Brand Involvement and Purchase Intention: Mediating Roles of Brand Trust and Customer Brand Engagement in Pakistan's Fashion Apparel Industry

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ARTICLE DETAILS

ABSTRACT

Despite a remarkable progress in the marketing literature, little empirical research has been done in this field to explore the causes and outcomes of customer brand engagement. Companies are seeking alternative methods of engaging people in their products and services to improve the performance of the brand. This paper attempts to explore how brand involvement affects brand trust and customer engagement. It also examines the effect of brand trust and customer brand engagement on purchase intention. In addition, this article also analyzes the mediating role of brand trust and customer brand engagement between brand involvement and purchase intention. This article employs a quantitative approach. We gathered the data using an online survey that included a representative sample of customers and potential buyers of Pakistani fashion apparel brands. A total of 443 participants were collected by means of a convenience sampling method. SPSS and Smart PLS are the two different software programs that were used for data analysis and testing research hypotheses. The results of this study underscore the significance of developing brand involvement in order to increase brand trust and customer engagement, which further affects the purchase intentions of the fashion clothing firms. Moreover, customer brand engagement and brand trust are partial mediators in the proposed relationships. The customer brand engagement significantly affects their purchase intention. The findings indicate that the marketers of fashion apparel have to examine the importance of customer brand engagement in shaping their purchase intentions.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, competition in the fashion market has evolved significantly (Tafolli et al., 2025). The fashion industry's inherent dynamism and temporal unpredictability further attract research endeavors in this domain (Zhao et al., 2024). Globalization, new ideas, and changing fashion trends have all helped the global apparel market grow considerably in the last 20 to 30 years. The global apparel market was valued at more than USD 1.5 trillion at the start of 2020 and is expected to reach USD 2.25 trillion by 2025 (Jayarathne et al., 2025). The apparel industry is a major global business that meets people's needs well (Rathore et al., 2024). The South Asian apparel industry has emerged as one of the biggest components of the world apparel market. The region includes countries like Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh (Jayarathne et al., 2025).

Fashion is a style of dressing that is adopted by a significant segment of a social group and believed to be appropriate for the current time and context (Taylor & Costello, 2017). Clothes are an important part of a person's identity because they show who they are and what kind of person they are. Consequently, individuals often prioritize the meticulous selection of suitable attire and engage with it actively to enhance their appearance and self-perception (Islam & Rahman, 2016a). For a long time, people have considered fashion brands to be symbols of status that let people show off their personality, image, and morals (Aruan & Wirdania, 2020). The fashion business is a significant sector of the Pakistani economy. Some local brands like Junaid Jamshed, Gul Ahmed, HSY Studio, and Khaadi are also strategically competing in some of the niche markets in the country (Atta et al., 2024).

The shift to a new age of marketing, where the business environment is more dynamic and participatory, has motivated the organization to redefine its mission of not just establishing customer relationships to developing active customer engagement (So et al., 2020). Customer Brand Engagement (CBE) is a core concept of the changing paradigm and the direction of the creation and enhancement of customer-brand relationships, which transcend simple transactions (Kumar & Nayak, 2019). CBE is considered to be a new aspect of brand relations (Harrigan et al., 2018). The increased interest in CBE is that it assists the business in numerous aspects, including enhancing customer relations with a brand and generating positive business outcomes as evidenced by the indicators such as customer retention, sales increase, improved marketing standing, and increased profitability (Fernandes & Moreira, 2019). Engaged customers are considered significant assets according to many studies; they contribute to the value of a company in both direct and indirect ways (Kumar et al., 2019).

Engaged customers are less likely to switch to a competitor brand; however, non-engaged customers are likely to switch. Research indicates that CBE is a key success factor in businesses (Kumar, Rajan, Gupta, & Pozza, 2019). Engaged customers are less likely to switch, more willing to take part in the development of new products and services, more willing to recommend organizations, and less price-sensitive than customers who are not engaged (Hollebeek et al., 2016;

So, Kim, et al., 2021). Engaged customers, according to Kaur et al. (2020), lead to increased revenue, positive word-of-mouth, and improved organizational performance. More than 80 percent of marketers will approach customers in the next five years by establishing a connection with them. This concept suggests that actively engaged customers would visit a firm 40 percent more often and increase the profitability by 20 percent (Cheung et al., 2020).

Western and Asian customers may get similar products for different reasons, as their behavior is considerably influenced by cultural differences (Li & Su, 2007). When comparing theoretical models developed by wealthy nations to those in developing countries, inconsistencies often arise (Sheth, 2011). When seen from a Western perspective, it may be challenging to comprehend how to address the needs of Asian customers. CBE research has received significant consideration in industrialized and Western countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, and the United States (Rather et al., 2018a). On the other hand, there is a very little research in non-Western countries (Asante et al., 2020; Glavee-Geo et al., 2020; Maree & van Heerden, 2021). There is scanty research on CBE in emerging nations like Pakistan. There are significant differences in the cultures of industrialized and developing economies (Farooq et al., 2014). Western cultures differ significantly unlike the Asian ones. South Asia is also known to have a rich cultural diversity and a long history of presenting a broad range of traditional designs of apparel (Edirisinghe et al., 2020).

Since 2010, the Marketing Science Institute (MSI) has placed customer engagement among its Tier I research priorities (Roy Bhattacharjee et al., 2023). Although consumer engagement research has been growing, there is a significant gap in the current literature because there is very little research in developing economies (Wahid & Gunarto, 2022), which highlights a significant gap in the recent literature (Hollebeek et al., 2022). In addition, empirical studies in the fashion industry, specifically in the developing countries, are scarce (Tafolli et al., 2025).

CBE is a dynamic and emerging area of study (Zeng et al., 2025). According to Lim et al. (2022), more research is required to examine CBE in the physical environment. In spite of the fact that authors are actively trying to improve customer engagement, various limitations are not identified (Shahid Satar et al., 2024). The importance of CBE has been increasing in the world today and this has been significantly reflected in the exploration of CBE. However, studies of this kind in economically disadvantaged countries remain limited. Developing nations' emerging markets offer substantial prospects for multinational corporations. As a result, future research may concentrate on underexplored nations (developing economies) to advance the expanding field of customer engagement studies (Islam & Rahman, 2016).

In Pakistan, the competition among companies dealing in the apparel industry is high. The management team of the Pakistan fashion businesses should employ effective approaches that can enhance the performance (Gul et al., 2021). The growing popularity of CBE is driven by the gains organizations receive, such as improved consumer-brand ties and positive firm performance, in

terms of customer retention, increased sales, a superior competitive advantage, and increased profit (Fernandes & Moreira, 2019).

Managers and academicians have recognized that simply achieving customer satisfaction is not enough to ensure profitability and loyalty (Rosado-Pinto & Loureiro, 2020). As a result, "the goal of organizations evolved from relationship marketing to engaging customers in all possible ways" (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Prominent organizations such as BMW, Procter & Gamble, Dell, Starbucks, and Louis Vuitton have effectively incorporated CBE into their business strategies (Islam et al., 2017). Gallup's analysis underscores the benefits of customer engagement, revealing that completely engaged customers provide an average premium of 23% in profitability, sales, wallet share, and connection building. But these signs go down by 13% for buyers who are actively disengaged. This fact explains why CBE is vital to the company (Gligor & Bozkurt, 2020).

The article enhances our understanding of CBE within the fashion apparel industry. The article has a tremendous impact on advancing the existing literature through explaining the correlations of Brand Involvement (BIN), Brand Trust (BT), CBE, and Purchase Intention (PI) within fashion clothing brands within the Pakistani economy. The article is significant because it addresses the mediation role that is played by CBE and brand trust between brand involvement and PI in the fashion clothing industry.

This study will seek to conduct an in-depth review of the available literature in determining the factors affecting purchase intention. This paper will examine the impact of BIN on CBE and BT. The study will seek to explore the mediating effects of CBE and BT on BIN and PI in the setting of fashion apparel firms, with the aim of providing further empirical knowledge in the area. In addition, this research paper examines how CBE and BT influence the purchase intentions of the fashion apparel sector.

Literature Review

Social exchange theory (SET)

This research has its theoretical foundations in SET. One of the most influential theoretical models is the social exchange theory, which explains the interactions between the firms/brands and the customers (Gligor & Bozkurt, 2022). The SET holds that people establish and sustain relationships on the premise that interactions among them generate mutual benefits and thus encourage reciprocity among the players (Blau, 1964). Trust is an a priori requirement to sustain relationships and social contacts and inform people about risky and uncertain social interactions. As per the SET, trust is deemed a consequence of positive social interactions (Shulga et al., 2021). The social exchange theory upholds the idea that people evaluate the advantages and the disadvantages of the relationships, which is fundamental to the maintenance of consumer engagement (Rather, 2019). The SET states that individuals consider costs and benefits individually and only afterwards develop relationships (El-Shihy et al., 2025). In the context of customer engagement, the consumers relate to businesses in a mutually beneficial way, which includes the sharing of both

tangible and intangible resources. This situation corresponds to the concept of investment because it is defined in SET, where customers consider the perceived benefits and drawbacks of doing business with a company (Parray et al., 2023). In case customers feel positively about a brand or a company, they are expected to respond with favorable perceptions, feelings, and behaviors about the brand or product (Sallaku & Vigolo, 2024). The theoretical framework of SET has been the foundation of many of the CBE research studies (Aziz et al., 2025; Gomes et al., 2025). This article analyzes the interrelations among brand involvement, CBE, BT, and PI within the domain of the SET.

Brand Involvement

Involvement is stated in a way in which " a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values and interests " (Zaichkowsky 1985) and is referred to a psychological state in which cognitive resources are allocated to explore, decide, or act in such a way (Anderson, 2005; Bian & Haque, 2020). BIN is the degree of customer excitement or interest in a certain brand (Cheung & To, 2024). According to Anderson, (2005) brand involvement allows customers to influence product development and directly and interactively discuss potential product changes with members of a community of similar brands (Gligor & Bozkurt, 2021). It helps consumers to evaluate product carefully and the particular brand is often perceived as part of self-concept (Bian & Haque, 2020). These deep and close relationships strengthen brands and enable their marketing initiatives to influence customers. Therefore, it is an important factor influencing communication, trust, and purchasing behavior (Gligor & Bozkurt, 2021; Su et al., 2022).

Brand Trust

Brand trust encompasses the views and opinions that customers have related to the competence, performance, and efficacy of a brand (Holbrook & Chaudhuri, 2001). Kim and Chao (2019) have proved in his study that brand trust increases buyer attachment to the brand, signifying that customer loyalty for a particular brand works as a determinant of the buyer-seller exchange relationship over time. These engagements are consequently inclined to shape purchasing intention, which signifies emotional attachment associated with the brand (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013). When customers rely on the brand, they are more willing to associate with it in multiple ways, for instance, by obtaining varied product lines tied to that particular company (Abdullah, 2015). Therefore, it can be concluded that brand trust exhibits favorable perception and responses regarding the company and increasing continued buying behavior (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013).

CBE

Hollebeek et al. (2016) formulate CBE as a measure of the level of physical, mental, and emotional involvement of a consumer with a particular brand. CBE has been defined as the willingness of a consumer to communicate in a certain affiliation to a company, which has received academic attention over the last decade (Rather et al., 2018). Customers are gradually more involved in brand

innovations and new products, less focused on product prices, and are avoiding switching brands, which leads them to become advocates for those brands (Gong, 2018).

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is conceptualized as purchaser's willingness to acquire a product (Cuong, 2020b). The main focus is on the link between consumer purchasing intent and buying capacity. Past studies have shown that purchase intention is related to opinions and choices regarding a brand or item (Krishna & Kim, 2021). It also reflects customers' probability or their intention to purchase a specific item or service in the future (Cuong, 2020b; Wu et al., 2011). Some authors argue that in making short-term purchase decisions, purchase intention reflects the expectations of consumers' predictable action (e.g., which product/brand they will buy in future purchases) (Cuong, 2020a). Additionally, the customer's purchase intention is also taken into account because as the customer's interest increases, the purchase intention also increases (Dodds et al., 1991). The relationship of perceived value, quantity, and price greatly influences purchasing decisions; moreover, different internal and external factors considerably shape buyer behavior throughout their buying process (Fandos & Flavián, 2006; H. Khan & M, 2019). Bueno (2018) also proved through research that purchase intention is a main driver of buying actions.

Brand Involvement and PI

Brand involvement indicates the level by which a buying individual emotionally relates or shows his personal preference to a particular brand (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Customers who are loyal and deeply engaged with a specific brand deeply investigate all information about a brand and possess strong urges and opinions about their purchase intentions (Prendergast et al., 2010). As a research conducted by Jalilvand & Samiei (2014) in the automotive sector argues, as a buyer deeply involved with the specific brand, his involvement with a brand contributes substantially in guiding his choice to purchase a Toyota vehicle. Similarly, Hollebeek et al. (2007) stated in his research that customers having high involvement with a brand perceive considerable value and uniqueness in that brand, which in turn increases consumer tendency to invest in premium products. According to the above discussion, the hypothesis below has been formulated.

H_1: BIN positively impacts PI.

Brand Involvement and CBE

Recently, brand engagement has gained more and more attention among practitioners and researchers, since brand involvement is critical in developing CBE (Samarah et al., 2021). Consumers are more likely to use the same brand when they believe it is important (Algharabat et al., 2020a; Bowden, 2009). When consumers believe that a product matches their own values and beliefs, they are more inclined to acquire it. Moreover, consumers engage on digital platforms and virtual groups, so influencers act as idea leaders to encourage engagement (Obilo et al., 2021).

Thus, brand involvement is the psychological stimulus that enhances brand engagement (Aziz et al., 2025; Cuong, 2020a; Samala & Katkam, 2020). Available literature found that there was a positive relationship between brand involvement and CBE (Aziz et al., 2025; Samarah et al., 2022). Brand involvement has been regarded as a major predictor of brand engagement (Cheung & To, 2026). In accordance with the above viewpoints, the hypothesis below may be formulated.

H₂: BIN has a favorable influence on CBE.

Brand involvement and BT

Brand involvement is necessary for creating consumer trust in the brand and influencing buyers' attitudes regarding the brand's credibility, honesty, and ability (Aziz et al., 2025). Whenever buyers are strongly connected with a product or brand, they aim to comprehend it and establish deeper connections, leading to stronger loyalty and trust in its competence to create long-term value (Husain et al., 2022; Kim & Chao, 2019). Existing research highlights that consumers experience a positive relationship that strengthens their trust that the brand will deliver its promises and demonstrate importance to their needs (Delgado & Munuera, 2001; Samarah et al., 2021). Previous studies indicate that credibility and perception can be used to build up the interaction between end users and companies. Also, the involvement of customers leads to the establishment of long-term trust and loyalty because customers are confident in the brands and consider them a part of their lives (Kim & Chao, 2019; Samala & Katkam, 2020; Sarkar & Sreejesh, 2014; Vazifehdoost, 2014). The following hypothesis will be developed based on the above discussion.

H₃: BIN positively influences BT.

CBE and Purchase Intention

CBE involves intellectual, affective, and action-oriented involvement in brand related activities, which directly affect the purchase intention of customers (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Customers who are involved in the brand would be psychologically attached and this would make the customers more attached and show more purchase intention. According to the previous research, when customers interact with a brand online or in any other form, their interactions may have a great influence on the overall experience (Brodie et al., 2013), and their emotional attachment and investment in this specific brand can be higher, which in turn raises the possibility of purchase and repurchase (Vivek et al., 2014). Numerous studies prove that PI is enhanced by customer engagement (Kumar et al., 2025). In addition, past scholars have established that there is a strong connection between CBE and PI (Aziz et al., 2024; Jayasingh et al., 2025; Zeqiri et al., 2025). Hence, the hypothesis below could be formulated.

H₄: CBE influences PI.

Brand trust and PI

BT is essential as it affects customers' intention to buy because it decreases uncertainty (Holbrook & Chaudhuri, 2001). Customers gain confidence when they trust in the ability, honesty, and trustworthiness of a brand, which will positively affect their purchasing behavior (Cuong, 2020b). Studies have indicated that trust is the major forecaster of PI, especially in uncertain or online purchases (Husain et al., 2022; Sahin et al., 2011). Thus, brand-based trust is a direct boost to purchase intention (Cuong, 2020a). A previous research emphasized the significant impact of BT on PI (Tafolli et al., 2025). As a result, the hypothesis below can be formulated.

H_5: BT positively impacts PI.

Mediation of CBE between BIN and PI

Highly engaged and loyal customers of a brand are more likely to have cognitive and emotional engagement with the brand, and their engagement has a positive impact on the purchase intentions of the customers (Dwivedi, 2015; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Relationships mediated by CBE have been established by other researchers connecting personal relationships with the desire to perform certain behaviors, including purchase intention (So et al., 2016). Empirical studies that already existed demonstrate the mediating role of CBE in their respective models, which have different causes and consequences of CBE (Aziz et al., 2025; Jayasingh et al., 2025; Ndhlovu & Maree, 2024; Shahid Satar et al., 2024). The discussion above enables one to formulate the following hypothesis.

H_6: CBE mediates the relationship between BIN and PI.

Mediation of BT between BIN and PI

BT mediates the relationship between BIN and PI (Esch et al., 2006). Customers who are engaged are encouraged to get to know businesses and become familiar with them, thus creating awareness and positive expectations, and trust is a critical element of it (Esch et al., 2006; Husain et al., 2022). Empirical research proved that trust significantly increases the chances of purchase intention by mitigating risk and uncertainty (Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005). This mediating mechanism demonstrates that trust functions as both a cognitive and emotional process, serving as a crucial element in customer decision-making, wherein interaction influences purchase intention (Laroche et al., 2012; Lau & Lee , 1999; Sahin et al., 2011). Furthermore, between independent and dependent variables, BT often acts as a mediator (Alguacil et al., 2021; Seduram et al., 2022). Thus, in this setting, the mediation role of BT is investigated. The prior debate enables the development of the subsequent hypothesis.

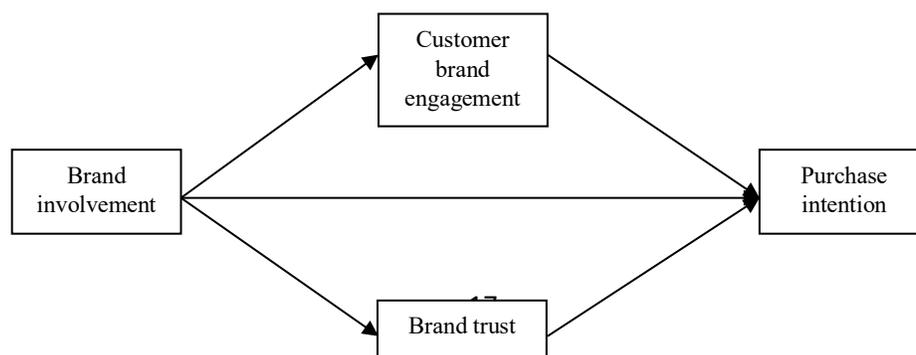*H_7: BT mediates the connection between BIN and PI.*

Figure 1: Theoretical framework

RESEARCH METHODS

The present research aims to explore the consumer in Pakistan in detail, using a large sample of 443 end-users who invest in and wear fashionable apparel brands regularly. The participants included in the analysis were chosen according to their past shopping experience in the fashion industry and their knowledge of clothing brands. A non-probability sampling method was used to select the sample based on this defined target population. The respondents provided feedback through a questionnaire completed online through Google Forms. The data were collected using a convenience sampling method. It was designed to collect data by using the current instrument, which consists of many questions focused on the population characteristics (demographics) and perceptions. All data were rated on a 5-point Likert scales, with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree. The validity and accuracy of the data collected were checked thoroughly before processing. We employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine a path analysis in which we evaluated the relationships between various variables, with BT and CBE as mediators.

In this research, a cross-sectional study was used to evaluate the relationship between brand involvement, brand trust, CBE, and purchase intention. A cross-sectional study is believed to be the most suitable when estimating the prevalence of behavior among a population (Agyekum et al., 2025). The techniques applied for sampling and data collection were convenience sampling and online surveys. These methods enable large samples to be collected with minimum investment and allow the findings of the study to be generalized relatively easily (Gumparthi & Patra, 2020).

Data collection

Online surveys may be more responsive provided that the questions are correctly formulated (Lyons et al., 2005). The academic marketing literature has many examples of online preparation of questionnaires (Khan et al., 2021). Self-administered questionnaires were used because they are very inexpensive and allow respondents to complete them without any influence from an interviewer (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Research context

The fashion and clothing industry in Pakistan is expanding (Gul et al., 2021). Young people know brands because they think they make them look more attractive, trendy, and fashionable. Working classes wear clothes to appear more presentable and attractive and create a positive impression in people. There is always some competition between people to show the best in the race of wearing the most expensive and well-known brands (Irshad et al., 2020).

Measures

This study tests the validity and consistency of the instrument by adapting the already established scales. To test each construct, a five-point Likert scale was used in this paper. The scale structure allowed participants to respond with values ranging from 1, indicating "strongly disagree," to 5, indicating "strongly agree." The construct of brand involvement was assessed in terms of five questions (De Vries & Carlson, 2014). CBE was operationalized on the basis of a four-item developed scale (Hollebeek et al., 2014). The brand trust was measured with a five-item scale (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003). Our focus on the key dependent construct was the purchase intention, which was measured through a five-factor scale developed by (Lee et al., 2008; Son et al., 2013).

Results and discussion

Demographic analysis

In total, 443 respondents have completed this survey. As per the findings, 225 men (or 50.8 percent of the total) and 218 women (or 49.2 percent of the total) completed the survey. In addition, most of the participants were between 20 and 25 years old, and they constituted 35.7 percent of the sample. The majority of respondents (57.8) hold a Master of Philosophy/Doctor of Philosophy degree, 50.1 percent of the respondents have a monthly income of less than twenty thousand rupees, and 39.3 percent of the respondents are students.

Data Analysis

The collected data were put through a long series of evaluations to critically test the designed hypothesis, wherein in the initial stage, SPSS software was used to analyze the basic data. The primary aim of our work was to identify data in missing responses or incomplete ones. To prove the accuracy of our data, we applied Mahalanobis distance to identify the outliers individually (one factor) and jointly (two or more factors). The method of data collection was a cross-sectional research design where data was collected at a single point through a self-reported questionnaire, which posed a high risk of common method bias (CMB). To alleviate this issue and ascertain the data normality, we ran Harman's one-factor test to ensure that CMB was not a major concern in the data set. To ensure the normal distribution of the data, a complete analysis was used that includes the Shapiro-Wilk test and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

The finding of this analysis confirmed that the data did not follow a normal distribution. Following proper data cleaning and validation, the constructed hypotheses were evaluated through structural equation modeling (SEM) in Smart PLS 3.0. This analysis involved two major parts: First, we assessed the measurement model to confirm the correctness and consistency of our study variables, which were essential to measure our study constructs. Second, by applying the structural model, we investigated the relationship among variables, which permitted us to conduct more rigorous tests of our theoretical framework.

Measurement Model Assessment

In validating the reliability and validity of the individual constructs assessed, the current paper has started by giving a thorough review of the measurement model which is a fundamental step in the process of validating the instrument. Figure 1 indicates that all the outer loadings are considerably higher than the 0.70 mark. Moreover, all the variables exhibited a high level of internal consistency as Composite Reliability (CR) values were much higher than 0.70 threshold and Variance Extracted (AVE) values were higher than 0.50 values, hence validating convergent validity (Henseler & Guerreiro, 2020).

To validate the uniqueness of every construct, we focused on the discriminant validity by calculating the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) and illustrated the results in Table 2. The values of all HTMT were lower than the 0.90 mark (Legate et al., 2023). It validates the fact that every reflective element is separate of the other within the model. We also used the check of potential data redundancy, and the values of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of all the variables were low (less than 5). It signified that multicollinearity was not an issue. The adjusted R-squared values indicated the extent to which the model was able to account the variation, whereby those values stood at 0.41, 0.46 and 0.45 respectively between BT, CBE and purchase intention.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
1	BIN	0.874	0.909	0.666
2	BT	0.862	0.900	0.644
3	CBE	0.810	0.876	0.641
4	PI	0.880	0.912	0.676

Table 2: Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

	BIN	BT	CBE	PI
BIN				
BT	0.730			
CBE	0.814	0.725		
PI	0.675	0.649	0.716	

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was then taken into account to find out whether the hypothesized causal relationships were correct. Table 3 gives the complete conclusion of the hypothesis test results. The investigation revealed that there was a great deal of support to the original correlations. The purchase intention was greatly influenced positively by brand involvement (H1: β=0.24, p<0.01). The hypothesis is proved by the positive effect of BIN on CBE (H2: β=0.68, p<0.01). The statistical significance of the expected positive direct connection between BIN and brand trust also proved the hypothesis (H3: β=0.64, p<0.01).

The positive effect of CBE on PI is significant (H4: β=0.29, p<0.01). Likewise, brand trust was also identified to enhance PI (H5: β=0.23, p<0.01). Finally, we provided an analysis of the impact of the mediation. The results support the mediation hypothesis of CBE as a relationship between BIN and PI (H6: β=0.20, p<0.01). The results of this effect were found to be statistically significant. It was established that the connection between BIN and PI had been mediated by BT (H7: β=0.15, p<0.01).

Table 3: Structural Model (Path Coefficients and Hypothesis testing)

Hypotheses	Relationship	β*	SE*	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	BIN → PI	0.24	0.05	4.10	0.00	Supported
H2	BIN → CBE	0.68	0.03	22.90	0.00	Supported
H3	BIN → BT	0.64	0.03	19.77	0.00	Supported
H4	CBE → PI	0.29	0.05	5.37	0.00	Supported
H5	BT → PI	0.23	0.05	4.47	0.00	Supported
H6	BIN → CBE → PI	0.20	0.04	4.95	0.00	Supported
H7	BIN → BT → PI	0.15	0.03	4.26	0.00	Supported

SE*=Standard Error; β* = path co-efficient

Table 4: Q Square Values

	Q² Values
BT	0.24
CBE	0.28
PI	0.28

Model Fit and Predictive Relevance

The assessment of the predictive power and the model fit is one of the most crucial steps in any PLS-SEM research procedure. PLS-SEM is more concerned with the explanatory and predictive strength of the individual elements of the model, but the traditional covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) tends to find a single optimal fit value. The primary index involved in such a purpose is the

Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). The SRMR was 0.07 in our analysis. The values are also much lower than the standard cutoff value of 0.10, which means that our theoretical model is perfectly consistent with the empirical one. The Q square values also confirmed the predictive significance of the model, as in Table 4. The values of these being more than zero demonstrate that our model has a strong predictive power. It should be known that relying on a single measure may create a misconception. When other significant measures, such as the SRMR and Q square are good, an overall model with low R-square value may fit well.

Figure 2: loadings

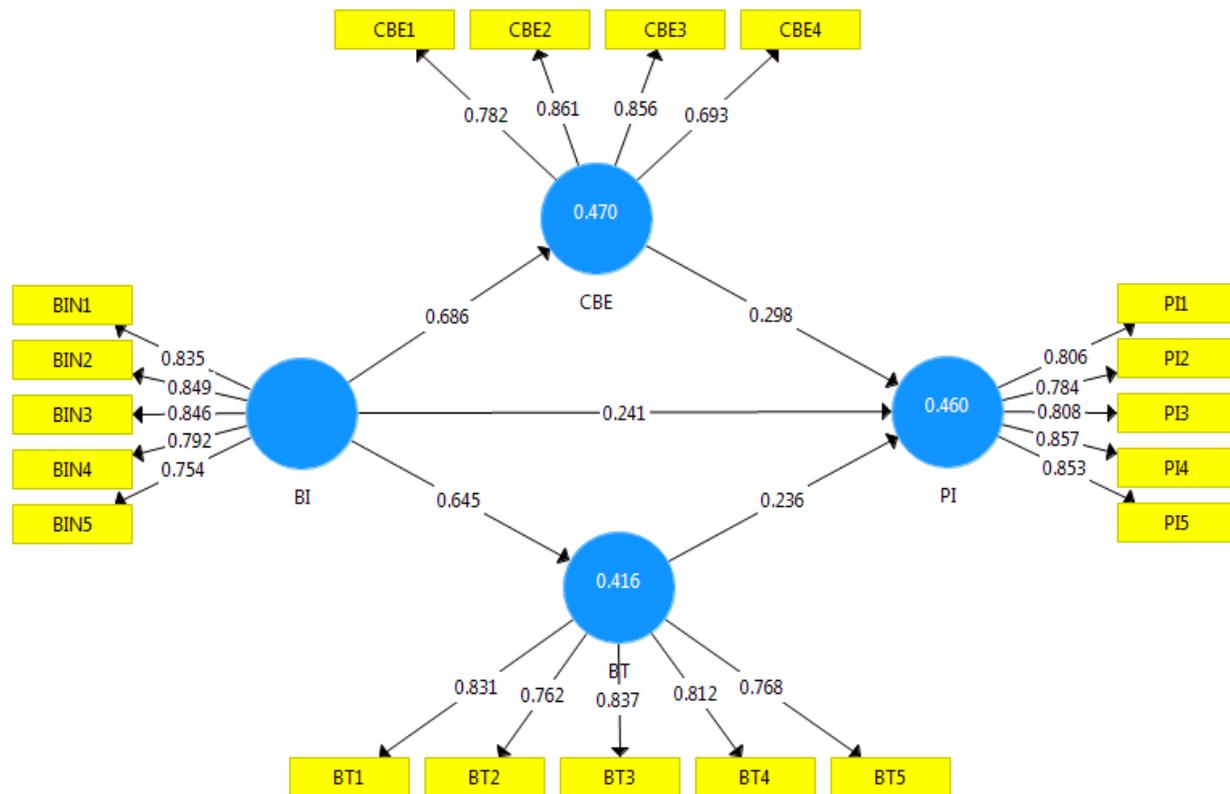|	BIN	BT	CBE	PI
BIN1	0.835			
BIN2	0.849			
BIN3	0.846			
BIN4	0.792			
BIN5	0.754			
BT1		0.831		
BT2		0.762		
BT3		0.837		
BT4		0.812		
BT5		0.768		
CBE1			0.782	
CBE2			0.861	
CBE3			0.856	
CBE4			0.693	
PI1				0.806
PI2				0.784
PI3				0.808
PI4				0.857
PI5				0.853

Figure 3: Structural Model

Discussion

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the BIN, CBE, and BT as critical antecedents of purchase intention in the fashion apparel sector. It also examines the mediating role of CBE and BT between BIN and purchase intention. This article deploys a theoretical framework grounded on social exchange theory to meet the goals of this paper. This theoretical framework is tested using PLS-SEM. In addition to that, the work adds to our understanding of CBE by elaborating a theoretical model as well as investigating the causes and consequences of it in a developing setting. The article validates the correlation between BIN, brand trust, customer engagement, and PI. Moreover, the research results present some valuable information regarding brand involvement, BT, CBE, and purchase intention in the fashion industry.

The results supported the positive correlation between BIN and PI. This finding is consistent with previous research findings. In addition, the results have also shown that BIN positively affects CBE. These findings have been confirmed by previous studies (Aziz et al., 2025; Samarah et al., 2022). As evident in this paper, the effects of BIN on brand trust within the Pakistani fashion

apparel industry are significant and positive. This is supported in past research. The results show that CBE is a predictor of PI. This outcome is in line with the findings of the previous studies (Aziz et al., 2024; Jayasingh et al., 2025; Zeqiri et al., 2025). According to this research, BT positively influences purchase intention. Brand trust also positively affects purchase intentions, as seen in other studies. Consumers are more likely to purchase a brand when they trust it (Tafolli et al., 2025).

This research shows that BT mediates the relationship between BIN and PI partially. That is to say, the greater the trust people place in a brand, the greater the impact that image has on their purchasing decisions. This result is in line with the current literature, which has highlighted the mediating effect of BT (Alguacil et al., 2021; Samarah et al., 2022; Seduram et al., 2022). The partial mediation that is presented in this paper, rather than the full mediation presented in others, could be explained by the fact that we used different constructs in our study. The proposed mediation role has been verified. Accordingly, the results also show that CBE partially mediates the relationship between brand involvement and PI. Advertising CBE may contribute to the augmentation of the impact of BIN on PI. The results were consistent with the conclusions made by other researchers. The mediation effect of CBE was found in the past (Aziz et al., 2025; Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2024; Jayasingh et al., 2025; Ndhlovu & Maree, 2024; Shahid Satar et al., 2024). The findings of this paper indicated that CBE was only partially mediated owing to differences in the constructs used in our research compared to theirs. The proposed role of the mediator was validated.

Theoretical implications

This research makes several contributions to the existing literature. This study further clarifies how brand involvement affects brand trust and customer brand engagement in fashion apparel brands, using brand trust and customer brand engagement as partial mediators. The research indicates a strong impact of brand trust on purchase intention and aligns with other past studies (Tafolli et al., 2025), but it makes a new contribution in the fashion apparel brand setting in the developing economy of Pakistan.

The study seeks to fill the gap of context-specific studies on this concept (Kumar et al., 2019; Roy, Shekhar et al., 2018). The Marketing Science Institute identifies the most significant causes and effects of CBE as one of the key research priorities for the period between 2018 and 2020 (Kumar et al., 2022). CBE is in its nascent stage; therefore, further research is necessary (Algharabat et al., 2020). The existing academic insights regarding the concept of engagement are quite inconsistent (Siu et al., 2022). Most published research on CBE has focused on more developed or industrialized markets. Due to this, the CBE has remained a poorly studied area in the academic field of emerging markets, and thus, further studies are warranted (Hollebeek et al., 2022). This research paper discusses the fact that there should be increased research in emerging markets.

Practical implications

Brand managers in the fashion clothing business might gain valuable insights from this study. Managers could utilize the real-world results of this research to get consumers involved in brand engagement initiatives. By engaging customers, businesses are trying to arouse the interests of consumers in their products and services. Customer engagement has a positive impact on the success of the company (Prentice et al., 2019). Furthermore, the marketers of fashion clothes may apply these findings to enhance their marketing strategies to ensure that individuals trust their brands and products.

This study is relevant because it provides relevant information to managers of fashion apparel companies, which can help them enhance the purchase intentions. Marketing experts used CBE as a key component of marketing to develop and nurture desirable attitudes and behaviors toward their companies. There is a high level of competition among business organizations in the apparel sector in Pakistan.

Customer engagement is a key component in the management of fashion firms in Pakistan, which has a significant influence on customer purchase decisions in the fashion clothing sector. The management should enhance BIN, BT, and CBE to make apparel businesses in Pakistan successful in the long term. Brand involvement, brand trust, and CBE will significantly contribute to the purchase intention and help the apparel businesses achieve long-term success in Pakistan. Managers should take the initiative to engage with consumers to increase their desire to buy fashionable clothing from businesses.

Limitations and future directions

The article outlines specific limitations that can create opportunities for future research activities. The cross-sectional nature of the study limits our understanding of customer engagement with particular fashion apparel brands. The future studies can greatly enhance its results by applying a longitudinal research design to explore the CBE. This paper discussed customer engagement as a unidimensional variable. Future studies can examine customer engagement as a multidimensional concept (Shah et al., 2024).

Engagement is a concept that has been introduced rather recently in the domain of marketing literature, and the literature in this particular field is scant. Thus, scholars know less about the development of this construct. Therefore, future research can concentrate on evaluating the development of consumer engagement (Bilro & Loureiro, 2020). The study takes place within a Pakistani market, which is considered an emerging economy (Ahmed et al., 2023). Further studies would be required in the setting of an advanced economy.

The current paper will only look at Pakistani fashion clothing brands. Future studies can involve various cultures in different countries and sectors. Further studies should include new insights and developments in the interaction with customers. A large segment of the studies conducted in this field of CBE focuses on theoretical examination. This fact calls for further empirical research on the topic. This study assessed the future value of customer engagement. Future studies need to

include the possible negative effects of customer engagement, such as fatigue and addictive behaviors, which also require a more in-depth examination (Paruthi et al., 2022). In addition, in future studies, moderating variables, such as gender, may be included.

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