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From Clicks to Connections: Exploring the Role of Social Media and e-WOM in Shaping Brand Engagement through Total Customer Experience in South Punjab

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the combined effects of social media (SM), electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), and total consumer experience (TCE) on brand engagement. Considering the S-O-R model as the framework of the study, data was collected from 350 participants from South Punjab using a mix of physical and online surveys. With the use of SPSS and PLS-SEM, the positive impact of SM and eWOM on the BE is exhibited and the role of TCE as a mediator. The vital role of customer experience in manifesting digital intercommunications into extensive brand connections was the highlighted result. The results of this research provide the developing reservoir of research on digital engagement by providing useful data for businesses to foster customer association by the strategic utilization of SM and eWOM. Upcoming studies might need to take in mind multiple kinds of cultural and industrial factors, probe extra mediators and moderators, and use longitudinal and analytical techniques. By contributing applicable strategies for businesses to grip SM and eWOM, this study contributes to expand the body of knowledge on digital engagement. Future studies could investigate these dynamics in different cultural or industrial contexts, investigate additional mediating or moderating constructs, and adopt longitudinal or more intricate analytical techniques to gain a deeper understanding of these relationships.



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Introduction

The rapid growth of digital instrument has change customer behavior universal (Moorhouse et. al., 2018), and South Punjab, Pakistan, is no exclusion. With increasing internet diffusion and the production of smart phones, persons in this region are becoming more vital participants in the digital market (Wanof, 2023). Platforms such as social media and electrical word of mouth (eWOM) have grow as key enablers of consumer-brand interaction, adapt traditional marketing dynamics. These tools not only provide customer with access to real-time data but also empower them to inspiration others through references, reviews, and shared familiarities. In South Punjab, a region known for its different cultural legacy and different socio-economic characteristics, digital floors play a double role (Ongsakul et. al., 2021). On one hand, they help the dissemination of brand-related info across geographically spread areas, and on the other, they strengthen consumer voices in the marketplace (Razzaq et al., 2023). However, the influence of these digital connections on consumer actions is not well-documented, mainly with respect to their effect on **Total Customer experience (TCE)** and **Brand engagement (BE)**.

According to De Keyser et al., (2020), **total customer experience** is a general construct encompassing all dealings that a customer has with a product, directly or indirectly, across several touch points. It returns not only functional approval but also emotional connections, which are mainly significant in districts like South Punjab, where purchasing choices often align with social and cultural beliefs. The role of **TCE** as a mediator in the link between digital platforms and product engagement remains underexplored, specifically in evolving economies.

The researcher Arghashi & ArsunYuksel (2023) said that, **Product Engagement** the emotional, reasoning, and behavioral obligation of consumers toward a product has become a precarious indicator of product success in competitive marketplaces. In South Punjab, where clients increasingly rely on digital references and social interactions to monitor their choices, understanding the drivers of product engagement is critical for businesses looking for to establish long-term client relationships. Despite the developing reliance on social media and eWOM, the collected works addressing their combined influence on TCE and BE in South Punjab is bare. The unique socio-cultural and economic changing aspects of this region require an in-depth examination to understand how digital incentives shape consumer involvements and foster engagement. This study purposes to fill this gap by exploring the interaction of eWOM, social media, TCE, and product engagement, contributing to the wider discourse on digital promotion and customer behavior in emerging marketplaces.

By addressing these gaps, this research not only offers practical insights for dealers operating in South Punjab but also extends theoretical sympathetic of digital advertising's role in enhancing customer experiences and building product loyalty in culturally rich and economically developing regions

Literature Review

Electronic Word of Mouth and Total Customer Experience

The marketing land has experienced remarkable development in consumer-generated content, driven by the simplicity of access and rapid data sharing enabled by the Internet (Zhang et al., 2021). According to Anderson et al., (2024), with social interacting sites encouraging clients to become part of a larger advertising community, peer-to-peer infrastructures on these platforms represent a new form of customer socialization, involving looking for, sharing and forwarding data. "Electronic word of mouth (EWOM) is defined as any positive or negative statement made by present or previous customers about a product, service or company, which is made available to large audiences via the Internet" (Abubakar&Ilkan, 2016). Interpersonal communication about

products and brands is perceived to be more trustworthy than marketer generated content, as it minimizes uncertainties (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Bo et. al. (2023) reported consumers become four times more likely to make a brand purchase (or no-purchase) decision based on positive (or negative) online reviews, and are influenced more by testimonials than by objective product benefits. Advertising as a traditional form of communication appears to be gradually losing its effectiveness as a growing share of new business sales come from consumer generated rather than marketer generated content (Kumar & Gupta, 2016).. When receivers pass forward EWOM to others in their social network, it creates a viral or ripple effect that facilitates exponential dispersion (Nguyen & Vo, 2021).

The concept of total customer experience extends beyond mere customer satisfaction, as even satisfied customers may still lodge complaints (Morgeson et al., 2020). Over the past decade, businesses have predominantly focused on the physical attributes of their products, often neglecting emotional aspects, leading to the loss of customers (Arslan & Altuna, 2010). To excel in this area, many organizations are now deliberately incorporating total customer experience into their strategies to cultivate a broader and more loyal customer base. Marketers have come to recognize that fostering total customer experience not only influences customer preference but also builds lasting customer loyalty (Räsänen, 2020).

Business strategy and marketing heavily emphasize branding, with brand loyalty considered an intangible asset and a critical element of strategic marketing (Faircloth et al., 2001). Top-performing brands have successfully attracted and engaged customers, converting them into loyal advocates willing to pay a premium for their products. Brand switching becomes challenging for loyal customers (More, 2023). However, competitive pricing and impactful promotions can affect brand loyalty, underscoring the importance of investigating the factors that contribute to long-term customer loyalty (Dandis & Al Haj Eid, 2022). Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) and Total Customer Experience (TCE) share a dynamic and symbiotic relationship, wherein eWOM shapes customer expectations and perceptions, influencing their overall experience with a brand (Wang & McCarthy, 2023). TCE, in turn, determines how customers perceive the credibility and accuracy of eWOM, forming a feedback loop that reinforces the importance of managing both effectively (Adewale, 2024).

EWOM significantly influences TCE as it serves as a pre-purchase informational instrument that influences clients' perceptions and expectations about a product or facility (Zhao et al., 2023). According to Aragones-Jerico et al., 2024, helpful eWOM helps to build trust, improve product image, and create favorable hopes. When these hopes are met or exceeded during client interactions, the result is an developed TCE. Existing literature offers strong support for the positive rapport between eWOM and TCE. Readings by Filieri & McLeay (2014) and Kim et al. (2016) have revealed that positive eWOM enhances client satisfaction and perceptions of facility quality by influencing pre-purchase hopes. These findings highlight the consequence of eWOM as a determinant of the client experience journey.

H1: Electronic word of mouth has a significant positive impact on total customer experience.

The **Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT)** ropes the relationship between eWOM and TCE by clarifying how eWOM shapes clients' pre-purchase expectations. These hopes are confirmed or disconfirmed through the genuine experience (TCE), which facilitates the impact of eWOM on approval and loyalty. Positive eWOM leads to authorization, enhancing TCE and behavioral consequences.

Social Media and Total Customer Experience

Social media serves as a platform that allows consumers to connect with one another, making companies no longer the sole source of brand-related information (Infante & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Customers now predominantly rely on digital media to gather information, shifting away from traditional channels like radio, magazines, and television (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In today's fast-

paced world, social media has emerged as a powerful tool for global interaction. It provides a space for people of all ages and genders to communicate, share ideas on nearly any topic, and offers businesses a fresh perspective and opportunities for growth (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Businesses recognize the opportunity to establish direct contact with prospective customers, gaining valuable market insights and enhancing their operations through active customer engagement (Alzoubi et al., 2022). Given its significance, new businesses must make every effort to leverage social networking platforms effectively and efficiently (Ryan & Jones, 2011).

McClain et al. (2021) highlight that a significant portion of people now spend one-third of their day online, resulting in a massive number of online subscribers. For instance, Facebook alone boasts over 3.07 billion active users (Kumar, 2024). The unique influence of social media has transformed the landscape of advertising (Quesenberry, 2020). Digital media has also reshaped how shoppers gather information before making purchases, whether in-store or online (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). According to Akram et al. (2021), numerous websites have emotionally and culturally influenced online communities. A large number of people connect with others online for various reasons, such as shared views, language similarities, or common interests (Keller, 2010). Social media enables individuals to engage and interact, often through personal online profiles that allow others to understand their preferences, fostering a sense of connection (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014). The World Wide Web continues to witness the growing popularity of digital networking platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

The rise of social marketing has created opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses to promote their products with minimal costs (Infante & Mardikaningsih, 2022). As advertising platforms continue to grow, numerous advertising networks have emerged to assist these smaller firms in leveraging the Internet through innovative marketing strategies (Volckner & Sattler, 2006). One such approach involves utilizing individuals with whom customers feel a sense of affiliation to endorse products on social media (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). By harnessing the authority of social media, small productions can reap various remunerations, including significant garage sale growth, enhanced brand awareness, well-organized handling of client queries and complaints, and the capability to anticipate future marketplace trends (Chatterjee & Kar, 2020).

Social media plays a critical role in shaping the Total Client Experience (TCE) by enabling businesses to involve directly with their clients in real time. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter offer avenues for brands to cooperate with their audience, distribute information, and address response, all of which contribute to a combined and engaging client journey (Araujo et al., 2020). Social media supports equally customer-to-customer (C2C) and business-to-customer (B2C) statement, influencing the emotional, intelligent, and relational aspects of TCE. The researcher Rane et al., (2023) supposed that, meaningful communications, such as tailored retorts, timely problem determination, and captivating content, boost client satisfaction and foster reliability. Additionally, user-generated content, like analyses and testimonials, offers honest insights into customer involvements, shaping the expectations and choices of potential buyers. By bring into line social media efforts with client experience management, businesses can generate a cohesive and rewarding experience through digital channels, improving brand image and promoting lasting relationships (Zollo et al., 2020). The Uses and Satisfactions Theory provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the impact of social media on Total Client Experience (TCE). This theory postulates that individuals actively use social media stages to fulfill their needs for information, social collaboration, and entertainment. By engaging with produces on social media, clients form discernments and hopes that influence their overall capability. Positive collaborations, such as custom-maderetorts and user-generated satisfied, bring into line with these needs, pressure a more favorable TCE.

H2: Social media (SM) has a significant positive impact on total customer experience (TCE).

2.3. Total Customer Experience and Brand Engagement:

The connection between **Total Customer Experience (TCE)** and **brand engagement** has gained meaningful concentration in latest marketing research. Total Customer Experience (TCE) mention to the complete insights a customer develops about a brand through their exchange at different touchpoints, encompassing the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase phases (Vermila, 2019). A positive TCE provide a route to increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and encouragement, as customers are more likely to continue engaging with a brand that meets or exceeds their likelihood (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). On the other hand, **brand engagement** states to the level of emotional and logical involvement a customer has with a brand. It can establish through behaviors such as sharing brand content, active in brand-related activities, or sharing point of view about the brand on social media (Brodie et al., 2013). High levels of brand engagement typically result in buyers forming deeper emotional connections with the brand, encourage long-term loyalty and support (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

The literature suggests that there is a **bidirectional relationship** between TCE and brand engagement. A positive and unforgettable customer experience reinforces brand engagement by encouraging customers to link more frequently with the brand (Kumar et al., 2019). Conversely, increased brand engagement in increase TCE by providing brands with valuable customer feedback and creating opportunities for personalized interactions, further enhancing customer satisfaction (Keller, 2013). Moreover, engagement behaviors such as customer co-creation and online brand communities have been shown to enhance the overall customer experience, solidifying the importance of this relationship in creating a cycle of continuous improvement and customer loyalty (Prahalad&Ramaswamy, 2004).

The connection between Total Customer Experience (TCE) and Brand Engagement (BE) can be explained through the **Customer Engagement Theory**. This theory suggests that customer engagement is driven by emotional and cognitive connections formed through meaningful interactions with a brand. When customers experience a positive and seamless journey with a brand marked by personalized services, high-quality touchpoints, and overall satisfaction they are more likely to develop a stronger emotional bond with the brand. This deeper connection encourages them to engage with the brand more frequently, whether by sharing content on social media, participating in brand-related activities, or becoming loyal advocates.

H3: Total Customer Experience (TCE) significantly influences and enhances Brand Engagement (BE) in a positive manner.

Mediation

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) shows a pivotal role in shaping product engagement by influencing consumers' discernments, emotions, and behaviors (Gvili& Levy, 2018). According to Nasser (2023), eWOM, shared through platforms like social media, online evaluations, and forums, provides trusted and related insights about products and facilities, making it a powerful tool for building customer trust. Positive eWOM increases brand visibility and creates a sense of believability, encouraging clients to connect emotionally and cognitively with the product. This connection often translates into behavior engagement, such as liking, sharing, or procuring (Abuhjeeleh et al., 2023). Furthermore, the social inspiration of eWOM fosters a bandwagon effect, where clients are motivated to interact with a product based on others' recommendations (Nadroo et al., 2024). For dealers, fostering eWOM through schemes like customer testimonials, influencer companies, and responsive engagement can innocently enhance brand loyalty and advocacy, dynamic long-term consumer relationships (Valmohammadi, et al., 2024).

H4: Electronic word of mouth (EWM) has a significant positive impact on brand engagement (BE).

Social media has an insignificant role in driving **brand appointment** by providing customers with a platform to interact with products and with each other (Samarah et al., 2022). Research specifies that social media engagement enhances product perception, strengthens customer loyalty, and boosts client advocacy (Hutter et al., 2013). According to Dolan et al., (2019), When clients feel that their interactions on social media are appreciated such as through personalized responses or greeting of their content they are more likely to become extremely engaged with the product.

Moreover, social media platforms encourage clients to share their personal experiences with brands, which create prospects for **user-generated content** (Koivisto & Mattila, 2020). This type of content can serve as reliable testimonials or endorsements, which more drive engagement from other potential clients (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). As a result, **brand appointment** on social media not only make stronger the emotional connection between clients and the brand but also contributes to a positive product image, influencing purchasing judgments and brand loyalty.

H5: Social media (SM) has a significant positive impact on brand engagement (BE).

In understanding the affiliation between **Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)**, **Social Media (SM)**, **Total Client Experience (TCE)**, and **Brand Appointment (BE)**, the **Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Model** serves as a critical theoretical framework. According to the SOR model, exterior stimuli (e.g., eWOM and SM) affect an individual's internal state, characterized by their cognitive and emotional responses (organism), which ultimately influences their behavioral response (BE).

In this framework, eWOM and SM act as **stimuli** that shape client perceptions and attitudes toward a product. Positive eWOM and engaging social media content can create satisfactory expectations and emotions, which effect how customers evaluate their collaborations with the brand this is the **organism** phase. When clients experience positive interactions across various touchpoints, it contributes to a developed **Total Customer Experience (TCE)**, a critical mediator in the development.

TCE, which reflects the overall fulfillment, trust, and emotional connection a client has with a brand, plays a vital role in adapting these internal experiences into **brand engagement** behaviors. As TCE improves, clients are more likely to engage with the brand, share content, or promote for the brand, representing their **response** to the stimuli. Thus, the SOR Model helps clarify how eWOM and social media, by persuading TCE, drive greater **Brand Appointment**, which in turn strengthens brand loyalty and promotion.

H6: Total customer experience (TCE) mediates the relationship between electronic word of mouth (EWM) and brand engagement (BE).

H7: Total customer experience (TCE) mediates the relationship between social media (SM) and brand engagement (BE).

Conceptual Framework

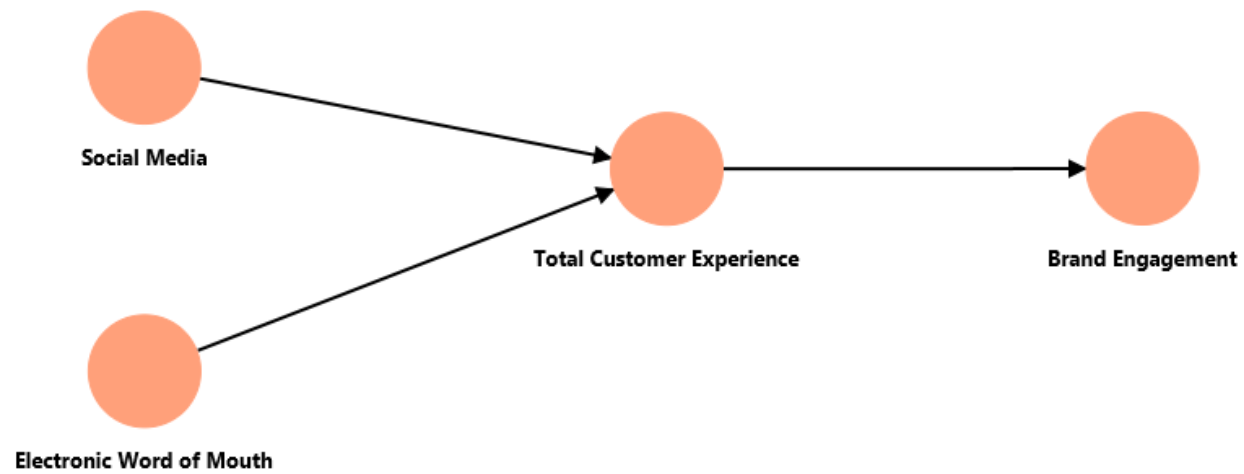


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative method with a random convenience sampling method to explore the influence of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and social media on product engagement among clients in South Punjab. Social media users in the district form the unit of analysis, selected grounded on demographic features such as age, gender, marital status, profession, and education level. G*Power examination determined a minimum sample size of 89 to certify the robustness of the research structure. A total of 366 responses were collected through a combination of online and physical investigations; however, 16 responses were excepted due to incomplete data. This caused in a final usable sample of 350 retorts, yielding a response rate of 95.6%. To ensure a diverse exemplification of participants, both online and offline statistics collection methods were working. The data were analyzed using SPSS and Partial Least Squares (PLS 4), an logical method ideal for examining multifaceted relationships and providing complete insights into the research variables (Hair et al., 2021)

Measurement

In the framework of the current study, various tools were adopted to measure the key variables effectively. The scale for **product engagement** was adapted from the work of Elaine Wallace et al. (2014), ensuring significance to the engagement construct. The capacity of **total client experience** utilized tools adapted from Ted Chen and Sharan Duggal (2013), reflecting their complete approach to customer involvement. The scale for **electronic word of mouth (eWOM)** was consequent from the study by Abubakar et al. (2016), contribution a reliable basis for understanding eWOM dynamic forces. Lastly, the instrument for **social media** was modified from the study by Manfred Bruhn et al. (2012), provided that a well-established framework for analyzing the effect of social media in the modern research context.

Results and Analysis

Demographical Statistics

In this study, a total of 366 questionnaires were distributed to audience from South Punjab, using both online and physical methods of data collection. Out of the 366 questionnaires circulated, 350 were found to be usable, subsequent in a response rate of approximately 95.6%. This high retort rate reflects the effectiveness of the data collection method and ensures that the findings are representative of the objective population.

The demographic results of the respondents, who were selected from various districts of South Punjab, reveals important discernments into the socio-economic and cultural composition of the sample. Significant demographic variables analyzed comprise **age, gender, education level,**

occupation, The circulation of responses also takes into justification the use of both **online** and **physical** questionnaires, certifying a diverse range of participants from different experiences and locations.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Number	Percentage	Total
Gender			
Male	221	63.14	63.14
Female	129	36.86	100
Age			
16Y-25Y	220	62.86	62.86
26Y-35Y	80	22.86	85.72
36Y-45Y	50	14.29	100
46Y-55Y	0	0	100
Above 55Y	0	0	100
Marital status			
Single	264	75.43	75.43
Married	86	24.57	100
Qualification			
Metric	0	0	0
Intermediate	75	21.43	21.43
Graduate	207	59.14	80.57
Others	68	19.43	100
Occupation			
Student	212	60.57	60.57
Businessman	115	32.86	93.43
Salaried	23	6.57	100
Social Media			
Facebook	115	32.86	32.86
Twitter	80	22.86	55.72
Linked In	37	10.57	66.29
Youtube	23	6.57	72.86
Others	95	27.14	100

Source(s): SPSS output

Review of Measurement Model and Factor Loading

According to Hair et al. (2014), various criteria are used to assess the measurement model's effectiveness. Item reliability is evaluated to ensure dependability, while composite reliability measures consistency. Convergent validity is assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with acceptable thresholds being composite reliability above 0.70, factor loadings above 0.70, and AVE greater than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2011). This study referenced benchmarks from Comrey and Lee (1992), where 0.71 is excellent, 0.63 good, 0.45 average, and 0.32 poor. Construct validity and measurement structure were further analyzed using AVE, and Cronbach's Alpha assessed internal consistency, with values above 0.60 considered acceptable (Nunnally, 1978). All Cronbach's Alpha values in this study exceeded 0.70, and AVE values were above 0.50, indicating good reliability and validity.

Duarte & Raposo (2010) and Hulland (1999) highlighted the importance of factor loadings in measuring item reliability. Items with loadings below 0.70 were excluded, though loadings above 0.50 are acceptable (Hair et al., 2014). In this study, all item loadings were above 0.50. The table below presents the internal consistency, convergent validity, and cross-loadings of constructs.

Table 2.

Variables	Items	VIF	Cross Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Social Media	SM1	1.603	0.805	0.763	0.815	0.849	0.590
	SM2	1.943	0.866				
	SM3	1.848	0.804				
	SM4	1.175	0.562				
Electronic Word of Mouth	EWM1	1.570	0.793	0.735	0.737	0.833	0.556
	EWM2	1.314	0.724				
	EWM3	1.505	0.715				
	EWM4	1.576	0.747				
Total Customer Experience	TCE1	1.435	0.821	0.674	0.722	0.820	0.606
	TCE2	1.524	0.865				
	TCE3	1.189	0.631				
	TCE4	1.189	0.631				
Brand Engagement	BE1	1.833	0.729	0.917	0.940	0.926	0.535
	BE2	2.138	0.728				
	BE3	1.924	0.628				
	BE4	2.045	0.745				
	BE5	1.903	0.676				
	BE6	2.402	0.777				
	BE7	2.387	0.819				
	BE8	2.353	0.755				
	BE9	2.408	0.806				
	BE10	1.925	0.606				
	BE11	2.083	0.743				

Source(s): PLS SEM output of measurement model.

The validity of the variables was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell&Larcker, 1981). Firstly, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was calculated for each variable. Subsequently, the interrelationships among the variables within the model were analyzed. The square root of the AVE, presented in bold in the table, was compared against the correlations of each construct. The results established strong validity, as the square root of the AVE surpassed the correlations among the constructs, sufficient the Fornell-Larcker standard.

Table 3.

	BE	EWM	SM	TCE
BE	0.731			
EWM	0.172	0.746		
SM	0.177	0.653	0.768	
TCE	0.212	0.553	0.631	0.779

Source(s): PLS-SEM output of measurement model

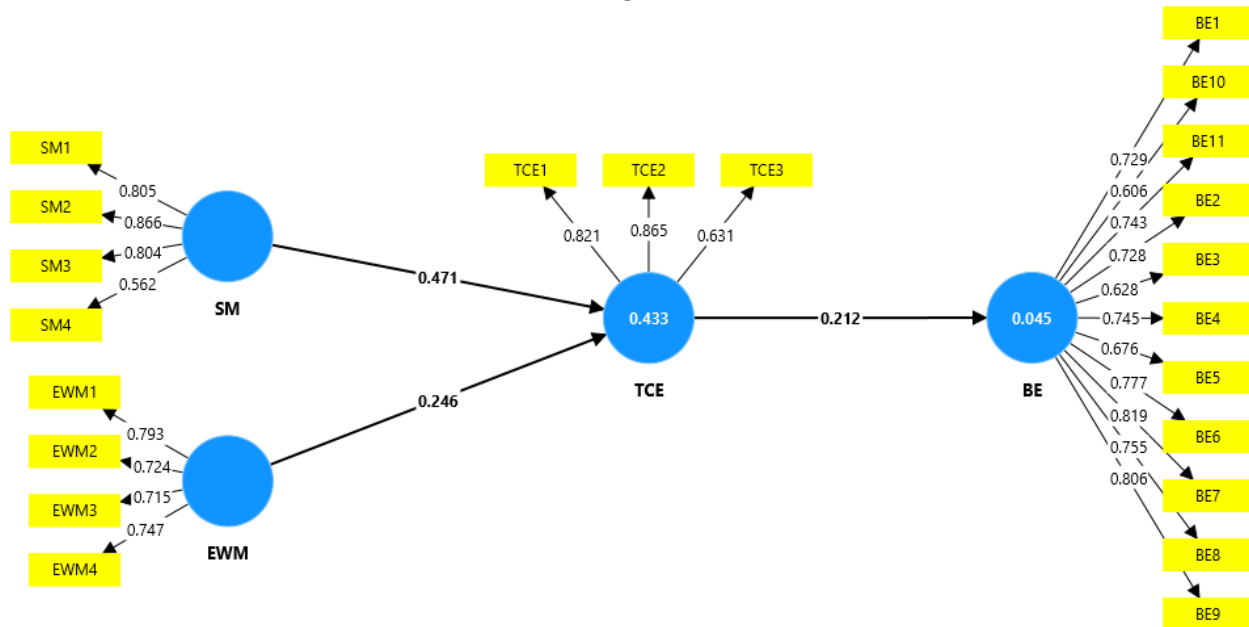
The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio assesses discriminant validity. HTMT values nearing 1 indicate insufficient discriminant validity. Henseler et al. (2015) demonstrated through a Monte Carlo simulation that HTMT offers superior sensitivity and specificity compared to other methods. Using HTMT as a criterion, values are compared to a predefined threshold; exceeding this threshold suggests inadequate construct separation. In this analysis, HTMT values are below 0.9, indicating strong discriminant validity, as shown in the table below.

Table 4. HTMT

Variable	1	2	3	4
1.BE	1			
2.EWM	0.202	1		
3.SM	0.191	0.864	1	
4.TCE	0.241	0.770	0.822	1

Source(s): PLS-SEM output of measurement model

Figure 2.



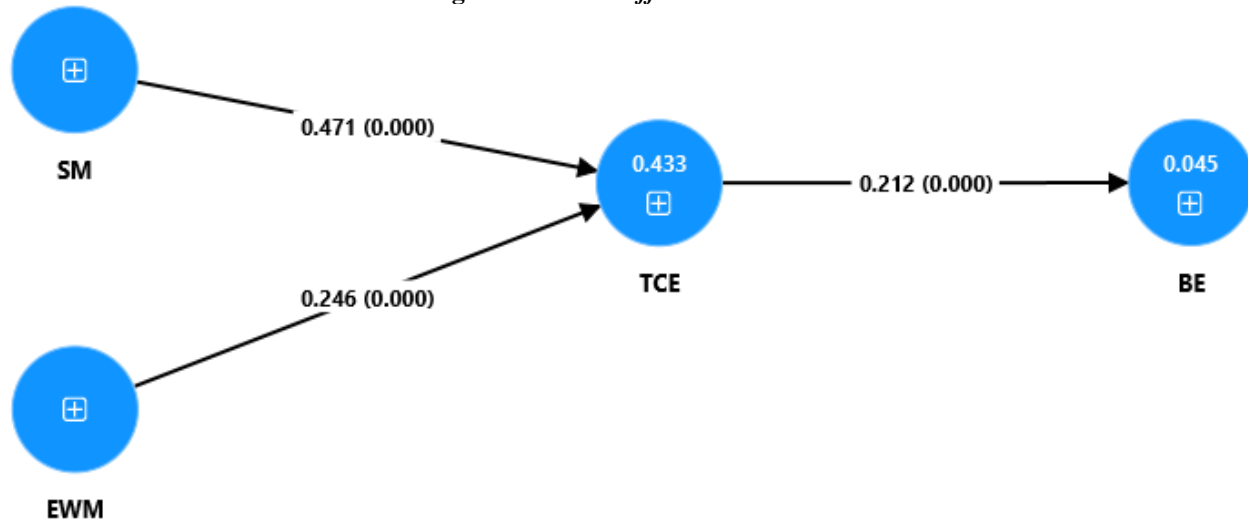
Source(s): PLS-SEM output of measurement model

Evaluation of Structural Model

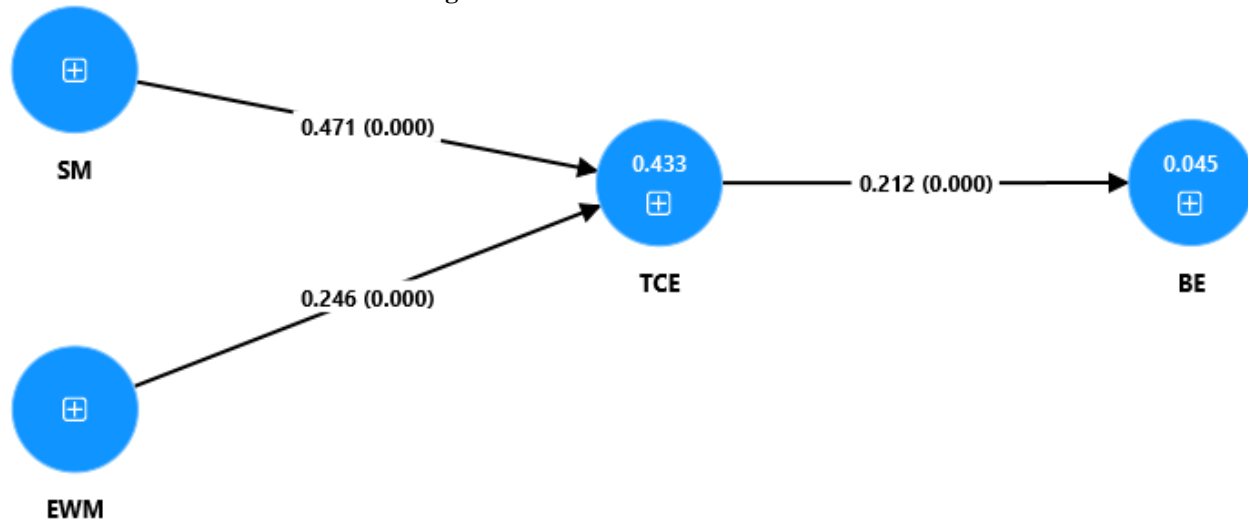
The structural model examined direct relationships between independent and dependent variables using bootstrapping with 5,000 samples and the PLS-SEM algorithm to estimate path coefficients. Significant relationships were found at $p < 0.05$ with a critical T-value of 1.645. The table below shows outlier effects, supporting several proposed hypotheses.

Table 5.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	CI Lower	CI Upper	Decision
EWM -> TCE	0.246	0.249	0.072	3.430	0.000	0.132	0.369	Supported
SM -> TCE	0.471	0.470	0.058	8.168	0.000	0.373	0.566	Supported
TCE -> BE	0.212	0.238	0.046	4.657	0.000	0.171	0.311	Supported
EWM -> BE	0.052	0.059	0.021	2.445	0.007	0.028	0.096	Supported
SM -> BE	0.100	0.112	0.026	3.886	0.000	0.076	0.155	Supported
EWM -> TCE -> BE	0.052	0.059	0.021	2.445	0.007	0.028	0.096	Supported
SM -> TCE -> BE	0.100	0.112	0.026	3.886	0.000	0.076	0.155	Supported

Figure. 3. Path coefficient and P-values

Source(s): PLS-SEM output of the structural model
 Figure 4. Path Coefficients and T-Value



Source(s): PLS-SEM output of the structural model

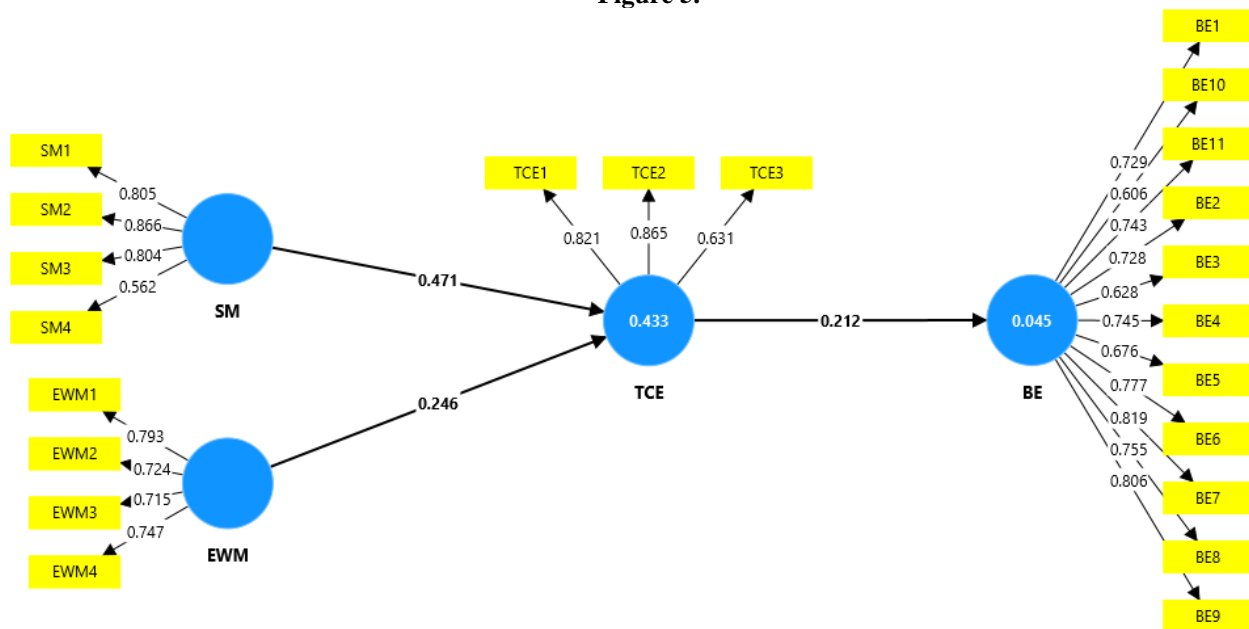
The coefficient of determination, commonly known as R-squared, is a measure of model quality that reflects the proportion of variance explained by the model (Hair et al., 2010). According to Chin (1998), R-squared values of 0.60, 0.33, and 0.19 are considered substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. For endogenous latent variables, R-squared values of 43% and 20% suggest moderate to weak model adequacy. Elliott and Woodward (2007) explain that R-squared indicates the extent to which independent variables account for the variance in the dependent construct.

Table 6.

Variables	R-square	R-square adjusted
BE (Brand Engagement)	0.045	0.042
TCE (Total Customer Experience)	0.433	0.430

Source(s): PLS-SEM output of the structural model

Figure 5.



Source(s): PLS-SEM output of the structural model

Discussion

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) significantly enhances the overall customer experience, as supported by both the findings of my study in South Punjab and the research conducted by Mihardjo et al. (2019). In the South Punjab context, eWOM emerged as a key factor in shaping customer perceptions and satisfaction levels, reflecting its ability to provide credible and accessible information. Correspondingly, Mihardjo et al. emphasized the positive impact of eWOM on product image and sustainable supply chain presentation, demonstrating its influence on customer-centric consequences. These findings align in showcasing that eWOM not only fosters trust and product loyalty but also intensifies the digital customer experience by qualifying informed decision-making and demonstrative connections with the product. The perception from both studies state the supposition that eWOM is a critical determinant of a supplemented customer experience, linking regional and global perspectives on customer behavior in the digital age.

The results of this study align with the research by Abd El Aziz et al. (2024), which peak the important positive impact of social media (SM) on total customer experience (TCE). Both studies emphasize that the planned use of social media enhances client engagement and fosters a more enriching and modified experience. This correlation is mainly evident in the context of the present study, which examines consumers in South Punjab, where social media stages play a crucial role in shaping customer discernments and interactions.

The findings of this study prove the hypothesis that total customer experience (TCE) has a positive impact on brand engagement (BE). This results aligns with earlier research by Prentice et al., (2019), which tells that enhanced brand experiences, attached with service quality, drive client engagement. According to this study, TCE serves as a holistic concept that encompasses emotional, intellectual, and sensory experiences customers encounter during their link with a brand. This complete engagement fosters deeper links, attractive their willingness to invest time, dynamism,

and loyalty toward the brand. Both studies together underscore the notion that creating a rich, memorable client experience is central to fostering robust brand engagement.

The results of this study confirm that electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has a important positive impact on brand engagement (BE), supporting the proposed hypothesis. These consequences are consistent with the study directed by Srivastava and Sivaramakrishnan (2021), which emphasized the critical role of eWOM in enhancing customer brand engagement. eWOM operates as a pivotal instrument for transmitting brand-related data, opinions, and experiences among clients, often influencing their perceptions and behaviors. In equally studies, it is evident that eWOM fosters deeper influences between consumers and brands by generating a sense of trust, genuineness, and shared values within the digital unrestricted. This engagement manifests in various forms, such as amplified interaction with brand content, grander loyalty, and advocacy behaviors.

The results of this study confirm that Social Media (SM) has a important positive impact on Brand Appointment (BE), validating the proposed hypothesis. These consequences are consistent with the research directed by Choedon and Lee (2020), which demonstrated the critical role of social media marketing happenings in driving brand engagement. In their study on Korean cosmetic firms, social media promotion significantly enhanced customers' interactions, emotional influences, and loyalty toward brands. Both studies highlight the effectiveness of social media stages as interactive spaces where products and consumers engage meaningfully. Social media simplifies dynamic communication, fosters community construction, and provides tailored brand involvements that resonate with diverse customer segments. This leads to delicate levels of engagement, as demonstrated in consumer behaviors such as liking, sharing, observing, and purchasing.

The results of this study support **H6** and **H7**, indicating that total customer experience (TCE) serves as a significant interceding variable in the relationships between electronic word of mouth (EWOM), social media (SM), and product engagement (BE). These results bring into line with the **Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Model**, which offers a theoretical framework for sympathetic how external stimuli effect internal states and, consequently, behavioral consequences. For **H6**, the study approves that EWOM acts as a critical incentive, shaping the perceptions and experiences of customers (organism) that lead to enhanced appointment with the brand (response). Equally, for **H7**, social media is identified as ansignificant stimulus that positively impacts TCE, further consolidation its mediating role in fostering brand engagement. The SOR model clarifies this relationship by highlighting that EWOM and social media, as external stimuli, enrich the client experience by providing valuable, collaborating, and engaging content. This enriched involvement acts as the organism's state, driving tougher emotional and cognitive bonds with the brand, eventually resulting in higher levels of brand appointment. These findings highlight the position of leveraging both EWOM and social media approaches to create superior client experiences that cultivate lasting product relationships.

Conclusion

This study explores the effect of social media (SM) and electronic word of mouth (EWM) on product engagement (BE), mediated by total client experience (TCE). The findings reveal that SM and EWM significantly and positively influence BE, both directly and through the mediating character of TCE. These consequences emphasize the dangerous role of SM and EWM as drivers of consumer appointment with brands, particularly in the context of South Punjab. The research provisions the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, importance how digital interactions shape customer experiences and engagement levels. These visions contribute to the mounting body of literature on digital marketing and consumer behavior, offering practical strategies for businesses aiming to increase brand loyalty and client relationships.

Implications

The study contributes to the theoretical understanding of the interplay among SM, EWM, TCE, and BE by authenticating the SOR framework in a South Punjab framework. It extends prior research by providing experimental evidence of the mediating role of TCE, elevating theories on customer engagement and digital marketing subtleties. For practitioners, the conclusions underscore the importance of leveraging SM and EWM to create meaningful customer experiences that foster engagement. Products can optimize their social media approaches by tailoring content to target audiences, encouraging positive EWM, and emphasizing personalized customer interactions. Marketers should also focus on enhancing TCE by delivering seamless, memorable, and value-driven brand experiences to maintain competitive advantage and boost engagement.

Future Recommendations

Future research could expand this study by exploring the relationships between social media, electronic word of mouth, total customer experience, and brand engagement across diverse cultural and economic contexts. Industry-specific analyses and the inclusion of mediators or moderators, such as trust or brand equity, could offer deeper insights. Longitudinal designs may uncover the long-term impacts of these variables on engagement, while advanced analytics like machine learning could analyze large-scale social media data for predictive insights. These directions will strengthen theoretical frameworks and provide actionable strategies for businesses in the digital age.

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