The role of Social Media (SM) Reels on Consumers' decisions to purchase fashion

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Abstract.

The introduction of a video-sharing tool by Facebook and Instagram, the two most prominent SM platforms, has captured the attention of internet users worldwide. Marketers are progressively utilising the well-known Reel feature, which not only strengthens brand personas but also establishes a new standard for more engaged audience outreach by embracing these platform elements. Fashion firms in Pakistan have been incentivized to integrate industry trends with the latest developments in SM technology and applications because of the growing popularity of Facebook and Instagram feeds among users.

Nevertheless, despite reels' increasing popularity among internet users, there is still a knowledge gap regarding their application in brand-related SM posts. Specifically, little is known about how brands can optimise engagement by looking into what makes reels more engaging and interactive for viewers. We may conclude SM reels significantly increase consumer engagement by using the feedback consumers leave on brand-related SM reels on Facebook and Instagram. The success of brand-related reels is still dependent on several other elements, including the content's depth and relevancy as well as other difficulties like the difference between user-generated and brand-related content influences customer choice.

Furthermore, the SM reel study demonstrates brands utilising these features positively impact consumer preference for the brand because they are seen as fashionable, modern, and stylish due to their presence on these platforms, which lends the platforms' legitimacy and attributes to the brand itself.

Keywords: Brand communication; Consumer behaviour; Fashion brands; Pakistan; Reels; SM.

1. Introduction

The most significant advancements in digital technology have completely changed how we connect and communicate. As a result, the world is moving towards a fast-paced setting where social contacts happen instantly thanks to sophisticated digital technologies (McKinsey, 2016). Furthermore, the expansion of social networking sites in recent years is proof of the demand for and popularity of virtual networking websites, where programmers are still coming up with innovative and interactive features to draw in users. Furthermore, Pakistan has seen an exponential rise in the use of SM platforms as a result of digital globalisation. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp, TikTok, and other SM sites are widely used and offer users a variety of interactive features, including the ability to share live updates, reels, and follows, among other ways to socialise (Pakistan Today, 2022).

More importantly, Pakistan's fashion apparel market is extremely competitive. Even Pakistani home-based businesses have been compelled to put their brands online through well-known e-commerce platforms like Daraz.pk and Shophive due to the growing interest of consumers in fashion. Similarly, SM platforms like Facebook and Instagram have made it possible for these companies to enter the Pakistani fashion sector since they are more affordable and effective at getting their brand in front of customers (Daily Pakistan Global, 2021). As a result, the fashion sector is having difficulty remaining competitive and holding onto its market share. In response to the need, these Pakistani fashion labels are embracing SM trends like reels in addition to setting new trends in fashion to increase their brand's persuasiveness by exhibiting their playful side through interactive content. It is critical to understand which elements of the reels' content pique viewers' interest the most. Researching this can give additional insights into how Pakistani fashion brands can affect consumers' purchasing decisions.

Although this study explores Pakistan's fashion business in great detail, its findings are not limited to any one sector. The results of this study can be useful to businesses in Pakistan, irrespective of the industry they work in, who are eager to implement SM marketing strategies to draw and focus consumer attention to their products. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate the influence SM reels have on Pakistani consumers' decisions to purchase fashion goods.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Media
Although SM platforms differ in terms of their objectives and reach, they all give various demographics a digital space to interact and socialise (Mintel Store, n.d.). SM users are creating, sharing, and understanding ideas from online information as it continues to increase at an exponential rate. People first use these platforms to interact socially and connect with other users of the SM sites. Currently, there are no restrictions on what can be done with these platforms. Customers are now continuously examining what brands are giving as marketers use these platforms to communicate with purchasers (Diba et al., 2019).

2.2 Fashion Brands in Pakistan
According to Keller and Lehmann (2006), a brand is first and foremost only the unique name given to a product. It plays a crucial role in creating the identity of the product. Over the past few years, Pakistan's fashion sector has significantly grown. Pakistani consumers' perception of brands increased when well-known worldwide brands like Nike and Adidas entered the country's market, although the fashion and textile industries have long been in demand and play a significant role in the country's trade.

Furthermore, the summer season—also referred to as the "lawn season"—and the spring season are the two main focus points of the Pakistani fashion business. In addition, several Pakistani manufacturers have started to reveal their lawn collections as summer draws near. Owing to the abundance of lawn brands, there is fierce competition in the market, which frequently sparks a lawn war during the season. Fashion brands appeal to men, women, and children of all ages and offer both Eastern and Western styles including Khaadi, GulAhmed, Alkaram, Nishat linen, and Zeen (Janjua and Shahjahan, 2015).

Companies are stepping up their attempts to take a bigger piece of the market by bringing variety to the menswear sector. Men have also been a prominent focus for many fashion brands in Pakistan (Kashif and Mubarik, 2021). It has to do with the fact urban Pakistani society has outgrown notions and acclimated to the outdated stigma of being a metrosexual. Conversely, Pakistani consumers' desire for fashion labels has increased due to outside trends. Pakistani fashion brands are using social responsibility to address several long-standing societal challenges that have become social conundrums. Generation is a Pakistani company that values diversity and has used online and SM advertising to challenge numerous social preconceptions about beauty (Jajja and Jat, 2019). Because of this, these commercials encourage SM views and conversations among Pakistani men and women, which helps to popularise these businesses across Pakistan's socioeconomic strata.

2.3 Review of Related Theories
Since the introduction of SM, social connections have undergone a significant shift. Users' experiences have undoubtedly been completely altered by the instantaneous digital communication that has replaced genuine, in-person encounters. Aside from the apparent, the shift from physical to digital media represents the mimicking actions of international marketplaces, which subsequently required the availability of well-known SM sites like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp, as supported by the social learning theory. As a result, the social learning theory is used in this study to direct the investigation. Among the first theories of learning behaviour is the Social Learning Theory. According to the hypothesis, people learn conduct by their experiences and ongoing interactions with one another.

SM interactions and the social learning theory are related. This study closes the gap between the two by going into additional detail about how SM influences Pakistani consumers' attention, learning, and motivation concerning fashion brands. According to the notion, new information is revealed and knowledge is developed within the social context through individual interactions and engagements in activities. Through participation in activities and individual feedback, individuals acquire the ability to model desired actions. Since interaction is unavoidably necessary to maintain cognition, exposure to outside stimuli is essential to starting the cognitive process (Deaton, 2015). In conclusion, these social learning theory reflections are pertinent to the SM setting and demonstrate how people mimic new information by mimicking answers. Furthermore, the idea posits humans acquire new habits through the illustration or portrayal of models, which serve as instances of patterns or actions. Accordingly, it expects the models will influence how each person perceives and comprehends the information (Coco and Eckert, 2020). The proposed framework for this research is illustrated in Figure 1.
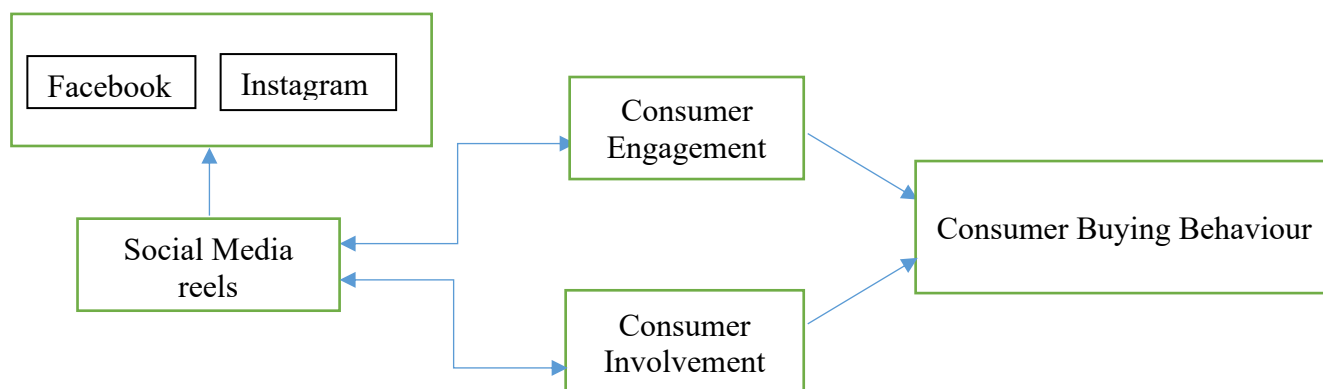
Fig. 1. Proposed Framework

2.4 Review of studies
More importantly, the report shows that the country's fashion market is experiencing an increase in demand for fashion products, as seen by the yearly revenue growth rate of 4.5% which was predicted to grow. According to Gazzola et al. (2020), there was a 9% decrease in revenue earned by SM marketing in 2021, despite SM's significant growth and popularity as well as the desire for fashion businesses.

Nash (2019) concluded that SM platforms play a major role in informing, interacting, and engaging consumers. The answers of high street fashion customers in the UK retail industry are thoroughly examined in this study. To arrive at important conclusions, the study makes use of qualitative research methods. Nash (2019) claims that although external and internal cues play a big role in Internet communications, unplanned consumer conduct can lead to several contradictions.

It assumes that decisions made by customers can be influenced at any stage of the purchasing process. As a result, SM platforms are continuously involved in interactions with consumers, exposing them to fresh, engaging information and eliciting reactions from them on the inside. In summary, this proves that SM platforms facilitate consumer and retailer interactions by allowing customers to modify their perceptions of fashion companies based on published content. Even though it is a crucial component of the online shopping experience, the selection of brands is no longer limited to fashion going digital. Other factors, such as quality and consumers' opinions on the company's online initiatives, add to the overall perception of the brand and brand equity.

3. Methodology
A secondary research study with initially defined inclusion-exclusion criteria was adopted for SM-related studies from 2006 to the present day. A qualitative research approach and analysis were employed on secondary data (Jaafari et al., 2023). The search engines Google and Google Scholar were adopted to find related studies where the keywords of Brand communication, Consumer behaviour, Fashion brands; Pakistan, Reels and SM were inputted in different combinations to find related studies. This period was selected due to Facebook being made available to the public from 2006 onwards. A thematic analysis was adopted to analyse the retrieved findings. The research was conducted in line with the Birmingham City University (2025) research guidelines.

4. Findings and Analysis
4.1 Findings and Analysis
The researchers focused on Pakistani fashion firms using SM channels to communicate, engage, and enlighten Pakistani consumers during a participatory observation of the SM landscape. Three observations in total were made on Facebook and Instagram, two popular platforms, with responses chosen at random.

The developed research questions aided in the development of themes. To identify the meanings from the quoted texts that are pertinent to the findings, we use a theme coding technique.

4.2 Discussion
People learn essentially by watching how other people react to actions that are either acceptable or unacceptable to their culture and set of values (Chen et al., 2017; Tantry & Ali, 2020). Once the behaviours are accepted, others start to imitate and replicate the model's behaviour. Khaadi's Instagram postings have garnered 9564 engagements, indicating the number of users who have looked at the posts and have responded favourably to the information. In response, 139 comments were left, three of which were selected to show the level of user engagement sparked by the Instagram reel.

Comment 1: '*Nice Cinematography and model makeup and dresses.*'
Comment 2: '*Please Don't be sad but all have the same look and typical type.*'
Comment 3: '*Price*'

The comments above show that a large portion of the Pakistani populace uses Instagram regularly and refers others to Instagram reels while making selections about which fashion labels to buy. Furthermore, it suggests that when the reel's content features models donning the outfits, viewers are usually engaged. Thus, Instagram reels are used to influence consumers' purchasing decisions.

A total of 49 encounters demonstrate that when brands use attention-grabbing and entertaining promotional messaging, consumers are involved. On the other hand, the identical message garnered a lot of feedback when it was shared on Generation's Facebook page, resulting in 525 Facebook interactions that made people feel something. In addition, 204

comments were left, 15 individuals shared the article, and 30 people came across it—all of which demonstrate how widely the item was spread. The Google Translate app is used to translate the message into English.

Brand Promotion Message: '*Loot us but don't leave us*' – Relationship building.
The end of the spring season coincided with the sales promotions. SM reels are used by the brand to raise awareness and make sure that customers are participating as a result of the post. Findings indicate SM reels are a crucial tool for Pakistani firms to inform customers about what they have to offer.

The public has responded favourably to the content and marketing initiatives that these Pakistani fashion firms broadcast on SM, particularly when it comes to the utilisation of SM reels. We watch the responses through the different interactions on these posts. For example, the number of followers Pakistani fashion firms have shows that their Facebook and Instagram accounts provide valuable and relevant content for consumers to consider when making a purchase.

A well-known Pakistani apparel business, Generation Apparel, ran an Instagram campaign that attracted a lot of attention by contextualising a traditional Pakistani desi wedding situation. Because the audience could identify with what was shown and because the users were seen to be very engaged, the reel made the viewers feel a sense of affiliation.

Comment 1: *The black one is unstitched or stitched and what about the price?*
Comment 2: *Love your content, you're so creative.*
Comment 3: *Major relates (fire icon)*
Comment 4: *I am the 8th one. One who doesn't care about anyone or anything. I just want to eat good food and then go home (laughing emoji)*

The findings thus relate to the research that shows users' incentives to follow brands on SM depend on factors such as brand affinity, entertainment, interaction, curiosity, or opportunity seeking. As a result, it is noted that consumers have preferences for Pakistani fashion firms that are active on SM and use Facebook and Instagram reels for interaction and referral.

Based on the results, we provide insightful information on Pakistani fashion firms that use Social Media Reviews (SMR) in the planning of their corporate advertising campaigns. Our study was able to collect more expressive, open-ended replies by watching people interact with brands' SMRs, which helped us address the research issue. Therefore, the study's findings confirm, in light of the body of current literature, that SMRs may have an impact on customers' decisions if Pakistani fashion firms prioritise customer connection and develop original content to elicit a response from their audience.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations
5.1 Key Findings
User reactions to SMR and the material on Facebook and Instagram reels offered some insightful information. It was noted that the majority of Pakistani women actively followed fashion labels on SM and were heavily engaged with the clips that the businesses uploaded. Additionally, it was observed that males were organising discussion groups and actively posting comments beneath the reels, indicating a shift in the male audience's acceptance of fashion trends in Pakistan. The information presented or as a component of their followers' actions.

However, these internal and external stimuli combine to create layers of motivation that influence customers' choices for particular fashion brands (Wang et al., 2020; Gilani et al., 2025; Tantry & Singh, 2016). This is because consumers perceive brands as more approachable and feel more empowered when interacting with them informally through digital spaces. The fashion brands' quick response times on their Facebook and Instagram feeds show how satisfied customers are with their vendors.

The results corroborate existing literature suggesting that SM reels affect consumers' decisions to buy depending on the degree of engagement they generate. Additionally, it confirms that the SM reels' content is essential to grabbing consumers' attention and strengthening their persuasiveness during the decision-making process (Iyer et al., 2024, Ko et al., 2022; Tantry & Puri-Singh, 2017). SM reels are essential to the shopping experience for customers because they help establish brands in their thoughts. Furthermore, the social learning theory validates the research results indicating that users acquire new behaviours when they watch SM reels and concurrently get knowledge about the viewers' impact. If the outcome is favourable, they imitate them in hopes of receiving similar favourable reactions (Khan et al., 2023; Deaton, 2015; Tantry and Ali, 2020). The findings show SM clips are not the only way that consumers make decisions. Users also mentioned affordability, quality, and price as important considerations when planning to buy stylish items. Pakistan's fashion sector has expanded significantly, and a brand's value proposition influences how successful it is perceived. Pakistan's market is price-sensitive since customers' purchasing decisions are still being influenced by economic factors (Khan et al., 2019; Mainali & Tantry, 2022).

5.2 Recommendations

The authors propose the adoption of innovative technologies to better promote fashion brands where studies in the past have demonstrated a positive correlation between innovation and business growth (Al Jaghoub et al., 2024; Aseer et al., 2024; Gilani et al., 2024a; Krupicka et al., 2024). This applies to all businesses regardless of their size and sector which has been demonstrated by studies based on businesses from different industries (Gernal et al., 2024; Moussa et al., 2024; Yasin et al., 2021). However, different studies identify the level of innovation adoption in businesses is based on leadership styles and other factors like regional culture which may also apply to businesses in the fashion sector (Gilani et al., 2022; Gilani et al., 2023; Gilani et al., 2024b; Sulthan et al., 2022; Yasin et al., 2024). Additionally, the likelihood of innovation adoption by fashion businesses for promoting products on SM platforms may also be influenced by the level of infrastructure in a given area where Gilani and Faccia (2022) highlight a positive correlation between developed infrastructure in a given area to innovation adoption by businesses based in such areas. The authors promote strategic alliances with fashion industry businesses with businesses from other sectors to better improve promotional operations which has been demonstrated to be effective in different studies.

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