International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media
ISSN: 2182-9306. VOL 13, Nº 24, June 2025

IJMCNM

DOI: https://doi.org/10.54663/2182-9306.2025.v.13.n.24.69-91

Research Paper

The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Customer-Brand Relationship: A Post-COVID-19 Analysis.

Shanza Noreen *
Qazi Ahmed **
Muhammad Arsalan Nazir ***

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of post-Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) social media marketing activities, including trendiness, active presence, and electronic word of mouth, on the customer-brand relationship, with the mediating effect of electronic brand experience in the twin cities of Pakistan. While some research has been conducted on these variables, a gap exists in the literature concerning post-COVID-19 social media marketing activities and the resulting changes in trends. Therefore, this study aims to identify trendy social media activities that can enhance the customer experience and their relationship with brands. A quantitative research method was employed, using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale. A total of 280 respondents were surveyed using the convenience sampling method. The collected responses were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) employing tests such as regression, correlation, the Hayes test for mediation, the normality test, and descriptive statistics. The results indicate that trendiness, active presence, and eWOM significantly impact the customer-brand relationship, with electronic brand experience playing a major role in the framework. These findings suggest that the independent, mediating, and dependent variables have positive relationships with each other and significantly influence one another. All stakeholders, including marketers, students, society, and policymakers, can leverage the findings of this study to shape their marketing strategies in the future and keep up with the ever-changing dimensions of consumer behavior, thereby improving their relationships with customers.

Keywords: Electronic word of mouth, E-brand experience, Customer-brand relationship, Social media marketing activities, Post corona virus disease.

* Department of Business Studies, Bahria University Islamabad Campus, Pakistan. E-mail: Sn36555@gmail.com
** Executive Business Centre, Greenwich Business School, University of Greenwich, UK. E-mail: q.m.ahmed@greenwich.ac.uk
*** Executive Business Centre, Greenwich Business School, University of Greenwich, UK. E-mail: m.nazir@greenwich.ac.uk

Received on: 2024.06.10
Approved on: 2025.02.08
Evaluated by a double-blind review system

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital media marketing has gained significant importance in recent years, leveraging advanced technologies to enhance the literature and practice of social media marketing. As the trend of social media marketing has increased manifold, it has fostered the development of customer-brand relationships, especially in retailing through social media (Koay et al., 2020).). The quality of social media marketing activities has improved a lot after Covid-19 as compared to before Covid-19 and it had a significant effect on the consumer purchase behavior according to a study in West Java (Hayati & Jaelani, 2024). Marketers are continually seeking ways to improve brands' social media activities to enhance service quality, boost sales, and improve brand equity. Social media marketing can create a better e-experience for customers, enabling brands to maintain and strengthen long-term customer relationships and loyalty (Quan et al., 2020). Social media has become a powerful tool or companies and its role has significantly increased in the execution of marketing strategies (Ana & Kustiawan, 2025). Various studies have demonstrated that social media marketing activities are crucial for developing brand image and brand equity. Marketers are eager to discover and implement new strategies and technologies to enhance brand equity, image, awareness, and brand love (Seo & Park, 2018; Sikander & Ahmed, 2019).

Before COVID-19, online shopping was not widely embraced in Pakistan. However, the shift observed during and after the pandemic indicates that online shopping has become a vital aspect for many people across different socioeconomic classes. According to a report by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the first quarter of 2020 saw a 79% increase in the trend of online shopping in Pakistan (SBP, 2020). Therefore, it is important to study the impact of post-COVID-19 social media marketing activities adopted by brands.

This study aims to analyze how social media platforms can be used to enhance customers' e-brand experiences and, in turn, improve the customer-brand relationship, especially in light of the heightened importance of social media in this emerging market following the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Customer-brand relationship (DV)

The customer-brand relationship defines the interaction between brands and their customers. A well-established principle in marketing is that the customer is paramount; without customers, businesses cannot exist. Consequently, brands must develop strategies centered around their customers and their interests. A study conducted in Nigeria stated that they faced a lot of challenges in the hospitality industry post-COVID-19 and had to reevaluate their social media marketing activities to sustain customer relationship management and customer engagement (Okeke, 2025). Kujur and Singh (2020) noted that customer relationships have become a crucial aspect of business over the past few decades. Numerous studies and theories support the importance of building strong customer relationships. They also highlighted that YouTube is one of the most innovative and popular social networking sites, allowing users to post, view, comment on, and watch videos for entertainment or information. Brands can leverage YouTube promotions to extensively advertise their products and use social media marketing activities (SMMA) to cultivate relationships with their customers (Kujur & Singh, 2020).

Consumer-brand relationships can be effectively developed through visual communications, as consumers tend to prefer visual content over other forms of online communication on corporate networking sites (Ellison, Gibbs, & Webber, 2014). Thus, social media can have either a positive or negative impact on a brand's e-commerce, depending on the nature of the brand's online activities (Singh & Singh, 2018). Social media offers a channel for communication between businesses and their customers through well-established tools that can enhance the public perception of the brand (Hwang et al., 2014). According to Nielsen's social media report (2023), Individuals dedicate 24 percent of their online time to social media. Therefore, social media plays a significant role in shaping customer-brand relationships, either positively or negatively, based on the quality of the social media marketing activities undertaken by the brand.

2.2 SMMAs (trendiness, active presence, and eWOM)

Trendiness refers to the quality of online activity based on market trends. Effective social media marketing activities (SMMAs) possess certain attributes that serve as independent variables in this study: trendiness, active presence, and electronic word of mouth (eWOM). The independent variable of trendiness in social media activities implies that brands must present the latest and most modern details and information about their products and services on their social media platforms

(Koay et al., 2020). The theory of planned behavior can also be used to assess customer behavior based on their purchasing history and intentions, leading to the collection of data to develop precise behavioral responses to the trendiness of social media activities on different brands' platforms. A study on tourism industry provides significant observations on the fact that the managers and the marketers have to strengthen their strategies in order to boost business (Azhar et al, 2023).

eWOM reflects how customers and the online community perceive a brand. This perception can be either positive or negative, depending on the brand's reputation among various customers. Mangold and Faulds (2009) stated that social media is a reliable channel for gathering information and can be used to build a brand's personality and enhance advertisements to improve the e-brand experience. eWOM significantly affects customers' purchase intentions and buying behavior, serving as a crucial marketing tool in many industries, particularly the apparel industry (Naqvi et al., 2019). This tool has gained considerable importance through social media platforms, with a gradual increase in user engagement due to its effectiveness in enhancing e-brand experience and customer relationships (Hajli, 2014). Brands face negative consequences if their electronic image deteriorates, highlighting the importance of maintaining strong customer-brand relationships and e-brand experiences for brands (Maru & Sai Vijay, 2024). Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Trendiness of SMMAs has a positive impact on the E-brand experience.

H2: The active presence of SMMAs has a positive effect on the E-brand experience.

H3: eWOM in SMMAs has a positive impact on E-brand experience.

2.3 E-brand experience

E-brand experience is the mediating variable in this study; however, this section focuses on the relationship between e-brand experience and the customer-brand relationship, which is the dependent variable. Koay et al. (2020) stated that the e-brand experience is a tool that can easily improve the brand's image and value in the eyes of its customers. Numerous studies indicate that a positive e-brand experience contributes to stronger relationships between a brand and its customers (Altaf et al., 2017). Recent studies have utilized e-brand experience as a mediating variable between SMMAs and brand equity, value, or brand love, with findings suggesting that a better e-brand experience fosters improved relationships with customers (Zollo et al., 2017; Koay et al., 2020). When customers perceive a positive brand experience through the brand's electronic strategies and content, they become emotionally

attached to the brand, enhancing the relationship between brands and their customers. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H4: E brand experience has a positive impact on the customer-brand relationship.

2.4 E-brand experience as a mediator

Mulyawati et al. (2020) elaborated that the e-brand experience is a predictor of the relationship quality between a brand and its customers. Roy et al. (2013) also concluded that a positive brand experience leads to the development of brand love and brand loyalty, with social media activities enhancing the electronic brand experience. This study examines the mediation effect of e-brand experience between SMMAs and the customer-brand relationship. The changes in consumer behavior require changes in the marketing strategies in order to enhance the E-brand experience and to keep the customer loyal to the brand (Tran & Chang, 2024). E-brand experience plays a crucial role in improving these relationships, as an active presence through SMMAs allows users to have a better e-brand experience, thereby fostering stronger relationships with customers (Hemsley-Brown & Alnawas, 2016).

Homburg et al. (2006) described the role of cognition and brand response in positively impacting customer-brand relationships. It is generally accepted that high-quality relationships lead to a higher intention to buy and loyalty to the brand (Kujur et al., 2020). This outcome is achievable when online customers have a positive e-brand experience on social media platforms. Positive eWOM creates a good brand reputation, which in turn helps maintain a better e-brand experience for customers (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). This indicates that e-brand experience has a significant capacity to enhance the eWOM of the brand and thereby improve the customer-brand relationship.

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) can also explain the mediation of e-brand experience between eWOM and the customer-brand relationship (Armitage & Conner, 2001). Customers consider reviews, comments, and the experiences of other customers online, which shape their perceptions of the brand. This suggests that their e-brand experience is influenced by the eWOM of the brand, an attribute of SMMA that has recently gained substantial importance. Therefore, studying the mediation of e-brand experience is essential to understand the relationship between eWOM and the customer-brand relationship. It is also important to note that this relationship can influence and manipulate customers' buying intentions. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H5: Mediation of E-brand experience shows a positive relationship between trendiness and customer-brand relationship.

H6: Mediation of E-brand experience shows a positive relationship between active presence and customer-brand relationship.

H7: Mediation of E-brand experience shows a positive relationship between eWOM and customer-brand relationship.

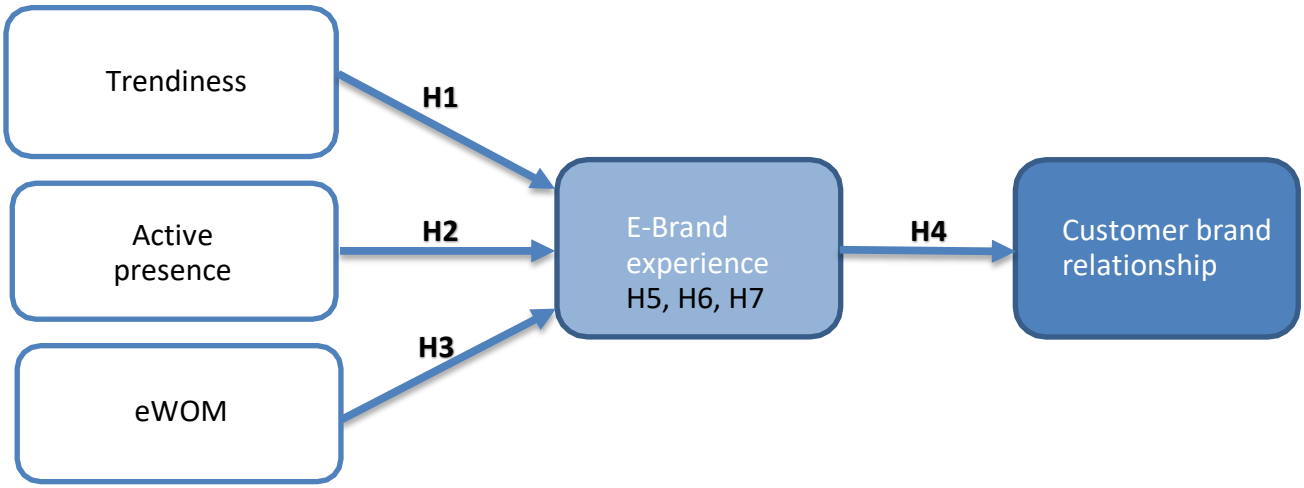

Fig 1. Research framework

3. METHODOLOGY

The research methodology of this study is based on a quantitative approach, examining the impact of three different attributes of SMMAs on customer-brand relationships, along with the mediating role of e-brand experience in the context of Pakistan. The population of this study comprises Pakistani customers who shop online and use social media to interact with brands and their social media platforms. This approach is combined with a positivist paradigm to ensure the objectivity of the study. The study employs a deductive approach, meaning that hypotheses are developed first and tested afterward (Flick, 2015). Positivism emphasizes "factual information," which is considered more trustworthy (Michell, 2003). This study is experimental, allowing respondents to answer a questionnaire and provide data in quantitative terms, as the questionnaires are based on the Likert scale.

The target population is defined as the set of individuals from whom a researcher chooses to collect data (Kumar, 2019). For this study, the target population is online consumers in the Pakistani

market, as the study investigates the impact of online activities on the customer-brand relationship. Since it is impractical to gather responses from the entire target population, the study uses a sample of residents from Islamabad and Rawalpindi who engage in online shopping. The smallest unit from which a sample can be derived is the sampling unit of a study. For this study, the Morgan table was used to finalize the sample size (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Thus, this study analyzes the responses of 280 respondents who use social media platforms to interact with different brands, ensuring the minimization of invalid, missing, or blank responses.

The sampling technique used in this study is non-probability sampling. Due to time constraints, ease of use, geographical proximity, and resource limitations, this method was chosen to acquire the necessary data for the research.

Data for this study was collected through a survey using a structured questionnaire technique, with scales adopted from the literature, as the variables used in this study are well-established in previous research. The study utilizes developed scales adopted from different studies. For the trendiness and eWOM variables, a 6-item scale (3 items each) is adapted from Koay et al. (2020). The active presence variable is measured using a 3-item scale from Tafesse & Wien (2018). To measure the mediating variable, e-brand experience (EBE), a 4-item scale is adopted from Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou (2013). The customer-brand relationship variable is measured using a 5-item scale from Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), also used by Singh et al. (2020). Responses to all these questions are measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

The quantitative data collected through the questionnaires is analyzed using SPSS. Before applying any tests, the data is validated through reliability, validity, and normality tests to enhance the authenticity of the results. Regression analysis and correlation analysis are used to examine the hypotheses in general, and the mediation test is conducted using the HAYES process V4.2 in SPSS. The results from these tests reveal the relationships between all these variables, as discussed below. The researcher distributed the questionnaires online, inviting potential customers to participate in the survey. The questionnaire is divided into sections based on the variables for the convenience of both the participants and the researcher.

4. RESULTS

The following are the descriptive statistics of the data collected through demographic research from the survey respondents in this study.

Table 1. Descriptive frequencies

Demographics		Frequencies	Percentages	Cumulative Percentage
Gender	Male	149	53.2	100.0
	Female	131	46.8	46.8
Age	15-20 years	29	10.4	10.4
	21-25 years	139	49.6	60.0
	26-30 years	79	28.2	88.2
	31 and above	33	11.8	100.0
Education	Intermediate	20	7.1	67.9
	Bachelors	157	56.1	60.7
	Masters	89	31.8	99.6
	others	1	0.4	100.0
Income	25k-50k	138	49.3	72.9
	51k-75k	48	17.1	90.0
	76k-100k	28	10.0	100.0
	101k-150k	32	11.4	12.9
	150k and above	30	10.7	23.6
Ethnicity	Pakistani	269	96.1	100.0
	Others	11	3.9	3.9

Table 1 shows the demographics of the respondents who have contributed to the data collection of this study.

4.1 Reliability analysis

After examining the demographic results, the data is assessed for validity and reliability to determine the trustworthiness of the questionnaire used for data collection. Cronbach's Alpha test is employed for this purpose to assess the reliability of the data. Higher reliability of the questionnaire is indicated by lower deviations in the repeated interval measures. This demonstrates the dependability, consistency, and relevance of the questionnaire used in this study. The following data is obtained from Cronbach's test using SPSS, as shown in the table below:

Table 2. Reliability statistics

Reliability Statistics		
Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Trendiness	0.584	3
Active presence	0.662	3
eWOM	0.688	3
E-Brand Experience	0.739	4
Customer Brand Relationship	0.818	5
Total	**0.899**	**18**

Results that are closer to 1 or are at least above 0.6 are considered highly reliable and acceptable indices. As shown in Table 2, the Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.823, 0.739, and 0.818 are very close to 1, indicating that these variables and the items used to validate these values are highly reliable for use in this study, as per the range defined by Hair et al. (2014).

These high values also suggest that the data gathered using this questionnaire is highly reliable, as the overall Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.899 is almost 0.9, which is close to 1, indicating that the overall data collected by this questionnaire is highly reliable.

4.2 Normality statistics

Normality statistics are utilized to provide a statistical overview of the dataset used in the research, including values such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, or skewness of the dataset under consideration. This method can be applied to both quantitative and qualitative data to assess the fitness of the datasets.

Table 3. Normality statistics

Normality Statistics								
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Trendiness	277	1	3	1.83	0.571	0.532	0.146	-.333	0.292
eWOM	274	1	4	2.04	0.661	0.884	0.147	1.516	0.293
A.P	280	1	4	2.07	0.586	0.042	0.146	-.112	0.290
EBE	278	1	4	2.18	0.612	-0.328	0.146	-.440	0.291
CBR	276	1	5	2.21	0.644	0.302	0.147	.950	0.292
Valid N (listwise)	269								

The kurtosis value measures the "peakedness" or "flatness" of data, and a kurtosis value closer to zero is considered normal. Table 3 presents the values of skewness and kurtosis,

where for normality, the kurtosis and skewness values should be below +1.5 and above -1.5, respectively. This implies that the acceptable range for kurtosis and skewness is between +1.5 and -1.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). All skewness values (-1 to 1) and kurtosis values (+1.5 to -1.5) in the table fall within this range, indicating the normality of the collected data for use in this study. Additionally, the mean values for all variables fall within the acceptable range of 1-5, further validating the normality of the data.

4.3 Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis is conducted to examine the relationship between two or more variables. When two or more variables are significantly associated with each other, the correlation is considered "high," and vice versa. The correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to +1. The correlation function of SPSS typically uses the Pearson r method to assess the connection between the variables under investigation. The following table displays the correlation results between the variables in this study.

Table 4: Correlation analysis

Correlations						
		trendiness	WOM	A.P	EBE	CBR
trendiness	Pearson Correlation	1	.600	.482	.383	.515
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	277	272	277	276	274
WOM	Pearson Correlation	.600	1	.580	.518	.655
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	272	274	274	272	270
A.P	Pearson Correlation	.482	.580	1	.434	.415
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	277	274	280	278	276
EBE	Pearson Correlation	.383	.518	.434	1	.657
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	276	272	278	278	276
CBR	Pearson Correlation	.515	.655	.415	.657	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	274	270	276	276	276

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of the correlation analysis indicate highly significant relationships between all three variables. Since the correlation is considered significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), a value of 0.00 is highly significant as it falls within the range of -1 to +1.

The results in Table 4 above show that Social Media Marketing Activities (trendiness, active presence, and eWOM) have a moderately significant positive relationship with E-brand Experience, with correlation values of 0.383, 0.518, and 0.434, respectively. Moreover, Social Media Marketing Activities (trendiness, active presence, and eWOM) have a significant positive relationship with Customer-brand relationship, with correlation values of 0.515, 0.655, and 0.415, respectively, indicating an even stronger association between Social Media Marketing Activities and Customer-Brand Relationship. Similarly, the relationship between E-brand Experience and Customer-Brand relationship is 0.657, which is highly significant, indicating a positive direct relationship between these variables. This suggests that an increase in one variable will always result in a significant increase in another variable, and vice versa.

4.4 Regression analysis

Regression analysis is a process in SPSS used to test the relationship between the variables under study and to determine the magnitude of that relationship. The summary of the model is presented below, indicating a significant value of 0.000, which means that overall, the results show that the variables are significantly positively linked to each other.

Table 5. Regression analysis

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.771[a]	.594	.588	.41860	.594	96.562	4	264	0.000	1.493

a. Predictors: (Constant), eWOM, EBE, AP, trendiness

b. Dependent Variable: CBR

According to the summary of this model, the R-squared value is 0.594, indicating that the predictor variables have caused a 59.4% change in the dependent variable, which is the customer-brand relationship. Table 5 shows that the value of R is 0.771, suggesting that the model is 77.1% fit or reliable. Another important value is the Durbin-Watson statistic, which has a threshold value

ranging from 0 to 4. In this case, the Durbin-Watson value is 1.493, falling within the range of significance.

The adjusted R-squared value indicates the fitness of the model. With an adjusted R-squared value of 0.588, it means that the theoretical model of this study is a 58.8% fit.

Table 6. ANOVA table

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	67.681	4	16.920	96.562	0.000[b]
	Residual	46.260	264	0.175		
	Total	113.941	268			

a. Dependent Variable: CBR

b. Predictors: (Constant), eWOM, EBE, AP, trendiness

The results of ANOVA are utilized to assess the statistical significance of the theoretical model. The value of F should be greater than 4, and in this case, according to Table 6, the value is 96.562. Additionally, the significance value should be less than 0.05. The results indicate that the significance value is 0.000, which is highly significant, demonstrating that the model is highly significant.

Table 7. Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.255	.114		2.228	0.027		
	EBE	.479	.050	.444	9.506	0.000	.705	1.418
	trendiness	.179	.058	.156	3.070	0.002	.598	1.674
	AP	-.057	.055	-.052	-1.046	0.297	.620	1.612
	eWOM	.353	.056	.361	6.354	0.000	.477	2.095

a. Dependent Variable: CBR

The coefficients table is utilized to examine the significance level of VIF, which should be less than 5 (Kock & Lynn, 2012). According to the VIF results in Table 7, the values are 1.418, 1.674, 1.612, and 2.095, which are visibly less than 3. Therefore, the data is validated to be significant.

Table 8. Collinearity diagnostics

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]								
Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions				
				(Constant)	EBE	trendiness	AP	eWOM
1	1	4.833	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
	2	.056	9.295	.28	.19	.24	.00	.18
	3	.042	10.670	.27	.43	.20	.04	.24
	4	.041	10.914	.01	.10	.37	.72	.01
	5	.028	13.037	.44	.28	.19	.24	.57

a. Dependent Variable: CBR

The above table of collinearity diagnostics is used to validate the reliability of data, even if the p-value is significant. The Eigenvalue indicates the significance of data as long as it is closer to 0, and the results in Table 8 show that the values 0.56, 0.42, 0.41, and 0.28 are very close to zero, indicating that the independent variables are interrelated with the dependent variables and they have a significant association in the positive direction.

Mediation of EBE between trendiness and customer-brand relationship

********** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 beta **********

Model: 4

Y: CBR

X: TRD

M: EBE

Sample

Size: 274

OUTCOME VARIABLE:						
EBE						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.4033	.1626	.3034	52.8228	1.0000	272.0000	.0000

Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1.3927	.1116	12.4792	.0000	1.1730	1.6125
TRD	.4234	.0583	7.2679	.0000	.3087	.5381
Standardized coefficients						
	coeff					
TRD	.4033					

The model summary shows that trendiness has a significant effect (0.0000) on the EBE and the value of R shows that the model is 40.33% reliable.

OUTCOME VARIABLE:						
CBR						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.7202	.5186	.2024	145.9948	2.0000	271.0000	.0000
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	.3277	.1143	2.8665	.0045	.1026	.5527
TRD	.3307	.0520	6.3590	.0000	.2283	.4330
EBE	.5918	.0495	11.9492	.0000	.4943	.6893
Standardized coefficients						
	coeff					
TRD	.2929					
EBE	.5503					

The value of R in the above table indicates that the model is a 72.02% fit, and the relationship between all these variables is significant, as the p-value is 0.000, which is highly significant.

********** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL**********						
OUTCOME VARIABLE:						
CBR						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5148	.2650	.3079	98.0796	1.0000	272.0000	.0000
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1.1518	.1124	10.2450	.0000	.9305	1.3732
TRD	.5812	.0587	9.9035	.0000	.4657	.6968
Standardized coefficients						
	coeff					
TRD	.5148					

This table illustrates the total effect model on all variables, where EBE mediates between the trendiness and the CBR. The total effect model is 51% reliable, and the results are also significant.

****TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y****						
Total effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_cs
.5812	.0587	9.9035	.0000	.4657	.6968	.5148
Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_cs
.3307	.0520	6.3590	.0000	.2283	.4330	.2929
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:						
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
EBE	.2506	.0366	.1800	.3224		

Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:				
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
EBE	.2219	.0340	.1575	.2886

Mediation of EBE between AP and CBR:

Model: 4

Y: CBR

X: AP

M: EBE

Sample

Size: 276

OUTCOME VARIABLE:						
EBE						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.4308	.1856	.3013	62.4472	1.0000	274.0000	.0000

********** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL **********						
OUTCOME VARIABLE:						
CBR						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.4146	.1719	.3446	56.8891	1.0000	274.0000	.0000
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1.2761	.1293	9.8674	.0000	1.0215	1.5307
AP	.4538	.0602	7.5425	.0000	.3354	.5723
Standardized coefficients						
	coeff					
AP	.4146					

****TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y ****

Total effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_cs
.4538	.0602	7.5425	.0000	.3354	.5723	.4146

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_cs
.1770	.0543	3.2597	.0013	.0701	.2840	.1618

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
EBE	.2768	.0410	.2014	.3592

Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
EBE	.2529	.0385	.1820	.3306

Mediation of EBE between eWOM and CBR:

Model: 4

Y: CBR

X: eWOM

M: EBE

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.7611	.5792	.1796	183.7809	2.0000	267.0000	.0000

********** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL **********

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

CBR

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6548	.4287	.2429	201.1369	1.0000	268.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	.9106	.0968	9.4096	.0000	.7201	1.1012
eWOM	.6414	.0452	14.1823	.0000	.5523	.7304

Standardized coefficients

	coeff
eWOM	.6548

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****

Total effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_cs
.6414	.0452	14.1823	.0000	.5523	.7304	.6548

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_cs
.4122	.0454	9.0780	.0000	.3228	.5016	.4208

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
EBE	.2292	.0402	.1591	.3177

Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
EBE	.2339	.0419	.1624	.3262

Table 9. Hayes test findings

FINDINGS OF HAYES PROCESS V4.2

Relationship	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect	T-statistics	P value	Conclusion
Trendiness > EBE > CBR	0.5148	0.3307	0.2506	7.542	0.0000	Partial mediation
Active presence (AP) > EBE > CBR	0.4538	0.1770	0.2529	3.5297	0.0000	Partial mediation
eWOM > EBE > CBR	0.6414	0.4122	0.2292	9.0780	0.0000	Partial mediation

Table 9 above shows the results obtained from the analysis of the data collected from the questionnaire used in this study, indicating that all variables have a significant effect on each other according to the theoretical framework, which means that H1, H2, H3, and H4 are accepted. Additionally, the mediating effect is tested through the Hayes test using SPSS, which demonstrates that the models are highly significant, and EBE has a partial mediating effect between all independent variables (IVs) and the dependent variable (DV), proving that H5, H6, and H7 are accepted. This indicates that the hypotheses under observation are significant, and all the hypotheses of this study are supported.

5. DISCUSSION

The results align with previous studies, such as Koay et al. (2020), Seo & Park (2018), and Nobar et al. (2020), showing significant positive relationships among the variables. Customer satisfaction with their brand experience directly impacts the customer-brand relationship and increases trust in the brand. Post-pandemic, the shift to online shopping in the studied market underscores the importance for marketers and brands to focus on SMMAs like trendiness and eWOM, which significantly affect E-brand experience and customer-brand relationship.

This study aimed to assess the impact of SMMAs on customer-brand relationships with E-brand experience as a mediating factor, using a sample from the twin cities of Pakistan. Data collected

via questionnaires were tested for normality and reliability, followed by correlation, regression, and Hayes test analysis using SPSS. The findings indicate strong positive correlations among the variables (0.600, 0.515, 0.383, 0.482, and 0.657). Regression analysis further confirmed significant positive relationships, indicating that increases in trendiness, active presence, and eWOM positively impact customer-brand relationships. Additionally, E-brand experience significantly mediates the relationship between SMMAs and customer-brand relationship.

This study provides valuable insights for marketers, brands, and consumers, contributing positively to the literature on SMMAs post-COVID-19. The research enhances the understanding of variables such as trendiness, active presence, eWOM, E-brand experience, and customer-brand relationship in Pakistan's context. Marketing students and researchers can benefit from the theoretical basis provided, and future research can build on this knowledge.

This study is significant for Pakistani marketers adapting to changing consumer behavior post-COVID-19. Brand stakeholders can benefit by tailoring their marketing activities based on the study's results, enhancing customer experiences and relationships. The findings will also benefit customers, improving their brand experience, commitment, value, and affection for brands that meet their needs and interests (Beig & Khan, 2018). Marketers can develop better E-brand experiences, strengthening customer-brand relationships in the long run. Theoretical frameworks similar to those used in this study have yielded positive results for marketers and consumers alike (Seo & Park, 2018; Koay et al., 2020; Lim et al., 2020; Nobar et al., 2020). This study suggests that enhancing customer-brand relationships through improved SMMAs is consistent with previous research recommendations (Zahoor & Qureshi, 2017).

6. CONCLUSION

This research aimed to investigate the relationship between perceived Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMAs) such as trendiness, active presence, electronic word of mouth (eWOM), E-brand experience, and customer-brand relationship in the twin cities of Pakistan, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic significantly changed customer buying behavior. The study demonstrates that updated and trendy social media accounts, active posting, and positive eWOM enhance the E-brand experience of customers, which positively affects the customer-brand relationship and adds value to the services provided.

However, the study's limitations include a short four to six-month timeframe and a sample size restricted to the twin cities of Pakistan. A larger, more diverse sample and an extended timeframe could provide more generalizable results for the entire Pakistani population. Additionally, while most similar studies use cross-sectional research methods, longitudinal research could offer deeper insights into these variables over time.

REFERENCES

Ahmad, N.; Salman, A.; Ashiq, R. (2015). The impact of social media on fashion industry: Empirical investigation from Karachiites. J. Resour. Dev. Manag.

Ana, A., & Kustiawan, U. (2025). Understanding the Effects of Social Media Marketing Activities: Mediation of Social Identification, Perceived Value, and Satisfaction. *Journal Syntax Admiration*, *6*(1), 451-464.

Armitage, C.J.; Conner, M. (2001). Efficacy of the theory of planned behavior: A meta-analytic review. Br. *J. Soc. Psychol*, 40, 471–499.

Altaf, M., Iqbal, N., Mokhtar, S. S. M., & Sial, M. H. (2017). Managing consumer-based brand equity through brand experience in Islamic banking. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, **8**(2), 218– 242.

Azhar, M., Husain, R., Hamid, S., & Rahman, M. N. (2023). Effect of social media marketing on online travel purchase behavior post-COVID-19: mediating role of brand trust and brand loyalty. *Future Business Journal*, *9*(1), 13.

Bell, E., Harley, B., & Bryman, A. (2022). *Business research methods*. Oxford University Press.

Chaudhary, M. A., Chaudhary, N. I., & Ali, A. Z. (2020). Enhancing the university's brand performance during the COVID-19 outbreak: The role of ICT orientation, perceived service quality, trust, and students' satisfaction. *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences (PJCSS)*, **14**(3), 629– 651.

Ellison, N. B., Gibbs, J. L., & Weber, M. S. (2015). The use of enterprise social network sites for knowledge sharing in distributed organizations: The role of organizational affordances. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *59*(1), 103-123.

Flick, U. (2015). *Introducing research methodology: A beginner's guide to doing a research project*. Sage.

Hajli, M. N. (2014). A study of the impact of social media on consumers. *International journal of market research*, *56*(3), 387-404.

Hayati, N., & Jaelani, E. (2024). Analysis Of Digital Marketing Quality Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic on Frozen Food Consumers in West Java Region. *Quality-Access to Success*, *25*(198).

Hung, W. (2006). The 3C3R model: A conceptual framework for designing problems in PBL. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning*, *1*(1), 6

Ho, C. H., K. H. Chiu, H. Chen, and A. Papazafeiropoulou. 2015. Can internet blogs be used as an effective advertising tool? The role of product blog type and brand awareness. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management* 28 (3):346–62. doi:https://doi.org/10.1108/JEIM-03-2014-0021.

Homburg, C., Koschate, N., & Hoyer, W. D. (2006). The role of cognition and affect in the formation of customer satisfaction: a dynamic perspective. *Journal of Marketing*, *70*(3), 21-31.

Hwang, I.J.; Lee, B.G.; Kim, K.Y. (2014). Information Asymmetry, Social Networking Site Word of Mouth, and Mobility Effects on Social Commerce in Korea. *Cyberpsychol. Behav. Soc. Netw.* 2014, 17, 117–124.

Huang, C.-C. (2017). The impacts of brand experiences on brand loyalty: Mediators of brand love and trust. *Management Decision*, **55**(5), 915– 934.

Koay, K. Y., Ong, D. L. T., Khoo, K. L., & Yeoh, H. J. (2020). Perceived social media marketing activities and consumer-based brand equity: Testing a moderated mediation model. *Asia Pacific journal of marketing and logistics*, *33*(1), 53-72.

Kock, N., & Lynn, G. (2012). Lateral collinearity and misleading results in variance-based SEM: An illustration and recommendations. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, **13**(7), 546– 580.

Kamboj, S., Yadav, M., & Rahman, Z. (2018). Impact of social media and customer-centric technology on performance outcomes: The mediating role of social CRM capabilities. *International Journal of Electronic Marketing and Retailing*, **9**(2), 109– 125.

Kujur, F., & Singh, S. (2020). Visual communication and consumer-brand relationship on social networking sites-uses & gratifications theory perspective. *Journal of theoretical and applied electronic commerce research*, *15*(1), 30-47.

Kumar, R. (2019). *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners*. Sage Publications Limited.

Lim, J.-S., Pham, P., & Heinrichs, J. H. (2020). Impact of social media activity outcomes on brand equity. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*. Epub ahead of print. **29**(7), 927– 937.

Mangold, W. G., and D. J. Faulds (2009). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons* 52 (4):357–65. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.03.002.

Maru, C., & Sai Vijay, T. (2024). The relationship between electronic word of mouth and brand: A systematic review and future research agenda. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, *48*(2), e13017.

Moran, N. (2012). Social marketing meets interactive media: Lessons for the advertising community. *Strategic Direction*, 28(6).

Morgan-Thomas, A., & Veloutsou, C. (2013). Beyond technology acceptance: Brand relationships and online brand experience. *Journal of Business Research*, *66*(1), 21-27.

Mulyawati, S., Handayani, B., & Sudiartha, H. (2020). The relationship between celebrity endorsement, brand experience, brand love, and brand emotional value of nature republic cosmetics. *The International Journal of Social Sciences World (TIJOSSW)*, **2**(01), 85– 94.

Nobar, H. B. K., Kalejahi, H. K., & Rostamzadeh, R. (2020). Impact of social media marketing activities on brand equity and brand commitment in the leather industry. *International Journal of Business Excellence*, *20*(2), 191-204.

Naqvi, B.; Soni, S.; Naqvi, B.; Soni, S. The Rise and Growth of the Indian Retail Industry. Indiaretailing, 29 August 2019. Available online: https://www.indiaretailing.com/2019/08/29/retail/the-rise-and-growth-of-the-indian-retail-industry/ (accessed on 10 March 2020)

Okeke, T. C. (2025). Assessment of customer relationship management and customer engagement behaviour in hospitality industry in south eastern nigeria post covid-19: a moderated mediation. *Nigerian Journal of Arts and Humanities (njah)*, *5*(1).

Quan, N., Chi, N., Nhung, D., Ngan, N., & Phong, L. (2020). The influence of website brand equity, E-brand experience on E-loyalty: The mediating role of e-satisfaction. *Management Science Letters*, **10**(1), 63– 76.

Roy, S. K., Eshghi, A., & Sarkar, A. (2013). Antecedents and consequences of brand love. *Journal of Brand Management*, **20**(4), 325– 332

Sharma, S., Singh, S., Kujur, F., & Das, G. (2020). Social media activities and its influence on customer-brand relationship: an empirical study of apparel retailers' activity in India. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, *16*(4), 602-617.
Shao, G. 2009. Understanding the appeal of user-generated media: A uses and gratification perspective. *Internet Research* 19 (1):7–25. doi:https://doi.org/10.1145/1341531.1341557.
Singh, M.; Singh, G. (2018). Impact of social media on e-commerce. *Int. J. Eng. Technol*, 7, 21–26.
Seo, E. J., & Park, J. W. (2018). A study on the effects of social media marketing activities on brand equity and customer response in the airline industry. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, *66*, 36-41.
Sharma, S., Singh, S., Kujur, F., & Das, G. (2020). Social media activities and its influence on customer-brand relationship: an empirical study of apparel retailers' activity in India. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, *16*(4), 602-617.
Sikandar, M. D. I., & Ahmed, Q. M. (2019). Impact of social media marketing on brand love: promoting loyalty in the restaurant landscape of Pakistan. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, *9*(4), e201927.
Tran, L. A. P., & Chang, T. Y. (2024). What makes customers loyal to an online booking brand? The effects of online brand experience and brand attachment. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, *25*(2), 187-214.
Tafesse, W., & Wien, A. (2018). Implementing social media marketing strategically: an empirical assessment. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *34*(9-10), 732-749.
Walrave, M., Poels, K., Antheunis, M. L., Van den Broeck, E., & van Noort, G. (2018). Like or dislike? Adolescents' responses to personalized social network site advertising. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 24(6), 599– 616
Yadav, M., & Rahman, Z. (2018). The influence of social media marketing activities on customer loyalty: A study of the e-commerce industry. *Benchmarking: An International Journal,25*(9), 3882-3905.
Zollo, L., Filieri, R., Rialti, R., & Yoon, S. (2020). Unpacking the relationship between social media marketing and brand equity: The mediating role of consumers' benefits and experience. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 256– 267.
Zarantonello, L., & Schmitt, B. H. (2013). The impact of event marketing on brand equity: The mediating roles of brand experience and brand attitude. *International journal of advertising*, *32*(2), 255-280.

How to cite this article:

Noreen, S.; Ahmed, Q.; & Nazir, M. A. (2025). The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Customer-Brand Relationship: A Post-COVID-19 Analysis. *International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media*, *Vol 13, Nº 24*, June 2025, pp. 69-91.