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The Role of Consumer Engagement in the Relationship Between Social Media Marketing and Brand Awareness

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Abstract

The rapid growth of digital technologies has transformed the way businesses communicate with consumers, making social media marketing an essential component of modern marketing strategies. This study examines the Role of Consumer Engagement in the Relationship Between Social Media Marketing and Brand Awareness. The study adopts a descriptive and exploratory research design using a secondary data approach. Relevant literature published between 2009 and 2025 was collected from reputable academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Emerald Insight, Wiley Online Library, Taylor & Francis Online, SAGE Journals, and Google Scholar. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select high-quality peer-reviewed articles, and the collected studies were analysed using qualitative content analysis and narrative synthesis. The findings reveal that social media marketing positively influences brand awareness by enhancing consumer interactions, improving brand visibility, and strengthening customer relationships. The review further indicates that consumer engagement, reflected through likes, comments, shares, reviews, and online participation, plays a significant mediating role in translating social media marketing efforts into higher brand awareness. Organizations that create informative, interactive, and engaging content are more likely to achieve stronger brand recognition, customer trust, and long-term brand equity. The study concludes that effective social media marketing strategies supported by active consumer engagement are essential for building sustainable competitive advantage in the digital marketplace. The findings provide useful insights for marketers, business managers, and researchers in designing effective digital marketing strategies. Future research may validate the proposed conceptual relationships using primary data and advanced statistical techniques across different industries and geographical contexts.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, Consumer Engagement, Brand Equity, Digital Marketing

Introduction

The rapid growth of digital technologies has transformed the way businesses communicate with consumers, making social media marketing an essential component of modern marketing strategies. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, and YouTube enable organizations to interact with customers in real time, promote products and services, and build long-term relationships. Unlike traditional marketing channels, social media facilitates two-way communication, allowing consumers to actively participate in discussions, share experiences, and influence the perceptions of other users. As a result, organizations increasingly invest in digital marketing initiatives to strengthen their market presence and remain competitive.

One of the primary objectives of social media marketing is to enhance brand awareness, which refers to the extent to which consumers recognize and recall a brand. Higher brand awareness increases the likelihood of customer preference, trust, and purchase decisions. However, creating brand awareness in a highly competitive digital environment requires more than frequent promotional content. Businesses must develop engaging and relevant content that encourages meaningful interactions with their target audience.

In this context, consumer engagement has emerged as a critical factor influencing the effectiveness of social media marketing. Engaged consumers are more likely to interact with brand content through likes, comments, shares, reviews, and recommendations, thereby expanding a brand's visibility and credibility. These interactions contribute to stronger brand equity, reflecting the value that consumers associate with a brand based on their experiences and perceptions. Consequently, understanding the mediating role of consumer engagement provides valuable insights into how social media marketing activities translate into improved brand awareness. This study examines the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness by investigating the mediating role of consumer engagement. The findings are expected to contribute to marketing literature while offering practical implications for organizations seeking to optimize their digital marketing strategies and strengthen their brand positioning in an increasingly competitive online marketplace.

Literature Reviews

Dwivedi et al. (2021) provided a comprehensive review of social media marketing research and highlighted emerging trends in digital marketing practices. The study reported that consumer engagement is central to successful social media campaigns, as it enhances customer participation, trust, and brand awareness. The authors also identified artificial intelligence, influencer marketing, and data analytics as future directions for social media marketing research.

Cheung et al. (2020) investigated the role of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and social media interactions in shaping consumer perceptions of brands. The findings showed that online reviews, recommendations, and social sharing positively influence brand awareness and consumer trust. The study concluded that organizations should encourage consumer participation on social media platforms to strengthen brand equity and sustain long-term customer relationships.

Hollebeek and Macky (2019) examined the importance of digital content marketing in fostering consumer engagement. The authors concluded that relevant, informative, and valuable digital content enhances customer trust, engagement, and brand awareness. They proposed that digital content marketing should focus on delivering value rather than direct promotional messages.

Pansari and Kumar (2017) developed a conceptual framework explaining customer engagement as a driver of organizational performance. The study highlighted that engagement extends beyond transactions to include advocacy, referrals, and knowledge sharing. Highly engaged customers contribute to greater brand awareness and improved brand equity through positive word-of-mouth communication.

Dessart (2017) examined consumer engagement in online brand communities and found that meaningful interactions among consumers positively influence brand awareness, trust, and loyalty. The study demonstrated that emotional and social engagement encourages consumers to advocate for brands through positive electronic word-of-mouth, thereby increasing brand visibility and equity.

Godey et al. (2016) examined how social media marketing influences consumer responses toward luxury brands. Using data collected from several countries, the researchers found that social media marketing activities significantly improve brand awareness, brand image, customer satisfaction, and purchase intention. The study concluded that interactive social media strategies strengthen consumer-brand relationships and increase customer loyalty.

Hollebeek et al. (2014) developed and validated a consumer brand engagement scale specifically for social media environments. The authors conceptualized engagement as consumers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in brand interactions. Their findings showed that higher consumer engagement positively influences brand usage intention, self-brand connection, and brand awareness. The study remains one of the most widely cited contributions to social media marketing literature.

Kim and Ko (2012) investigated the influence of social media marketing activities on luxury brands. Using empirical analysis, the study found that entertainment, interaction, customization, trendiness, and word-of-mouth positively affect customer value and brand awareness. The research demonstrated that well-designed social media campaigns significantly improve consumers' perceptions of luxury brands and strengthen brand equity. The findings highlighted the strategic role of social media marketing in creating competitive advantages.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as internet-based applications built on Web 2.0 technologies that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content. The study explained how organizations can use different social media platforms to improve customer communication, increase brand awareness, and establish stronger relationships with consumers. The authors emphasized that effective social media strategies require transparency, interaction, and consistent engagement. Their conceptual framework continues to influence digital marketing research and practice.

Journal of Business Horizons Mangold and Faulds (2009) highlighted that social media has transformed traditional marketing communication into a two-way interactive process between firms and consumers. The authors argued that consumers actively generate and share brand-related content, significantly influencing brand awareness and purchasing decisions. Organizations can no longer rely solely on conventional advertising because user-generated content substantially shapes brand perceptions. The study concluded that integrating social media into marketing communication strategies enhances customer interaction and strengthens brand visibility. This work laid the theoretical foundation for understanding social media as a critical marketing communication channel.

Hypothesis

Table 1. Proposed Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis No.	Hypothesis Statement
H1	Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant influence on Brand Awareness.
H2	Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant influence on Consumer Engagement.
H3	Consumer Engagement has a positive and significant influence on Brand Awareness.
H4	Consumer Engagement positively mediates the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Brand Awareness.

Table 2. Variables Used in the Study

Variable Type	Variable	Description
Independent Variable	Social Media Marketing	Marketing activities conducted through social media platforms to promote products, services, and brands.
Mediating Variable	Consumer Engagement	Consumers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral interactions with a brand on social media.
Dependent Variable	Brand Awareness	The extent to which consumers recognize and recall a brand.

Table 3. Hypothesis Summary

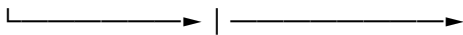
Independent Variable	Mediator	Dependent Variable	Hypothesis
Social Media Marketing	—	Brand Awareness	H1
Social Media Marketing	Consumer Engagement	—	H2
Consumer Engagement	—	Brand Awareness	H3
Social Media Marketing	Consumer Engagement	Brand Awareness	H4 (Mediation)

Conceptual Model

Social Media Marketing

|

H1 | H2



|



Consumer Engagement

| H3



Brand Awareness

H4: Consumer Engagement mediates the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Brand Awareness.

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive and exploratory research design using a secondary research approach to examine the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness, with consumer engagement as a mediating factor. The study is based on a comprehensive review and synthesis of existing scholarly literature to understand the relationships among the selected variables. A systematic review of peer-reviewed journal articles was conducted to identify key themes, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings related to social media marketing, consumer engagement, brand awareness, and brand equity. Relevant studies published between 2009 and 2025 were critically analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The research follows a qualitative synthesis approach, comparing and integrating findings from previous studies to identify research trends, knowledge gaps, and practical implications. Since the study relies entirely on published literature, no primary data were collected, and no statistical hypothesis testing was performed. The findings are presented through critical analysis and interpretation of existing evidence, making the study suitable for conceptual and review-based academic research.

Data Source

The study is based exclusively on secondary data obtained from credible and peer-reviewed academic sources. Data were collected from internationally recognized databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Emerald Insight, Taylor & Francis Online, Wiley Online Library, SAGE Journals, IEEE Xplore, and Google Scholar. Additional information was obtained from reputable reports published by organizations such as Statista, DataReportal, We Are Social, and industry reports on digital marketing and social media trends. Only English-language journal articles, conference papers, review articles, and authoritative reports published between 2009 and 2025 were considered. The selected sources were evaluated for relevance, credibility, and quality to ensure the reliability and validity of the study's findings. The collected literature was systematically reviewed, categorized, and synthesized to examine the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness and the mediating role of consumer engagement.

Sampling Technique

The study employed purposive sampling to identify relevant literature addressing the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness and the mediating role of consumer engagement. Peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2009 and 2025 were retrieved from reputable academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Emerald Insight, Wiley Online Library, Taylor & Francis Online, SAGE Journals, and Google Scholar. Only studies published in English and directly related to the research variables were considered. Articles lacking sufficient methodological information, duplicate publications, non-peer-reviewed sources, book reviews, editorials, and studies unrelated to the research objectives were excluded. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the selected studies were critically reviewed and synthesized to support the research objectives.

Data Screening and Cleaning

Since this study is based exclusively on secondary data, no respondent-level data cleaning was required. Instead, the collected literature underwent a systematic screening and quality assessment process. Duplicate records identified across databases were removed, and article titles, abstracts, and full texts were examined

to determine their relevance to the study. Publications with incomplete bibliographic information, unclear methodologies, or limited relevance to the research topic were excluded. The remaining studies were checked for consistency, authenticity, publication quality, and alignment with the research objectives. Preference was given to peer-reviewed articles indexed in internationally recognized databases and published in high-quality journals. This screening process ensured that only reliable and credible sources were included in the final review, thereby enhancing the validity and trustworthiness of the study's findings.

Variables and Measurement

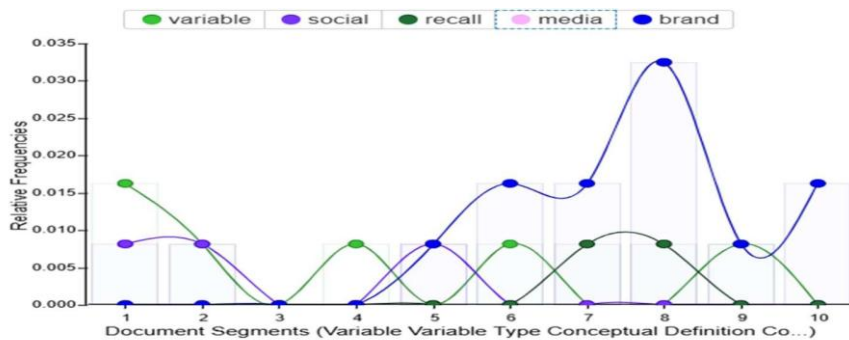
The present study examines the relationship between Social Media Marketing (SMM), Consumer Engagement (CE), and Brand Awareness (BA) based on evidence from existing literature. Social Media Marketing is considered the independent variable, Consumer Engagement serves as the mediating variable, and Brand Awareness is the dependent variable. The study also discusses Brand Equity as a supporting outcome frequently associated with enhanced brand awareness.

The variables were measured conceptually by synthesizing definitions, dimensions, and empirical findings reported in previous peer-reviewed studies. Rather than collecting primary data, the study compared and analyzed established measurement scales and indicators adopted by earlier researchers. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the relationships among the selected variables.

Table 1. Variables and Measurement

Variable	Variable Type	Conceptual Definition	Common Measurement Indicators (from Literature)
Social Media Marketing	Independent Variable	Marketing activities performed through social media platforms to promote products, services, and brands.	Entertainment, Interaction, Trendiness, Customization, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), Informativeness
Consumer Engagement	Mediating Variable	The cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement of consumers with a brand through social media interactions.	Likes, Comments, Shares, Participation, Content Creation, Brand Interaction, Customer Involvement
Brand Awareness	Dependent Variable	The ability of consumers to recognize, recall, and identify a brand within a product category.	Brand Recognition, Brand Recall, Brand Familiarity, Brand Visibility, Top-of-Mind Awareness
Brand Equity	Supporting Variable	The additional value a brand receives based on consumer perceptions, experiences, and loyalty.	Perceived Quality, Brand Associations, Customer Loyalty, Brand Preference

The conceptual measurement of these variables is based on established marketing literature, including the works of Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), Kim and Ko (2012), Hollebeek et al. (2014), Godey et al. (2016), and Dwivedi et al. (2021). The synthesis of these studies provides the theoretical foundation for understanding how social media marketing influences brand awareness through consumer engagement.



Analytical Strategy

The present study employed a qualitative content analysis and narrative synthesis approach to analyze the selected literature. The analytical strategy involved systematically reviewing and synthesizing findings from peer-reviewed journal articles related to social media marketing, consumer engagement, brand awareness, and brand equity. The selected studies were critically examined to identify common themes, theoretical perspectives, research methodologies, and empirical findings. Initially, the retrieved articles were screened based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The selected studies were then categorized according to publication year, research objectives, methodology, industry context, variables examined, and key findings. This classification facilitated the identification of similarities, differences, and emerging trends across the existing literature. Subsequently, a thematic analysis was conducted to explore the relationships among the study variables. The analysis focused on understanding how social media marketing influences brand awareness directly and indirectly through consumer engagement. The synthesized findings were interpreted using established marketing theories and conceptual frameworks reported in previous studies. To enhance the credibility of the review, evidence was compared across multiple high-quality sources indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, and other recognized academic databases. The study did not employ statistical techniques or meta-analysis because it relied exclusively on secondary data. Instead, the analytical strategy emphasized critical interpretation, comparison of empirical evidence, identification of research gaps, and development of a comprehensive conceptual understanding of the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness through consumer engagement.

Discussion

This study examined the impact of social media marketing on brand awareness by reviewing previous research studies. The findings show that social media has become an effective marketing platform for businesses to connect with consumers and increase the visibility of their brands.

Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and X (formerly Twitter) help organizations share information, promote products, and communicate directly with their target audience. The reviewed studies indicate that social media marketing positively influences brand awareness by increasing brand recognition and helping consumers remember a brand. Businesses that regularly post informative, creative, and engaging content are more likely to attract customer attention and build a positive brand image. Features such as likes, comments, shares, and online reviews help spread brand information to a wider audience. The literature also shows that consumer engagement plays an important role in this relationship. When consumers actively interact with brand content, they become more familiar with the brand and are more likely to recommend it to others. This increases brand awareness and strengthens customer trust. Therefore, consumer engagement acts as a bridge between social media marketing and brand awareness.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that effective social media marketing contributes to stronger brand equity by improving customer loyalty and positive brand perception. Organizations should focus on creating valuable and interactive content instead of relying only on promotional messages. Overall, the study concludes that social media marketing is an important tool for improving brand awareness, and consumer engagement significantly enhances its effectiveness. These findings provide useful insights for businesses to develop successful digital marketing strategies and build long-term relationships with their customers.

Conclusion

The study concludes that social media marketing plays a significant role in improving brand awareness in today's digital business environment. Based on the review of previous research, it is evident that social media platforms provide organizations with effective opportunities to communicate with consumers, promote their products and services, and increase brand visibility. Well-planned social media marketing activities help businesses reach a larger audience and create a strong brand presence. The findings also highlight that consumer engagement is an important factor in strengthening the relationship between social media marketing and brand awareness. Consumers who actively interact with brand content through likes, comments, shares, and reviews contribute to higher brand recognition and positive brand perception. These interactions not only improve customer relationships but also support the long-term growth of brand equity. Overall, the study confirms that organizations should invest in engaging, informative, and customer-focused social media content to achieve better marketing outcomes. Although the study is based on secondary data, it provides valuable insights for researchers, marketers, and business managers. Future studies can extend this research by collecting primary data from different industries and using advanced statistical techniques to empirically examine the proposed relationships. Such research will provide a deeper understanding of how social media marketing influences consumer behavior and brand performance.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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