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IMPACT OF BRAND AUTHENTICITY AND SOCIAL MEDIA ON CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR. A CASE OF PAKISTAN'S FOOD MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of the study is to understand the concept of authenticity and the integration of social media in enhancing the brand authenticity. Authenticity is the main aspect of creating trust. By keeping the authenticity in a real sense, the association between the brand and the followers becomes relatively stronger The research design of the study is quantitative research which implies the use of the data in the numerical form tested through the statistical tools. The researcher has also used the positivism philosophy that is used in the research where the scientific method for obtaining the information is used. Furthermore, the quantitative approach in this study has been used as it has been indicated to be the most suitable technique when studying the relationship between the variables The results of the study indicate there is a significant association between Brand Authenticity and social media on Customer Behaviour. It further indicates that it is important for brand preference to be considered while determining the customer behaviour as it leads to effective customer brand relationship to be determined The study has provided a theoretical framework for brand authenticity and social media's impact on it. Managerial objectives can be facilitated by this framework to develop an understanding of the importance of social media.

Keywords: Brand Authenticity, social media, Customer, Manufacturing, Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Consumers are showing more interest in ethical and sustainable consumption routines and incorporating these practices in their daily routine because of the increased emphasis on environmental-friendly actions. To assess this pattern, researchers have provided evidence for the consumption patterns of people of organic food and local manufactured food (Tandon, et al., 2021). The results present that locally manufactured food is a prominent choice of the customers for their sustainable consumption practice. Consumers have a perception that locally manufactured foods are being produced in small quantities limiting the waste amount, and are manufactured without using artificial ingredients and additives. Consumers also show a willingness to consume locally manufactured food as they feel a sense of satisfaction by facilitating a local manufacturer by buying for it and assisting it with their consumption compensation. Consumers tend to prefer locally manufactured food as it brings multiple benefits which include less chemical usage during production, local farmers getting support, and many environmental advantages (Jensen, et al., 2019). Locally manufactured food has recently seen a boom across the world as figures show that local food manufacturing has crossed the $20 billion

market valuation in 2020. The trend of locally manufactured food consumption can also be seen majorly in the USA and Europe (Zhang, Grunert, and Zhou, 2020).

It has been studied that keeping the presence of social media real while representing the brand in an interesting way can be considered to be an important aspect. Today everyone in the world is showing the main highlights which are carefully constructed and perfectly moments. Creating the real and authentic content can develop a deeper connection with the consumers, thus it helps to encourage the brand loyalty and ultimately boost the sales of the brand (Coelho, Rita and Santos, 2018). It is all about the association between the brand and followers (Blair, 2020). Association enables the brands to ensure the attention of customers and their respective engagement. Brand authenticity is considered to be an important aspect as it helps the customer to decide the various factors which they like and support about the brand. It has been studied that 90% of the customers checks the authenticity of the brand. The research has suggested that millennial and Gen Z mostly give the preference to the brands which are real and organic and not to the one which is perfect and well packaged (Chen et al. 2020).

Pakistan is also seeing a prominent boost in the consumption of the local food manufacturing industry. There are three main reasons for such a consumption pattern. First is that the Pakistani population is gaining more interest and raising concern about the whole food manufacturing process which includes its origin, use of material, and use of materials. The second reason can be seen as Pakistanis are now more concerned about the environmental changes and impact of the food industry on the climate diminishing. They are inclining towards sustainable production and consumption for the sake of the environment. The third reason can derive that the Pakistani government is backing the local food manufacturing industry and supporting locals to enable their products supplied to various parts of the country (Hassan, Abbasi, and Ahmed, 2020). Although consumers are showing a willingness to consume locally manufactured food, the will does not reflect in figures. It can seem that the local food manufacturing industry is not aware of their target audience about their products and their contribution towards sustainable production and consumption (Bukhari, et al., 2020). This communication gap can be associated with the lack of use of social media and digital communication mediums by the local food manufacturing industry of Pakistan.

Studies suggest that the Pakistani local food manufacturing industry is still proceeding with the traditional way of communication with their customers and has shown negligence to the new modern and digitalize way of communication with their customers (Irshad, Ahmad, and Malik, 2020). This means that they have underwhelmed the capabilities of Social media to use for their Brand authenticity and have missed out on the proper use of this medium for communication. The study has shown how brand authenticity can be sated for the local food manufacturing industry in Pakistan with the means of Social media (Manzoor, et al., 2020). This study has assisted the local food manufacturing industry of Pakistan to capitalize on the digital means of communication and strengthen their image and authentication for their customers. The study has researched the gap of the influence of social media on brand authenticity of the local food manufacturing industry in Pakistan.

Considering the importance of brand authenticity and social media integration, the main aim of the study is to understand the concept of authenticity and the integration of social media in enhancing the brand authenticity. To do so, the following objectives are structured;

To explore the concept of brand authenticity and the social media.

To determine the social media power in enhancing the brand authenticity.

To examine the various ways through which the brand authenticity is achieved in manufacturing industry in Pakistan

To evaluate the various challenges which are encountered in accomplishing the brand authenticity and also faced by the manufacturing industry.

What are the possible ways through which the brand authenticity can be achieved by the social media in manufacturing industry?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Authenticity is the main aspect of creating trust. By keeping the authenticity in a real sense, the association between the brand and the followers

becomes relatively stronger, enhancing the engagement of customers, respect and many more. Integrating the authenticity of the brand through the efforts of social media is significant for enhancing the sales and enhancing the ROI-91% of them are mostly willing to increase the brand for their authenticity with the purchase, or various other endorsements (Jian, Zhou and Zhou, 2019). On the other hand, 62% would make a sale or purchase from the brand they considered as very authentic.

Hence authenticity is mainly about the perspective and how the brands are taken or perceived. It has been studied that when the customer know that they mainly support the brand which is authentic and honest at the same time, it helps to create a positive feeling about various choices. In the context of social media, authenticity has various definitions and implications. (Samadzadehazdi and Ansari, 2020). For generation X, authenticity is considered to have personal relationships with various brands. There are a lot of definitions that are related to authenticity but the main goal should be to "be trustworthy". In the end, everything that is done should have the main purpose of gaining people's trust. Brand authenticity is not a complex process (Chen et al., 2021).

Some of the customers give priority to social and environmental issues and problems. They tend to keep their expectations from the brands in the same manner. Most of the time, their expectations are beyond the bottom line. It has been studied that customers do not trust the brands just to gain profit. Customers want to support those brands that support others (Herandez and Lewis, 2019). They slowly are drifting towards the brands which greatly embeds the different communities they are serving. Around the globe, marketers are actually recognizing the significance of authentic brand formulation specifically in the post-pandemic world. By creating and defining some of the authentic corporate strategies of sustainability, businesses can be used to inspire customers to trust and build brand equity. This helps to ensure the stability in the long term of the consumer association (Athwal and Harris, 2018).

It has been studied that to be truly authentic, brands should be able to make sure their values in an internal manner. It is very significant to include the employees in each and every level in the creation and growth of values of brand. Hence these values need to be framed in long term actions.

Further to have consistent communication, either internally or externally is considered to be the main key which often helps in the time of crisis (Kim and Lee, 2021). Customers usually wants to make more interaction with the brands which are authentic and hence considers it to communicate the passions. One of the common example includes the use of UGC(User Generated content) which helps to enable the customers to show why the environmental and social concerns is important. This further assists in adding the value to the brand and enhance the social proof (Han et al., 2018).

According to the research of Oberlo, authenticity is important for the brand as depicted in figure 1 below.

Figure 1

Importance of Brand authenticity Source: Oberlo 2020

Figure 1 above signifies that 86% consumers in the survey responded they consider brand authenticity while making purchasing decisions and the recent survey posted in Oberlo stated that 81% of the consumers buy based on trust.

Where, social media has a great power and a major influencing factor towards brand authenticity of the firms. In this regards, recent stats presented by DeGruttola, M. and DeGruttola,

M. (2022) signified that that user-generated content on social media is perceived as the most dependable form of content by customers internally, with 58% of consumers assenting. Marketers are on a diverse page. Whereas customers are 2.4x more probable to say UGC is most dependable, when likened to brand-created content, marketers are 2.1x additional probable to say brand-created content is most reliable in contrast to UGC as depicted in figure 2 below.

Figure 2

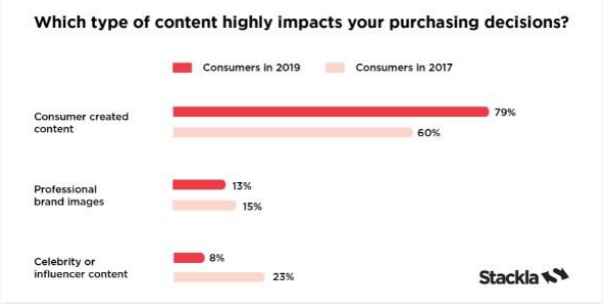
Role played by online content in creating brand authenticity Source: (Infographic, 2020)

This depict the social media has the power and plays massive role in building brand authenticity of the manufacturing companies. Similar results can be seen in the case of Pakistani manufacturing firms, where it was argued by Riaz and Ahmed, (2019) that the rising number of fast food companies has augmented the penetrating competition in fast food manufacturing. The researcher further articulated the results which signifies a positive and significant association amid brand authenticity and social media marketing. Research findings likewise illustrates that social media marketing as important constituent in managing and constructing brand authenticity in fast food sector of Pakistan. It also supports the arguments of Objects, (2022) where the researcher contended that social media marketing assists fast food brands to construct an appealing association with the clients and increases optimistic perception towards brand or company.

Moreover, in terms of ways that social media marketing allows the brand to construct brand authenticity, the results of DeGruttola, M. and DeGruttola, M. (2022) signifies that social media marketing allows to develop consumer created content, professional brand images that builds authenticity, and celebrity endorsements that plays a major role in creating brand authenticity as shown in figure 2.

Figure 3

Ways social media allowing to develop brand authenticity.



Source: DeGruttola and DeGruttola, (2022)

Above figure signifies that, internationally, 79% of individuals say user-generated content greatly influences their decisions to purchase, increased 60% in 2017, whereas just 13% say content from a brand is influential, and a just 8% opinion that influencer-created content would greatly influence their decision to purchase because they believe that brand authenticity is built by the brand and endorsed by celebrities. The fading impact of celebrity and influencer contact is the indicator that day to day clients trust the social media influencers and consider themselves as authentic which leads to positive behaviour of customers the brand. However, customers find user- generated content 9.8x additionally influential likened to influencer content, closely half of advertisers (49%) are intending to enhance their investment in influencing marketing in 2019. These activities allows the company to validate their actions by means of celebrity endorsements and customer created content which is considered as valid by the customers. It can also be seen in the case of Pakistani food firms where results of Jakste and Kuvykaite, (2013) signifies that, Fast food is one of the sectors that extensively utilises social media for activities of branding. Besides extensive growth has been observed in the rate of usage of social media in Pakistan. fast food brands in Pakistani extensively uses social media to build brand authenticity by posting videos of their manufacturing process, provide their kitchen tour, which builds the perception among people that the companies are offering and providing what they actually advertised in the commercials which is a sign of enhanced brand authenticity. This depicts that social media cerates ways for food manufacturers in the country to engage their customers by building

brand authenticity in comparison to other marketing tools.

Similarly, the results of Ahmed, (2021) also supports these findings where it was articulated that, the efficient utilisation of social media marketing assists food manufacturing companies to impact people purchasing decisions, behaviour and patterns of spending. This is resulted by enhanced brand authenticity. For example, well known food brands such as Shan, Habib group, advertised on social media regarding their operations, inclusion of healthy and hygienic ingredients in preparation of edibles and continuous online advertisement to build brand authenticity among the target market (Riaz and Ahmed, 2019). They sense that company value their customers in terms of quality, and premium products provisions which marks them as an authentic brand. Furthermore, viral marketing and e-word-of mouth strategy also assists food manufactures in managing and building high brand authenticity. Therefore, social media platforms act as efficient and effective tool for the firms to advertise their processes and planned strategies to get in touch with their targeted customer while enhanced brand authenticity (Karamian, 2015).

On the other hand, the results also signifies that, being meaningful is important for the business and this can be done by using social media as depicted in figure 4 below.

Figure 4

Increasing value to enhance brand authenticity

Source: Oberlo 2020

Above figure signifies that 77% of the people purchase form the brand that share the same values as they do, this is established by food manufacturers in Pakistan on social media advertisement. For example, Coca Cola commercials in the month of Ramadan depicts family and religious values and these commercials remained common throughout YouTube, Facebook and Instagram. This build perception among population that the brand is authentic as values both cultural and religious value of the population in Pakistan. This has maintained sales growth of the beverage in Pakistan.

Social media is considered to be extremely important in the golden age of branding. However things usually turns out to be as expected. Marketers in the beginning thought that the Facebook, YouTube and twitter would help them to bypass all the media and thus helps to connect with all the customers. Their main concern was to attract the huge number of audiences for their brands and to do so they have spent millions to produce the creative content (Safeer, He and Abrar, 2020). However even after this attempt customer never showed their interest. In fact the social media has led the business or brands to be less significant. The main issue behind this is the social media has changed how the culture basically works in a way that has ultimately weakens the technique of branding (Stephens, 2020).

In the age of Facebook and YouTube, brand building has gradually became the challenge. A decade back, most of the companies were incorporating the new golden age of branding. They have hired some of the creative agencies and tech individuals to insert the brands in the digital universe. It has been noticed that memes, stickiness and buzz had slowly became the new language of branding (Khajeheian and Ebrahimi, 2021). Despite all of the efforts, little payoffs had achieved. Considering the main feature of digital strategy, most of the companies had started making huge bets which is called as the branded content. The main theme behind this thought that the social media would enable the company to leapfrog some of the conventional media and enhance the association with the customers. Businesses had invested a large amount of money to pursue the vision. At this point, the main point to ponder was that why the content of brand and sponsorships was getting utilized in order to work. Further most of the promoters have largely insisted that the brand content is a new concept. Brands have also used integrated culture by sponsoring various kinds of TV shows and different events thus attaching to an interactive content

(Angeline et al. 2019). With the sudden rise of various new technologies that had helped the audiences to choose the advertisements from various resources such as cable networks, DVRs and internet. This had made comparatively difficult for the brands to but the fame. Moreover the companies have also created short films to be aired on the internet so attract an attention of customers. With this, the corporations have started hiring different film directors such as Michel Gondry, Wes Anderson etc. to push the extremely spectacular special effects and various values of production. These were categorized into pre-social media efforts which have led the businesses to make believe that if they delivered any type of content which is of Hollywood level then in the future they could engage the huge amount of audiences around their respective brands. This had push them towards the branded content (Gielens and Steenkamp, 2019).

Theorectical Framework

Brand identity theory refers to the various visible elements of brand which includes the color, and design that helps to highlight and differentiate the brand in the minds of customers. Building a positive brand image can helps to bring consistent sales and results the products to be more successful. Creating a positive image of brand needs the consistent analysis of the company and the market. (Fujita, Harrigan and Soutar, 2018). It includes the determination of the goals of the company, customers and various messages. Hence a successful brand can be one of the most important asset of the company. Brand value and identity is intangible and it cannot be quantified. It has been studied that Nike has one of the world interactive logo which ultimately increase their brand value.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1

Conceptual Model

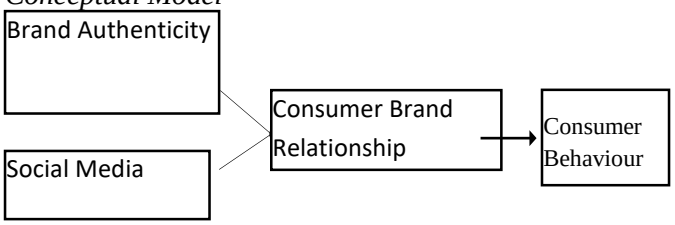


Figure 1 above shows the conceptual model of the study. It has the brand authenticity and social media as the independent variables, consumer behaviour as the dependent variable and consumer brand relationship as the mediating variable of the studies. There are certain studies that has been conducted to identify the influence of brand authenticity on the consumer behaviour such as Uysal and Okumus (2021). Furthermore there are certain studies such as Gupta, Chopra and Manek (2020) who has studied the relationship between the social media and consumer behaviour. The mediating role of the consumer brand relationship has not been studied in the previous studies however there are studies that has studied the direct impact of the brand authenticity on the consumer brand relationship (Oh et al., 2019) and the relationship between the consumer brand relationship and consumer behaviour (Ahn and Black, 2018). The previous studies has also explored the relationship between consumer brand relationship and social media. Mari (2016) has indicated the direct impact of the social media on the consumer brand relationship. Hence, the study evaluates its mediating role in the above model.

METHODOLOGY

The research design of the study is quantitative research which implies the use of the data in the numerical form tested through the statistical tools. The hypothesis testing of the study for the model developed in the Figure 1 above, implies that the quantitative form of the data is used in this study. It further implies the use of the inductive approach in the research which indicates the testing of the hypothesis in the study developed from the previous literature and theories. The researcher has also used the positivism philosophy that is used in the research where the scientific method for obtaining the information is used. Furthermore, the quantitative approach in this study has been used as it has been indicated to be the most suitable technique when studying the relationship between the variables (Apuke, 2017).

For this purpose, the study used the primary data collection technique through the use of the survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire has been distributed to the consumers of the Food manufacturing industry of Pakistan. The survey was distributed to the 500 respondents out of which 405 respondents has responded to the online survey sent

through Google form link. It indicates the response rate of 81%. The sampling technique used for the sampling of the respondents was the convenience sampling technique where the respondents were reached considering the accessibility and time constraint faced by the researcher. The questionnaire was developed using the 5 point Likert Scale and the items for measuring each of the variables has been adapted from the literature of the previous studies.

The data obtained from the questionnaire survey was converted into the numeric form and the data was cleaned for the missing values. The data collected was then analysed using the structural equation modelling using the software SMART PLS. Structural equation modelling (SEM) is thought to be the powerful multivariate technique that is obtained increasingly in the scientific studies for evaluating the multivariate and causal relationship. SEMS are different from the other techniques as they test the direct and indirect effect on the hypothesized associations (Kline, 2015). The analysis is divided into two different parts which are measurement model using CFA and path analysis. The measurement model or CFA analysis indicates the reliability and validity of the construct. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is the statistical technique used for the verification of the factor structure of the variables being observed. The analysis helps in testing the hypothesis that there is an association between the observed variables and underlying latent constructs. It includes the convergent validity and reliability using the factor loadings, composite reliability, reliability through Cronbach's alpha and average variance extracted (AVE) for the factor validity. It further includes the discriminant validity for the measurement of the validity of the constructs in measuring the variables (Brown, 2015). When compared with the exploratory factor analysis, it helps the researcher to obtain the valuable information about the data fit specific, and indicates the weakness in the specific items used to measure each of the variable. The confirmatory factor analysis helps in obtaining the improved statistical power through the modelling of the measurement model and providing the theory based approach to the data reduction with the robust statistical basis. Therefore, it has been applied for indicating the validity and reliability of the model for the better estimation.

Additionally, path analysis is applied for the evaluation of the direct and indirect effects between the different variables of the study model. The analysis is used to explain the causal relationship between the variables. The analysis is used as the alternative to the multiple linear regression. However, the analysis gives the more comprehensive analysis in comparison to the multiple linear regression as it shows both the direct and indirect effect with the specific effects between the variables and also supports the researcher to identify the mediating role within the variables (Jeon, 2015). Therefore, it is applied in this research for evaluating the mediating effect of the consumer brand relationship between the brand authenticity, social media and consumer behaviour.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Convergent Validity and Reliability

According to Carlson and Herdman (2012) convergent validity and reliability is also known as the Confirmatory Factor analysis (CFA) and it is used to evaluate the reliability and validity of the variables and its influence on different variables. It has been observed that many different statistical tests have been used to determine and evaluate the reliability and validity of the data and it has led to effective results to be generated. The first component that has been assessed is the outer loading and the aim of the test is to determine if the items in the test make an absolute contribution. The threshold for the test is 0.4 and each variable should be above 0.4 as it would help to determine if there is an absolute contribution Wong (2016). The results of the test indicates that the value of the outer loadings in the results is above 0.4 and this indicates that the variables make an absolute contribution and they should be retained in the model. Another test that has been conducted is regarding Cronbach Alpha which indicates the reliability of the variables and the items of the variable. The threshold for the reliability is 0.7 and as per the results it has been observed that the values are above 0.7 and it can be stated that the variables are reliable as they are above the threshold. The last test that has been examined and evaluated is the Average Variance Analysis and as the threshold for the test is 0.5. As per the results it has been witnessed that the values are above 0.5

and this indicates that the data of the study is valid and reliable.

Table 1
Convergent Validity and Reliability

Indicators	*Items*	*Outer loading*	*Cronbach Alpha*	*Composite Reliability*	*Average Variance extracted (AVE)*
Brand Authenticity	BA1	0.873	0.925	0.943	0.769
	BA2	0.841			
	BA3	0.909			
	BA4	0.890			
	BA5	0.871			
Customer Behaviour	CB1	0.804	0.851	0.893	0.627
	CB2	0.787			
	CB3	0.875			
	CB4	0.697			
	CB5	0.785			
Customer Brand Relationship	CBR1	0.846	0.793	0.870	0.637
	CBR2	0.492			
	CBR3	0.899			
	CBR4	0.886			
Social Media	SM1	0.829	0.911	0.933	0.737
	SM2	0.860			
	SM3	0.870			
	SM4	0.881			
	SM5	0.852			

Discriminant Validity

The table 2 of discriminant validity and reliability is used to determine the amount of distinctiveness among the variables and it further determines the correlation between the variables that can lead to multicollinearity issues to occur. There are many methods that are used to determine the discriminant validity of the dataset. Zaiţ and Bertea (2011) states that the threshold for discriminant validity of the HTMT ratio is 0.9 and the value should be below the threshold value. Therefore, as per the results of discriminant validity and it can be stated that the value of variables is below 0.9 and this indicates that variables are valid and different from each other. It can also be stated that there is distinctiveness in the variables and there no issues of multicollinearity in the model.

Table 2
Discriminant Validity

	Brand Authenticity	*Customer Behaviour*	*Customer Brand Relationship*	*Social Media*
Brand Authenticity				
Customer Behaviour	0.374327			
Customer Brand Relationship	0.812418	0.44196297		
Social Media	0.399759	0.480882947	0.4214672	

Path Analysis

Path analysis is considered to be one of the main statistical techniques that is performed and assessed after reliability and validity and the aim of the path analysis is to determine and investigate the impact of Brand Authenticity and social media on Customer Behaviour along with the moderating impact of customer brand relationship on the dependent on independent variable.

The significance of the variables is evaluated through the three main intervals that consists of 0.01, 0.05 and 0.1 therefore, the p-value of the variables should be above the mentioned value and it will help to determine the significance level. The table 3 of path analysis indicates that brand authenticity does not significantly affect the customer behaviour as the P-value is 0.306 which is below the significance level. The table further indicates that there is a significant association between brand authenticity and customer brand relationship with the P-value of 0.00 that is below the threshold. There is a significant association between customer brand relationship customer behaviour with the p-value of 0.083 with the interval value of 0.1. The results of the study further indicates that there is significant association between social media and customer behaviour and customer brand relationship with the p-value of 0.00 and 0.004 respectively. The results also indicates that there is a moderating impact of customer brand relationship on brand authenticity and customer behaviour with the p-value of 0.081 which falls under the interval value of 0.1. There is no moderating impact of customer brand relationship on social media and customer behaviour.

Table 3
Path Analysis

	Beta	*T-stats*	*P Values*
Brand Authenticity -> Customer Behaviour	0.093	1.024	0.306
Brand Authenticity -> Customer Brand Relationship	0.648	14.398	0.000
Customer Brand Relationship -> Customer Behaviour	0.16	1.736	0.083
Social Media -> Customer Behaviour	0.352	5.687	0.000
Social Media -> Customer Brand Relationship	0.134	2.858	0.004
Brand Authenticity -> Customer Brand Relationship -> Customer Behaviour	0.104	1.746	0.081
Social Media -> Customer Brand Relationship -> Customer Behaviour	0.021	1.518	0.129

Model Summary

The model summary of the results indicates that the factors of customer behaviour and customer brand relationship can predict the factors of the study by 24.1% and 50.1% and it can be stated that customer behaviour predict the variables by 24.1% and customer brand relationship can determine the moderating variables in an effective manner by 50.1%.

Table 4
Model Summary

	R-Square	*Adjusted R-Square*	*Q-Square*
Customer Behaviour	0.241	0.235	0.136
Customer Brand Relationship	0.501	0.498	0.311

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate there is a significant association between Brand Authenticity and social media on Customer Behaviour. It further indicates that it is important for brand preference to be considered while determining the customer behaviour as it leads to effective customer brand relationship to be determined. Social media is considered to be extremely important in the golden age of branding. As per the results of the study it has been observed that it is important for branding tactics to improve as it leads to a customer base to be determined. It has also been determined that social media marketing can provide an advantage to local food manufacturing companies and it helps to brand awareness to increase in a significant manner. Similarly, the results of Ahmed, (2021) also supports these findings where it was articulated that, the efficient utilisation of social media marketing assists food manufacturing companies to impact people purchasing decisions, behaviour and patterns of spending. This is resulted by enhanced brand authenticity. For example, well known food brands such as Shan, Habib group, advertised on social media regarding their operations, inclusion of healthy and hygienic ingredients in preparation of edibles and continuous online advertisement to build brand authenticity among the target market (Riaz and Ahmed, 2019).

The study has concluded that the local food manufacturing industry of Pakistan can have a significant impact on their brand authenticity by the use of digital communication means such as the social media market. Social media reflects the real picture of the company and presents its brand's story, origin, and culture for the customer to relate to it (Zaheer, 2018). It is important to note that local food companies of Pakistan have to focus on social media to convey their message about the importance they give to sustainable production and consumption (Bhatti et al., 2019). The postmodern perspective has

discussed that people are showing willingness towards environmental concerns and feel that the local food manufacturing industry is the right choice to fulfil this perspective.

As per the contemporary brand image theory, brand authenticity is more likely to be derived from the perception of the customers created from the communication by the company to its customers (Godsey, Perrott, and Hayes, 2020). The theory suggests that brand image is associated with brand authenticity as the authentication of a brand will develop the image of that brand (Riefler, 2020). Studies mentioned in the results show that communication with the customers allows the company to impose perception in the minds of the customers. That perception is then compared with the brand operations and customers evaluate whether the perception is according to the business operations or not. This process validates the authenticity of the brand, creating an image of that brand in the minds of customers (Jian, Zhou, and Zhou, 2019).

The results indicate that the brand authenticity is assessed under a phenomenon that integrates three main themes which include access to the private sphere, authenticity and human dimension, and m meaningful interpersonal discourse with relevance to the brand authenticity and digitalization (Pringle, and Fritz, 2019). Social media plays a vital role to combine the variables of meaningful interpersonal discourse and access to the private sphere. The combination indicates the authenticity of the brand and provides a core conceptualization for brand storytelling that develops the brand image of the company. According to Dwivedi, and McDonald, (2018) social media provides a significant impact on customer empowerment which in relevance to the study means that communication with the customers about the brand story and shared values like it culture, identity, origin, etc. through digital communication mediums improves the interaction with the customers increasing the brand authenticity. This can be seen as a company's role to indulge customers into the marketing approach and create the company brand authentication by preferred means till the desired outcomes.

The results have shown that social media marketing can provide a significant advantage to local food manufacturing companies of Pakistan to enhance their brand identity and awareness and help in spreading their brand story, culture, and image (Jin, Muqaddam, and Ryu, 2019). The results reflect that social media is a means of continuous exposure of the message and provides significant opportunities for the food industry to have two-way communication. This trait of social media usage helps in building brand authenticity and provides facilitation for better engagement programs with customers. Improved engagement with customers helps to enhance the positive perception that leads to improved brand authenticity and brand image (Bilgin, 2018). Tow way commination assists in building a relationship with the customers and enable customers to relate with the company's business operation objectives (Shawky, et al., 2019).

It is seen that local food manufacturing companies of Pakistan are not utilizing social media techniques to convey their message and provoke customers to buy their products. They are unable to reach customers which are beyond their traditional customer communication means (Bhatti, 2018). In this digital environment era, social media is considered the most effective tool to interact with customers and convey them reliable information to gain their trust and satisfy them accordingly to develop brand authenticity which then leads to improved brand image. Social media is contributing massively to business success by playing an imperative role in developing, brand authenticity, brand image, brand awareness, and brand association which ultimately lead to overall brand equity and increased sales volume (Bukhari, et al., 2020). Moreover, social media also provide support to retain customers by having a better approach for after-sales services. Therefore, the local food manufacturing industry of Pakistan has to look at the potential opportunities provided by the use of social media to communicate with their customer and improve their brand authenticity and brand image (Burhan, et al., 2021).

Customers have been seen to respond better when they are communicated with advertisements through online channels mainly by social media. This helps in developing common trust publicizing enlightening and engaging materials. This creates an ideal discernment about the importance of social media usage for promotion for the local food manufacturing industry of Pakistan (Papa, et al., 2018). Social media platforms provide an

opportunity to the local food industry to be called cool products and merge with trendy products which then creates a perception of the company in the minds of the customers as better utility and they subconsciously accepts the company's product recognizing their brand authenticity which then leads to improved brand image and higher conversion rate (Sashi, Brynildsen, and Bilgihan, 2019). As the modern era is creating a need for social acceptance, humans are craving social media use to be called socially active and become a part of this revolution. This has led them to get involved in advertising campaigns for local food manufacturing companies as they spread the company's message through their e word of mouth (Shen, et al., 2019). This is perhaps the most crucial and critical advantage for the use of social media e word of mouth provides significant assistance for the marketing and promotion of products without even including any financial resources for the purpose. People subconsciously indulge in a promotion activity so that they can be called socially active and convey the company's message without any need for compensation or recognition (Wijayaa, et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

This research has aimed at understanding the concept of authenticity and the integration of social media in enhancing the brand authenticity. For this, the researcher has paid heed to finding the possible ways through which the brand authenticity can be achieved by the social media in the manufacturing industry. To attain this target, the study has used the primary data collection technique by the use of the survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was distributed to the consumers of the Food manufacturing industry of Pakistan. The survey was conducted from 500 respondents out of which 405 respondents had responded to the online survey that was shared with them through the Google form link. It means that 81% of responses were taken online. The sampling technique adopted for a sampling of the respondents was the convenience sampling technique. The questionnaire was developed using the 5 points Likert Scale and the items for measuring each of the variables have been adapted from the literature of the previous studies (Apuke, 2017). The data collected was then analysed using the structural equation modeling using the software.

The analysis revealed that the results of the test proved the value of the outer loadings in the results that is above 0.4. Thus, it indicates that the variables make an absolute contribution and they should be retained in the model. The results of discriminant validity revealed that the value of variables is below 0.9 and this indicates that the variables are valid and different from each other. Moreover, distinctiveness in the variables is there and no issues of multicollinearity are there in the model. The researcher has conducted path analysis for investigating the impact of Brand Authenticity and social media on Customer Behaviour along with the moderating impact of customer brand relationship on the dependent on independent variable. The results show that the brand authenticity does not significantly affect the customer behaviour because the P-value is 0.306 is below the significance level. However, there is a significant association between brand authenticity and customer brand relationship having a P-value of 0.00 which is below the threshold. In fact, a significant association is there between social media and customer behaviour and customer brand relationship that has the P-value of 0.00 and 0.004 correspondingly. The moderating impact of customer brand relationship on brand authenticity and customer behaviour is noticed with the p- value of 0.081. Lastly, there is no moderating impact of customer brand relationship on social media and customer behaviour.

In short, a significant association is there between Brand Authenticity and social media on Customer Behaviour (Jian, Zhou and Zhou, 2019). It is important for brand preference to be considered while determining the customer behaviour as it leads to effective customer brand relationships to be determined. Moreover, the local food manufacturing industry of Pakistan has a significant impact on their brand authenticity with the use of digital communication means like the social media market. It helps in reflecting the real picture of the company and shows its brand's story, origin, and culture for the consumer to relate to it (Zaheer, 2018).

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