The Effect of Digital Marketing Communication on Consumer Behavior of Textile Products in Iraq

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Abstract

There is fierce competition among textile sector organizations on a global scale. Every business endeavors to engage customers and enhance profits. Consequently, this study aimed to investigate the impact of digital marketing elements such as social media, e-mail, and mobile marketing on customer engagement and loyalty. In addition, the role of customer involvement as a mediator between social media marketing, e-mail marketing, mobile marketing, and client loyalty was evaluated. The data for this cross-sectional study were acquired using a self-administered survey. Using basic random sampling, the questionnaire was delivered to clients of Iraqi textile enterprises. This research analyzed 301 surveys using Smart PLS. The study confirmed that social media marketing, e-mail marketing, and mobile marketing directly impact client engagement. The correlation between customer involvement and loyalty is also proven by statistical evidence. The results also validated the mediating function of consumer engagement in the suggested model. These findings can be used for future research policy creation and management methods. The study's additional implications and limitations are examined in depth.

Keywords: *Digital Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Customer Loyalty, Email Marketing, Iraq Textile*

Introduction

The production environment of today is becoming increasingly intelligent. The textile industry around the world faces a variety of obstacles. These obstacles include rapid response, sustainability, and client efficiency. In addition, the global textile industry is under pressure from the customer-driven economy, international business trends, and industrial ecosystem. It is because customers' requirements and demands are developing rapidly, and they are also aware of alternative alternatives (Gazzola et al., 2020).

The textile business is expanding, and competition is intensifying due to the rapid development of new technologies. Due to the technical nature of this industry, ongoing experimentation is required in this area. The textile sector in Iraq has the same challenges. It has become exceedingly difficult for textile companies in Iraq to cultivate consumer loyalty. To increase consumer loyalty, Iraqi textile companies must improve their technological performance to gain a competitive advantage over other businesses (Neamah et al., 2022).

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Consumer behavior of customers is one of the most important variables in the textile industry. The study of consumer behavior is crucial for analyzing and comprehending groups and people. As market rivalry continually intensifies, organizations must take various measures to keep their clients. To accomplish this, they must engage in a variety of direct-marketing strategies. Therefore, it is essential to comprehend the variables influencing consumer behavior. According to marketing-related studies, consumer loyalty is one of the essential components of consumer behavior. Gaining customer loyalty is a crucial objective for every organization. Therefore, consumer loyalty is one of the most important aspects of marketing. Making a customer loyal to an organization is not simple. To get a competitive edge, consumer loyalty plays a crucial role. Customer loyalty depends on multiple aspects, including customer happiness and involvement (Suchánek & Králová, 2019).

In recent years, academics worldwide have become interested in customer engagement searches. This instrument plays a crucial function in fostering client loyalty. It also helps the organization generate referrals. Marketing efforts based on technology play an essential part in attracting clients. Digital marketing, Internet marketing, electronic marketing, and viral marketing are technologically-based marketing efforts. Therefore, businesses must prioritize social media, mobile, and e-mail marketing to keep clients for longer durations (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

In 2000, social media marketing was introduced as a novel technique. Currently, this is a valuable tool for user communication. Therefore, organization-to-public and organization-to-customer communication rely heavily on this technology. As a large number of people across the world utilize social media platforms such as Facebook, the usage of social media applications is one of the key drivers for businesses. Social media is digital technology used to communicate with individuals and the general public. Based on the consumers' authorization, a business uses a social media tool to communicate with its clients via social media (Leung, Bai, & Erdem, 2017).

Mobile marketing is a significant tool for delivering messages to customers. Mobile phones have become a vital component of our daily lives. Smartphone growth and sales have increased dramatically over the past several years. Mobile marketing has therefore become popular in the modern world. The mobile phone has a variety of advertising platforms, including laptops, televisions, and other sources. One of the most significant aspects of mobile marketing is targeting customers based on their location and personalized information (Ozuem & Mulloo, 2018).

The textile sector worldwide is beset by intense rivalry. Iraqi textile companies must establish strategies to retain domestic and international clients. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of social media marketing, e-mail marketing, and mobile marketing on consumer engagement and loyalty. This study will also investigate the role of consumer engagement as a mediator.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Customer Loyalty

Literature consumer loyalty is defined as the customer's willingness to make repeat purchases and recommend the product to others. One of the most crucial initiatives to gain a competitive advantage is client loyalty. In the current dynamic and competitive environment, customer loyalty is vital to the organization's success. This concept is founded on two components: behavior and attitude. Researchers have defined customer loyalty as the pledge of a buyer to use a particular service to purchase a product over an extended period, regardless of the introduction of new items by competitors. Loyal clients have always held a favorable opinion

of the organization and will remain in the buying process for longer. On the other hand, customer loyalty is also viewed as the customer's purpose in purchasing the product repeatedly so that a long-term relationship can be built with the organization (Khairawati, 2020).

Customer engagement: Relationship with customer loyalty

Decision-making is dependent upon three factors. These elements include attitude, intent, and conduct. Attitude is less essential than behavior. Customers' activities result from their level of engagement with the organization and brand. This action leads to the buy level.

In consequence, the organization's performance improved over time. Therefore, client engagement is an essential part of an organization's sustainability. Various authors have provided varying meanings for this idea. Customer engagement is "a psychological process that results in customer loyalty" (Thakur, 2016). In addition, researchers defined customer brand engagement as "the amount of a customer's motivational, brand-related, and context-dependent state of mind characterized by certain levels of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activity in brand encounters" (Hollebeek, 2011).

According to researchers, client loyalty is one of the most significant outcomes of consumer involvement. The past literature has described customer loyalty as a positive sentiment toward an organization or recurrent purchasing behavior. Most previous authors have examined consumer loyalty in terms of repeat purchases. Some authors contend that repeat purchases are not indicative of customer loyalty. According to several experts, it is the confluence of behavioral and psychological factors (Zaid & Patwayati, 2021).

Several authors also mentioned that customer loyalty is the result of consumer engagement. They also suggested that customer engagement has a direct effect on consumer loyalty. In addition, studies believe that consumer interaction has resulted in customer loyalty (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014). Customer engagement also predicts the intention to use the brand (Harrigan et al., 2018). Therefore, the literature views customer engagement or loyalty as a vital connection (Tirado, Tena, & Guillén, 2019).

Social media marketing: Relationship with customer engagement

Social media is an integral component of our daily life. In previous research, various definitions of social media have been cited. Two fundamental pillars support social media: human contact and the internet. Zahoor and Qureshi (2017) describe social media as using online technologies to communicate with the general community. As the impact of social media marketing on consumer behavior is enormous, the marketing industry's interest in social media continues to grow. On the other hand, organizations' interest in social media is also increasing.

Therefore, social media marketing has been characterized by researchers as "a series of Internet-based apps that build on the conceptual and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and permit the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). There are various sorts of social media marketing, including social networking sites, wikis, and blogs. Additionally, it can be linked to numerous websites and web links. These platforms have been designed specifically for social media marketing. Consequently, it is crucial to define social media marketing. According to Tuten and Solomon (2017), social media marketing is "the exploitation of social media technology, channels, and software to produce, communicate, deliver, and trade value products to a company's stakeholders." Yadav and Rahman (2017) define social media marketing in the context of e-commerce as "the process by which companies create, communicate, and deliver online marketing offerings via social media

platforms to build and maintain stakeholder relationships that enhance stakeholders' value by facilitating interaction, information sharing, personalized purchase recommendations, and WOM creation among stakeholders about existing and trending products and services."

Customer engagement represents the relationship between current customers and the firm and the organization's interaction with potential stakeholders. Interacting with stakeholders to engage customers and other stakeholders in an organization is essential. There are numerous opportunities for contact, including social media networks and websites. It is impossible to build interaction without the participation and involvement of clients. Interaction with customers via social media generates electronic word-of-mouth and customer loyalty (Shawky et al., 2020).

Social media marketing plays a crucial part in enhancing the interaction between an organization and its existing clientele. On the other hand, its primary function is communicating with potential customers and comprehending their demands. Regarding speed, quantity, and contacts, social media marketing also modifies the nature of the interaction. Without social media, it would have been impossible for businesses to reach such clients. In addition, the content of social media marketing is significantly more diverse than that of mass marketing (Farook & Abeysekara, 2016). Customers will be more interested in the brand if they know the product's release date and other pertinent details. If consumers are interested in the post, they will respond to it. Customers will be engaged as a result of social media advertising.

E-mail Marketing: Relationship with customer engagement

In marketing, many studies have been undertaken on e-mail marketing communication. From the perspective of relationship marketing, it is simple to present e-mail marketing as a communication medium for online relationship marketing. The primary purpose of online relationship marketing is to create and sustain long-term relationships with prospective and existing customers. Engagement Mentioning the customer's name in the e-mail will favor the relationship (Sahni, Wheeler, & Chintagunta, 2018). Numerous studies have demonstrated the favorable impact of e-mail marketing on customer engagement, as e-mail marketing plays a crucial role in establishing trust, perceived value, and commitment (Mannelqvist & Mårtensson, 2022).

E-mail marketing is one of the most effective methods for generating client responses. Users are interested in hearing from you and are also interested in learning about the products manufactured by the firm to which you belong. Customers can be readily segmented based on their preferences by businesses. Because the information is more personalized and targeted, customers feel more appreciated, which eventually leads to consumer engagement (Kiselova, 2019).

Personalized e-mails play a crucial part in establishing the legitimacy of newly-established brands. If the sender is unknown, the e-mail will be deleted. On the other hand, marketing organizations typically utilize e-mail. E-mail marketing plays a significant role in fostering brand loyalty and customer engagement. It is due to communication with the customer directly. Customers generally enjoy personalized e-mails. Due to customized e-mail, clients feel valued. Through the use of personalized e-mails, a strong link is established with the customer, enhancing this sentiment. Personalized e-mail establishes ongoing, direct communication between clients and businesses. Ultimately, the company's sales increased (Liimatainen, 2020).

Mobile Marketing and customer engagement relationship

Organizations can capitalize on a successful mobile marketing campaign by utilizing mobile marketing. There are several advantages of mobile marketing campaigns, including: (1) the

ability of the customer to evaluate personalized messages; (2) the ability to generate location-sensitive offers; and (3) the constant connectivity of mobile devices, which makes it simple to create mobile marketing campaigns (Berman, 2016).

There are numerous types of mobile marketing applications, including social media applications. Kaplan (2012) defines mobile marketing in this context as "any marketing action undertaken over a ubiquitous network to which consumers are continually linked utilizing a personal mobile device." There are three distinct mobile marketing traditions. One of these three conditions is the network's accessibility for communicating with stakeholders. For internet access, mobile devices are preferred by many clients over laptops and desktop computers. Tablets and mobile phones account for more than 45 percent of personal computer usage. More than half of Google searches worldwide are conducted via mobile devices (Berman, 2016).

In a saturated market, it is simple for customers to gain interest and develop brand loyalty. With this, businesses can quickly modify their revenue model and create a different type of advertisement to market their products and establish media campaigns. In the current competitive marketing environment, these efforts are crucial. This presents new obstacles for the new groups. Organizations possess a wealth of information crucial for gaining a competitive advantage.

On the other hand, mobile marketing is crucial to client engagement. Mobile marketing facilitates consumer communication, hence enhancing relationships with customers. Consequently, client loyalty is enhanced (Khan et al., 2022).

Mobile marketing is, therefore, one of the most significant components in fostering client engagement and loyalty. Mobile advertising also directly affects impulse purchases (Galeano et al., 2016). However, Yang et al. (2022) also noted that mobile phones have a major impact on customer involvement. Following the above discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: CE has a positive effect on CL
H2: EM has a significant positive impact on CE
H3: MM has a significant positive effect on CE
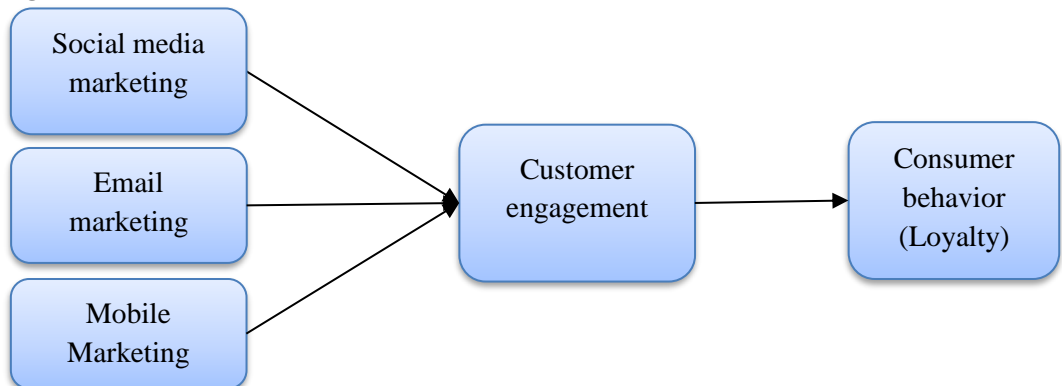H4: SMM has a significant positive impact on CE
H5: CE mediates the relationship between MM and CL
H6: CE mediates the relationship between SMM and CL
H7: EM mediates the relationship between MM and CL

Digital marketing communication

Figure 1: Research Framework

Research Methodology

A quantitative research methodology was employed to solve the study's research challenges. We utilized a cross-sectional research technique to identify the time horizon of the present study. This study acquired the original data and relied on it for analysis. The present study's data were collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was formatted using a seven-point Likert scale. The scale range was 1 to 7. (i.e., 7- strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree). Through the survey, the questionnaire was delivered to Iraqi textile purchasers. This study utilized a basic random sample strategy for data collection.

The questionnaire was circulated among 400 questionnaires. The researcher obtained 301 completed questionnaires. 17 of these surveys were insufficient. Consequently, these were omitted. The remaining 284 completed questionnaires were received and analyzed. The collected information was evaluated for dependability and validity. Later, these data were utilized to test hypotheses. These processes were conducted using clever PLS- 3 as the statistical instrument. Data produced included p-value, t-statistics, standard deviation, and Beta value. These data were used to analyze the link between the suggested and proposed hypotheses.

Results

Previous research has examined two distinct types of structural equation modeling (SEM). Covariance-based SEM and Partial least square SEM are the two distinct variants. Literature indicates that CB-SEM is mostly utilized for theory rejection, confirmation, and development. In addition, it employs multivariate assumptions. On the other hand, PLS-SEM is used to explain the variance explained in the endogenous variable using an exogenous variable (Yakubu et al., 2020). Additionally, researchers noted that PLS-SEM is useful for predictive analysis, confirmatory analysis, and exploratory studies (Henseler, Hubona, & Ray, 2016). In addition, the primary purpose of the present investigation is to predict particular outcomes. Hence PLS-SEM was chosen for the present study (Shmueli et al., 2019). In addition, PLS-SEM was utilized to assess the presented hypothesis following (Richter et al., 2016) recommendations.

Figure 2: Measurement model
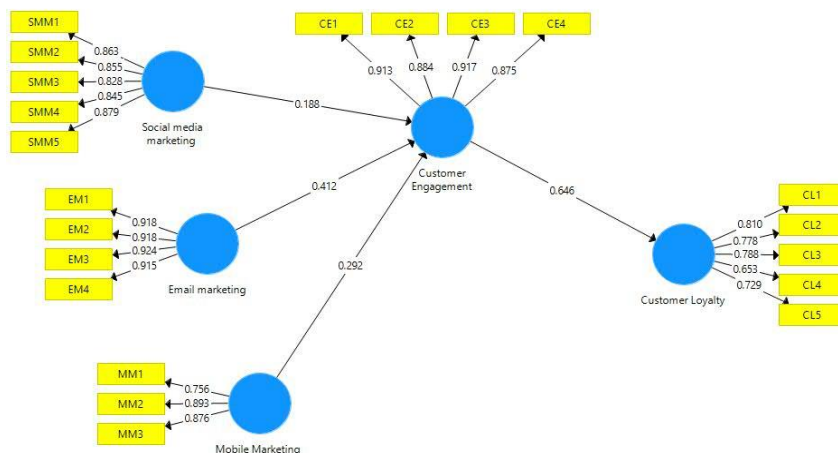
Note: MM= mobile marketing, EM= e-mail marketing, CL= customer Loyalty, CE= customer engagement, SMM= social media Marketing

Tables 1 and 2 reflect the current study's convergent validity and reliability of the measurement model. All items with loadings greater than 0.50 were kept after an initial factor load test. In addition, Hair Jr et al. (2017) said that the minimum threshold value for CR and Cronbach alpha must exceed 0.70. These results collectively show the internal consistency and reliability of the constructs. In addition, table 2 depicts the average variance retrieved from data for which the 0.50 threshold level is met. All of the AVE values are more than 0.50, demonstrating the convergent validity of the results in the present investigation.

Table 1: Factor Loading

	CE	CL	EM	MM	SMM
CE1	0.913				
CE2	0.884				
CE3	0.917				
CE4	0.875				
CL1		0.810			
CL2		0.778			
CL3		0.788			
CL4		0.653			
CL5		0.729			
EM1			0.918		
EM2			0.918		
EM3			0.924		
EM4			0.915		
MM1				0.756	
MM2				0.893	
MM3				0.876	
SMM1					0.863
SMM2					0.855
SMM3					0.828
SMM4					0.845
SMM5					0.879

Note: MM= mobile marketing, EM= e-mail marketing, CL= customer Loyalty, CE= customer engagement, SMM= social media Marketing

Table 2: Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
CE	0.919	0.920	0.943	0.805
CL	0.809	0.811	0.867	0.568
EM	0.939	0.939	0.956	0.844
MM	0.801	0.850	0.881	0.712
SMM	0.907	0.908	0.931	0.729

Note: MM= mobile marketing, EM= e-mail marketing, CL= customer Loyalty, CE= customer engagement, SMM= social media Marketing

After the measurement model, it is crucial to evaluate the discriminant validity. For this objective, the current study utilized the heterotrait–monotrait correlation ratio and the Fornell and Larker matrix. This investigation started with Fornell and Larcker's (1981) methodology. The values of intercorrelation are listed in table 3. The diagonal values are greater than the other inter-correlation values. These criteria meet the discriminant validity criterion of Fornell

and Larcker (1981). Later, HTMT indicators were used to test the discriminant validity of this study. Henseler et al. (2016) noted that values in the HTMT matrix must be less than 0.90 to show discriminant validity using this category. All values in table 4 are less than 0.90, demonstrating the discriminant validity (Kline, 2005).

Table 3: Fornell and Larcker (1981)

	CE	CL	EM	MM	SMM
CE	**0.897**				
CL	0.646	**0.754**			
EM	0.561	0.546	**0.919**		
MM	0.461	0.449	0.247	**0.844**	
SMM	0.463	0.417	0.413	0.360	**0.854**

Note: MM= mobile marketing, EM= e-mail marketing, CL= customer Loyalty, CE= customer engagement, SMM= social media Marketing

Table 4: HTMT

	CE	CL	EM	MM	SMM
CE					
CL	0.733				
EM	0.603	0.606			
MM	0.520	0.558	0.278		
SMM	0.506	0.479	0.446	0.405	

Note: MM= mobile marketing, EM= e-mail marketing, CL= customer Loyalty, CE= customer engagement, SMM= social media Marketing

Next, the hypothesis testing is depicted in tables 5, 6, and 3. The bootstrapping process is employed for this reason. The hypothesis is rejected or accepted based on the p- and t-values. The nature of the association is determined using the structural model's retrieved B value. The study's findings indicate that CE has a statistically significant beneficial influence on CL (Beta= 0.646, t=14.888), confirming H1. Statistical evidence suggests that EM significantly benefits CE (Beta=0.412, t=6.321), hence confirming H2. In addition, the results indicate that EM has a favorable influence on CE (Beta= 0.292, t= 5.636), therefore supporting Hypothesis 3. After the direct association, H4 is also supported, indicating that SMM has a significant beneficial influence on CE (Beta= 0.188, t= 3.146).

Table 5: Direct results

	Beta	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
CE -> CL	0.646	0.043	14.888	**0.000**
EM -> CE	0.412	0.065	6.321	**0.000**
MM -> CE	0.292	0.052	5.636	**0.000**
SMM -> CE	0.188	0.060	3.146	**0.001**

Note: MM= mobile marketing, EM= e-mail marketing, CL= customer Loyalty, CE= customer engagement, SMM= social media Marketing

The mediating role of CE will therefore be studied and tested in this investigation. The results indicate that CE mediates the link between MM and CL (Beta=0.189, t=5.323), thus supporting Hypothesis 5. In addition, the data corroborate the mediating effect of CE between SMM and CL (Beta=0.122, t=3.002), supporting Hypothesis 6. In conclusion, H7 is likewise supported, indicating the mediating role of CE between EM and CL (Beta=0.266, t=5.641).

Table 6: Mediation Results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Stan. Devi. (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
MM -> CE -> CL	0.189	0.192	0.035	5.323	**0.000**
SMM -> CE -> CL	0.122	0.121	0.041	3.002	**0.001**
EM -> CE -> CL	0.266	0.265	0.047	5.641	**0.000**

Note: MM= mobile marketing, EM= e-mail marketing, CL= customer Loyalty, CE= customer engagement, SMM= social media Marketing

Figure 3: Structural Framework
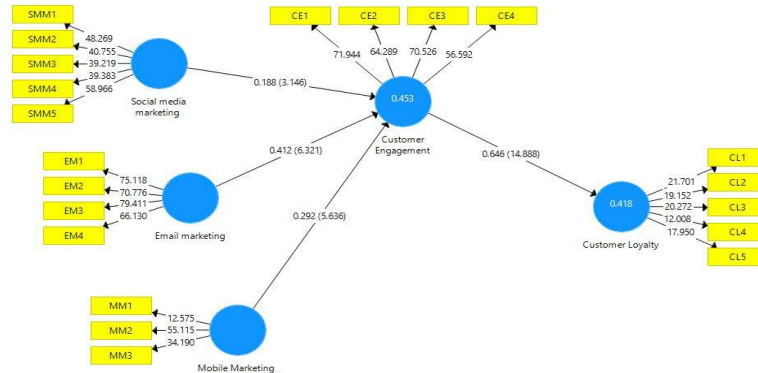
Note: MM= mobile marketing, EM= e-mail marketing, CL= customer Loyalty, CE= customer engagement, SMM= social media Marketing

The structural model also evaluated the coefficient (R square) determination demonstrating the influence of independent variables on dependent variables. In this analysis, it is obvious that the independent variables influence CE by 45.3% and CL by 41.8%.

Table 7: R Square

	R Square
CE	0.453
CL	0.418

Note: CL= customer Loyalty, CE= customer engagement

Discussion

This study investigated the influence of digital, mobile, and e-mail marketing on consumer engagement and loyalty. The study's findings demonstrated that customer involvement benefits customer loyalty, explaining the significance of customer engagement. These results are comparable to those of Zaid and Patwayati (2021). In addition, the study's findings support the premise that e-mail marketing is a significant predictor of consumer engagement, supporting Hypothesis 2 of the study. This result is comparable to those of Kiselova (2019). In addition, the data indicate that mobile marketing plays a crucial role in client engagement. These results support the previously presented Hypothesis 3 and are identical to those (Khan et al., 2022). H4 of the study, which asserts that social media marketing plays a crucial role in client engagement, is approved for the same reasons. A previous study Farook and Abeysekara (2016) also revealed the same findings. The mediating role of customer interaction is statistically proven after the study.

Conclusion, Implications, and Limitations

The organization's long-term sustainability relies heavily on the retention of loyal clients. Textile companies in Iraq must establish methods to engage clients and foster customer loyalty. Based on the findings, textile companies in Iraq should prioritize acquiring clients that can later be converted into loyal customers. Later, textile companies should establish customer engagement tactics such as digital marketing, e-mail marketing, social media marketing, and mobile marketing. With these modern and inventive solutions, it is quite simple to approach customers. Globally, textile companies can meet the needs of their clients. By increasing digital marketing, firms may easily engage and convert clients into devoted customers.

As with other empirical studies, this study has several limitations. The R-square value of the proposed model is 45.3% (Mediator) and 41.8% (Interceptor) (DV). It demonstrates that future research can utilize additional factors to increase the R-square value. In addition, a mediator and direct contacts were used in this study to increase consumer loyalty. Future researchers can test the same models by incorporating modifiers such as culture.

In terms of theoretical implications, there has been very few research on this topic in the past, according to the available literature. This study has improved our understanding of digital marketing aspects such as mobile marketing, social media marketing, and e-mail marketing in attracting and retaining clients. Moving on to the managerial implications, this study will assist textile sector managers in formulating a strategy for utilizing digital marketing variables to engage and retain clients.

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