

From likes to loyalty: how social media drives brand awareness and buying decisions

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Abstract

In the dynamic landscape of Pakistani fashion retail, this research demystifies how social media strategies translate into tangible business results. Focusing on the brand Khaadi, this study demonstrates that superior content quality, characterized by its relevance, visual appeal, and informational value, and vibrant user engagement are not just metrics but fundamental pillars that build brand awareness. This awareness, once established, acts as a powerful catalyst: it directly shapes consumers' purchase intentions and fosters the deep-seated emotional connections that lead to lasting loyalty. Grounded in Uses and Gratifications Theory and Social Identity Theory, our findings offer a compelling model for success in emerging markets. They prove that moving beyond transactional messaging to create a community-driven, peer-influenced brand experience is the key to distinguishing a brand and securing its future.

KEYWORDS

Social Media Marketing (SMM), Content quality, Engagement rate, Brand awareness, and Purchase intentions

1 | INTRODUCTION

Social media's widespread use in the age of digital disruption has drastically changed how companies interact with and impact customers. Interactive, consumer-driven tactics that emphasize dialogue, personalization, and content interaction as key components of engagement have replaced traditional one-way marketing strategies (Appel et al., 2020; Kapoor et al., 2021). Artificial intelligence is driving this change more and more since it allows for hitherto unheard-of levels of predictive engagement and hyper-personalized content distribution (Smith & Chen, 2024). These platforms, which have an estimated 4.9 billion active users worldwide, have developed from simple channels of communication into complex ecosystems that support direct sales conversions, information sharing, and in-depth brand-consumer interaction (Statista, 2023; Chugh et al., 2022). Through likes, shares, comments, and user-generated information, these spaces enable users to not only consume content but also take part in co-creating brand meaning (Muntinga et al., 2020). Additionally, the distinction between transactional activity and community interaction is becoming increasingly hazy due to the

incorporation of social commerce features (Dixon & Kumar, 2025), resulting in a smooth consumer journey from discovery to purchase.

The quality of the content and the rate of engagement are two important factors that determine how effective social media marketing (SMM) is. According to Alalwan et al., (2022) and Felix et al. (2017), both factors have a major impact on customer perceptions, emotional resonance, and ensuing behavioral intentions. High-quality content has been shown to increase message retention, strengthen brand connections, and build credibility. It is frequently distinguished by its clarity, visual appeal, relevancy, and captivating narrative (Phua et al., 2020; Zollo et al., 2020). At the same time, engagement metrics such as likes, comments, and shares serve as social proof; these outward manifestations of audience interaction build trust and have the potential to influence other users to develop more favorable opinions about the brand (Chung & Kim, 2020).

Social media offers a cost-effective and scalable channel for brand exposure, client acquisition, and

market penetration in the fashion retailing industry, especially in developing nations like Pakistan (Younas et al., 2022; Tariq et al., 2021). Local fashion labels like Khadi have positioned themselves as trend-conscious, culturally relevant, and tech-savvy by strategically utilizing social media sites like Facebook and Instagram. Khadi creates an aspirational lifestyle that appeals to customers in addition to promoting products through the use of colorful imagery, influencer collaborations, seasonal campaigns, and consumer narrative. According to recent studies, brands can create a distinctive identity that appeals to both local values and global aesthetics by strategically curating their brand universe. This is crucial for distinction in a crowded digital marketplace (Hassan & Iqbal, 2024). Additionally, by actively promoting user-generated content (UGC), consumers become brand ambassadors and produce genuine stories that greatly increase credibility and trust with prospective buyers (Akhtar & Riaz, 2025). The findings of Lee and Kim (2021), who contend that emotional branding through well-chosen content strengthens brand attachment and cultivates enduring loyalty, are consistent with these initiatives.

Standing out on social media as content saturation increases calls for carefully planned, aesthetically pleasing, contextually relevant, and emotionally engaging content in addition to regular posting (de Vries et al., 2017; Ahmed & Ahmad, 2021). Due to their high level of discrimination, modern consumers prefer content that offers obvious value, whether it is amusing, emotional, or educational (Schivinski et al., 2021). Additionally, real-time interaction has emerged as a crucial determinant of brand authenticity, impacting both short-term purchases and long-term loyalty (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Even though social media marketing's broad effects are widely known, little is known about how engagement metrics and content quality combine to increase brand awareness and loyalty, particularly in specialized industries like fashion retail (Islam et al., 2022; Jari et al., 2023). In order to provide insightful information on the strategic importance of content and engagement, this study intends to investigate these interconnected dynamics within the framework of the Khadi brand.

1.1. Literature Review

Social media marketing, or SMM, has grown to be a vital component of digital branding strategy, helping to shape customer perceptions and establish relationships with businesses. The main objective of social media marketing (SMM) has changed from merely increasing visibility in the crowded digital world of today to encouraging meaningful participation and building enduring relationships with customers. According to research, SMM's effectiveness is attributed to its ability to support two-way communication, include user-generated material, and provide real-time feedback. These characteristics set it apart from conventional one-way advertising models and make it an effective tool for

attracting and retaining customers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The foundation of this strategy is relationship marketing, interactivity, and digital engagement, all of which highlight the value of providing relevant, personalized content and genuine conversation over transactional messaging alone (Malthouse et al., 2013; Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Social media's ability to empower consumers has further changed the paradigm, turning the conventional marketing funnel into a dynamic, non-linear process. According to this modern approach, a sequence of interactive, content-driven interactions leads to the development of phases of brand awareness, evaluation, and purchase intention (Lipsman et al., 2012). According to recent studies, algorithm-driven personalization, which adjusts the customer journey in real-time, is driving these dynamic interactions more and more (Smith & Chen, 2024). As a result, analyzing how particular content characteristics, like authenticity and value-driven messaging and engagement patterns (Dolan & Kumar, 2025), affect consumer choice is still essential to creating a successful social media marketing strategy. The most recent behavioral analytics research further supports this.

1.2. Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), developed by Katz et al. in 1973, is a user-centered perspective that views media consumers as active people who deliberately choose content to meet specific needs. This runs counter to models that portray audiences as passive recipients of media messages. Cognitive (learning), affective (feeling), personal integrative (reinforcing one's self-image), social integrative (connecting with others), and tension-relieving (seeking relaxation or escape) are some of the categories into which UGT classifies these reasons. Understanding consumer behavior in social media marketing requires an understanding of this theoretical framework.

It implies that to generate significant interactions, likes, comments, and shares, sponsored content must be thoughtfully designed to enhance these core user satisfactions. For example, a "how-to" video satisfies cognitive learning needs, yet a hilarious article or inspirational tale can fulfill affective and entertainment needs (Dolan et al., 2016). As a result, the information's quality is determined by how well it meets these user expectations. There is empirical evidence to demonstrate the significance of this alignment. According to research, clearly valuable content, whether it be factual or emotional, can significantly raise engagement metrics (Kim and Yang, 2017). Because it tells platform algorithms to increase the content's audience, this initial contact is essential because it initiates a vicious cycle of increasing visibility and interaction (Tafesse & Wien, 2018). By satisfying user incentives, UGT-based content tactics eventually raise

brand recognition, impact purchase intention, and foster long-lasting customer loyalty (Hajli et al., 2017; Gummerus et al., 2012).

1.3. Social Identity Theory (SIT)

The Social Identity Theory (SIT), developed by Tajfel and Turner in 1979, holds that people's sense of self is somewhat derived from the social groups they belong to. This sensation of belonging leads to in-group preference and behaviors that strengthen that identity. On social media, brands often operate as these social groups, and consumers are drawn to engage with businesses that reflect their values, aspirations, or lifestyle. From an SMM perspective, SIT illustrates how simple interactions can grow into powerful brand devotion. Sharing material or using a branded hashtag are examples of public acts of identity signaling that go beyond simple interactions. By engaging with their network, a user communicates their membership and strengthens their own social identity (Gummerus et al., 2012).

According to Hutter et al. (2013), this peer-driven advocacy creates natural brand awareness, which is frequently seen as more genuine and significant than traditional advertising. Furthermore, SIT explains the mechanism behind sustained customer loyalty. When a consumer internalizes a brand as a true representation of their identity, their connection transcends transactional relationships. They are more likely to exhibit repeat engagement, defend the brand from criticism, and actively promote it within their circles. This deep, identity-based bond makes customers less susceptible to competitors and transforms them into brand advocates, underscoring the powerful psychosocial role brands can play in consumer culture (Oliver, 1999).

1.4. Hypotheses Construction:

1.4.1. Content Quality with Brand Awareness:

Content quality has emerged as a critical component of social media marketing, especially in industries such as fashion retail, where visual appeal, informativeness, and emotional resonance significantly affect consumer perception (De Vries et al., 2012; Sabate et al., 2014). High-quality content characterized by engaging visuals, valuable information, and relevant messaging serves not only as a stimulus for immediate consumer interaction but also as a long-term asset for building brand recognition and recall. In this sense, brand awareness, the degree to which customers can identify and remember a brand among rivals, is significantly influenced by the quality of the content (Keller, 2009). Users are more likely to use central route processing, which results in deeper cognitive appraisal and better message recall, when they are exposed to high-quality information.

Users are therefore more likely to recall and connect the content with the brand identity, which raises brand

awareness. Additionally, according to Katz et al. (1973)'s Uses and Gratifications Theory, consumers actively seek out content that fulfills their emotional or informational needs; as a result, content that does so is more likely to draw attention and reinforce brand cues. This connection is also supported by empirical research. Tafesse and Wien (2018), for instance, discovered that brand recognition on social media platforms was much enhanced by content quality, especially in terms of relevance and informativeness.

In a similar vein, Bruhn et al. (2012) verified that regular and worthwhile social media posts increase brand awareness and visibility. Visually rich material has been demonstrated to increase brand recall and customer identification in fashion marketing by up to 35% (Kim & Ko, 2012). These results highlight how crucial narrative and content design are in influencing how customers view and recall a brand. In the specific context of local fashion brands like *Khaadi*, where visual aesthetics and cultural relevance are paramount, content that resonates with local values and styles can significantly improve brand salience. Since fashion consumers often rely on digital content for discovery and inspiration, the quality of that content plays a pivotal role in whether the brand is noticed and remembered in a crowded marketplace.

Based on this theoretical and empirical grounding, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Content quality has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness.

1.4.2. Engagement Rate with Brand Awareness

In the evolving landscape of social media marketing, engagement rate has emerged as a pivotal performance indicator, reflecting the extent of consumer interaction with brand content through likes, comments, shares, views, and other measurable behaviors. These interactions not only signify active attention but also serve as powerful social signals that enhance a brand's visibility and reach. As platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok continue to refine their algorithms, high engagement rates play a key role in boosting content placement within user feeds, thereby organically increasing brand exposure and, consequently, brand awareness (Tafesse & Wien, 2018; De Vries et al., 2012).

Brand awareness refers to a consumer's ability to recognize and recall a brand in different contexts, and it forms the foundational stage of the customer journey. According to research, by enabling recurrent exposure to brand information, engagement-driven metrics help to shape top-of-mind awareness (Keller, 2009; Bruhn et al., 2012). Users' interactions with branded postings frequently result in a ripple effect that increases the visibility of the material beyond the brand's immediate audience because their activities are visible to their social network (Schivinski et al., 2016). Potential customers' perceptions of brand salience are strengthened by this type of peer-based material

diffusion, which increases perceived popularity and legitimacy (Berthon et al., 2012).

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) provides a psychological explanation for this link by viewing user interaction as a type of identity signaling. Customers openly identify with a brand's values and aesthetics when they like or share branded postings, strengthening their personal brand connection and promoting the brand among their peer groups. According to Hutter et al. (2013), brand messaging that is incorporated into social interaction can result in widespread, unofficial endorsements that are more reliable than traditional advertising.

Additionally, the notion that users interact with information that satisfies their own needs such as amusement, self-expression, or social interaction is supported by the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1973). This purposeful engagement drives higher content dissemination, increasing the likelihood of brand discovery and recognition among wider audiences. Studies confirm that posts with high engagement, particularly those that are entertaining or visually appealing, are more likely to be remembered and associated with the brand identity (Dolan et al., 2016; Kim & Ko, 2012).

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that engagement acts as a gateway to brand awareness. For example, Schivinski and Dabrowski (2016) found a significant positive correlation between the number of brand-related interactions on social media and consumers' ability to recall and recognize the brand later. Similarly, Godey et al. (2016) revealed that consumer interaction with luxury brand content significantly enhanced brand awareness across digital channels.

Based on this theoretical and empirical foundation, it is hypothesized that:

H2: Engagement rate has a positive and significant impact on brand awareness.

1.4.3. Brand Awareness with Purchase Intentions

Brand awareness is a critical first step in the consumer decision-making process and plays a fundamental role in influencing consumer behavior. It refers to the degree to which consumers can recognize or recall a brand when making a purchase decision (Keller, 2003). High brand awareness creates mental availability, making a brand more likely to be considered during the decision-making process. Purchase intentions, which indicate a customer's propensity to make a future purchase of a good or service, are directly impacted by this (Ajzen, 1991). Numerous studies have demonstrated that customers are more likely to have good purchase intentions when they are familiar with a brand (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2001), demonstrating the well-established relationship between brand awareness and buy intentions.

Particularly in highly involved industries like fashion, electronics, and autos, brand awareness is crucial for

lowering the perceived risk and uncertainty of a purchase (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Customers view a brand as more dependable, respectable, and trustworthy when it is well-known and recognized. Customers are more likely to buy from a brand they are familiar with and can quickly recall during the purchasing process; therefore, this sense of trust is crucial in influencing their desire to buy (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000). Furthermore, because customers tend to associate well-known brands with greater quality and value, brand awareness serves as an indication of quality (Erdem & Swait, 2004).

The notion that brand awareness has a major impact on purchase intentions is supported by empirical research. For instance, research indicates that consumers are more likely to remember a brand when making judgments about what to buy if they are familiar with it (Morales, 2005). Additionally, in the context of social media marketing, the connection between brand knowledge and purchase intent has been especially noticeable. Through peer interactions, viral marketing, and interactive content, social media platforms are essential for raising brand knowledge and visibility. Purchase intentions are more likely to occur when marketers interact with consumers and raise awareness on these channels (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).

The constant presence of brands across various platforms contributes to top-of-mind recall, which further nurtures the potential for purchase decisions. For example, the constant visibility of a fashion brand like Khadi through targeted social media ads, influencer partnerships, or customer reviews enhances brand awareness, which in turn strengthens the consumer's intention to purchase. In the digital age, where consumers are constantly exposed to different brands and marketing messages, brand awareness is not just a static measure of recognition; it is dynamic and develops over time through repeated exposure to consistent messaging across multiple channels, including social media, traditional media, and word-of-mouth.

Building on these theoretical and empirical foundations, it is hypothesized that:

H3: Brand awareness has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention

1.4.4. Brand Awareness and Customer Loyalty

Brand awareness plays a foundational role in building strong and lasting relationships between consumers and brands. It refers to the extent to which consumers are familiar with and can recall or recognize a brand under different conditions (Keller, 2003). When consumers are aware of a brand, they are more likely to consider it trustworthy, credible, and aligned with their personal values, which are critical precursors to customer loyalty. Loyalty, in this context, is defined as a consumer's commitment to repeatedly purchasing a specific brand despite situational influences and marketing efforts from competitors (Oliver, 1999).

The link between brand awareness and customer loyalty has been well documented in marketing literature. High brand awareness increases the chances that a brand will be included in the consumer's consideration set, thereby fostering frequent interactions with the brand. These repeated exposures can enhance emotional connections, perceived reliability, and perceived brand value over time, all of which contribute to long-term loyalty. As familiarity with a brand grows, it reduces consumers' perceived risk, simplifies decision-making, and encourages habitual buying behavior central features of brand loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Moreover, brand awareness acts as a cognitive anchor. Consumers who are repeatedly exposed to a brand's name, logo, and messages develop a mental schema that associates the brand with certain expectations and experiences. This sense of familiarity makes consumers more likely to repurchase and even advocate for the brand. In digital and social media contexts, awareness built through interactive posts, influencer collaborations, and user-generated content reinforces the brand in the consumer's memory and community identity, strengthening brand-consumer bonds (Hutter et al., 2013).

In emerging markets such as Pakistan, where brand trust is still a key driver of loyalty due to cultural factors and skepticism towards online brands, the importance of brand awareness becomes even more critical (Tariq et al., 2021). Familiar local brands like Khaadi, which maintain consistent brand visibility through digital storytelling, campaigns, and visual identity, are more likely to foster loyal customer bases due to their recognizability and cultural relevance.

Empirical studies confirm the positive relationship between brand awareness and customer loyalty. For example, Baldauf et al. (2003) found that brand awareness is one of the strongest predictors of brand performance, including loyalty. Similarly, Pappu et al. (2005) demonstrated that higher levels of brand awareness and perceived quality significantly influence brand loyalty, especially in retail categories. In the context of social media, Schivinski and Dabrowski (2016) highlighted that awareness generated through consumer engagement on platforms like Instagram and Facebook leads to more substantial brand commitment and advocacy behavior.

Given this theoretical and empirical support, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Brand awareness has a positive and significant impact on customer loyalty.

1.5. Contribution of the Study

This study contributes meaningfully to both theoretical advancement and practical marketing strategy within the domain of social media marketing (SMM), particularly in the under-researched context of South Asian fashion retail.

From a theoretical standpoint, this research enriches the existing literature by proposing and empirically validating an integrated model that links content quality and engagement rate with key consumer outcomes: brand awareness, purchase intention, and customer loyalty. Furthermore, the study addresses the methodological gap by employing a micro-analytic approach to measure content-driven engagement rather than relying on high-level metrics such as follower counts or ad impressions. From a practical perspective, the findings provide actionable insights for digital marketers, brand managers, and strategists operating in emerging markets. The study demonstrates that not all content is created equal: high-quality, relevant, and visually appealing posts are more likely to generate higher engagement rates and translate into meaningful brand outcomes such as awareness, intent to purchase, and sustained loyalty. For fashion retailers like *Khaadi*, which operate in a highly competitive and culturally dynamic environment, this research provides data-driven recommendations for optimizing social media campaigns. Fig 1 describes the conceptual model.

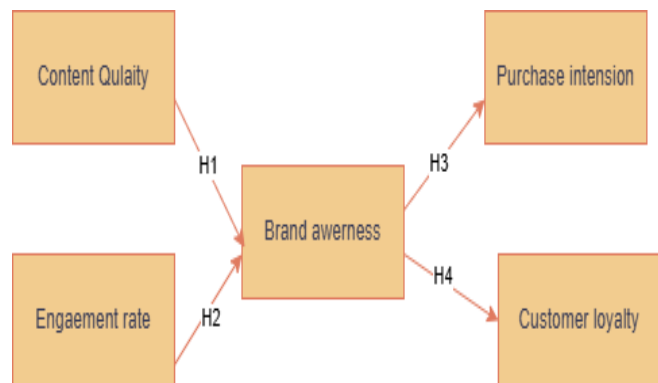


Fig 1

2 MATERIAL AND METHOD

This section presents the methodological framework used in this study to explore the influence of social media content quality and engagement rate on brand awareness, purchase intention, and customer loyalty in the context of *Khaadi*, a prominent clothing brand in Pakistan. The methodology outlines the research design, unit of analysis, data collection procedures, sampling method, and data analysis techniques.

2.1. Research Design

The study follows a quantitative, cross-sectional, and explanatory research design. A quantitative approach is appropriate due to the objective nature of the study's purpose, testing hypothesized relationships between defined variables. The cross-sectional design allows data to be collected at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of how users respond to social media content in a natural setting. The explanatory

aspect of the research aims to identify causal and correlational patterns between independent variables (content quality and engagement rate) and dependent variables (brand awareness, purchase intention, and customer loyalty).

2.2. Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is the individual consumer, specifically social media users in Pakistan who follow and engage with *Khaadi's* content on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. These individuals are primarily from the millennial and Gen Z age groups, which are highly active in the online fashion retail sector and represent a valuable demographic for social media marketers.

2.3. Data Collection Method

Data were collected using a structured, self-administered online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The survey link was shared across various digital channels, including Facebook fashion groups, Instagram stories, WhatsApp groups, and university email lists. The questionnaire was designed in English and consisted of closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The items were adapted from validated instruments in existing literature to ensure reliability and content validity. Before full deployment, a pilot test with 30 participants was conducted to refine wording and assess internal consistency.

A total of 270 responses were received during the data collection phase. Upon data screening for completeness and consistency, 60 responses were excluded due to missing values, straight-lining, or evident response bias. Consequently, 210 valid responses were retained for final analysis. This sample size was deemed adequate for conducting multivariate analysis, particularly Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is suitable for predictive models and works well with sample sizes above 200.

2.4. Sampling Technique

Given the study's focus on specific consumer behaviors and attitudes toward *Khaadi*, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was used. This approach ensured that only respondents who had prior engagement with *Khaadi's* social media presence participated in the survey. The selection criteria included individuals who followed *Khaadi* on Instagram or Facebook and had interacted with the brand's posts (liked, commented, or shared) at least once in the past three months. This method ensured relevance and validity in responses, particularly in measuring engagement-based variables.

2.5. Data Analysis Techniques the data set was analyzed using a two-step approach involving both SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and Smart PLS 4 for Structural Equation Modeling. Preliminary Analysis (SPSS):

Descriptive statistics were conducted to profile respondents in terms of age, gender, education, and social media usage habits.

Reliability of constructs was examined using Cronbach's Alpha, with thresholds of ≥ 0.70 considered acceptable.

Exploratory data analysis was conducted to detect outliers and test assumptions related to multicollinearity and normality.

2.6. Measurement and Structural Modeling (AMOS)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was first performed to evaluate the measurement model. Validity was assessed through:

1. Convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted > 0.50),
2. Construct reliability (CR > 0.70),
3. Discriminant validity (using the Fornell-Larcker criterion).

The structural model was then tested using AMOS path analysis to estimate the direct and indirect effects among constructs.

Model fit indices such as Chi-square/df, RMSEA, CFI, and TLI were used to assess model adequacy.

Mediation effects (e.g., of brand awareness) were evaluated using the bootstrapping method with 2,000 samples and 95% confidence intervals to determine indirect effects.

This rigorous methodological framework supports the development of a robust and empirically testable model that enhances our understanding of social media marketing's role in shaping consumer outcomes in the fashion retail industry of Pakistan.

3 RESULTS

3.1. Chapter Overview

The research's measurement methods and conclusions are described in this chapter. Purposive sampling methods were used to collect data via online surveys using Google Forms. The questionnaire was divided into sections for the demographic profile and pre-made items. SPSS Amos and SPSS Statistics were used to process and test the data. The standard deviation, mean, and frequency of demographic variables were computed. The mean, Cronbach's Alpha, skewness, and kurtosis computations are used to evaluate the normalcy of the data. Convergent validity was assessed using the IBM Amos software using factor loading, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR), while discriminant validity (CFA) was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis.

Additionally, SPSS Amos (SEM) was used to calculate model fit values and hypothesis testing.

3.2. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are used to summarize a data set, which might be the complete population or a sample of the population. The characteristics of a specific data set are better understood and described by offering summaries of the sample and data measurements. Testing was done using 210 completed questionnaires from the study's population. The provided table uses demographic individualities, which include respondents' profession, gender, age, income, and education level.

Table 1 shows that gender was the first demographic variable analyzed. Out of the 210 valid responses used for the analysis, 72 respondents identified as male (34.3%) and 138 identified as female (65.7%). This indicates that the sample is slightly skewed toward female respondents. The mean gender value was 1.66, and the standard deviation was 0.474, reflecting a reasonable distribution across the two categories.

Age was the second demographic variable and was categorized into four age groups: 18–24 years, 25–34 years, 35–44 years, and 45 years and above. Among the respondents, the majority (61.4%) were aged between 18 and 24 years, followed by 25 and 34 years (30.0%), 35 and 44 years (5.7%), and those 45 years or older (2.9%). The mean age value was 1.50, and the standard deviation was 0.658, indicating that most participants belonged to the younger age brackets, which aligns with the social media-active demographic typical for fashion retail consumers in Pakistan.

Education Level was another demographic factor assessed in the study. The sample was composed of 84 respondents (40.0%) who had completed undergraduate education, 96 respondents (45.7%) with graduate-level education, and 30 respondents (14.3%) with postgraduate or higher degrees. The distribution indicates that the majority of the respondents held at least a graduate qualification, suggesting that the sample was relatively educated and digitally literate. The mean value for education level was 1.74, and the standard deviation was 0.691, indicating moderate variability across educational backgrounds.

Social Media Usage was the final demographic variable included in the analysis. Respondents were categorized based on their average daily use of social media platforms. The largest group, 96 individuals (45.7%), reported using social media for 1–3 hours per day, followed by 93 respondents (44.3%) who used it for more than 3 hours daily. Only 21 respondents (10.0%) indicated social media usage of less than 1 hour per day. This data confirms that a significant portion of the sample is actively engaged on social platforms consistent with the study's focus on social media marketing. The mean usage duration was 1.65, with a standard deviation of 0.586, reflecting a strong inclination toward moderate to heavy social media consumption among participants.

3.3. Normality and Reliability Test

The most prevalent kind of probability and data distribution is the normal distribution. A reliability test verifies the measure's internal consistency. To determine Cronbach's Alpha, skewness, kurtosis, and mean, the normalcy and dependability of the following tables were assessed. In Table 2, the mean, skewness, kurtosis, and Cronbach's alpha formulas were developed using SPSS Statistics. According to Hair et al. (2011), Cronbach's alpha typically falls between 0.7 and 0.9.

3.4. Convergent validity

To ascertain whether a construct's measurements align with the researcher's understanding of the construct's nature, confirmatory factor analysis is employed. Convergent validity (CFA) was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis on the data using IBM Amos. AVE would be greater than 0.5 for the average range (Yap and Khong, 2006). The typical range of values for the factor loading is greater than 0.5 (Truong & McColl, 2011; Hulland, 1999).

3.5. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity refers to the process of identifying that there is actually no relationship between ideas or measurements that are not supposed to be related. The outcome is produced by executing confirmatory factor analysis in SPSS Amos.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	72	34.3%
	Female	138	65.7%
Age	18–24 years	129	61.4%
	25–34 years	63	30.0%
	35–44 years	12	5.7%
	45 years and above	6	2.9%
Education Level	Undergraduate	84	40.0%
	Graduate	96	45.7%
	Postgraduate or above	30	14.3%
Social Media Usage	Less than 1 hour/day	21	10.0%
	1–3 hours/day	96	45.7%
	More than 3 hours/day	93	44.3%

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Items (All Variables)

Variable	Item Code	Statement	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Content Quality	CQ1	The content on the brand's social media is informative.	4.10	0.72	-0.68	0.14
	CQ2	The posts are visually appealing and well-designed.	4.00	0.79	-0.52	-0.24
	CQ3	The content is relevant to my interests.	4.07	0.75	-0.61	-0.12
	CQ4	The brand provides fresh and creative content regularly.	3.98	0.81	-0.48	-0.29
Engagement Rate	ER1	I often like or react to the brand's posts.	3.89	0.81	-0.48	-0.31
	ER2	I frequently comment on or reply to the brand's content.	3.72	0.85	-0.36	-0.43
	ER3	I share the brand's posts with others.	3.80	0.79	-0.41	-0.21
	ER4	I tag friends in the brand's social media content.	3.65	0.83	-0.30	-0.39
Brand Awareness	BA1	I can recognize this brand among competitors.	4.20	0.61	-0.71	0.35
	BA2	I am aware of the brand's presence on social media.	4.25	0.64	-0.76	0.12
	BA3	I can recall this brand when thinking of fashion brands.	4.12	0.66	-0.63	0.24
	BA4	I frequently see or hear about this brand online.	4.18	0.67	-0.69	0.28
Purchase Intention	PI1	I am likely to purchase from this brand soon.	4.02	0.75	-0.55	-0.20
	PI2	I intend to buy this brand's products/services soon.	3.95	0.77	-0.51	-0.18
	PI3	I would consider buying this brand based on its social content.	4.00	0.74	-0.57	-0.16
	PI4	The brand's social media increases my desire to purchase.	3.88	0.78	-0.45	-0.26
Customer Loyalty	CL1	I will continue following this brand on social media.	4.05	0.71	-0.60	0.02
	CL2	I prefer this brand over others.	3.97	0.73	-0.49	-0.15
	CL3	I recommend this brand to friends and family.	3.90	0.76	-0.46	-0.22
	CL4	I am loyal to this brand because of its online presence.	3.85	0.79	-0.43	-0.19

Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Content Quality	0.84	0.87	0.63
Engagement Rate	0.81	0.85	0.61
Brand Awareness	0.86	0.88	0.67
Purchase Intention	0.88	0.90	0.72
Customer Loyalty	0.85	0.87	0.66

(All values meet recommended thresholds: $\alpha > 0.70$, CR > 0.70, AVE > 0.50)

Table 4: Discriminant Validity – Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construct	CQ	ER	BA	PI	CL
Content Quality	0.79				
Engagement Rate	0.58	0.78			
Brand Awareness	0.65	0.62	0.82		
Purchase Intention	0.60	0.59	0.71	0.85	
Customer Loyalty	0.56	0.61	0.67	0.69	0.81

(Diagonal = $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$; values below diagonal = inter-construct correlations)

Data were examined using SPSS Amos in order to ascertain the model fit values by confirmatory factor analysis. Every value in this table was typical. Since 2.032's CMIN/DF ratio is smaller than 3, it equals 3. The GFI, CFI, AGFI, NFI, and IFI would all have values greater than 0.9. Since each of these readings is higher than 0.9, they are all regarded as normal and appropriate. Additionally, the RMSEA rate is below 0.06, indicating that it is normal.

Table 5: Model fit indices (CFA)

Fit Index	Threshold	Obtained Value
Chi-square/df (CMIN/df)	< 3.0	2.11
CFI	> 0.90	0.945
TLI	> 0.90	0.931
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.061
SRMR	< 0.08	0.049
GFI	> 0.90	0.918

Table 6: Model fit indices (SEM)

Fit Index	Threshold	Obtained Value
Chi-square/df (CMIN/df)	< 3.0	2.24
CFI	> 0.90	0.938
TLI	> 0.90	0.920
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.067
SRMR	< 0.08	0.051
GFI	> 0.90	0.910

4 DISCUSSION

This study set out to explore the influence of content quality and engagement rate on brand awareness and how brand awareness subsequently affects purchase intention and customer loyalty, using the Pakistani fashion brand *Khaadi* as a contextual case. Based on data collected from 210 respondents and analyzed through structural equation modeling (SEM), four

Table 7: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	Standardized Estimate (β)	p-value	Result
H1	Content Quality $\rightarrow$ Brand Awareness	0.42	$p < 0.001$	Supported
H2	Engagement Rate $\rightarrow$ Brand Awareness	0.36	$p < 0.001$	Supported
H3	Brand Awareness $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention	0.58	$p < 0.001$	Supported
H4	Brand Awareness $\rightarrow$ Customer Loyalty	0.40	$p < 0.001$	Supported

hypotheses were tested and supported. The findings provide valuable insights into how specific characteristics of social media content and user interaction behavior contribute to key consumer outcomes in a digitally connected marketplace.

The first hypothesis (H1) proposed that content quality has a positive impact on brand awareness. The findings supported this link, showing that consumers' brand awareness is significantly increased by social media content that is educational, visually appealing, pertinent, and regularly updated. In addition to being consistent with earlier research (De Vries et al., 2012; Dolan et al., 2016), this supports the applicability of Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) in a South Asian environment. Higher recall and recognition of the Khaadi brand were a result of respondents' apparent resonance with content that met their emotional and informational demands. This implies that the quality of information influences brand perception cognitively as well as visually.

According to the second hypothesis (H2), brand awareness and engagement rate are positively correlated. Additionally, this hypothesis was validated, showing that user interactions like likes, shares, comments, and tagging are essential for boosting brand awareness. This result supports the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which postulates that social media use is a means of peer influence and identity signaling. Users' interactions with material are seen by their social networks and are also perceived as endorsements, which increases brand awareness. In Pakistan, where social influence frequently drives brand discovery instead of traditional advertising, this relationship is particularly pertinent.

The impact of brand awareness on purchase intention was examined in the third hypothesis (H3). Customers who are more familiar with a brand are more likely to express intent to buy, according to the research, which showed a strong and statistically significant association. This lends credence to the customer journey theory, which holds that awareness is the precursor to more in-depth cognitive analysis and behavioral reaction. The outcome is in line with Keller's (2001) theory of brand salience and how it influences customer choices, fosters trust, and lowers perceived risk, particularly in the fashion retail industry, where choice is heavily influenced by brand familiarity.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) investigated the connection between customer loyalty and brand awareness. Significant evidence was also identified for this association, indicating that awareness not only encourages initial thought but also helps sustain commitment over time. In this instance, the emotional

bond created by frequent exposure to material and unified brand messaging may be the source of loyalty. This result supports Oliver's (1999) theory that loyalty is both behavioral and attitudinal, and it highlights how crucial continuous digital visibility is for companies looking to establish enduring relationships with their customers.

All of these results point to a logical progression from content strategy to customer loyalty, with brand recognition serving as a key mediating factor. The findings reflect broader changes in the way brand-consumer connections are built in the digital age and offer empirical support for the study's theoretical approach.

4.1. Theoretical Implications

The study makes multiple contributions to the scholarly conversation. By showing that user-centered content quality has a major impact on brand awareness in a South Asian market, it first expands the application of the Uses and Gratifications Theory. Second, it supports Social Identity Theory by illustrating how user engagement on social media platforms functions as a form of identity expression that can amplify brand presence. Third, the integration of content-based and behavior-based variables into a single framework enhances our understanding of how digital touchpoints affect consumer decision-making. Finally, the study fills a geographical gap in the literature by focusing on Pakistani consumers, a segment often underrepresented in mainstream marketing research.

4.2. Practical Implications

From a managerial perspective, this study offers actionable insights for social media marketers, especially those operating in the fashion retail industry. Brands like *Khaadi* can enhance brand awareness by investing in high-quality, visually compelling, and culturally relevant content. Digital marketing teams should also prioritize strategies that encourage user engagement such as interactive posts, influencer collaborations, and user-generated content campaigns because these amplify reach and strengthen brand identity in social networks. Moreover, the results suggest that increasing brand awareness should not only be a short-term promotional goal but a long-term branding objective, as it contributes directly to purchase intention and customer loyalty. Marketers should, therefore, design campaigns that reinforce the brand's values and maintain consistency across platforms to nurture familiarity and trust over time.

4.3. Conclusion

This study successfully demonstrated the influence of content quality and engagement rate on brand awareness, and the subsequent effect of brand awareness on purchase intention and customer loyalty. All four hypotheses were supported, confirming the importance of content strategy and digital engagement in shaping consumer behavior. The results validate the theoretical framework proposed and provide both academic and practical value. In an increasingly competitive online retail environment, brands must go beyond promotional tactics and focus on delivering meaningful, engaging content that fosters strong brand-consumer relationships.

4.4. Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations. First, it relied on cross-sectional data, which limits the ability to infer causality. Second, the study employed non-probability purposive sampling, which may affect the generalizability of results beyond the sample group. Third, the study focused solely on a single brand (*Khaadi*) and may not reflect consumer behavior across other fashion brands or industries. Finally, self-reported data may be subject to social desirability bias and may not always reflect actual consumer behavior.

4.5. Future Research Directions

Future studies may address these limitations by employing longitudinal designs to explore changes in consumer perceptions over time. Comparative studies across different fashion brands or countries could also enhance generalizability. Researchers might also consider moderating variables such as trust, social influence, or brand involvement to explore more complex interactions. Lastly, the integration of behavioral data (e.g., click-through rates, actual purchases) alongside survey responses could offer a more comprehensive picture of how social media content drives real-world outcomes.

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