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THE ROLE OF CONSUMER TRUST IN AI-DRIVEN SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND PURCHASE INTENTION IN EMERGING MARKETS

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Consumer trust, artificial intelligence, purchase intention, social media marketing, brand awareness, brand engagement, and emerging markets.	The purpose of this study is to investigate how consumer trust affects purchase intention in emerging economies and the use of AI in social media marketing. To supplement earlier research on social media marketing, the study adds Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Consumer Trust to the relationship between social media marketing and consumer behavioral outcomes. In addition to examining how social media marketing affects brand awareness and engagement, the study also looks at how these factors affect consumer trust and purchase intention. Additionally, the relationship between social media marketing and brand awareness as well as between social media marketing and brand engagement uses artificial intelligence as a moderating element. A total of 196 valid social media user questionnaires were evaluated after the main data was gathered using a structured questionnaire. Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was the structural equation modeling technique utilized in this study to analyze the obtained data and evaluate the measurement and structural model. The study presents a modern perspective on social media marketing by integrating consumer trust and artificial intelligence into a developing market environment. By improving knowledge of the impact of AI-based social media engagement on customers' perception, engagement, trust, and buy intent toward companies, the results are anticipated to provide a distinctive contribution to the marketing literature. Additionally, the study offers advertisers insightful information about how to leverage AI-powered social media marketing in a way that preserves customer trust and engagement with their target demographic.
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Introduction

Digital technology has significantly changed how businesses market to and interact with consumers. Among all these technical advancements, social media has emerged as one of the most important marketing platforms for customers to discover brands, exchange information, interact with businesses, and develop opinions about goods and services. Social media marketing (SMM) enables businesses to engage consumers in brand-related activities and communicate with them through interactive, content-based platforms. Social media extends beyond traditional marketing since consumers may create, share, comment on, and respond to brand content in addition to receiving marketing information (Alalwan et al., 2017).

Social media is becoming an essential component of the marketing mix because it is now so crucial to contemporary marketing. Organizations utilize social media as a tool to increase brand awareness, offer product details, cultivate relationships with customers, and influence their purchasing decisions. Consequently, brand awareness, brand engagement, and purchase intention are important consumer outcomes that can be influenced by the different facets of social media marketing (Godey et al., 2016; Yadav & Rahman, 2017). Social media can improve consumers' brand identification and recall by giving them information about the brand on a regular basis. Additionally, the interactive features of social media platforms give customers more opportunities to engage with brands and create deeper connections.

One of the most important outcomes of social media marketing is brand awareness since consumers are more likely to consider brands that they can identify and recall. Social media platforms give brands the opportunity to interact with consumers on a regular basis and encourage them to interact with their content. Social networking activities have the potential to increase brand recognition, according to Barreda et al. (2015), and Hutter et al. (2013) shown that consumer interaction on social media could positively affect brand awareness and purchasing behavior.

Understanding consumer-brand connections now depends more on brand engagement than awareness. Customers can participate in discussions, share brand information, interact with material, and connect with other customers who are interested in the brand through social media. Cognitive, emotional, and behavioral brand engagement may result from the activities. According to Brodie et al. (2013) and Hollebeek et al. (2014), meaningful interactions between customers and brands require consumer engagement.

These connections are especially strong in developing nations, where social media platforms are now widely used, easily available, and efficient ways to communicate with customers and compete in more digital marketplaces. Zegiri et al. (2025) investigates how brand awareness, brand engagement, and purchase intention relate to social media usage in emerging economies. According to their conclusions, the current study has a significant foundation. However, the social media marketing landscape has expanded beyond the purview of conventional social media activities due to the continuous advancement of digital technologies.

One of the major technological developments that has affected contemporary marketing is the application of artificial intelligence (AI). Because of its suggestions, customer interaction automation, consumer information analysis, content creation, and customer interaction, AI is also becoming increasingly important to marketing. These apps assist marketers in processing massive amounts of data and delivering more streamlined and personalized consumer experiences (Davenport et al., 2020). Additionally, Huang and Rust (2021) highlighted AI's growing strategic role in marketing and how it might change marketing initiatives.

AI's incorporation into social media marketing has the potential to alter how customers perceive brand communication. AI-powered solutions can automate consumer-brand interactions and personalize the material that customers see. However, as AI becomes more widely used, worries about privacy, transparency, dependability, and trust in technology-enabled interactions also arise. Depending on their experiences and opinions about AI technology, customers may react differently to AI-powered marketing (Puntoni et al., 2021). Because of this, it is now more important than ever to comprehend how AI may be used in social media marketing.

Technology-enabled consumer trust is another essential element of consumer relationships. Customers' degree of confidence in a brand or seller's dependability, integrity, and skill is known as consumer trust. In the digital age, consumers frequently select companies based on information they find online without interacting with the company or its goods, which makes brand trust even more important. Customers may be able to evaluate brand information, communication, and conduct through social media interactions, which may have an impact on their level of brand trust.

When artificial intelligence is employed in marketing campaigns, consumer trust is very crucial. Customers may have concerns about how their personal data is handled, how AI is used in decision-making, and the caliber of AI-driven interactions, even though AI can improve efficiency and personalization. These problems may affect how consumers view and respond to AI-driven marketing initiatives. According to Puntoni et al.'s study from 2021, consumers' experiences with AI differ from those of traditional human interactions, and consumer perceptions of AI are becoming increasingly important in marketing research.

Thus, the current study expands upon the SMM framework by incorporating the ideas of consumer trust and artificial intelligence. The study examines how social media marketing affects brand awareness and engagement and finds a relationship between these factors and consumer trust and purchase intention. Additionally, artificial intelligence's position as a mediator between social media marketing and brand awareness and between social media marketing and brand engagement is examined. The study is especially relevant to emerging markets since businesses there are using digital platforms increasingly to interact with customers and gain a competitive edge. Businesses may create marketing tactics that are not just engaging but also more meaningful and dependable with consumers by utilizing the synergy of social media marketing, artificial intelligence, and consumer trust. Thus, the goal of this study is to provide a thorough understanding of how customer trust in AI social media marketing affects by intention in

emerging economies. The study will contribute to the advancement of the literature on consumer behavior and technology in marketing, building on the body of research already conducted in the field of AI and customer trust.

Analysis of Gaps

Social media marketing has been a hot issue in marketing literature due to its ability to influence consumers' perceptions, engagement, and behavioral intentions. A correlation between SMM and BA, BE, and PI has been found by Alalwan et al. (2017), Godey et al. (2016), and Yadav & Rahman (2017). Zegiri et al. (2025) investigated the connections between these, which is regarded as a significant contribution to comprehending the function of SMM in this situation. However, the advent of AI has altered the landscape of digital marketing. While AI is being used in many facets of social media marketing, including automation, suggestion, personalization, and customer analysis, its application in current models has not been well investigated. Instead, then examining whether AI affects the relationship between SMM and certain brand outcomes, current research on the deployment of AI in marketing has mostly concentrated on the strategic usage of AI and customer experiences.

CT is a second lacuna. Trust is particularly important in the digital and AI environment because customers may have doubts about the veracity of businesses, privacy policies, information accuracy, and interactions with AI. Nevertheless, CT is not well-established in the current SMM framework for emerging market research. The comprehensive analysis of AI and consumer trust reveals yet another discrepancy. Relatively few studies have merged social media marketing, consumer engagement, AI, and trust in the same environment, even though these concepts have been the subject of several studies. By (i) adding CT to the current SMM framework and (ii) examining AI as a moderator, this study seeks to close this gap. Therefore, by developing an expanded model that incorporates the ideas of SMM, Brand Awareness, Brand Engagement, Consumer Trust, Purchase Intention, and Artificial Intelligence in the context of emerging markets, the current study significantly adds to the body of literature.

Research Goals

The purpose of this study is to investigate the function of PI in emerging markets and the role of CT in AI-driven SMM.

The objectives are:

To examine how social media marketing affects brand awareness.

To investigate how brand engagement is affected by social media marketing.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how brand awareness affects purchase intention.

The purpose of the study was to investigate how brand engagement affects purchase intention.

To investigate how consumer trust is affected by brand awareness.

To examine the connection between consumer trust and brand engagement.

To determine whether brand awareness and social media marketing are moderated by artificial intelligence.

To determine how artificial intelligence affects the connection between brand engagement and social media marketing.

To develop a longer-term social media marketing strategy that incorporates consumer trust and artificial intelligence in growing regions.

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of Social Media Marketing on Brand Awareness?
2. What is the effect of Social Media Marketing on Brand Engagement?
3. What is the effect of Brand Awareness on Purchase Intention?
4. What is the effect of Brand Engagement on Purchase Intention?
5. What is the effect of Brand Awareness on Consumer Trust?
6. What is the effect of Brand Engagement on Consumer Trust?
7. Does Artificial Intelligence moderate the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Brand Awareness?
8. Does Artificial Intelligence moderate the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Brand Engagement?
9. How does the integration of Artificial Intelligence and Consumer Trust extend existing Social Media Marketing research in emerging markets?

Literature Review

Marketing in Social Media

Social media marketing (SMM) is becoming a crucial marketing technique in the modern era since customers are using digital platforms to get information, connect with others, compare products, and make purchases. Social media has supplanted the conventional one-way communication approach by allowing customers to influence and disseminate brand information. According to Alalwan et al. (2017), social media enables businesses to interact directly with customers, share product details, respond to inquiries about products, encourage customer dialog,

and build consumer communities around brands. Since consumers are viewed and evaluated based on a variety of factors, including information, interaction, personalization, and popularity of the social media marketing activities carried out, social media marketing activities are undoubtedly one of the important components of contemporary digital marketing (Yadav and Rahman, 2017). As a result, businesses should be conscious of how customers perceive and respond to social media content in addition to whether they are exposed to it. Additionally, the Godey et al. (2016) study demonstrated how social media marketing initiatives might influence important brand-related outcomes and consumer behavior. According to their research, social media can influence how people perceive and respond to a brand. This means that SMM should be viewed as a tool for businesses to influence consumer connections with brands in addition to being a communication channel. The importance of SMM has become increasingly clear, particularly in emerging economies. Businesses in emerging markets may engage with customers and build brand awareness quite easily using social media. The authors Zeqiri et al. (2025) investigated the effects of SMM on Brand Awareness, Brand Engagement, and Purchase Intention in the Emerging Economy era and demonstrated the importance of SMM in this setting. The current analysis expands on the previous one by including consumer trust and artificial intelligence. The extension is essential since social media marketing has evolved into a technique that depends on artificial intelligence-powered systems that can evaluate customer behavior, generate personalized content, and automate communication. By offering chances for consumer interaction rather than only promotional messaging, interactive communication can also promote engagement.

Awareness of Brands

The degree to which customers can identify or remember a specific brand is known as brand awareness. It is a crucial step in the decision-making process for customers because it is frequently seen that consumers are aware of a brand before assessing and/or contemplating a purchase. Recall and recognition are the two parts of brand awareness. The ability of a consumer to identify a brand when they see its name, logo, packaging, communications, or any other indication of the brand is known as brand recognition. The ability of consumers to remember a brand in connection to a certain product category or buying scenario is known as brand recall.

Social networking activities can also aid in increasing brand awareness, according to Barreda et al. (2015). Their results show that online social networks give brands the chance to become more identifiable and remembered to consumers. In a similar vein, Hutter et al. (2013) shown that brand awareness and purchase-related outcomes are influenced by social media interactions. Customers may become accustomed to a brand if they encounter it or learn about it on a regular basis. Therefore, social media marketing is crucial to raising brand awareness. Through consistent communication and interactive content, businesses can ensure that their brands are recognized and remembered by their customers. This is particularly important in the context of emerging markets since social media allows businesses to interact with customers instead of depending solely on traditional media. The relationship between SMM and brand awareness in emerging economies is demonstrated empirically by Zeqiri et al. (2025).

Engagement with Brands

Consumer engagement, according to Brodie et al. (2013), is an interactive process that develops as customers engage with companies and brand communities. They have observed that active participation, rather than just exposure, can also lead to engagement. Additionally, Hollenbeck et al. (2014) developed the idea of consumer brand engagement via social media, which includes activation, affection, and cognitive processing. This implies that different facets of the customer experience may include engagement. Because social media is interactive and enables customers to participate in brand communication, it is particularly well-suited for engagement. Interactions with brand representatives and other consumers who use the same brands might convey either positive or negative emotions.

Furthermore, Bazi et al. (2020) emphasized the significance of social media in customer interaction and relationship-building. According to the findings, these initiatives can help businesses engage with customers on social media in a more meaningful way. Additionally, Zegiri et al. (2025) asserted that SMM is important for brand engagement in developing nations. This relationship serves as one of the core relationships in the research framework of the current study.

Mental Involvement

The degree to which customers are aware of and engaged with a brand's information is known as cognitive engagement. Customers can actively participate by listening to brand information, comparing products, looking for additional information, and thinking about brand experiences. Social media provides users with information, reviews, discussion, and interactive content, all of which can promote cognitive engagement. Customers' feelings and emotional responses to a brand are the subject of emotional engagement. Because of their interactions with businesses, consumers may experience positive emotions like excitement, intrigue, enthusiasm, or attachment. Through storytelling, visual communication, entertainment, and community involvement, social media can arouse feelings.

Intention to Purchase

Social media interactions can influence purchase results, as demonstrated by Hutter et al. (2013). Consumers can use social media as a source of information to evaluate brands and create purchasing intentions. Brand awareness may also have an impact on purchase intention. Customers may be more likely to consider a brand when making a purchase if they are familiar with it. Recall and recognition can therefore play a significant role in reducing the number of options that a consumer has to choose.

Another factor that may influence purchase intention is brand involvement. Active customers can engage with a brand more deeply on an emotional and cognitive level. These relationships may encourage the customer to stick with the brand and buy from it. Zegiri et al. (2025) investigated emerging economies and discovered significant connections between brand awareness, brand

engagement, and purchase intention. By examining these connections and incorporating consumer trust and artificial intelligence, the current study expands on the findings of the previous research.

Customer Confidence

One of the most important strategies for creating a lasting relationship between consumers and brands is to foster trust. The consumer's propensity to rely on a brand or seller because they are dependable, trustworthy, competent, and concerned about their well-being is known as trust. There are numerous ways for customers to evaluate a brand in social media marketing before developing trust. They can observe how brands interact with other customers, reply to inquiries, handle complaints, and provide information. Building trust can be facilitated by consistent and efficient communication. The degree to which a consumer interacts with brands is another aspect that affects consumer trust. Customers who actively engage with a brand may have more opportunities to assess the business's behavior and determine whether it is reliable and moral. Reliability, honesty, competency, integrity, and concern for customers have all been used to explain consumer trust. Customers are more inclined to trust businesses that regularly keep their word. Customer trust may increase, and uncertainty can be reduced with effective communication and service.

The Connection Between Purchase Intention and Brand Awareness

Because consumers are likely to take recognizable brands into consideration when making decisions, brand awareness may have an impact on purchase intention. If consumers have seen the brand previously, they might be more likely to comprehend it than if they haven't. Social media may strengthen this relationship by consistently reminding customers about the brand. Hutter et al. (2013) have demonstrated the importance of social media interactions in terms of brand awareness and purchase-related responses. Therefore, the current study proposes the following hypotheses: Higher brand awareness will be positively correlated with purchase intention.

The Connection between Purchase Intention and Brand Engagement

A stronger bond between the brand and the customer is what brand engagement is all about, not just awareness. Increased customer propensity to purchase from brands can result from favorable cognitive and emotional experiences and active consumer-brand connection. Engagement is essential for consumer-brand interactions, according to Brodie et al. (2013), while Hollenbeck et al. (2014) emphasizes the significance of these relationships. Zegiri et al. (2025) investigated emerging economies while taking into consideration the connection between Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention.

The Connection between Consumer Trust and Brand Awareness

Brand recognition is closely linked to consumer trust. Customers might become more familiar with and knowledgeable about a brand thanks to brand awareness. Repeatedly viewing brand

information will increase the likelihood that consumers will feel comfortable passing judgment on the company's goods and messaging. Social media awareness can be increased through contact and exposure. Customers can contrast a brand's communication style with other customers' responses. These encounters may contribute to the development of brand confidence. Because of this, the current study also indicates that consumer trust and brand awareness are positively correlated. The findings show that customer trust and brand engagement are positively correlated.

The Connection between Customer Trust and Brand Engagement

Customers can interact with brands and evaluate their behavior over time through brand engagement. Customers can assess a brand's responsiveness, dependability, honesty, and client concerns as interactions recur. Thus, trust can be developed through positive interaction experiences. However, poor or inconsistent interactions can erode customer trust. The importance of customer-brand connection is justified by the theoretical foundation of consumer engagement discovered by the authors of Brodie et al. (2013) and Hollebeek et al. (2014). Thus, the current study focuses on the connection between consumer trust and brand engagement.

Artificial Intelligence's Moderating Function

AI does not have the same function in this study as the other constructs. AI is not recommended as a mediator or independent variable. Rather, it is seen as a moderator. The direction or intensity of the association between two other variables is influenced by a moderator. The current study predicts that AI will significantly affect how SMM affects brand awareness and brand engagement. By providing tailored content, rapid communication, targeted recommendations, and customer insights, AI can enhance SMM effectiveness. Huang and Rust (2021) and Davenport et al. (2020) provide examples of how AI is starting to play a bigger role in altering marketing procedures. In the meanwhile, customers may be concerned about AI interactions' authenticity, privacy, and transparency. Puntoni et al. (2021) stress the need to understand how consumers interact with AI. Therefore, depending on the experience and perception of the customers, AI can either increase or decrease the impact of SMM.

Literature's Theoretical Synthesis

According to the material presented in this chapter, social media marketing has become a crucial tool for fostering relationships between brands and consumers. According to earlier research, SMM may influence brand engagement and awareness, which may then influence purchase intention.

The review also demonstrates the growing significance of customer trust in digital marketing, as consumers need to have faith in brands and their communication before establishing long-term connections.

Furthermore, AI has presented social media marketing with both new potential and difficulties. AI can improve customer targeting, automation, and personalization, but it can also give rise to worries about authenticity, privacy, and transparency.

Therefore, by combining these elements into a single model, the current study expands upon the well-established SMM framework. The suggested framework looks at:

Brand Awareness via Social Media Marketing

Social Media Promotion → Brand Involvement

Purchase Intention → Brand Awareness

Brand Involvement → Intention to Buy

Consumer Trust → Brand Awareness

Brand Involvement → Customer Confidence

Artificial intelligence, however, moderates:

Brand Awareness via Social Media Marketing

Brand engagement through social media marketing.

Conceptual Model Development and Hypothesis

Development of Conceptual Models

To better understand the interactions between Social Media Marketing (SMM), Brand Awareness (BA), Brand Engagement (BE), Consumer Trust (CT), Purchase Intention (PI), and Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a moderating variable, this study will develop a conceptual model. This model is based on the body of research that demonstrates how social media marketing affects customers' perceptions of and intentions to behave in relation to their businesses. In emerging and transition economies, social media marketing has been proven to positively correlate with brand recognition, brand engagement, and purchase intention (Emini & Zeqiri, 2021; Zeqiri et al., 2025). Social media marketing is thought to increase brand awareness and engagement. Consumer trust and purchase intention are likely to be further impacted by these consumer reactions. Additionally, a direct positive link between Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention is expected. Additionally, the role of AI in marketing information personalization, communication, and consumer perception is a moderating variable because it can influence how consumers perceive, communicate, and personalize marketing information (Davenport et al., 2020; Huang & Rust, 2021).

Development of Hypotheses

Direct Connections

H1: Brand awareness is significantly improved via social media marketing.

According to other studies, social media marketing initiatives can raise brand awareness by improving brand recognition and exposing consumers to more brand information (Godey et al., 2016; Zeqiri et al., 2025).

H2: Brand engagement is significantly improved by social media marketing.

Customers can interact with brands and take part in brand-related activities through social media. SMM and consumer brand engagement are positively correlated, according to earlier research (Emini & Zeqiri, 2021; Zeqiri et al., 2025).

H3: Consumer trust is significantly enhanced by brand awareness.

Customers may feel more confident when assessing a brand if they are more knowledgeable and aware of it. Thus, this study suggests that consumer trust is positively impacted by brand awareness.

H4: Consumer trust is significantly improved by brand engagement.

Customers' relationships and trust in a brand may be strengthened via active social media contact and participation. As a result, this study suggests that consumer trust and brand engagement are positively correlated.

H5: Purchase intention is significantly positively impacted by brand awareness.

In consumers' consideration sets, brand awareness can increase a brand's recognition and accessibility. According to earlier studies, brand awareness has a significant role in explaining customer responses connected to purchases (Emini & Zeqiri, 2021; Zeqiri et al., 2025).

H6: Purchase intention is significantly positively impacted by brand engagement.

Customers who regularly interact with brands on social media may form closer bonds with them and be more inclined to think about making purchases from them. Brand engagement and purchase intention are related, according to existing research (Emini & Zeqiri, 2021; Zeqiri et al., 2025).

H7: Purchase intention is significantly positively impacted by consumer trust.

Because consumers need to have faith in a brand's information, promises, and actions before making decisions about purchases, trust is especially crucial in online consumer decision-making.

According to earlier studies, a crucial component of online customer connections is consumer trust (Casaló et al., 2007).

AI's Moderating Function

Businesses may now analyze client data, customize marketing campaigns, automate tedious operations, and improve customer interactions thanks to artificial intelligence (Davenport et al., 2020; Huang & Rust, 2021).

AI is suggested as a moderating variable in this study. Finding out if the degree of a third variable affects the strength of a link between two variables is the goal of moderation analysis. As a result, this study investigates whether the existence and application of AI affect how well social media marketing generates brand awareness and engagement.

H8: The association between brand awareness and social media marketing is considerably moderated by artificial intelligence.

H9: The relationship between social media marketing and brand engagement is considerably moderated by artificial intelligence.

Model of Conceptual Research

The conceptual model suggests Social Media Marketing as the main explanatory construct based on the relationships mentioned above and the research studied in Chapter 2. Two suggested outcomes of SMM are brand awareness and brand engagement. Purchase intention and consumer trust are subsequently influenced by these two characteristics. The two interactions that come from social media marketing are said to be moderated by artificial intelligence. Figure 3.1: Conceptual Research Model The model displays two moderation relationships and six direct relationships. Artificial intelligence's moderating effects are represented by dashed arrows, while its direct effects are represented by solid arrows.

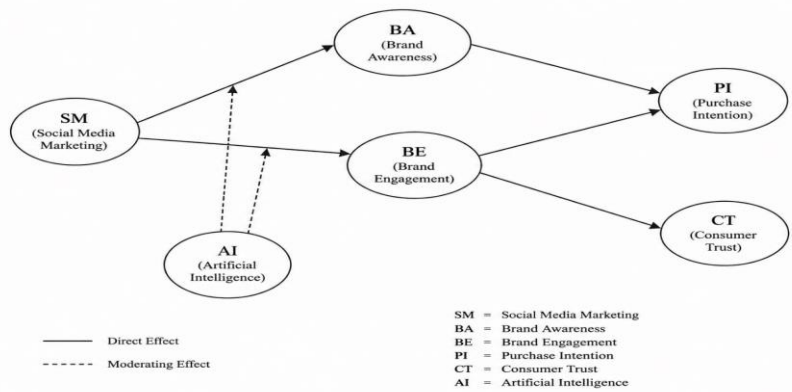


Figure 1: Conceptual Research Model

Data Analysis and Findings

Analysis of Demographic Features

The respondents' demographic details are compiled into a single table in Table 4.1. According to the gender distribution, 43.0% of respondents were men and 57.0% of respondents were women. This shows that the study included both male and female respondents, with most of the available replies coming from female participants. In terms of age, respondents between the ages of 20 and 30 made up the largest group (49.5% of the responses). 24.0% of respondents were under 20, while 18.0% were in the 31–40 age range. The remaining 8.5% were in the 41–50 age range. Thus, the distribution suggests that younger social media users made up most of the sample. The respondents' degree of social media experience varied as well. 31.8% of respondents said they had been using social media for one to two years, while 28.2% said they had been using it for more than seven years. About 25.1% said they had three to four years of experience, and 14.9% said they had five to eight years. Overall, the responses show that the participants had different degrees of social media experience, which is pertinent to the current study since it looks at how consumers see social media marketing and AI-related activities. In general, the demographic profile shows variance in terms of occupation, age, gender, and social media experience. To investigate the suggested connections between Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, Brand Engagement, Consumer Trust, Purchase Intention, and Artificial Intelligence, this variation offers a more comprehensive respondent profile.

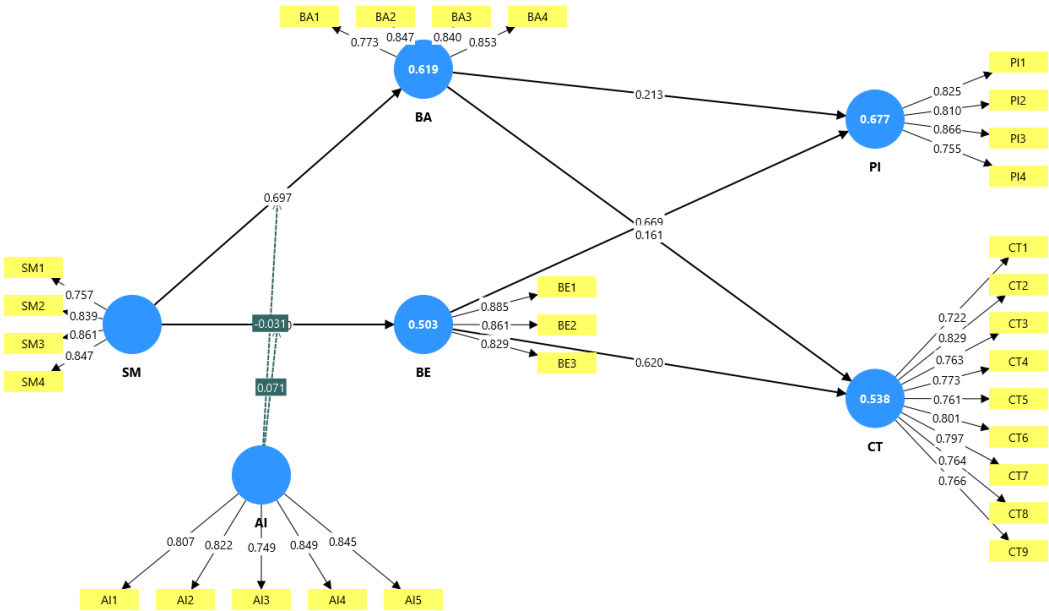
Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	86	43.0	43.0
	Female	114	57.0	100.0
Age group	Under 20	48	24.0	24.0
	20/30	99	49.5	73.5
	31/40	36	18.0	91.5
	41/50	17	8.5	100.0
Social Media Experience	½ Years	62	31.8	31.8
	¾ Years	49	25.1	56.9
	5/7 Years	29	14.9	71.8
	More than 7 Years	55	28.2	100.0
Occupation	Student	89	45.2	45.2
	Working Full Time	55	27.9	73.1

Working part- Time Collage/ University going	25	12.7	85.8
Working part Time only	28	14.2	100.0

Measurement Model Assessment

Prior to analyzing the structural correlations, the measuring model was evaluated. Determining whether the indicators accurately reflect the underlying latent constructs is the goal of measurement model assessment. Artificial Intelligence, Brand Awareness, Brand Engagement, Consumer Trust, Purchase Intention, and Social Media Marketing are the study's six main constructs. Indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were all considered in the measurement evaluation.



Indicator Reliability and Outer Loadings

Indicator reliability was assessed through the outer loadings of the measurement items. Higher outer loading values indicate that an indicator explains a greater proportion of the variance in its associated construct.

Table 2:

	AI	BA	BE	CT	PI	SM	AI x SM
AI1	0.807						
AI2	0.822						
AI3	0.749						
AI4	0.849						
AI5	0.845						
BA1		0.773					
BA2		0.847					
BA3		0.840					
BA4		0.853					
BE1			0.885				
BE2			0.861				
BE3			0.829				
CT1				0.722			
CT2				0.829			
CT3				0.763			
CT4				0.773			
CT5				0.761			
CT6				0.801			
CT7				0.797			
CT8				0.764			
CT9				0.766			
PI1					0.825		
PI2					0.810		
PI3					0.866		
PI4					0.755		
SM1						0.757	
SM2						0.839	
SM3						0.861	
SM4						0.847	
AI x SM							1.000

All reported indicators have loadings above 0.70, according to the outer loadings. CT1 has the lowest loading (0.722), while BE1 has the greatest loading (0.885). This suggests that the indicators adequately represent the corresponding constructs. For the measurement items kept in the model, the findings thus show satisfactory indication reliability.

Internal Consistency Reliability and Convergent Validity

Cronbach's alpha, rhoA, and composite reliability (rhoC) were used to evaluate internal consistency dependability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used to assess convergent validity.

Table 3:

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite (rho_a)	reliability	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
AI	0.874	0.877		0.908	0.665
BA	0.848	0.851		0.898	0.687
BE	0.822	0.826		0.894	0.737
CT	0.917	0.918		0.931	0.602
PI	0.831	0.836		0.888	0.664
SM	0.845	0.850		0.896	0.684

The results demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency across all constructs. Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.822 to 0.917, while composite reliability values range from 0.888 to 0.931. These results indicate that the indicators within each construct demonstrate consistent measurement. The AVE values range from 0.602 to 0.737. Thus, all constructs exceed the commonly applied minimum level of 0.50, providing evidence of convergent validity. Overall, the measurement model demonstrates satisfactory reliability and convergent validity, allowing the study to proceed to discriminant validity and structural model assessment.

Discriminant Validity

The HTMT ratio was used to evaluate the discriminant validity. The role of HTMT is to determine the distinctiveness of the constructs in the research model.

Table 4:

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite (rho_a)	reliability	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
AI	0.874	0.877		0.908	0.665
BA	0.848	0.851		0.898	0.687
BE	0.822	0.826		0.894	0.737
CT	0.917	0.918		0.931	0.602
PI	0.831	0.836		0.888	0.664
SM	0.845	0.850		0.896	0.684

As a measure of discriminant validity, many of the pairs exhibit an HTMT value of less than 0.90. Brand Engagement–Purchase Intention (HTMT = 0.975) and Social Media Marketing–Brand Awareness (HTMT = 0.919) are the relationships that receive special attention. The SMM–BA ratio of 0.919 is still somewhat higher than 0.90, while the BE–PI value of 0.975 is greater than the widely accepted 0.90 standard. Therefore, it is important to publish the outcomes in a straightforward manner rather than omitting them. When evaluating the results and talking about constraints, it is important to consider the high HTMT, which indicates that there is substantial conceptual overlap between these conceptions. The current BE–PI research mentions the same issue.

4.2.4 Collinearity statistics (VIF) The variance inflation factor (VIF) was examined to look for potential multicollinearity across the measurement model's indicators. Less conservative criteria would suggest that a number below 3.3 is acceptable, and collinearity is not a significant worry for values below the standard rule of thumb of 5.0. All the VIF values in the indicators are below the 3.3 limit, according to the results. AI2 has the greatest VIF (2.745), followed by AI4 (2.738) and CT2 (2.734). These numbers do not indicate problematic multicollinearity because they are not high. Further evidence that there is no significant collinearity across the indicators comes from the other indicators, which likewise show comparatively low VIF values ranging from 1.568 (SM1) to 2.669 (AI1).

Table 5: Collinearity statistics VIF

	VIF
AI1	2.669
AI2	2.745
AI3	1.597
AI4	2.738
AI5	2.659
BA1	1.631
BA2	2.067
BA3	2.166
BA4	2.072
BE1	2.056
BE2	1.848
BE3	1.725
CT1	1.791
CT2	2.734
CT3	2.124
CT4	2.101
CT5	1.923
CT6	2.363
CT7	2.312
CT8	2.226
CT9	2.145

PI1	1.881
PI2	1.807
PI3	2.166
PI4	1.607
SM1	1.568
SM2	2.041
SM3	2.194
SM4	2.029
AI x SM	1.000

With a VIF value of 1.000 for the interaction term $AI \times SM$, the moderation term's collinearity is not an issue. Overall, the VIF results show that there is no serious multicollinearity across the model's indicators. As a result, the data are appropriate for moving forward with the evaluation of structural models and testing of hypotheses.

Evaluation of structural models and testing of hypotheses

Following the evaluation of the measurement model, the suggested links between the constructs were assessed by looking at the structural model. Two moderation relationships and six direct relationships make up the structural model. According to the hypotheses, brand awareness and brand engagement are influenced by social media marketing, purchase intention and consumer trust are influenced by brand awareness and engagement, and the relationships between social media marketing and brand awareness and engagement are moderated by artificial intelligence.

Coefficients of Paths

The direction and strength of links between constructs are indicated by path coefficients.

Table 6:

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
AI → BA	0.107	0.107	0.059	1.799	0.072
AI → BE	0.318	0.322	0.081	3.917	0.000
AI x SM → BA	-0.031	-0.024	0.032	0.956	0.339
AI x SM → BE	0.071	0.078	0.039	1.815	0.070
BA → CT	0.161	0.159	0.075	2.157	0.031
BA → PI	0.213	0.212	0.058	3.662	0.000
BE → CT	0.620	0.620	0.065	9.545	0.000
BE → PI	0.669	0.671	0.055	12.211	0.000
SM → BA	0.697	0.698	0.052	13.443	0.000
SM → BE	0.550	0.544	0.075	7.303	0.000

The findings show that brand awareness and social media marketing are positively correlated ($\beta = 0.697$). Likewise, there is a positive correlation between SMM and Brand Engagement ($\beta = 0.550$). Purchase intention ($\beta = 0.213$) and consumer trust ($\beta = 0.161$) are positively correlated with brand awareness. Purchase intention ($\beta = 0.669$) and consumer trust ($\beta = 0.620$) are positively correlated with brand engagement. With a value of $\beta = 0.669$, the strongest direct relationship is found between Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention. This implies that when it comes to describing consumers' purchase-related intents, brand involvement has a special place in the suggested model. The moderating results show that the coefficient of the interaction between AI and SMM is good for brand engagement ($\beta = 0.071$) and negative for brand awareness ($\beta = -0.031$).

Testing Hypotheses

To investigate the direct and moderate relationship in the research model, the following hypotheses were proposed.

Table 7: Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Proposed Relationship	β	Preliminary Result
H1	SMM $\rightarrow$ BA	0.697	Positive
H2	SMM $\rightarrow$ BE	0.550	Positive
H3	BA $\rightarrow$ PI	0.213	Positive
H4	BE $\rightarrow$ PI	0.669	Positive
H5	BA $\rightarrow$ CT	0.161	Positive
H6	BE $\rightarrow$ CT	0.620	Positive
H7	AI moderates SMM $\rightarrow$ BA	-0.031	Negative interaction
H8	AI moderates SMM $\rightarrow$ BE	0.071	Positive interaction

For variables H1–H6, all the results show positive estimated connections; H1 indicates a positive association between SMM and brand awareness, while H2 indicates a positive relationship between SMM and brand engagement. Both H3 and H4 demonstrate the favorable correlations between Purchase Intention and Brand Awareness/Brand Engagement. The two brand-related variables and consumer trust were found to have strong positive connections (H5 and H6).

Although the SmartPLS spreadsheet is accessible, bootstrapped t-values and p-values are not included. Therefore, only the direction and size of the estimated connections may be given; no assertion that a hypothesis has been "accepted" or "rejected" can be statistically supported by the current research. In the context of school reporting, this is important.

Predictive Accuracy and Effect Size Assessment

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The explanatory capacity of the structural model was assessed using R^2 . R^2 is a measure of how much of an endogenous construct's variance can be accounted for by its predictor constructs.

Table 8:

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
BA	0.619	0.620	0.061	10.136	0.000
BE	0.503	0.513	0.056	9.021	0.000
CT	0.538	0.544	0.064	8.378	0.000
PI	0.677	0.681	0.048	14.035	0.000

The model accounts for 50.3% of the variation in brand engagement and 61.9% of the variation in brand awareness. With a R^2 value of 0.538, the predictor constructs account for about 53.8% of the variance in consumer trust. At 0.677, Purchase Intention has the greatest R^2 score, meaning that the model accounts for roughly 67.7% of the variance in Purchase Intention. Out of all the endogenous constructs in the model, this one has the best explanatory performance.

Table 9: R-Square Adjusted

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
BA	0.613	0.614	0.062	9.884	0.000
BE	0.495	0.505	0.057	8.744	0.000
CT	0.533	0.539	0.065	8.219	0.000
PI	0.674	0.678	0.049	13.822	0.000

Effect Size (f^2)

Effect size was assessed using the f^2 statistic to determine the contribution of individual predictor constructs to the explained variance of endogenous variables.

Table 10:

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
AI → BA	0.022	0.030	0.027	0.813	0.416
AI → BE	0.151	0.170	0.091	1.661	0.097
AI × SM → BA	0.005	0.009	0.011	0.479	0.632

AI x SM -> BE	0.022	0.029	0.023	0.985	0.325
BA -> CT	0.033	0.040	0.033	1.006	0.315
BA -> PI	0.082	0.089	0.048	1.704	0.089
BE -> CT	0.486	0.516	0.169	2.873	0.004
BE -> PI	0.810	0.854	0.231	3.511	0.000
SM -> BA	0.732	0.755	0.174	4.216	0.000
SM -> BE	0.349	0.358	0.110	3.183	0.001

According to the results, social media marketing contributes significantly to brand engagement ($f^2 = 0.349$) and brand awareness ($f^2 = 0.732$). Additionally, Brand Engagement contributes significantly to Purchase Intention ($f^2 = 0.810$) and Consumer Trust ($f^2 = 0.486$). Brand awareness and consumer trust have comparatively smaller effects on purchase intention ($f^2 = 0.082$ and 0.033 , respectively). With f^2 values of 0.005 for Brand Awareness and 0.022 for Brand Engagement for the AI $\times$ SMM interaction group, the interaction effects are quite weak. Although formal bootstrapping proof is still required, these values show that the increase of the interaction terms to the endogenous constructs is not that large.

Discussion

Brand awareness and social media marketing

SMM and brand awareness are found to have a significant direct link with a β value of 0.697 . This implies that there is a strong correlation between social media marketing efforts and customers' brand awareness, recall, and information retrieval skills. This is consistent with earlier research. Zegiri et al. (2025) examined social media marketing in developing nations and found a favorable correlation between SMM and brand awareness. Their research indicates that social media platforms allow customers to interact with brand-related content and give businesses the chance to repeatedly disseminate brand information. The current outcome is also in line with previous studies that demonstrated social media marketing can increase brand awareness, including Godey et al. (2016), Dabbous and Barakat (2020), and studies compiled in the preceding literature.

Table 11: Comparison with Previous Research

Relationship	Present Study β	Previous Research	Comparison
SMM $\rightarrow$ Brand Awareness	0.697	Positive relationship reported by Zegiri et al. (2025), Godey et al. (2016), Dabbous & Barakat (2020)	Consistent
SMM $\rightarrow$ Brand Engagement	0.550	Positive relationship reported by Zegiri et al. (2025), Bazi et al. (2020), Cheung	Consistent

BA → Purchase Intention	0.213	et al. (2021) Positive relationship reported in previous research	Consistent
BE → Purchase Intention	0.669	Positive relationship reported by Zegiri et al. (2025) and Choedon & Lee (2020)	Consistent
BA → Consumer Trust	0.161	Less directly examined in the original SMM framework	Extends previous research
BE → Consumer Trust	0.620	Trust and engagement identified as important consumer responses in prior research	Extends previous research
AI × SMM → BA	-0.031	AI moderation is less established in traditional SMM literature	New/contrasting finding
AI × SMM → BE	0.071	AI-related consumer interaction increasingly examined	Provides contemporary evidence

The comparison reveals that while the Consumer Trust and AI links expand the conventional SMM framework, the first four relationships mostly follow the path set by earlier research. While the current study adds Consumer Trust and AI to this paradigm, the underlying prior research particularly identified SMM as a significant predictor of Brand Awareness, Brand Engagement, and Purchase Intention.

Brand Engagement and Social Media Marketing

The results show that brand engagement and social media marketing are positively correlated ($\beta = 0.550$). This implies that social media marketing can motivate customers to engage in brand-related activities in addition to raising brand awareness. Customers can like that comment on, share, debate, suggest, and produce brand-related content on social media. Customers can become active players in the brand connection by engaging in such activities instead of being passive recipients of marketing communications. While Cheung et al. (2021) stressed the significance of social media aspects in fostering engagement and co-creation, Muntinga et al. (2011) focused on consumer participation by consuming, producing, and generating social media material. The current result is in line with Zegiri et al. (2025), who discovered that SMM had a favorable impact on consumer brand engagement in emerging markets. Additionally, it aligns with previous results related to Bazi et al. (2020), Godey et al. (2016), and Cheung et al. (2021). As a result, the present study supports the claim that successful social media marketing is more than just an advertising tool. Rather, it needs to be viewed as an interactive communication tool that can motivate customers to engage in brand-related activities.

Purchase Intention and Brand Awareness

Purchase intention and brand awareness were shown to be positively correlated ($\beta = 0.213$). This implies that more informed customers will be more inclined to buy the brand. This is a reasonable conclusion because consumers are more inclined to consider well-known and memorable companies when making decisions. Repeated exposure to brand material through social media can boost brand familiarity and make a brand more remembered. The findings are consistent with other research that indicates brand awareness plays a significant role in consumer purchasing behavior. While Bibi et al. (2025) discovered a relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention in the Pakistani market, Kerse (2023) discovered a positive relationship. Zegiri et al. (2025) incorporated the idea of brand awareness into the SMM framework for emerging markets as well. However, compared to Brand Engagement, the current study's Brand Awareness $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention coefficient is significantly lower. The results show that high purchase intentions are not solely dependent on brand recognition or recall. Customers must have a thorough encounter with the brand and become fully involved in its activities in order to strengthen their behavioral intention.

Purchase Intention and Brand Engagement

With a value of $\beta = 0.669$, the association between Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention was one of the strongest in the structural model. The outcome shows that purchase intent is more positively correlated with consumer involvement in the brand than with brand awareness. Customers are more likely to consider purchasing from brands if they interact with brand content, participate in brand activities, and have favorable opinions about brands. This outcome is consistent with previous research. According to Zegiri et al. (2025), one of the main elements influencing purchase intention in emerging economies is consumer brand engagement. Additionally, Choedon and Lee (2020) found that brand equity, social brand engagement, and social media marketing activities are associated with purchase intention. Thus, the new research supports the notion that marketers must do more than simply educate customers about a brand. Engagement appears to be a more strongly felt customer response when the objective is to influence purchase-related behavior. This is particularly true for social media, which allows firms to have a two-way dialog with their audience. Customers can share their experiences, submit material, respond to content, comment on content, and ask questions. Deeper brand relationships may result from these exchanges.

Consumer Trust and Brand Awareness

The findings show that consumer trust and brand awareness are positively correlated ($\beta = 0.161$). Although the coefficient's direction is positive, it is not as strong as the link between Brand Engagement and Consumer Trust, indicating that customers' confidence in a brand or vendor may be influenced by high brand familiarity. A brand's reputation, communication, consumer interactions, and products can all be better understood by a consumer who frequently sees it on social media. This exposure can reduce uncertainty and provide consumers with knowledge to

assist assess a brand's dependability. However, the comparatively low coefficient suggests that knowledge might not be enough to establish strong trust. To increase trust, they will require more positive experiences, such as openness, information, feedback, service, and participation. It is a continuation of earlier SMM research since it did not specifically address consumer trust and instead concentrated on the three core constructs of brand awareness, brand engagement, and purchase intention. Thus, the current study expands the framework to include trust, another significant consumer reaction.

Consumer Trust and Brand Engagement

Brand engagement and consumer trust were found to have a stronger and more positive association ($\beta = 0.620$). According to the findings, consumers who actively engage with brands may be far more inclined to develop trust in them. The coefficients for the connection between Brand Awareness and Consumer Trust ($\beta = 0.161$) and Brand Engagement and Consumer Trust ($\beta = 0.620$) differ noticeably. It suggests that trust has a stronger correlation with active engagement than with passive awareness. This is consistent with the literature on consumer engagement in general. Cheung et al. (2021) emphasize how social media interactions have the potential to engage consumers and facilitate co-creation. Prior research has associated engagement with beneficial results for the consumer, such as loyalty, trust, and word-of-mouth. Additionally, the discovery adds significant value to the initial SMM architecture. The current study investigates the relationship between engagement and consumer trust and expands the conversation about engagement beyond its significance due to SMM and buy intention.

Artificial Intelligence's Moderating Function

Artificial Intelligence is a contemporary addition to the research model. This study investigated whether the use of AI has an impact on the connection between social media marketing and consumer brand awareness and engagement. Brand Awareness has a negative correlation with AI and SMM ($\beta = -0.031$). However, there was a favorable correlation ($\beta = 0.071$) between AI and SMM on brand engagement. These results suggest that AI has different effects on consumers' responses. The negative coefficient of brand awareness indicates that as AI's influence grows, the relationship between SMM and brand awareness is negatively impacted. However, the positive correlation between Brand Engagement and the other variables suggests that AI could enhance the relationship between SMM and consumer engagement. This is important because AI may assist in providing more responsive social media experiences, automated communication, and tailored recommendations. In the meantime, customers may also be concerned about authenticity, privacy, transparency, and the genuineness of the relationships. Customer perceptions of AI-driven marketing may be impacted by these concerns. Additional information is provided by the conditional effects. While the SMM $\rightarrow$ BE $\rightarrow$ CT effect is rising from 0.296 to 0.385, the indirect SMM $\rightarrow$ BA $\rightarrow$ CT effect is falling from 0.117 at low AI to 0.107 at high AI. Similarly, when AI increases from low to high, the effect sizes of the SMM $\rightarrow$ BA $\rightarrow$ PI relationship decrease from

0.155 to 0.142 and the effect sizes of the SMM → BE → PI relationship increase from 0.320 to 0.416.

These patterns imply that AI has a different effect: it may have a favorable influence on engagement-related pathways and a slight negative effect on awareness-related pathways.

However, without the matching t-values and p-values from the bootstrapping, these conditional effects should not be regarded as showing a statistically significant moderation. As a result, the moderation coefficients' sign for H7 and H8 is established, but the statistical conclusion for them ought to be supported by complete bootstrapping evidence.

Conceptual Consequences

The study advances theory in several ways. First, it incorporates Consumer Trust into the current Social Media Marketing structure. BAT and BE have been extensively researched in relation to SMM, but BPI has received less attention. Furthermore, trust has not been investigated in this way in earlier research. Second, artificial intelligence is used as a moderator in the study. Furthermore, because social media marketing is becoming more automated, personalized, dependent on recommendation systems, and using artificial intelligence to create content, it is theoretically pertinent to the field. The outcome suggests that a technological method should be used while researching consumer-brand relationships in the modern era. Third, the results emphasize the necessity of customer participation. Compared to the Brand Awareness → Purchase Intention link, the Brand Engagement → Purchase Intention relationship has a larger coefficient, indicating a deeper level of consumer engagement. Finally, the study expands the body of SMM literature to a context that is increasingly pertinent to the use and implementation of AI-enabled consumer experiences and digital marketing in emerging countries. The prior literature also highlights the necessity for research in many cultural and developing market contexts because responses to SMM may vary between nations.

Useful Consequences

The findings have several ramifications for businesses and marketers.

First, rather than relying solely on promotional advertisements, investments in interactive social media marketing are necessary. Brands should create educational, pertinent, engaging, and interactive content since social media marketing (SMM) has a favorable correlation with both brand awareness and brand engagement. Secondly, marketers ought to concentrate on engagement-based tactics. According to the results, there is a significant correlation ($\beta = 0.669$) between Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention, thus businesses should encourage customers to share, comment, take part in discussions, provide feedback, and participate in Brand activities.

Thirdly, businesses must actively cultivate customer trust. Businesses should place high priority on communicating clearly, giving accurate information, delivering prompt customer service, and

encouraging sincere connections. To establish a favorable relationship with consumer trust, organizations should prioritize clear communication, accurate information, prompt customer service, and real interactions ($\beta = 0.620$). Lastly, proper implementation of AI is required. Organizations must consider people's concerns about privacy, transparency, authenticity, and dependability even though AI can improve personalization and engagement. AI cannot be presumed to provide a marketing benefit without effort, as different moderation coefficients have been found for Brand Awareness and Brand Engagement.

Restrictions and Prospects for Further Research

This study provides useful insights into the relationships among Social Media Marketing (SMM), Brand Awareness, Brand Engagement, Consumer Trust, Purchase Intention, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). However, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study used a cross-sectional design, collecting data at a single point in time. Therefore, it could not capture changes in consumer perceptions as social media platforms and AI technologies evolve. Future studies should employ longitudinal designs to examine how Brand Awareness, Brand Engagement, Consumer Trust, and Purchase Intention develop over time (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Huang & Rust, 2021). Second, the study analyzed 196 valid responses, with a relatively high proportion of younger participants. Consequently, the findings may not be fully generalizable to consumers of different ages, occupations, educational backgrounds, and levels of digital experience. Future research should use larger and more diverse samples to improve generalizability and examine whether relationships differ across consumer groups. Third, the study was conducted within a specific contextual and cultural setting. Consumer perceptions of AI, privacy, trust, and SMM may vary across countries and markets due to differences in culture, economic conditions, technological literacy, and previous technology exposure. Comparative studies across developed and emerging economies could therefore provide broader insights. Fourth, the conceptual model focused on a limited number of constructs. Future research could incorporate variables such as perceived personalization, usefulness, privacy concerns, transparency, authenticity, perceived risk, customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and electronic word-of-mouth. Researchers could also distinguish between trust in the brand, social media platform, and AI-generated marketing communications. Finally, the quantitative PLS-SEM approach identifies relationships but provides limited understanding of consumers' underlying perceptions and experiences. Future studies could employ qualitative interviews, focus groups, experiments, observational methods, or mixed-method approaches. Further research should also examine specific AI applications, including AI-generated advertisements, chatbots, recommendation systems, and generative AI content, to determine their distinct effects on consumer responses.

Conclusion

Social media has become a major marketing environment through which consumers discover, evaluate, and interact with brands. This study examined the relationships among Social Media

Marketing (SMM), Brand Awareness (BA), Brand Engagement (BE), Consumer Trust (CT), and Purchase Intention (PI), while incorporating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the research framework. The findings generally support the proposed model and highlight the interconnected nature of these factors in contemporary digital marketing. The results indicate that SMM contributes to brand-related consumer outcomes by providing opportunities to access information, interact with brands, share content, and participate in online communities. Such experiences can strengthen Brand Awareness and encourage consumers to engage more actively with brands. Brand Awareness is particularly important in competitive digital environments because consumers who recognize and recall a brand may be more likely to consider it during purchasing decisions. Brand Engagement also plays an important role by transforming consumers from passive recipients of promotional messages into active participants in brand-related interactions. Social media facilitates communication, information sharing, and relationship building, creating opportunities for stronger consumer–brand connections. Consumer Trust is similarly important, particularly as AI becomes increasingly integrated into digital marketing. Although AI enables personalization, automation, and improved customer experiences, concerns regarding privacy, transparency, authenticity, and data usage may influence consumer responses (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Huang & Rust, 2021; Puntoni et al., 2021). The study further indicates that Purchase Intention is associated with consumers' awareness, engagement, and trust developed through social media experiences. The integration of AI demonstrates that emerging technologies should be considered alongside traditional SMM when examining contemporary consumer behavior. From a managerial perspective, organizations should develop informative, engaging, authentic, and customer-oriented social media communication. Firms using AI should emphasize transparency, responsible data practices, personalization, and trust. Overall, the study extends existing digital marketing literature by integrating SMM, BA, BE, CT, PI, and AI within a unified framework and provides a foundation for future research across different industries, consumer groups, regions, and digital platforms.

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