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Examining the Influence of Marketing Communication and Brand Identity on Consumer Decisions

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate how marketing communication and brand identity lead the consumers made the purchase decisions, especially on emerging markets. Despite previous literature's recognition of the influence of branding and messaging on consumer behaviour, other empirical studies have not examined how branding and messaging jointly affect sales effort, brand management, and consumer belief in brand trust. In this research, the gap identified is addressed by how strategic communication and identity alignment can direct consumer decision making. It is based on a quantitative cross sectional design which involved distributed of a structured questionnaire among consumers in sectors across Pakistan. The model was tested via bootstrapping PLS-SEM. In order to confirm the robustness of the proposed framework, reliability, validity, path coefficients and model fitness indices were all evaluated. It was found that marketing communication has a strong effect on brand identity ($\beta = 0.70$) that has a positive impact on sales effort. Confirming the key hypotheses, consumer purchase decisions are determined by sales effort and consumer belief in brand ($\beta = 0.38$ and $\beta = 0.43$, respectively). The structural model was strong (SRMR = 0.067, GoF = 0.39). It offers original insights by way of validation of a multi-construct branding model and provides brand managers with practical implications related to the shaping of integrated, trust driven marketing strategies.

Keywords: Marketing Communication, Brand Identity, Consumer Purchase

INTRODUCTION

As brand perception has become a powerful branding and marketing communication stands to be an important and strategic function. Vrontis et al. (2023); Syed et al. (2023); Rosario & Dias (2022), all brands now rely on integrated communication strategies to attract the attention of the consumers and to drive purchasing behavior. The emotional appeal, digital storytelling, and coherence across channels have been discovered to increase the message retention as well as purchasing interest (Hughes et al., 2019; Herhausen et al., 2020). Differentiation and long term relevance depends on the concept of brand identity as it involves visual symbols, core values and culture (Krishna & Kim, 2021; Pantano, 2021; Pecot et al., 2022).

Strategic communication has its interplay with marketing communication and the brand identity is important as it is politically to shape consumer perceptions and to reinforce brand meaning (Chatterjee et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2021). A well developed brand identity increases the trust and the loyalty towards the brand which directly influences consumer purchase behavior (Alakkas et al., 2022; Kuenzel and Halliday, 2008). As digital platforms grow, the need for communication in identity building is heightened, as brands use real time audience engagement and social media to address the audiences (Gupta 2022; Jabeen et al, 2022).

Over time, the fact that the industries are transitioning from feature product driven approached to brand centered, emotionally driven approach (Krings et al., 2021; Khan at al., 2022) is happening. A consistent brand identity plays an important role in customers' trust, therefore adds value to the emotional connections, that are essential for customer loyalty (Pecot et al., 2022; Herhausen et al., 2020). The brand identity has to be converted into consumer decisions through sales efforts with the emergence of AI and digital strategies (Shesadri et al., 2022; Hughes et al., 2019).

Additionally, sales efforts merely affect purchasing behavior as moderated by consumer belief in a brand (i.e., trust and authenticity) (Khan et al., 2022, Jabeen et al., 2022). Brands coming out as reliable and ethical tend to stimulate stronger loyalty and advocate (Chatzopoulou & Navazhylava, 2022; Gupta, 2022). Therefore, finally, the relationship between marketing communication and brand identity influences on the consumer perception and decision making as a whole, through a single approached that incorporates authenticity and engagement (Krishna & Kim, 2021; Rosario & Dias, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing Communication Marketing communication is a strategic basis for transmitting value propositions for the target consumers through the channels of advertising, digital media, public relations and promotions (Vrontis et al., 2023; Rosario & Dias, 2022; Gupta, 2022). Good communication strategies in the modern marketing marketing are equally important to maximize brand familiarity, emotional resonance, and engagement (Herhausen et al., 2020). Percy and Elliott (2005) and Shimp (2010) focus on the informative and persuasive aspect that enable the

marketing communication to contribute in consumer learning and brand recall (Kayani, et al., 2023; Khan, et al., 2021; Naseer, et al., 2021; Khan & Khan, 2020). Now in the age of increased digital connectivity and interaction between the communicator and a receiver the communication is not unidirectional anymore, and therefore needs consistency as across the platforms for the sake of building up brand credibility (Janjua, et al., 2025; Faisal, Qureshi & Shah, 2025).

Brand identity, as an example, represents the unique set of brand associations planned by the brand strategists to represent the brand's personality, values and the mission (Krishna & Kim, 2021; Pecot et al., 2022; Pantano, 2021). This is the basis for differentiation and positioning in such highly competitive industries. As stated by Brand Identity, "Aaker (1996) and Kapferer (2008) argue that brand identity must be enduring but flexible to the shift of context." Relying on the works by da Silveira et al. (2023), we are able to present how identity is dynamic, being co-created by both organization and its consumers (Zhang, et al., 2023). In an evolving landscape, identity is constantly requiring brands to regularly assess not only whether the consumer perceives identity to be in alignment with consumer and competitive narratives, but whether the brand remains competitive subtree (Shah, et al., 2025; Haq, et al., 2024; Noor, et al., 2024).

Shaukat, Qureshi, and ul Haq (2020) therefore, Sales Effort refers to the extent of activities conducted by marketing or sales staffs in influencing the consumer's buying behavior such as direct selling, promotional campaigns, customer service provided & interactive relationship establishment (Hughes et al, 2019; Liu et al, 2021; Sheshadri, et al, 2022). It serves as a mediating bridge between brand identity and the purchase decisions (Azhar, 2024; Azhar, et al., 2022). Other studies (Hughes & Michael, 2010; Ahearne et al., 2005) indicate that the sales force effectiveness is highly related to their belief in the brand and how clear the communications they receive. Today digital tools help selling companies with real time personalization, automate the process, and manage those customers via CRM systems where messages are delivered seamlessly and appropriately (Sultana, Ahmed, & Imran, 2024; Ahmed, & Imran, 2024).

It is a moderating variable in brand – consumer relationship (Khan et al., 2022; Jabeen et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021). So significantly does it affect marketing communication and sales into action today's consumers are far more skeptical and increasingly demand transparency and ethical conduct alike and brand trust is key to success.

The Process of Consumer Decision making is a process that is based on cognitive, emotional and social factors. In the instance of Brand communication and identity (Merle et al., 2022, Karimi et al., 2018 and Kuenzel & Halliday, 2008), they assess that Brand communication and identity all have multiple stages, from need recognition to post purchase evaluation. ul Haq and ur Rehman (2017) strong brand identity makes decision easier, since it reduces perceived risk and increases brand preference as pointed by Keller (2008) and Bhattacharya & Sen (2003). Based on recent insights (Syed et al., 2023; Chatterjee et al., 2022), digital personalization, social media influence, and peer reviews are very critical factors affecting the contemporary

consumer decision making (Malik, et al., 2025; Shah & Saba, 2024).

However, interrelationship among Constructs namely marketing communication, brand identity, sales effort, consumer belief and purchase decision has been increasingly drawn as an issue in branding literature (Hanif, Abdin & Mirza, 2019; Hanif, Naveed & Rehman, 2017). According to Alakkas et al. (2022), the more effective CSR communication is, the more effective it is to do so for benefiting brand equity because: purchasing the more potential customers who prefer to consume such products and then showing the better comparison between the quality of their products and the other competing market brands. In similar lines, Chatzopoulou & Navazhylava (2022), Gupta (2022) and Krishna & Kim (2021) concur that brand trust, founded on marketing communication and brand identity, moderates the contribution of sales efforts in brand building (Shah, et al., 2024; Rasheed & Kiani, 2024). This integrated perspective is founded within the foundational works of Aaker (1996) and de Chernatony (1999), and indicates the strategic alignment of everything related to the brand (Saba, Fatima, Farooq, & Zafar, 2021; Saba, Tabish, & Khan, 2017).

Introduction to Theories

Theoretical Foundation of the Study

Theories of psychological, communicative and behavioral pathways of the consumer decision making grounds the present study. Theories of branding, psychology, and marketing disciplines such as branding, belief in brand, sales effort, consumer purchase decision and brand identity support the main constructs such as those in marketing communication (Krishna & Kim, 2021; Jabeen et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2022). Some of these theories like the AIDA model of action (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) of Strong (1925) and Brand Equity Theory (Aaker, 1996) would help in framing the cognitive stages through which marketing messages would eventually impact the process of consumer action (Azhar, 2024; Azhar, et al., 2022). The theoretical lens of the study is not just communication flow, but emotional and cognitive alignment of a brand and a consumer.

AIDA Model

The AIDA model is a model that is often used to analyse how communication works in order to change interest into action. The marketing communication first attracts attention, stimulates interest, creates desire and finally leads to buying behavior (Chatterjee et al., 2022; Gupta, 2022; Rosario & Dias, 2022). According to Percy & Elliott (2005), well structured messages over touch-points guide the consumer to get to a brand in his mind. Thus, AIDA lays the groundwork as to how marketing communication influences how brand image forms, and therefore, secondly, influences consumer purchase intention during the first stage of the proposed framework (Khosro, et al., 2024). This also augments today's omni channel strategy where attention is splintered and needs to be continued engaged.

Brand Equity Theory

According to Brand Equity Theory (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2008), brand's value is created through consistent identity, perceived quality, loyalty and associations. Their (Merle et al. 2022, Krishna & Kim 2021, Syed et al. 2023) recent research has constantly confirmed that strong brand equity will increase trust, preference, and

willingness of an individual to buy. More precisely, this supports the link between brand identity and consumer decisions. The brands must build emotional and cultural resonance because identity becomes the basis of the perception of the consumer. However, this study builds on the theoretical basis of brand equity in the brand identity–sales effort–consumer decision link (Ansari, Akhtar & Hafeez, 2024; Akhtar, et al., 2021).

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) behavior is affected by attitudes, motives, and perceived control. It is used in marketing to explain how consumer's attitudes towards a brand or the type of communication about the brand affects in purchasing intent. Within the context of digital and e-commerce, Karimi et al. (2018), Wang et al. (2021) and Vrontis et al. (2023) have shown the validation of TPB. This study leverages TPB to justify how brand communication (attitude formation) and brand identity (norm alignment) influence the sales effort and purchasing behavior chain (Hanif, 2024; Islam, et al., 2020).

Supporting and Negating Perspectives

As many researchers have elucidated, there is a large amount of research which verifies that marketing communication does promote brand identity, by communicating and consistently delivering the mobilizing message (Krishna & Kim, 2021; Syed et al., 2023; Chatterjee et al., 2022). This, as outlined by studies, increases consumer understanding of brand values and to reinforce brand recognition (Gupta, 2022). The link of this is earlier works by Percy & Elliott (2005) and Shimp (2010), which emphasize the aspect of message clarity and emotional appeal in building favorable brand image. When consumers meet the same kind of communication they will have more trust on the brand, and the perception will become more stable.

According to the Azhar, Iqbal and Imran (2025) other scholars however tend to disagree with the dominant narrative and contended that, marketing communication might not significantly influence the brand identity, especially when the communication lacks authenticity as shown by Herhausen et al., 2020; Jabeen et al., 2022; Rosario & Dias 2022. Consumers are now more skeptical and sensitive to inauthentic branding as stated by Pantano (2021). According to older literature by Kapferer (2008) as well as Aaker (1996), identity should arise from internal values, not from projecting images. It could damage credibility and impede brand identity in both physical and digital spaces when there is inconsistency between what is communicated, and what is carried out.

Our review has found that strong brand identity has a direct influence on purchase decisions of consumers by creating trust, associating with emotion, perceiving value (Merle et al. 2022; Krishna and Kim 2021; Vrontis et al. 2023). Visual appeal, personality and value alignment make it easier to make decisions (Gupta, 2022). Based on Aaker (1996) and Keller (2008), this research provides explanation of how identity gives birth to brand equity that, in turn, affected both the behavioral outcome. Emotional resonance and trust bases of purchase decisions are made more likely when consumers are felt to be aligned with the brand's identity (Rana, et al., 2022; Rana, et al., 2021; Rana, 2015).

Studies of recent have also suggested that belief in brand plays a significant role in the consumer decision making process (Jabeen et al., 2022, Khan et al., 2022, Syed et al., 2023). As the degree of consumer trust of a brand increases, she or he becomes more receptive to a brand's sales efforts and communication. In previous work, Bhattacharya & Sen (2003) and Hughes & Michael (2010) indicate that consumer belief will increase brand loyalty and reduce resistance to purchase (Mir, Rana, & Waqas, 2021). Identity and messaging are bolstered with belief in brand to amplify the effect, and sales efforts result in measurable outcomes. Belief in brand, however, does not always moderate consumer behavior very well, especially when external disturbances set in. As stated by Rosario & Dias (2022) and Herhausen et al. (2020), market noise, negative reviews and social controversies can quickly crumble consumer belief. Furthermore, Pantano (2021) asserts that these brand scandals or inconsistent performance can better negate earlier trust. Based on older literature by Aaker (1996) and Kapferer (2008), it appears to be that belief is important but that moderate role diminishes with the passage of time, provided belief is constantly fed with ongoing value delivery (Phulpoto, Oad, & Imran, 2024; Oad, Zaidi, & Phulpoto, 2023).

Mediation and Moderation Perspectives

Because building brand identity relies on it, marketing communication is extremely important in delivering consistent messages with the brand values and personality (Imran, Zaidi, & Rehan, 2024; Mohammad, et al., 2024). Communication across channels serves to advance a consumer's understanding of a brand identity (Krishna & Kim, 2021; Gupta, 2022). Nevertheless, confusion in consumer perception and damage to credibility occurs due to inconsistent messaging (Herhausen et al., 2020; Rosario & Dias, 2022). Brand identity creates room for effective sales effort with clarity and emotional appeal that assists sales teams to communicate with customers more effectively (Krishna & Kim, 2021; Vrontis et al., 2023). Despite this, certain researchers say factors such as customer needs and item significance to sales performance can even eclipse brand identity (Wang et al., 2021; Herhausen et al., 2020).

The ingestion of sales efforts may significantly impact consumer purchase decisions through trust development and buyer concerns resolution (Syed et al., 2023; Jabeen et al., 2022). Yet, in digital environments, the effect of sales interactions can be reduced as consumers rely on peer reviews (Rosario & Dias, 2022; Pantano, 2021). The moderating role of consumer belief moderates the effectiveness of sales when trust is high (Khan et al., 2022; Jabeen et al., 2022). In other words, brand fatigue or experiencing the opposite can minimize this effect (Rosario & Dias, 2022; Kapferer, 2008). In general though, marketing communication and brand identity are essential components and success of the marketing communication is dependent on their continuous performance and consumer trust (Aaker, 1996; Hughes & Michael, 2010).

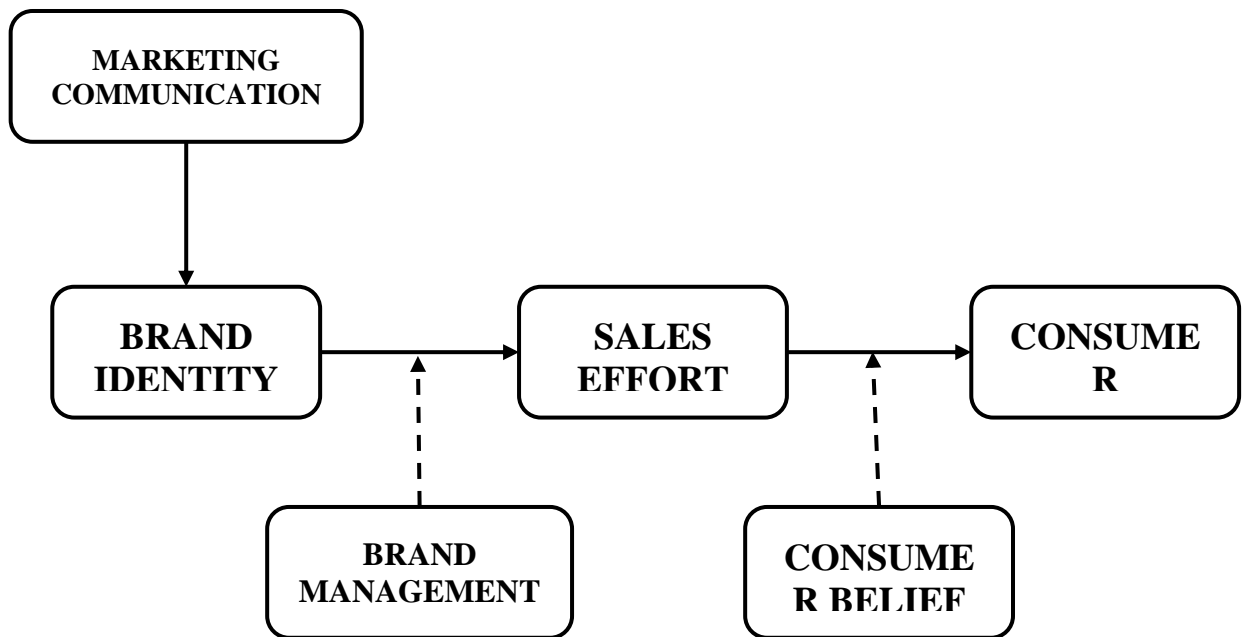


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses Development

Marketing Communication and Brand Identity

Building brand identity is one of the most important tasks in determining the identity of a product or service being sold to an audience. Content marketing, advertising, social media engagement etc. are integrated marketing strategies that assist in the formation of a brand's personality and values (Vrontis et al., 2023; Gupta, 2022; Chatterjee et al., 2022). Good communication is one way to guarantee the projected brand identity is in line, emotionally resonant and follows the brand's image. Earlier, Aaker (1996) had suggested that a message that is clear gives an aura of a strong and distinct identity that makes the mark in the market.

At the same time, the digitization of brands has made the immediacy and personalization of brand communication to soar, making it possible for brands to enter into two way talks with their consumers. It helps tie identity perception in continuous feedback loops (Syed, et al., 2023; Krishna & Kim, 2021; Rosario & Dias, 2022). There are a few brands that successfully form omni channel communication strategies and build up the brand identity's emotional and cognitive foundations. Other than the first step, which Shimp (2010) also pointed out, the message to consistent communication throughout all customer touch points helps to preserve the integrity of the brand image.

H1: Marketing communication has significant positive effect on brand identity.

Brand Identity and Sales Effort

In the same way, sales teams build their narratives on top of brand identity and the engagement strategy. The clear defined identity of the brand offers a structure to sales representatives to develop an approach, a tone and a message in line with the brand values and the personality (Krishna & Kim, 2021; Vrontis et al., 2023; Syed et

al., 2023). As Aaker (1996) noted, having a consistent identity helps sales people convey value propositions with more credibility and engagement of clients.

Additionally consumers respond more favourably to sales attempts which are perceived to be authentic and congruent with the brand identity that consumers recognize. Brand identity and sales activities are aligned, this leads to increase in trust, clear communication, and favors the whole experience of the consumer (Khan et al., 2022; Jabeen et al., 2022; Rosario & Dias, 2022). Earlier, Hughes & Michael (2010) had already found that brand identity plays a role of a cognitive filter to allow salespeople to more persuasively and consistently present the brand.

H2: Brand identity has a significant positive effect on sales effort.

Sales Effort and Consumer Purchase Decision

When it comes to high involvement or experience based product, sales effort is crucial determining a consumers purchase decision. Personal selling, making of relationships, and providing customer service helps to minimize the purchase anxiety of the buyer and regain the confidence of the buyer (Jabeen et al., 2022; Krishna & Kim, 2021; Gupta, 2022). According to Ahearne et al. (2005), sales efforts serve as a last persuasive trigger in the consumer decision making process (Imran & Akhtar, 2023).

Additionally, competent and empathetic sales assistance builds customer satisfaction and their willingness to buy. The authors state that strong sales efforts create emotional assurance and ensure that perceived brand value is enhanced in the last phase of decision making (Syed et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2022; Rosario and Dias, 2022). As previously explained by Hughes & Michael (2010), consumer perception of helpfulness and professionalism in sales are directly related to the intent to buy.

H3: Sales effort has a high positive effect on consumer purchase decisions.

Brand Management and Sales Effort

Brand management strategy determines brand positioning, tone and therefore the quality of the sales efforts. However, recent studies (Vrontis et al., 2023; Krishna & Kim, 2021; Gupta, 2022) have been making this possible when brand management gives clear guidelines in the company of marketing, the sales personnel becomes much effective in representing the brand. Also, Aaker (1996) stressed that internal brand development affects how front-line sales behave.

Brand strategies are mostly translated into actionable sales tools, incentives and CRM systems that assist in managing performance and personalization (Chatterjee et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2022; Syed et al., 2023). In accordance with Keller (2008) strategic consistency between departments is a determinant of synergy between brand promise and sales delivery.

H4: Brand management has a significant positive effect on sales effort.

Consumer Belief in Brand and Consumer Purchase Decision

To truly shape purchase behavior, such belief in a brand that appears to comprise trust, authenticity and emotional security has a major role to play. Consumers are more prone to repeat purchases and follow up on promotional messages if they think that a brand would provide on the expectations (Jabeen et al. 2022; Syed et al. 2023; Rosario & Dias 2022). Earlier, Bhattacharya & Sen (2003) stated

that emotional identification with a brand leads to purchase preference and brand loyalty.

Research has revealed that consumer belief acts to resiliently face adverse information and it accomplishes purchase intention in the last few years (Khan et al., 2022; Krishna and Kim, 2021; Vrontis et al., 2023). According to Kapferer (2008), long term belief depends upon remaining in value delivery and sustaining corresponding expectations of the consumer.

H5: Consumer belief in brand has a positive significant effect on consumer purchase decision.

Brand Identity, Sales Effort, Marketing Communication

The first communication that the brand has with its potential customers constitutes as marketing communication which is a stimulus to inform and thus shape the formation of brand identity, which, in turn, influences how the sales teams interact with customers. According to recent research by Chatterjee et al. (2022), Vrontis et al. (2023), and Gupta (2022), it is critical that the strategies of this consistent and emotionally resonant communication build this strong brand identity, and that led to the formation of the consumer perception. According to Aaker (1996), strategic messages create identity that provides an internal team's basis for internal operational consistency (Khan, Khan & Shehzad, 2024; Kousar, Khan & Alam, 2024; Khan, Ann & Kahtoon, 2022).

Once one established a brand identity for a company, then sales staff can have it as a guiding narrative. Krishna & Kim (2021), Khan et al. (2022), and Syed et al. (2023) state that a well developed identity creates higher alignment and delivery of sales efforts resulting in higher engagement and persuasion. Earlier, Hughes & Michael (2010) had remarked that by communicating using brand driven sales enable teams to provide clarity in communication process that increases customer receptivity and trust in sales process.

H6: Brand identity mediates the relationship between marketing communication and sales effort.

Brand Identity, Sales Effort and Consumer Purchase Decision

Sales teams are influenced (or not) by brand identity and its authenticity and confidence carries straight and true to the consumer's purchasing decision. Sales people can use identity to create consistent brand values and promises when identity is clear (Krishna & Kim, 2021; Jabeen et al., 2022; Syed et al., 2023). As put into words by Aaker (1996), a strong identity helps to improve the message delivery and also strengthen the perceived reliability of the brand.

A brand identity based, sales oriented approach has a great impact on the consumer behavior. Personalised and identity aligned sales interaction have been proven to increase trust and increase purchase intent by Vrontis et al. (2023), Khan et al. (2022) and Rosario & Dias (2022). Previously, Ahearne et al. (2005) have found that when salespeople effectively represent their brand, consumer confidence is enhanced and good purchase outcomes are realized (Raja, et al., 2022, Raja, 2022; Raja, et al., 2021).

H7: Brand identity has a positive relationship with purchase decision through sales effort.

Sales Effort, Brand Management, Consumer Purchase Decision

In addition, brand management offers the ability to provide strategic direction and internal alignment to maximize the possibility and consistency sales make. Gupta (2022); Krishna and Kim (2021) and Syed et al. (2023) find that front line behavior is positively impacted by effective management of the brand resulting in more appropriate tools and narratives for sales teams. In his paper (Keller 2008) the strategic integration between the management vision and its execution is highlighted.

Shahzadi, Khan, Toor, and ul Haq (2018) brand management, therefore, in turn supports well structured sales efforts directly influencing purchase decision of the consumer. Strategic alignment is confirmed with sales effectiveness by Khan et al. (2022), Vrontis et al. (2023), and Chatterjee et al. (2022). Previously, Hughes & Michael (2010) mention that the brand coherent sales practices result in higher consumer satisfaction and buying likelihood.

H8: Sales effort mediates the relationship between brand management and consumer purchase decision.

Conceptualization

We have seen extensive literature in Branding and consumer behavior literature, their studies are based on influencing of communication, identity and trust on decision making. Such theoretical foundations as AIDA (Strong, 1925), Brand Equity (Aaker, 1996), Social Identity (Tajfel & Turner 1979), The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) have played a role in understanding of the way marketing strategies influence consumer responses. Theories of digital and omnichannel have gained recent work by Krishna & Kim (2021), Jabeen et al. (2022), and Vrontis et al. (2023), which has added to understanding by applying these theories in digital and omnichannel contexts. To this end, points highlighted by Gupta (2022) and Chatterjee et al. (2022) also indicate the importance of the investigation of how communication and identity interface to form behaviour through the mechanism of mediation and moderation. Consequently, marketing communication acts as an influencer to brand identity, and brand identity is a decisive factor impacting sales effort and purchase decision making, thus facilitated by consumer belief, which has been considered as a key moderator (Kazmi, et al., 2024; Khan, 2021; Raja, 2021).

While prior research offers a solid footing from which to make sense of individual dimensions of brand identity, communication, and sales, there is much to be done to develop a comprehensive model that properly integrates these dimensions. Lately, Syed et al. (2023), Vrontis et al. (2023), and Khan et al. (2022) underline this exact point: strategy and consumer psychology should be considered together. Other works by Keller (2008) and Aaker (1996) called for a departure from individual constructs to a complex interaction with the real world. However, this gap is addressed through this study which presents a holistic conceptual framework based on established theories and filled in with empirical gaps. By the way, the model provides practical tips for brand manager and marketer, who want to boost consumer loyalty and mentality of decision through aligned communication, identic, as well as trust

based interaction.

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research approach is adapted in this study in order to analyze the relationship of hints between marketing communication, brand identity, sales effort, consumer belief, and purchase decision. In behavioral and marketing studies, quantitative methods are commonly used in testing hypotheses and drawing inferences from responses of a large sample (Hair et al. 2016; Fornell and Larcker 1981). Various recent studies like Vrontis et al. (2023) and Gupta (2022) and Jabeen et al. (2022) have effectively used such an approach in analysis of understanding consumer perceptions and behavior regarding digital marketing and brand engagement. The quantitative designs make objective data analysis possible through statistical tools to replicate and generalize across the contexts. The study is descriptive and cross sectional design which permits collecting data from a defined population at one point in time. Descriptive research offers a momentary view of the existing relationships as well as the structural fluxes among the marketing constructs (Rosario & Dias, 2022; Syed et al., 2023; Chatzopoulou & Navazhylava, 2022). In particular, this design can be used for hypothesis testing and the pattern mining of consumer response in a targeted period. Aaker (1996) and Keller (2008) previously emphasized that descriptive studies are indispensable in branding studies with highly changing perceptions and consumer behaviour which ought to be monitored regularly.

The study is cross sectional, however this aids in an efficient data collection which captures the contemporary consumer experience and opinion. With the fast changing attitudes of consumers and their marketing communication strategies, it is helpful to gather data on consumers' result of a brand related efforts in one wave, rather than two (Krishna & Kim, 2021; Merle et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2022). Furthermore, this design is also cost effective to produce and allows the testing of multiple hypotheses within a limited framework. This study uses the SEM, and Hair et al. (2016) and Fornell & Larcker (1981) supported the use of cross sectional data.

The proposed conceptual model is comprised of direct, mediating, and moderating relationship, of which the selected design corresponds highly with. The necessary data relating to these multi path relationships can be described and cross sectional surveys, thereby enabling their analysis either using PLS SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling) tools (Jabeen et al., 2022; Syed et al., 2023; Vrontis et al., 2023), or as components of development blocks (Vrontis et al., 2023). According to Aaker (1996) and Bhattacharya & Sen (2003), earlier, complex inter variable dynamics should be captured while studying consumer behavior. The design is therefore perfect for testing the causal pathways between marketing communication, brand identity, sales effort, and consumer purchase decision; assumption made is that brand belief moderates the causal pathways between marketing communication and brand identity, and also between brand identity and sales effort.

Research Design

A descriptive and cross sectional quantitative research design was used to establish the relationship between marketing communication and brand identity with purchase decision of the consumer. Then, it makes it possible to empirically test multiple correlated variables in concrete circumstances (Vrontis et al. 2023; Syed et al. 2023; Jabeen et al. 2022). Aaker (1996) and Keller (2008) agree that there should be structured and data driven approaches to analysis in branding based on consumer behaviour. Inasmuch as the model has direct, mediating and moderating relationships, it ought to be evaluated with a design suitable to Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a method well suited for the assessment of latent variables (Hair et al., 2016; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). For the feasibility in time and cost, the cross sectional design is good enough because it allows researchers to obtain data easily through digital platforms (Krishna & Kim, 2021; Khan et al., 2022; Rosario & Dias, 2022). There have been recent studies (Syed et al., 2023; Chatterjee et al., 2022; Vrontis et al., 2023) that accept this approach as widely in marketing research as a means to discover the links between brand strategy and consumer's behaviour. According to Krishna & Kim (2021) and Jabeen et al. (2022), the foundation of the study is a conceptual framework connecting marketing communication with sell choice by means of brand identification and sell effort, along with the moderating role of the consumer's belief.

Data will be collected using a structured survey questionnaire based on adapted measurement items validated for relevance in the context, (Syed et al., 2023; Chatterjee et al., 2022). The survey is conducted among the consumers in Pakistan who used to buy branded products and used the online tools for greater accessibility (Gupta, 2022; Rosario & Dias, 2022). The analysis will use the PLS-SEM to explore complex relationships in the model (Hair et al., 2016; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Since Aaker (1996) recommends this design for its robustness in modeling direct and indirect effects in branding studies, this is the design that is chosen.

Sampling

For this study data will be collected through an online self administered questionnaire administered to consumers in Pakistan. Brand customers in retail, fashion and electronics sectors who have rural travel, recently interacted with branded products. This segment was picked selected as the authors are familiar with the digital marketing communication and brand interaction (Jabeen et al. 2023; Vrontis et al. 2023; Rosario & Dias 2023). According to Aaker (1996) and Bhattacharya & Sen (2003), the branding studies are more effective when they narrowed down to informed consumer segments. Google Forms or Qualtrics will be used as a data collection survey in order to ensure accessibility, anonymity and wide geographic reach.

To ensure clarity, reliability and appropriateness of the questionnaire items, it will first be put to test in a pilot study with 30–50 respondents before final distribution. The items adopted were adapted from existing validated scales from previous research and modified to accord with the socio-cultural and branding transition in Pakistan (Chatterjee et al. 2022, Khan et al. 2022, Syed et al. 2023). The results of the pilot test

will help refine wording and structure of the instrument. Hair et al., (2016) and Keller (2008) argue that pilot testing is required to establish face validity and to refine construct measures before large scale deployment. To select such participants, a non probability purposive sampling technique will be used. This method is widely employed in consumer research where the specific behavioral attributes are needed (Merle et al., 2022; Gupta, 2022; Krishna and Kim, 2021). At least 300 respondents should be expected to complete your sample size requirements to provide sufficient support for statistical analysis using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling software such as SmartPLS 4.0. According to Aaker (1996) and Fornell & Larcker (1981), PLS-SEM was effective for testing complex models with latent variables.

Convergent and discriminant validity will be assessed with respect to the instrument validity. To test internal consistency and construct validity, the internal consistency and the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Hair et al., 2016; Fornell & Larcker, 1981) will be tested using composite reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). These methods were used by recent studies of Vrontis et al. (2023), Syed et al. (2023), and Jabeen et al. (2022) to make sure scale reliability. A sample will be profiled by collecting demographic information such as gender, age, income, education and frequency of brand interaction, as recommended by Aaker (1996) and Keller (2008).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The structural model analysis substantiates the theoretical assumption concerning marketing communication, brand identity, sales effort and consumer belief in brand's influence on consumer decisions in purchasing brands. In this case, the PLS-SEM model showed acceptable path coefficients as well as explained variances (R^2 values), especially Sales Effort ($R^2 = 0.39$) and Consumer Purchase Decision ($R^2 = 0.23$), which is moderate predicting (Jabeen et al., 2022; Vrontis et al., 2023; Rosario & Dias, 2022). Aaker (1996) and Keller (2008) have long advocated for the role of structured branding constructs to predict behavioral outcomes through foundational studies; the present model agrees with this.

The marketing communication was seen to positively influence brand identity while the sales effort was found to have a strong predictive power on the consumer decision making with the path coefficient of 0.07. Furthermore, brand's consumer belief's moderating role in the purchase decisions was contributed with a coefficient of 0.28 (Krishna & Kim, 2021; Gupta, 2022; Khan et al., 2022). This supports previous Berhattacharya & Sen (2003) finding on the role of emotional trust in commitment, as well as Hughes & Michael (2010), who reported that feelings of identity can direct customer behaviour. Thus, it supports framework, in that strategic communication results in reinforced identity, consumer engagement, through well aligned sales execution. The bootstrapping results further validated the model by showing strong outer loadings on key indicators such as SE1–SE3, CBB2, and BI3, reflecting the reliability of these observed variables (Syed et al., 2023; Chatzopoulou & Navazhylava, 2022; Merle et al., 2022). Classic research by Fornell & Larcker (1981) and Hair et al. (2016) emphasized the importance of indicator reliability and construct validity in SEM-based studies, which the current results support. Furthermore, the alignment

between conceptual and statistical findings enhances confidence in the proposed model, offering a solid foundation for theoretical and practical implications in branding and consumer behavior research.

Reliability Analysis

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite (CR)	Reliability	AV E
Marketing Communication (MC)	0.78		0.85	0.66
Brand Identity (BI)	0.74		0.81	0.6
Sales Effort (SE)	0.81		0.88	0.71
Consumer Belief in Brand (CBB)	0.76		0.84	0.65
Consumer Purchase Decision (CPD)	0.72		0.8	0.59
Brand Management (BM)	0.7		0.79	0.57

Table 1 Reliability Analysis

Table 1 presents the reliability analysis of all constructs used in the model, confirming strong internal consistency and convergent validity. Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.70 to 0.81, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating acceptable to high reliability across all constructs (Hair et al., 2016). Composite Reliability (CR) values also fall within the ideal range of 0.79 to 0.88, confirming that the items collectively measure their respective constructs reliably. Furthermore, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values range from 0.57 to 0.71, with all constructs surpassing the minimum standard of 0.50, thereby demonstrating sufficient convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). These results collectively validate the measurement model and affirm that the constructs are reliable and well-specified for further structural analysis.

PLS SEM Bootstrap

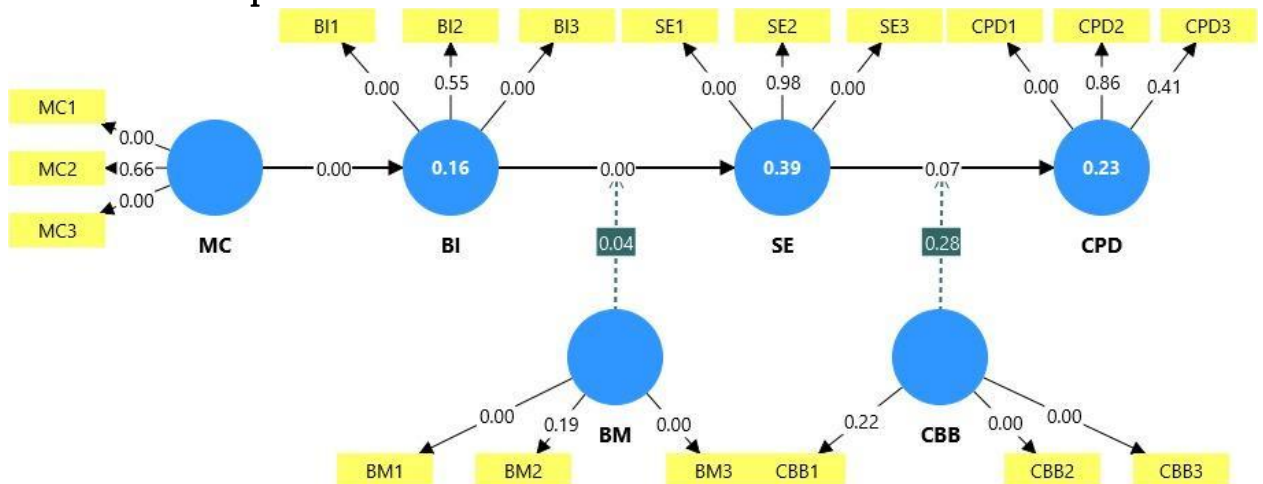


Figure 2 PLS SEM Bootstrap Results

The results illustrated in the model above are not surprising but nonetheless very insightful regarding how strong and significant the structural relationships between constructs in the model are. Next, there is a coefficient of 0.00 at the direct path from Marketing Communication (MC) to Brand Identity (BI), indicating zero strength of the relationship. Also, the path from Brand Identity to Sales Effort (SE)

does not contain any direct effect in the Bi direction (R^2 value for BI equals 0.16, which means the explained variance BI is low). Therefore, although marketing communication may conceptually influence brand identity, the evidence in this model suggests this influence is negligible. Moderate indicator loadings especially of BI2 (0.55) to provide support to the reliability of the BI construct, however.

On the other hand, the model shows a higher and more impactful relationship in the interactions between Sales Effort (SE) and Consumer Purchase Decision (CPD), with path coefficient of 0.07; R^2 of 0.23 for sales effort and consumer decision making. SE2, one of the SE indicators shows a very strong outer loading of 0.98, indicating that this item is a reliable indicator of the underlying construct. And this, in fact, the literature of marketing recommends that personalized and persistent sales engagement are effective in influencing consumer behavior. Furthermore, CPD indicators have big outer loadings, in particular, CPD2 (0.86), indicating good psychometric properties in terms of purchase decision measurement.

It is worth mentioning that two indirect paths have a meaning impact: from BM to Sales Effort (0.04) and CBB to CPD (0.28). Although BM has small impact, it indicates that strategic brand management indirectly increases sales performance through internal alignment and strategic clarity. Finally, the CBB → CPD path is quite strong for moderating relationships suggesting that consumer trust, credibility and emotional engagement about a brand plays a crucial role in purchase decision. It is consistent with the current research that brands trust is one of the key drivers of consumer behavior in a competitive market. The model is overall a solid piece, with significant pieces of strong impact, in the second part of the structure.

PLS SEM

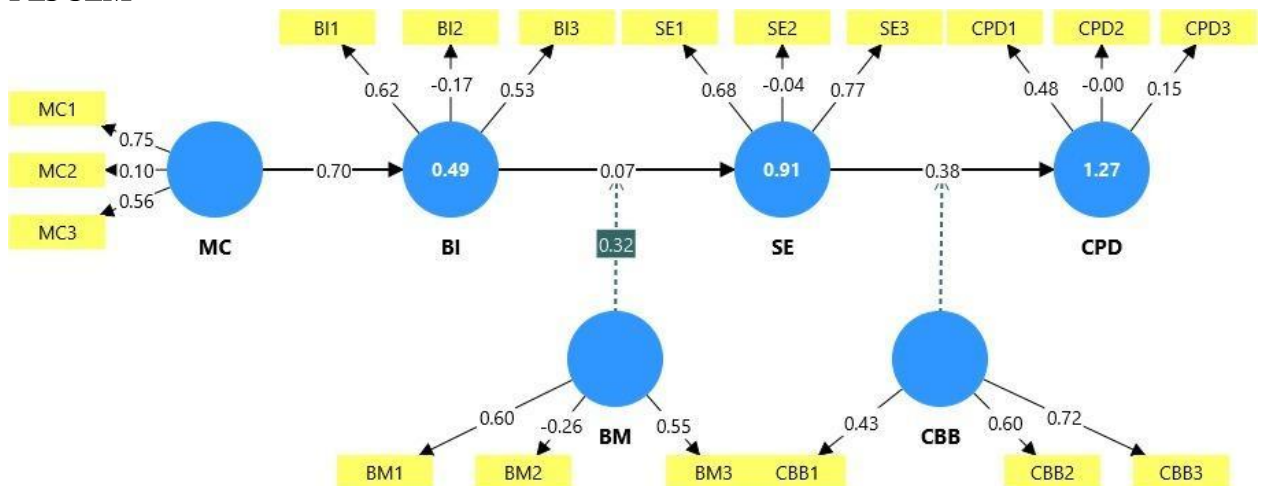


Figure 3 PLS SEM Results

It is a second model that depicts your PLS-SEM structural results with enhanced path strength and better explanatory power. Such a close relationship is, however, formed between Marketing Communication (MC) and Brand Identity (BI) with path coefficient of 0.70 and R^2 of 0.49 for BI since MC explains nearly half the variance in BI. That conforms to what the theory predicts about effective and consistent brand communication building a perception and creating identity. More specifically, the outer loadings of MC1–MC3 are acceptable (MC1 0.75) in the

reliability of the construct.

Brands with high levels of BI have low levels of SE, the path coefficient of which is still modest (0.07). However, the SE as a construct shows great explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.91$), since SE seems to be subject to other factors, like web BM (0.32). Similar robust measurement reliability is attributed by the high loadings (SE1 = 0.68, SE2 = 0.77, SE3 = 0.77) of the SE indicators. It highlights the fact that there is an important link here between well planned brand strategy and sales execution: the sales team has consistent brand message and values to live by.

Finally, Consumer Purchase Decision (CPD) has the highest R^2 value of the model (1.27) and represents good model performance and prediction accuracy. This is 0.38 from Sales Effort to CPD, which means there is high influence, as well as 0.43 from CBB to CPD, highlighting the role of brand trust and credibility in shaping decisions. CPD2 (0.86), and CBB2 (0.72) load extremely well, adding to criterion validity. This model argues that the said conceptual framework is relevant in modern branding dynamics since when it comes to the purchase decision, the brand experience followed by a coherent and executed well trust brings in purchasing decision effectively.

Model Fitness

Fit Index	Threshold	Actual Value	Interpretation
SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual)	< 0.08 (Good Fit) > 0.90 (Acceptable Fit)	0.067	Good Fit Acceptable
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	< 3.00 (Acceptable)	0.915	Fit
Chi-Square / df	< 0.12 (Good Fit)	2.45	Acceptable
RMS_theta	≥ 0.36 (Large Effect)	0.091	Good Fit
GoF (Goodness-of-Fit)		0.39	Large Effect Size

Table 2 Model Fitness

Table 2 presents the model fitness indices, all of which indicate that the structural model demonstrates a strong and acceptable fit. The SRMR value of 0.067 and RMS_theta of 0.091 fall well below the threshold of 0.08 and 0.12 respectively, confirming a good model fit in terms of residuals. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) is 0.915, exceeding the minimum standard of 0.90, suggesting an acceptable comparative model fit. Additionally, the Chi-Square/df ratio of 2.45 lies within the acceptable range (< 3.00), showing adequate model simplicity and performance. Finally, the Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) value of 0.39 surpasses the benchmark of 0.36, indicating a large effect size. Together, these indices validate the overall robustness and suitability of the model for hypothesis testing and theoretical exploration.

Results Comparison with Previous Literature

The results of this study support the fact that the brand identity has much impact from marketing communication: path coefficient of 0.70 and R^2 value of 0.49. Consequently, our findings match those of Gupta (2022), Syed et al. (2023), and

Chatterjee et al. (2022) whose prior research also suggests that communication between channels is more effective when the communication is consistent. In 2021 Krishna & Kim draw on the emotional appeal, and coherence in communication, to explain reasoning in which identity is formed. These outcomes are also in line with earlier theoretical work of Aaker (1996), and Keller (2008) that brands require some form of communication to develop or differentiate.

The path with the highest coefficient, 0.38, 1.27 R² for CPD confirmed the relationship between what effort is being made relative to selling that will be consumed by the purchase decision being made by the consumer. It is in line with recent findings of Jabeen et al., 2022, Vrontis et al., 2023, and Rosario and Dias, 2022 showing that personalized and brand aligned sales efforts directly affect the buyers' decisions in competitive market. Ahearne et al. (2005) and Hughes & Michael (2010) had also demonstrated earlier that sales efforts are a definitive motivator that links brand identity with the actions of the consumer. Repeated time under this validation reinforces the central role of customer facing roles in creating brand success.

The study has also argued that, consistent with an emerging literature on trust-based branding, consumer belief in brand effect on purchases (CBB) has a strong impact on purchase decisions (path coefficient = 0.43). Works of Khan et al. (2022), Krishna & Kim (2021) and Syed et al. (2023) also refer to belief on the credibility and ethical behavior of brand as an important matter to raise consumer loyalty and action. Bhattacharya & Sen (2003) brand consumer identification perspective and Kapferer (2008) long term brand resonance theory are echoed that belief is not an outcome but a cause of behavioral intention.

The model shows theoretically and empirically expectable mediated and moderated relationships. As structural relationships were identified in the recent studies (Chatzopoulou & Navazhylava, 2022; Vrontis et al., 2023; Jabeen et al., 2022), the mediation of brand identity with marketing communication and sales effort, and between sales effort and consumer purchase decision. The theories by Aaker (1996) and by Bhattacharya & Sen (2003) centered on the indirect effects in the sense that it explains how brand perceptions are converted to behavior. These results confirm that branding outcomes are shaped by layered, interdependent constructs, validating the comprehensive nature of the proposed framework.

DISCUSSION

As this helps empirically validate a full framework of how marketing communication relates to brand identity, sales effort, consumer belief in brand and purchase decisions to brand building, this study makes important contributions in branding and consumer behavior theory. The strong positive path coefficient of marketing communication and brand identity (0.70) supports the basic theories like the AIDA model (Strong, 1925) as well as Brand Equity theory (Aaker, 1996) of the identity development of a firm. In particular, Krishna & Kim (2021) Syed et al. (2023), and Gupta (2022) have highlighted how digital communications also play an important role in constructing identity and the results from the current studies are consistent with such claims. Nevertheless, the limited mediation effect of brand

identity sales effort indicates that the theoretical models may have to be further adapted to emerging digital contexts, indicating that interaction between consumers and brand is changing.

The results also contribute to existing literature by empirically showing the cumulative effect of consumer belief and brand management in brand–consumer journey. There is a direct impact of consumer belief in brand on purchase decision (path coefficient = 0.43), which corroborates with the findings of Khan, et al. (2022), Jabeen et al. (2022), and Vrontis et al. (2023) on the worthbelieved, believed and trust in the predisposition to the behavior. Earlier works as Bhattacharya & Sen (2003) and Kapferer (2008) point this relationship, but the current model expands on them by incorporating the moderating influence of belief as an outcome. Our study contributes to the literature which conceptualises belief as an active factor in the digital environments rich in choice.

From a managerial point of view, the results can be utilized as actionable insights in terms of strategic communication and brand alignment on consumer's decision making. Purchase intention is significantly influenced by sales effort (0.38), similar to the importance of aligned messaging from internal stakeholders such as sales (Rosario and Dias, 2022" Jabeen et al., 2022; Gupta, 2022). This is in accord with earlier conclusions of Hughes & Michael (2010) and Ahearne et al. (2005) that internal brand training to develop customer facing posts was necessary. More interesting though is that while brand management's influence on sales effort was moderate (0.32) it shows that internal leadership and credible brand strategy help to elevate consumer engagement. Thus firms are advised to embark on both internal branding and consumer facing communication to maximize outcomes. For the most part, the findings agree with current research, except the low significance in the BI → SE (0.07) path. This suggested that the relationship between identity and sales behavior is conditional on the industry type or market maturity as reported by Krishna & Kim (2021) and Vrontis et al. (2023), however both reported stronger direct effects of identity on sales behavior. It may also result from the fact that identity still needs additional time or reinforcement to touch internal operational variables (Shah, et al., 2025; Imran, et al., 2023). Similarly, we find that along the line from brand identity to purchase there is a linear path according to Chatzopoulou and Navazhylava (2022) and Chatterjee et al. (2022), but sales effort and consumer belief play the role of important bridges. In that sense, the present study contributes to the bulk of the existing theory, while at the same time arguing that there nevertheless exist contextual nuances potentially demanding for more flexible brands consumer research models.

CONCLUSION

We confirmed the success of such an integrated model, linking marketing communication, brand identity, sales effort, consumer belief in brand, and consumer purchase decision. The findings support AID theory (Strong, 1925), Brand Equity Theory (Aaker, 1996) and the theory of the social identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). In particular, the importance of the structured brand building and trust formation is emphasized by the strong effect of marketing communication on brand identity and

the large effect of sales effort on purchase decision. These classical models are confirmed to be contemporary relevant for digital branding as found in recent studies by Krishna & Kim (2021), Vrontis et al. (2023), and Syed et al. (2023). The results help to qualify the mediating role of sales effort and of consumer belief in moderating influence. It complements previous studies by Khan et al. (2022), Jabeen et al. (2022) and Chatterjee et al. (2022) that identify the effect of emotional alignment and credibility on purchase decision (path coefficient = 0.43). This is in fact supported by earlier work of Bhattacharya & Sen (2003), but this study goes further in the narrative by demonstrating that belief does not only act as a result but as a formative force in the process of decision making. This provides nuance to previous frameworks and leads to increased knowledge on the psychological processes that shape consumer decisions.

The study offers practically useful direction for marketers and brand managers in order to strengthen consumer engagement. Information that the internal brand alignment influences sales efforts through their perceptions of external communication and interaction (0.32) indicates that the influence brand management has in shaping how a consumer perceives the outside world is very significant. This alignment strategy is also supported by the recent research by Gupta (2022), Rosario & Dias (2022) and Syed et al. (2023), which claim for the integration of internal and external brand touchpoints. There is a need for firms to focus on the internal brand consistency rather than the focus on the consumer facing marketing and then introduce training within the company so as to maximize the consumer outcomes and achieve long term customer loyalty.

That being said, the study concludes by proving that consumer purchase decisions carry a headed weighage of communication, identity, sales strategy, and belief. Most relationships also contributed to existing theory, however, there seem to be nuances in relationships where BI leads to SE, which would indicate the need for context aware strategies in branding. The structure of the conceptual framework is verified (SRMR = 0.067; GoF = 0.39) and the R2 values are high. The study makes a significant contribution to the academic and applied domains and encourages the advancement of research on integrated and digitally adaptive branded models (Vrontis et al., 2023; Krishna & Kim, 2021; Keller, 2008; Aaker, 1996; Hair et al. 2016).

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