., 2021). SMMA is effective in creating the feeling of time constraint and the scarcity of product or service that results in the impulsive buying (Yi Wu, 2021). Social media helps in the dissemination of user-content materials like comments and reviews which fosters trust as well



as encourages impulse buying (Imtiaz Arif, 2020). Also, friendly adaptable advertisements on social networks making products and services' suggestions depend on user preferences stimulate likelihood of impulsive buying (Huzaiifa Aslam, 2021). In light of these factors, it is reasonable to hypothesize that:

H1: SMMA has a positive and significant impact on Consumer EIB.

Many organizations often apply SMMA to direct customers to their stores on the Internet. However, to spread an idea, social media marketing is the only means by which individuals can engage the entire population of users with a particular idea in a matter of minutes (Voramontri & Klieb, 2019). Research shows that through social marketing has the potential to change customers' decisions. The example of this aspect is that buyers find it relevant to consult the opinion of the social network influencer before purchasing, whether the product is costly or cheap (Trivedi & Sama, 2020). In this aspect, social media marketing offers marketers various strategies for directing and controlling their customers' buying behaviors. Real-time data is available which help marketers to change their strategies, services, and even the product within the timeframe of days or hours (Hermanda, Sumarwan, & Tinaprillia, 2019). These dynamics can help bring significant changes in the market and the way the consumers behave during their purchase. In light of these factors, it is reasonable to hypothesize that:

H2: SMMA has a positive and significant impact on PI.

Several reasons can explain why PI has an influence over the EIB. The survey conducted by Peña-García et al., (2020) try to establish that the internet shoppers are more likely to behave in an impulsive way especially when offered good discounts. The affective component of a strong buying intention intensifies enthusiasm that results in impulsive buying, especially in the context of purchasing through the Internet (Yi & Jai, 2020). Downloading via the internet is even less effortful, thereby making it easier for those with high PI to give in to their impulsivity (Gulfranz and Bano, 2022). Perceived values lead the consumers to hold a positive impression over the product or service they intend to buy and which they think has upgraded value. This perceived value then becomes the reason for impulse buying as customers will be willing to buy the product impulsively if they consider it to have value (Yang et al., 2021). Considering these factors collectively, it is reasonable to propose that:

H3: PI has a positive and significant impact on EIB.

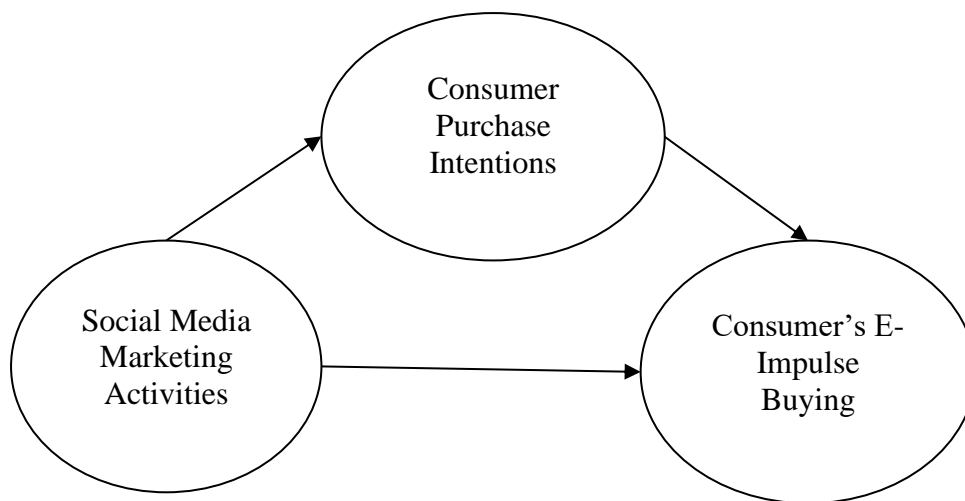
SMMA can also switch EIB through PI. Social media enables enhancing the company's brand visibility and awareness (Budree et al., 2021), opinions from other consumers, positive interacting, and endorsements from influencers (Imtiaz Arif, 2020), and defining the marketing campaigns that



are beneficial to companies and have a positive influence on consumers' performance (Huzaifa Aslam, 2021). Impulsive buying is thus likely to occur among the consumers who have the high interest in buying a given product or service. Peña-García et al., (2020) and Yang, Tang, & Men (2021) affirm that consumers judge a well-considered and wanted product or service as having better value. This high PI increases the likelihood of the impulsiveness in purchasing behaviors. Based on this discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: SMMA influences consumer EIB through PI.

Figure 1
Conceptual Model



Research Methodology

In the context of this study, convenience sampling was employed to select participants who wanted and were able to participate in the study which led to the selection of 145 Karachi residents who filled a structured self-administered Google Forms' questionnaire. The survey instrument was developed with the constructs SMMA, PI and EIB. SMMA was evaluated through nine items adopted from Chen and Lin (2019) and Kim and Ko (2012); PI was measured through seven items adapted from the previous reports McKnight and Chervany (2014), Wang and Chang (2013), and Yoo and Donthu (2001); while EIB was assessed with a five-item scale adapted from Rook and Fisher (1995) and Park, Kim, and Forney (2006). Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed herein for the data analysis. Software used for data analysis is SmartPLS 4. The purpose of the study was to establish the direct effects of SMMA on PI and EIB together with the mediating effect that SMMA has on EIB by means of PI.



Results

Table 1
 Demographics

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	95	65.5
Female	50	34.5
Age		
16 – 20	25	17.2
21 – 40	108	74.5
41 - Above	12	8.3
Qualification		
Bachelor	97	66.9
High School	25	17.2
Postgraduate	23	15.9

Source: Author’s Calculation

The dataset comprises data from 145 respondents, the majority of whom are males (65.5%) while the rest are females. The youngest age group, 16 to 20, accounts for 17.2% of all respondents. The bulk of respondents (74.5%) are between the ages of 21 and 40. This age group establishes a noteworthy share of the sample and is vital for understanding the viewpoints and understandings of individuals in the early to middle stages of adulthood. The older age group, consisting of individuals aged 41 and above, constitutes 8.3% of the sample. Concerning educational qualifications, the majority of respondents 66.9% reported having a Bachelor's degree, followed by 17.2% with a high school qualification, and 15.9% with postgraduate qualifications. As shown in Table 1.

Measurement Model Analysis

Figure 2.

PLS-SEM Measurement Model

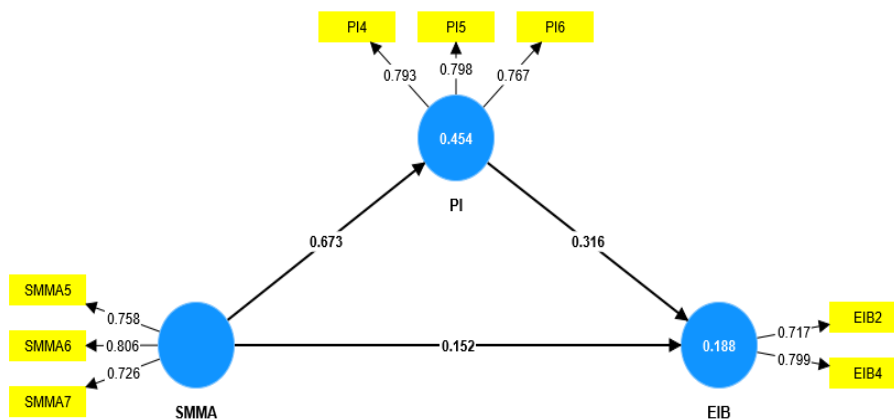




Table 2
 Reliability and Convergent Validity

	Outer loadings
<i>Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) CR = 0.808, AVE = 0.584</i>	
SMMA5	0.758
SMMA6	0.806
SMMA7	0.726
<i>Purchase Intention (PI) CR = 0.829, AVE = 0.617</i>	
PI4	0.793
PI5	0.798
PI6	0.767
<i>Electronic Impulse Buying (EIB) CR = 0.731, AVE = 0.577</i>	
EIB2	0.717
EIB4	0.799

Source: Author’s Calculation

The Composite Reliability (CR) values are used to analyze the internal consistency. It is recommended that CR should be greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2016). Table 2 presents the results of CR, indicating that it meets the recommended threshold value. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and outer loadings values to evaluate the convergent validity of the constructs. To ensure convergent validity, outer loadings should be ≥ 0.708 and AVE should be ≥ 0.5 (Hair et al., 2016). Table 2 indicates that both outer loadings and AVE are above the recommended values. Besides, the items with outer loadings less than 0.708 were removed.

Table 3
 Discriminant Validity

	Fornell–Larcker criterion		
	EIB	PI	SMMA
EIB	0.759		
PI	0.419	0.786	
SMMA	0.365	0.673	0.764

Source: Author’s Calculation

The discriminant validity was evaluated by the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Table 3 reveals that all the diagonal bold values are greater as compared to the values in horizontal and vertical sites. As per (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), the discriminant validity has been attained.

Table 4
 Cross Loadings criterion result

	EIB	PI	SMMA
EIB2	0.717	0.288	0.268
EIB4	0.799	0.345	0.286
PI4	0.431	0.793	0.434
PI5	0.304	0.798	0.557
PI6	0.258	0.767	0.590
SMMA5	0.361	0.496	0.758
SMMA6	0.235	0.545	0.806
SMMA7	0.237	0.502	0.726

Source: Authors’ Computation



Table 4 reveals that all the items have the highest loadings on their respective construct. The results depict that discriminant validity has been achieved.

Table 5
 HTMT Results

	Electronic Impulse Buying	Purchase Intention	Social Media Marketing Activities
Electronic Impulse Buying			
Purchase Intention	0.975		
Social Media Marketing Activities	0.875	1.008	

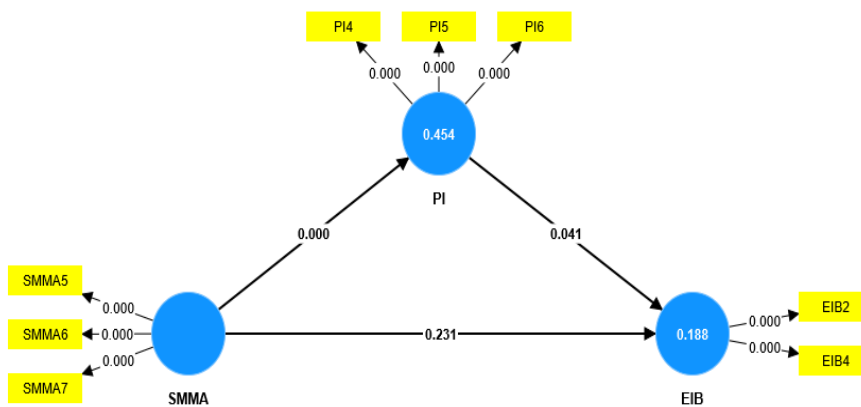
Source: Author's Calculation

Table 5 reveals that all the values are virtually < 1 . As per Henseler et al. (2015), the discriminant validity has been attained.

Structural Model Analysis

Figure 3

PLS-SEM Structural Model



Structural Model Analysis

Table 6.

Complete Hypothesis Testing Results

Relationship	Coef.	T Stat	Decision	Outcome
			<i>p</i> -Value	
Social Media Marketing Activities → Electronic Impulse Buying	0.365	3.730	0.000	Supported
Social Media Marketing Activities → Purchase Intention	0.673	9.726	0.000	Supported
Purchase Intention → Electronic Impulse Buying	0.316	2.041	0.041	Supported
Social Media Marketing Activities → Purchase Intention → Electronic Impulse Buying	0.213	0.112	0.056	Unsupported

Source: Authors' Computation



The results in Table 6 indicate that SMMA significantly impacts both EIB (coefficient = 0.365, p-value = 0.000) and PI (coefficient = 0.673, p-value = 0.000). PI also significantly influences EIB (coefficient = 0.316, p-value = 0.041). However, the indirect effect of SMMA on EIB through PI is not significant (coefficient = 0.213, p-value = 0.056). This suggests that while SMMA directly impacts both PI and EIB and PI also directly impacts EIB, the mediated pathway is not supported. Therefore, there is partial mediation present in this relationship.

Conclusion and Discussion

Discussion

The purpose of this research is to identify and analyze the complex relationship among SMMA, EIB, and PI. The results provide interesting implications that can be in line as well as contrasting the existing literature and research. One of the most important outcomes of this research work is the fact that SMMA has direct relationship with both EIB and PI. The above findings are supported by Jiang & Yin (2021) and Asyhari et al., (2022) on the impact of social media marketing that has a positive impact on PI. Notably, the study also establishes that PI has a significant and positive impact on EIB which is in agreement with Zhang et al., (2007) as they established that there is positive relation between PI and impulse buying.

SMMA's indirect impact on EIB via PI is not significant which is contrary to the previous research and expectations. This result is contrasting with the results of Khan et al. (2019) and Yang et al. (2023), as they discovered significant mediating influences via customer satisfaction and brand equity. Social media marketing both have an influence over EIB but this influence is independent.

Besides, the study also explores the possible reasons for such outcomes in light of Pakistan. It is seen from Husnain et al. (2018) and Bashir et al. (2013) that nine cultural factors and financial controls may result in cautious impulsive buying. In addition, as proposed by Zhang et al. (2014), Xu et al. (2020) and Parboteeah et al. (2008), such fears may cause a decline in customers' trust, which as a result, may impact EIB.

Although the present study has made efforts to select the sample conveniently, the limitations and assumptions are considered as liabilities of this research study: Convenience sampling, sample size and cultural difference. Despite the differences obtained in all the variables, it is suggested that in future studies more rigorous sampling methods should be employed to enhance generalizability. Also, sample sizes should be raised in order to enhance statistical power of the study, and some researchers suggest examining cross cultural effect of social media on impulse purchase. It may be also possible to get more profound insight into this matter due to elements as psychological factors,



choice of the platform, and technological advancements. One can note the following weaknesses of the work, which can be eliminated and taken into account by other researchers when continuing to study the relationship between SMMA and EIB.

Conclusion

The research results reveal that EIB and PI are affected directly by SMMA to a significant extent. Also, the study establishes that PI has a significant relationship with EIB. PI does not therefore seem to mediate the relationship between EIB and SMMA. This means that while both SMMA and PI individually relate to EIB, the relationship is not significantly mediated by the pathway from SMMA to EIB through PI. Therefore, to increase electronic impulse buying behaviors, marketers should focus on direct social media and enhancement of purchase intentions separately.

Implications for Marketers and Policymakers

The information gathered in the study is therefore crucial for policymakers and marketers in the following ways. Since SMMA has a direct relation with PI and EIB, marketers should ensure great and attractive social media campaigns are developed. Therefore, the focus of these activities should be on the development of a proper message that will help engage the consumers and make them interested in the products enough to make both planned and impulse purchases. For the purpose of sheltering clients from possibly fallacious advertisements, rules on social media marketers should be applicable, which is proven by the fact that SMMA has a direct effect on EIB and PI. Regulators should look at establishing rules that would govern the social media marketing aspect for a just and reliable online economy.

Future Directions

Future research ought to examine the fundamental mechanisms by which SMMA influences PI and EIB. Further insights into the dynamics of these connections may be obtained through longitudinal studies. To further understand the dynamics at work, it may be helpful to look into the role of additional potential moderators or mediators, such as brand loyalty, consumer trust, and differences in susceptibility to social media influences.

Furthermore, extending the geographic scope beyond Karachi might enhance the generalizability of the results. Conducting comparative studies in many cultural and demographic contexts would yield a more comprehensive understanding of the global ways in which SMMA shapes consumer behavior. Finally, but just as importantly, adding qualitative methods like focus groups and in-depth interviews could provide richer, more nuanced understandings of how consumers perceive and engage with social media marketing.



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