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Impact of Brand Experience on Positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) communication in Smartphone products: A mediation effect through customer satisfaction.

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Abstract

The impact of brand experience on positive word of mouth has taken for the current study in which customer satisfaction used as the mediator in the context of Smartphone usage in Pakistan. The data have been collected through using convenience-sampling technique from the undergraduate students of The Shaikh Ayaz University Shikarpur. The data collection was done from the aspect of Smartphone buying experiences (N = 389) and were quantitatively analyzed on SPSS 26 and Amos 26. The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to check the mediation effect of customer satisfaction between Brand Experience and Positive word of Mouth communication. The results signified that brand experience was the main construct having contribution on positive WOM communication but customer satisfaction performed the role of full mediator in the association between Brand Experience and Positive word of mouth in the context of Smart phones. The discussion, conclusion, Theoretical and managerial suggestion of the results are reported in the light of the brand management literature. Moreover, further research directions are also evident.

Keywords: Brand Experience, customer satisfaction, Positive Word of mouth, SEM, composite measures, smart phones, Pakistan.

1-Introduction and background:

It is an established phenomena that the (WOM) communication is the main authoritative promotional device with comparison to the rest of other promotional devices (Trusov & Bucklin, 2009); the organization uses the word of mouth as promotional device as a fact with no any doubt (Ferguson & Paulin, 2010). It is also evident that the consumers trust on (WOM) communication more as compared to other communication tools when they get information or experience the goods or services (Gruen & Osmonbekov, 2006). The consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions are influenced by widely recognized and



accepted concept of the WOM communication, which plays the main element on the (consumers) decision-making process (Chatterjee , 2001;Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006).

Very few selected products or services were suggested by the customers as WOM communication although the customers have information about various products, services and usages (Chung & Darke, 2006). Consequently, in the larger interest of marketers or the success of the practitioners the word of mouth communication recommendations or suggestions can be recognized with the help of intermediary factors and forefront variables (Wien & Olsen, 2012). The success of the companies is dependent on the distinctive, unforgettable brand experiences, which are needed to make stronger relationship between brand and the consumer, and this would directly enhance the performance of the organization (Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014). This has been found as an established fact that the customers purchase the product or services on the grounds of valid reasons and simultaneously on the grounds of psychological aspects just to enjoy the delightful experience; they don't purchases only for just the satisfaction gained on the basis of functions of the goods or services (Morrison & Crane, 2007;Schmitt & Rogers, 2008).

The customer of the smart phone user uses the mobile to get the user-friendly experience of the cell phone, voice call quality, the graphics or the software used in the Smartphone. This creates positive and memorable experience, which will affect the word of mouth activity by the consumer of the Smartphone. This study explores the prerequisites of the factors, which will affect on the positive word of mouth communication as mentioned by (Khan & Fatma , 2017). As the customer, satisfaction has also been used as the predictor of word of mouth communication (De Matos & Rossi , 2008). The brand experiences generated from the smart phones in terms of .i.e. emotions, interface quality of the built-in software, voice quality and behavioral notions associated can be the predictor of word of mouth but whether it has impact on the positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication? in addition, if the customer satisfaction is used as the mediator would it has impact on the positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication in the smart phones industry of Pakistan. These are fundamental investigating inquires of this research, which are infrequently studied in the context of Pakistan. Little research has been done in Pakistan based on our knowledge of the customers of the Smartphone users related with positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication. Here the customer satisfaction is performing the role of mediating variable. The data has been collected from the students of The Shaikh Ayaz University Shikarpur by using convenience-sampling technique through self-administered questionnaire. In one study it has been evident that the 77% population of Pakistan using Smartphone were between the age from 21 and onwards (Arif, Aslam & Ali , 2016). (SEM) Structural equation modeling technique was adopted for checking of the hypotheses. Initial analysis was carried through SPSS 26 then confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used through AMOS 26. In this research study, brand experience was employed as the exogenous variable and positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication was employed as endogenous variable whereas the customer satisfaction was used as mediator variable. The intermediary variable here i.e. customer satisfaction is used endogenous variable. The definition and determination of the latent constructs i.e. the exogenous and endogenous



latent construct were employed by assessing the multivariate data analysis book (Joseph F. Hair Jr. William C. Black Barry J. Babin Rolph E. Anderson, 2010).

Concerning the research examination, the development of the digital phone market, predominantly Smartphone has taken attention by the diversity of specialists or researchers (Isaid & Faisal, 2015). The hyper intelligent phones or smart phones are essentially useful Personal computers with strong or significant chip and proficient working framework, access to wide range of frequencies on web(internet) and nice affiliates (Wang, Park & Fesenmaier, 2012; Wang et al, 2014). In the most recent years, the acquisition of smart phones has been hurried by the development of new process and methodologies, brands, models, value levels, and propensities (Shin, Shin,Choo & Beom, 2011).

Nevertheless, the durable goods have more life in contrast to smart phones (Tseng & Lo, 2011). The recent data from Pakistan telecommunication authority, i.e. one of the country's finest, trusted office declared the fact that the number of mobile phone users in Pakistan has reached 165 million i.e. 78% of population were the users of cellular phone with increase of 51% of the statistics of 2014 (PTA, 2020). Hence, it creates further interest to explore the brand experiences created by using Smart phones with influence of positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication with the existence of customer satisfaction variable as intermediary variable in the context of Pakistan.

2-Literature Review:

2-1 Brand Experience: Brakus et al (2009) characterizes brand experience as “sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand’s design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments” (p. 53). The marketing, applied management, philosophy and cognitive science point of views were used for understanding the experience, thought or ideas. According to the founders of brand experience the overall brand experience consists of dissimilar observed experiences like i.e. Shopping experience, product purchase experience, service consumption experience and commutatively called as brand experience (Brakus J, 2009). Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) were of the the view that the cognitive and emotional portion of the consumption experience were the main parts of the concept of brand experience . The developer of brand experience scale was Schmitt (1999) who explained the brand experience notion as multifacetaed dimensions, no research was done before him. Schmitt (1999) divided the brand experience into five sub dimensions i.e sense experience , think experience , act experience , relate experience and feel experience .

Afterward, Brakus (2009) discussed and scientifically proved that brand experience is the multifaceted construct including four factors namley i.e sensory experience , affective experience , behavioral experience and intelletual experience . This concept is some how connected but theoritical different from concepts like Brand association , brand attitude and brand attachment as these are emotional, relative and judgemental brand concepts. The brand experience according to Alloza (2008, p.373) is “the perception of the consumers, at every moment of contact they have with the brand, whether it is in the brand images projected in advertising, during the first personal contact, or the level of quality concerning the personal treatment they receive”.



The Experiences with the brand can be understood through out over all consumer buying decision process which mainly includes features collection, buying, functional information regarding use of physical goods and services (Schmitt & Rogers, 2008). Ramaseshan & Stein (2014) discussed and informed that many brand related cues are impacting and are treated as source of brand experience like including marketing communication, position of the distributors or retailers, wrappers labeling, product characteristics and product shape. Taking consumer decision making process as further indicator in research , the Researchers found that comprehensive analysis of experiences were the foundation of brand experiences (Khan & , 2015).

The latest aspect of the brand management describes that the brand was viewed in terms of experience, any of the brand generates experiences, ranges from services to products (Payne, Storbacka, Frow & Knox, 2009). So they focused on the significance of the decision making made by the customer in two categories i.e. one is rational, based on logic and thoughts and second one was irrational based on the feelings and emotions. The researchers has identified several brand related cues which were generated when the customer meet with the brand. These are also called as customer touch points where the customer is exposed to the brand (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello ,2009). Different approaches have been identified by the researchers regarding these touch points in order to explore the association between brand and customer in connection to positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication. The researcher has shown greater interest in identifying the variables as the predictors of the positive word of mouth(PWOM) communication. These predictors include brand image and brand love (Ismail, , and Spinelli, 2012). The researchers have highlighted the importance of facebook on which customers normally share their attitudes towards the particular brand in shape of customer comments. These comments are mentioned on the facebook pages of the brand where the customers share their experiences that whether they are happy with the brand or not known as Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) (Wallace, Buil, & Chernatony, 2012). The marketing offer consists of two components. The component which comprises of feelings and emotions called as irrational. The component which comprises of the physical/ functional benefits called as rational. These marketing offering were based on the distinctive features and characteristics which were generated by the brand for the customer when they use the brand.

2-2 Positive Word of mouth (PWOM) communication:

Walker (2001) describes word of mouth communication as the “informal, person-to-person communication between a perceived noncommercial communicator and a receiver regarding a brand, a product, an organization, or a service” (p. 63). The customer may transfer or share knowledge regarding brand experience to the other customers or users, although these customers are associated with official or unofficial practices in groups or communities (Westbrook 1987). With the help of these communities, the customers can discuss with each other about the opinion, feelings, and concepts and review the comments because it provides them the platform (Bone 1992).

Numerous scholars approved in various consumption settings that word of mouth communication is the result of brand experience concept (Barnes et al .2014; Beckman et al. 2013) Word of mouth communication either positive or negative can be treated as strong and significant instrument, employed as the product of brand



experience for a brand (Lam & Mizerski, 2005). One of the most reliable source of communication for the customers is word of mouth communication as compared to firm advertising campaign (Herr et al. 1991). The positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication can be initiated from the side of customers, those who were satisfied from the product and share that positive experience to other customers (Richens, 1983). The sustainable company's success is reliant on word of mouth (WOM) communication and performing of constant purchases (Dabholkar, Thorpe & Rentz, 1996).

The consumer behavior especially the post purchase behavior may be predicted with the help of word of mouth (WOM) communication because the customers are continuously informing to other customers regarding their views and memories associated with the product or service (Kim & Lee, 2011; Nee & Kim 2009). The marketing scholar Minser (1999) affirmed that the word of mouth (WOM) communication as the world's most effective, yet least understood marketing strategy and can be used as a feasible option as compared to conventional marketing. The performance of conventional marketing transmission options have no longer importance nowadays; in this connection marketing practitioners have given undivided attention to word of mouth (WOM) communication (Forrester Research, 2005).

The recent research on word of mouth (WOM) communication in the meta-analysis studies conducted, extended and explored that brand experience is significantly and positively related to positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication (Oliveira Santini, Ladeira, Sampaio, & Pinto, 2018). This study also supports the past findings regarding the positive experiences generated by the brand which is then shared by the customers when they meet with each other in different parties or get together (Sabiote & Ballester, 2011). It has been also evident that the word of mouth communication measure was correctly predicted by the brand satisfaction measure. Other studies also supported meta-analysis structural equation modeling in which brand satisfaction was used as independent variable and word of mouth was used as dependent variable (Oliveira Santini, Ladeira, Sampaio & Pinto, 2018).

According to Day (1971) the word of mouth (WOM) was considered as free advertising tool done by the customers themselves. And it is more powerful communication tool as compared to traditional advertising, i.e. (WOM) was 9 times more efficient than traditional advertising. Nowadays the concept of word of mouth has been viewed by the researchers with greater importance that the customer driven recommendations had huge significance on the buyings of other customers (Blazevic, Hammedi, Garnefeld, Rust & Keiningham, 2013).

According to Sweeney, Soutar, & Mazzarol, (2014) the interpersonal dimensions are necessary for creating word of mouth (WOM) and the negative word of mouth (NWOM) has lower impact as compared to positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication. Earlier according to Brown, Barry, Dacin & Gunst, (2005) the word of mouth (WOM) in the automobile products has yielded positive impact. It has been also evident by the researchers and academicians that the customers of the company who vote in favour of the company products act similar as the marketing sales personnel of that company (Reichheld, 2006). According to East, Hammond, & Wright (2007) positive word of mouth (PWOM) variable was considered as very attractive communication method with



huge potential to grab the market. The studies also showed that the positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication was the best predictor to acquire new customers and maintain the old customers; importantly where there was huge trust from the side of the customer to the firm or company (Garnefeld, Helm, & Eggert, 2011).

The decisions of the customers regarding liking and dislikings of the products were changed or manipulated with the help of positive word of mouth communication (PWOM) (Luo & Zhong, 2015). According to Kim & Lee (2011) the companies winning position were dependent on the positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication as it was the best predictor of the future variable outcomes of the firm. The positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication has had impact of the feasibility of the firm and the progress of the business was also determined with the help of it (Eisingerich, Auh & Merlo, 2014).

2-3 Customer satisfaction:

The term customer satisfaction was the main causal factor in the success of any firm in terms of its stockholder value maximization, and which is influenced by brand experience (Brakus 2009). Recently, one of the main acknowledged and established explanations for the customer satisfaction was that customers are viewed as emotional human beings. Now this notion of emotional human beings is characterized as the part of human decision faculties, which consist on feelings like i.e. happiness / unhappiness, satisfied/dissatisfied, frame of mind, and behavioral view of customers (Chen and Cheng 2012).

The feelings are emotional processes, which are generated through consumers' self-thoughts, and they have impact from their experiences (Jang and Namkung 2009). The company's success is dependent on customer's satisfaction which is the central predictor of company's profitability performance through buying methods. Keeping in view of above facts about customer satisfaction that it is the main basis and the part of firm's successful policy for making the corporate level strategy, business level strategy and functional level strategy as these are the vital factors for the gaining sustainable competitive advantage in today's world market (Anderson et al. 1994).

As stated by Kotler and Keller (2006), the term customer satisfaction is the individual's sentiments of happiness and/or unhappiness and based on these consequences of the consumers are making comparison between products their functional performance and the expectations related to the product or service. Anderson et al. (1994) pointed out that the total customer satisfaction is mainly linked with the overall experiences of the consumers that results from past purchases of goods and services.

This consist of mutual sentimental assessment and course of action for making comparison between before and after consumption experience especially the expectation and product perceived results or consequences. According to Cronin and Taylor (1992) there are two types of satisfaction i.e. characteristics foundation satisfaction and total or result foundation satisfaction. These researchers were of the view that the characteristic based satisfaction is linked with a particular service or good. On the contrary, the total or result based satisfaction is also linked with the customer satisfaction which can also be called as total product performance or service provider which is based on over all functions of the product (Nimako, 2012).



Empirical evidence from other scholars describes that customer satisfaction can be either negotiable or augmenting in nature. Now this can be understood through the aspect of negotiable target oriented satisfaction like the customer satisfaction mainly consists of single time i.e targeted after bought assessment of the service encounter (Oliver, 1993). As for as augmented customer satisfaction is concerned the satisfaction would be believed as total customer assesment of the service or the product which is mainly based on the past expeirences of buying and consumptions over the lifetime of patronage (Wang and Hing-Po Lo, 2002).

The consumer researchers and marketing practationers considered the concept of customer satisfaction as the most valuable aspect from its pragmatic and theoretical perspectives (Meuter, Ostrom, Roundtree and Bitner, 2000). The researcher pointed out that customer satisfaction was the main indicator or the source of competitive advantage for any company or firm. All companies must focus on the this indicator because the world is now becoming more advanced in terms of managing and growing competitive advantage (Patterson, 1993). The concept of customer satisfication was used as the best predictor of customer future purchase intentions and it has effect on how qualitaive marketing decisions were made? (Taylor and Baker , 1994). The positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication was done by those satisfied customers who share about the experience of the their recent purchases to their friends, neighbours and family members and others (Richens, 1983). This was also noted that future goal of organization regarding profitability was dependent on the performance of positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication and it repeats the buying and selling behavior of the customers (Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz, 1996).

3- The formulation of hypotheses and model development:

Based on past research, studies the following sections will describe about the formulation of hypotheses and the development of the proposed model.

3-1 Brand Experience and positive word of mouth communication:

The brand experiences generate and have influence on recommendation done by customers either positive or negative based on the level of experiences. According to Harrison-Walker LJ (2001) the word of mouth (WOM) concept defined as “informal, person-to- person communication between a perceived noncommercial communicator and a receiver regarding a brand, a product, an organization, or a service” (p. 63). The customers are interconnected with each other through the means of recognized or unrecognized groups but they share the experiences, which they had got from the brands by using them (Westbrook RA, 1987). These recognized or unrecognized groups i.e. formal and informal groups includes the gossip, chitchat, sharing of knowledge and information, passing comments and discussions were carried out by the members of the group (Bone PF, 1992). Various researches has evident that brand experience has positive influence on word of mouth (PWOM) communication in different fields and aspects (Beckman, Kumar , Kim , 2013; Barnes, Mattsson & Sørensen, 2014). Hence, the hypothesis proposed here is:

H1: Brand Experience has significant positive relation on positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication in the cell phone industry of Pakistan .



The marketing literature has been evaluated; it has been evident that the association of Customer Satisfaction as a mediating variable or intermediate variable on Brand Experience and the Positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) Communication has rarely been studied in the context of Smartphone industry in Pakistan as per our knowledge. Earlier Customer satisfaction was used as the consequence of brand experience variable and plays role in between Brand experience and Word of Mouth (Khan, I., & Fatma, M, 2017). This research employs positive word of mouth (PWOM) and customer satisfaction variable as a mediator the effects are going to be predicted with the help of brand experience in the context of Smartphone industry of Pakistan. The intermediary variable is employed to check the direct and indirect relationship between planned latent constructs. The intermediary variable (Mediator) has to affect on the latent constructs variables, the analysis of the intermediary variable can be called as strong mediator/partial mediator/no mediator (Baron, Reuben, Kenny & David, 1986).

H2: Customer satisfaction has significant influence on the relationship between brand Experience and positive Word of mouth communication in the Smartphone industry of Pakistan.

3-2 Research design and data collection Method :

This study was done in the aspect of smart phone usage experiences. For checking the validity at initial level of the questionnaire, the pilot test was carried out in order to measure the degree of understanding of the respondents with the questionnaire. The twenty students of final year batch of the Department of Business Administration participated in the pilot study from The Shaikh Ayaz University Shikarpur. The purpose is to check the wording of the questions that either they are easily understandable especially in analyzing the brand experiences of the respondents in the context of the smart phones. After pilot study some rewording was incorporated into the item, which is minor, one i.e. the Smart phone word was inserted in each item to measure the respondents' brand experiences responses in the context of smart phones. Detail is given in measure section.

The respondents were students of the Shaikh Ayaz University Shikarpur Sindh Pakistan. Who participated in the data collection and filled self-administered questionnaire. These students belonged to senior classes (3rd year and 4th year batches). The data collection was done in the context of Smartphone users from the campus. The sorting of the proper students and responses were carried out with the help of initial question that whether they are the user of smart phones yes or not. Those who are the users of the smart phones or having smart phones were only allowed to participate voluntarily to fill the questionnaire. The convenience sampling technique was employed for the collection or gathering of the data and further quantitative analysis through SPSS and AMOS.

The 400 self-administered questionnaires were circulated among the students while they were in the classes early in the morning inside the campus. Their responses were collected by giving them instructions. Out of which 389 respondents were found correct with no missing values. This represent 97% correct response rate. The results of this sample size cannot be generalized because of the quires of convenience sampling procedure (Sears, D. O., 1986). As the questionnaire was short, consist of just 20 items.

12 items of brand experience , 04 items of customer satisfaction and 04 items of positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication . There is also research, which



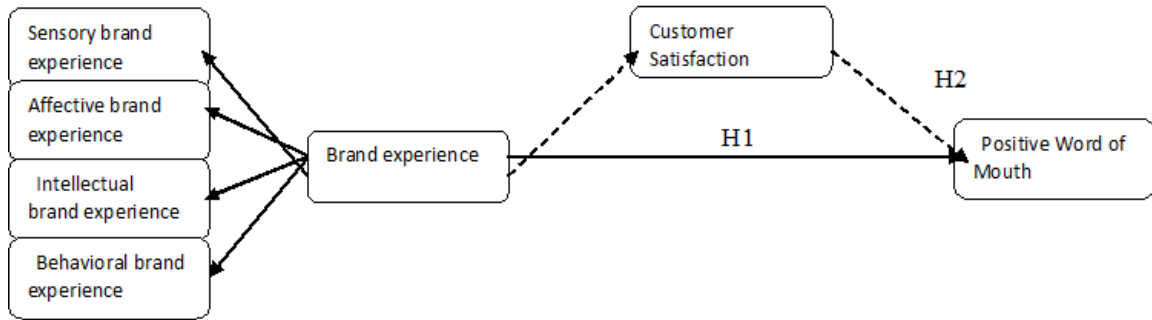
provides the inadequate justification of information regarding the student sampling restrictions overview or generalization (Bernstein, Hakel & Harlan 1975). According to MacCallum, Widaman, Zhang & Hong (1999) it is not decided that what would be maximum sample size for generalizing the results. The evidence supports 10 responses are required for each item. In this research, the sample size is 389 respondents. Therefore, the sample is justified according to the research directions.

3-4 Measures:-

This research study adapted brand experience (BE) scales which consist of 04 dimensions i.e. sensory brand experience 03 items, affective brand experience 03 items, behavioral brand experience 03 items and intellectual brand experience 03 items total 12 items for brand experience. These measure were used in Likert scale 01=strongly disagree to 07= strongly agree (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). The 12 items were given as follow: in which sensory brand experience (SENSORY_EXP) items were as fellows. This smart phone brand makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses, "I find this smart phone brand interesting in a sensory way, This smart phone brand appeals to my senses. The affective brand experience (AFFECTIVE_EXP) items were as follows: This smart phone brand induces my feelings and sentiments, I have strong emotions for this smart phone brand, This smart phone brand is an emotional brand. The behavioral experience (BEHAVIORAL_EXP) items were follows as: This smart phone brand reminds me of actions and behaviors when I use this smart phone brand, This smart phone brand results in bodily experiences, This smart phone brand is action oriented. And the intellectual brand experience (INTELLECTUAL_EXP) items were as follows: I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this smart phone brand, This smart phone brand makes me think, This smart phone brand stimulates my curiosity and problem solving. For simplifying, the results of brand experience scale, the mean of each dimension of brand experience scale i.e. sensory brand experience, affective brand experience, behavioral brand experience and intellectual brand experience were calculated. Just for converting the measurement model as less complex as the procedure used (Francisco-Maffezzolli, Semprebon & Muller, 2014). The scale for customer satisfaction (CS) consist of 04 items which was calculated through the 7 point Likert scale 01= strongly disagree and 07 to strongly agree (Patterson & Smith, 2003). The last item of the customer satisfaction scale was measured as 01=very dissatisfied and 07 highly satisfied. The scale items of customer satisfaction were given as follows: I am happy with my decision to use this smart phone, My choice of using this smart phone is wise one, I feel good about my decision to use this Smartphone.



Figure 01: Conceptual model and hypothesized path analysis: source authors



Taking everything into consideration, how do you feel about the service you received from this smart phone ? The scale for the positive word of mouth communication (PWOM) was calculated through 7 point Likert scale and had 04 items were adapted (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). The items of the positive word of the mouth (PWOM) communication were given as follows: I have recommended smart phone brand to lots of people , I talk up about this smart phone brand with my friends , I try to spread the good-word about this smart phone brand , I give this smart phone brand tons of positive word of mouth advertising . These all items were than analyzed through in AMOS26 with the help of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The sole purpose was to investigate the measurements models discriminant validity, convergent validity and reliability, and these measures were calculated during and before factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE) and Composite reliability figures were calculated. All these things are shown in the figure 01, which shows the theoretical model and hypothesized path analysis.

4- Data analysis:

The data analysis section is divided in two steps (1) the fitness of the proposed model was done with the help of (CFA) confirmatory factor analysis & (2) the hypothesized research model or structural model was taken after performing structural equation modeling (Anderson, J., Gerbing, D., & Hunter, J., 1987). These steps were adopted to evaluate the model. The analysis of the general measurement model and the confidence in the data was taken with the help of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). AMOS 26 was used for hypotheses testing by using structural equation modeling (SEM) (Jöreskog, K. G., & Sörbom, D., 1996).

The validity and reliability tests were checked through maximum likelihood method by using AMOS 26. The results of measurement model were shown in figure 02. The data fit of the hypothesized model were clearly expressed through figures: i.e. $\chi^2 (62, 389) = 168.663, p < 0.000$, the / $df = 1.9$ and called as goodness fit statistics. The normal range of the df was between 1 to 3. This means that the fitness of the measurement model was evident from these figures. Research model other figures like $GFI = .93, CFI = .95, SRMR = .08, TLI = .96$ & $RMSEA = .07$ were also meeting the recommended ranges criteria and showing the fitness of the model. After the thorough analysis of the CFA or measurement model the recommended model, i.e. $\Sigma (\theta)$ describes the total statistics Σ and little change was found in between two values. i.e. population dispersion matrix $\Sigma (\theta)$ and



representative dispersion matrix S than the indirect model. Hence, it had not required for including any extra path in the assumed or hypothesized model or form further model fitness requirements already meet by the hypothesized model. The discriminant validity value shown with the help of each construct AVE values, which are greater than there average correlation, squared. The convergent validity results shown with the help of each constructs AVE scores greater than .50, the composite reliability value of the individual constructs showing that all constructs are reliable. i.e. (> .70). All these results are shown in table (A)

4-1 Structural equation modeling: The SEM was employed in order to analyze structural model effectiveness through maximum likelihood method for checking relationship among the variables. In which hypothesis H1 was supported. The Brand experience has significant positive influence on positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication in the Smartphone industry of Pakistan ($\gamma = .54, p < .000$) and Brand Experience explains a 29% variance in positive word of mouth(PWOM). The model's fitness recommended threshold is between (1–3), hence in this model $\chi^2 = 175, p < 0.001$, the $\chi^2 / df = 1.6$. These are called as goodness of fit statistics and these indicates that the proposed model fits the data very well. There is difference between the hypothesized models. i.e. dispersion matrix and unit dispersion matrix. This was interpreted with the help of χ^2 absolute fit index values.

Figure: 02. Source authors

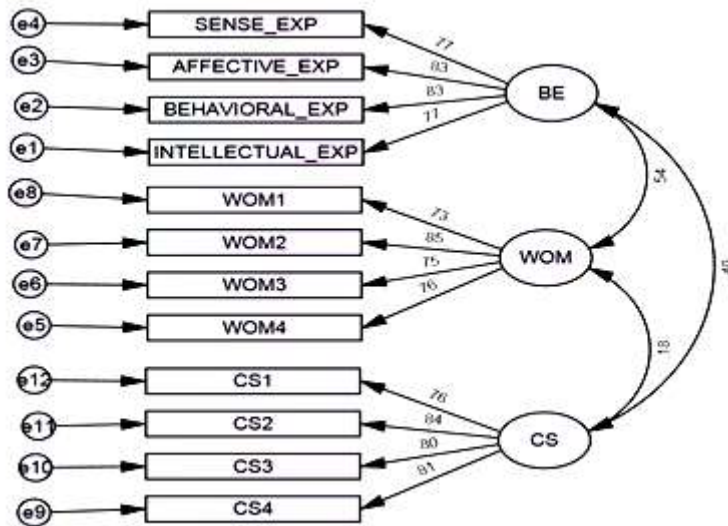


Table (A) the recap sheet of standardized factor loadings, Average variance extracted (AVE) and Composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha values of Brand Experience, Customer satisfaction and positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication.



Constructs	Brand Experience	Customer Satisfaction	Positive Word of Mouth
SENSE_EXP	.77		
AFFECTIVE_EXP	.83		
BEHAVIORAL_EXP	.83		
INTELLECTUAL_EXP	.78		
CS1		.78	
CS2		.84	
CS3		.80	
CS4		.81	
WOM1			.73
WOM2			.85
WOM3			.75
WOM4			.76
Cronbach's Alpha	0.96	0.87	0.85
Average variance extracted (AVE)	64 %	65 %	60%
Construct Reliability (CR)	0.87	0.88	0.85

Model fitness was showed by all other indices measures. The confirmation of the SEM model or structural model explained that BE has impact on (PWOM). The model fitness represented by other measures was as follows: GFI = .96; CFI = .97; SRMR = .05; TLI = .96; and RMSEA = .06. Now that association was again explored through incorporating a new variable as a mediator in the existing model. i.e. customer satisfaction.

After adding the mediator it has been found that the intermediary variable between brand experience and positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication; the relationship between (BE) and (PWOM) is fully mediated by (CS) variable. Table (B) represents mediation effects. It shows that mediation impact direct and indirect association between the variables beta coefficient which is called as regression coefficient as well as which was .54($p < .001$). this regression coefficient is when the mediator was not added in the model, but after adding the mediator the value of regression coefficient dropped to .20($p > .05$) with insignificant association.

Furthermore after the inclusion of mediator i.e. CS in the model. The contribution of the mediator into endogenous variable PWOM was raised by 45%. The value of indirect regression coefficient path was shown and raised up to 84($p < .001$). With the help of this, we the researchers were in the position to reject the null hypothesis means no mediation effect. This indirect effect was significant. Figure 3(a) & (b) shows the results of direct and indirect effects with the help of standardized estimates. The fitness test of mediation effects were shown by: $\chi^2 = 168$, $p < 0.001$, the $\chi^2/df = 1.9$, and other goodness of index values are given. i.e. GFI = .93; CFI = .98; SRMR = .06; TLI = .96; and RMSEA = .05.



5- Conclusion and discussion:

The main purpose of this research was to explore the role of brand experience on positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication by adding customer satisfaction, which was used as a mediator variable among in Smartphone products of Pakistan. This research contributes in the academic literature of branding in number of ways. From the aspect of Pakistani Smartphone market experience and consumption, the brand experience has significant positive influence on (PWOM) communication; The characteristics of the respondents were using Smartphone for personal lifelong experiences. The analysis clearly depicts that brand experience influences positively on positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication while the role of customer satisfaction variable was here is mediator with full mediation effect on the association among brand experience and positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication . The foundation for conclusion is on the suggestions of SEM.

As by performing bootstrapping at 95% confidence interval, the full mediation was supported. This means that the association between brand experience and positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication become stronger when the mediator i.e. customer satisfaction variable was added into the model in the Smartphone experience shared by satisfied customer and then positively recommending to other customers . The evidence also supports that the SEM model in terms of statistical measure were more powerful as compared to the measurement model or confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) . Although the CFA model or measurement model had not required for deletion of any questionnaire items. Hence, it has been also proved that the data was reliable and valid from the sample of students. The current study establishes that the customer satisfaction plays a mediating role in the case of brand experience and its influence on positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) .

This research entails that distant from running the brand experience, the companies should develops satisfaction as well as then the customers of the Smartphone will share or recommend the Smartphone for adoption to other friends or in social circle for promoting positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) recommendations. The companies of the Smartphone should also focus on good advertising and the pleasant environment from the outlet when the customer visits them. Warranty and guarantee features may be given so that will create more satisfaction level as compared to the competitor and last but not the least the companies should have user-friendly interface from them the customer satisfaction would be more increased as the model suggest; the marketing planners of Smartphone are entitled to draw their attention towards some unidentified factors increasing and maintaining long-term beneficial association with the future customers, these are called as intangible factors.



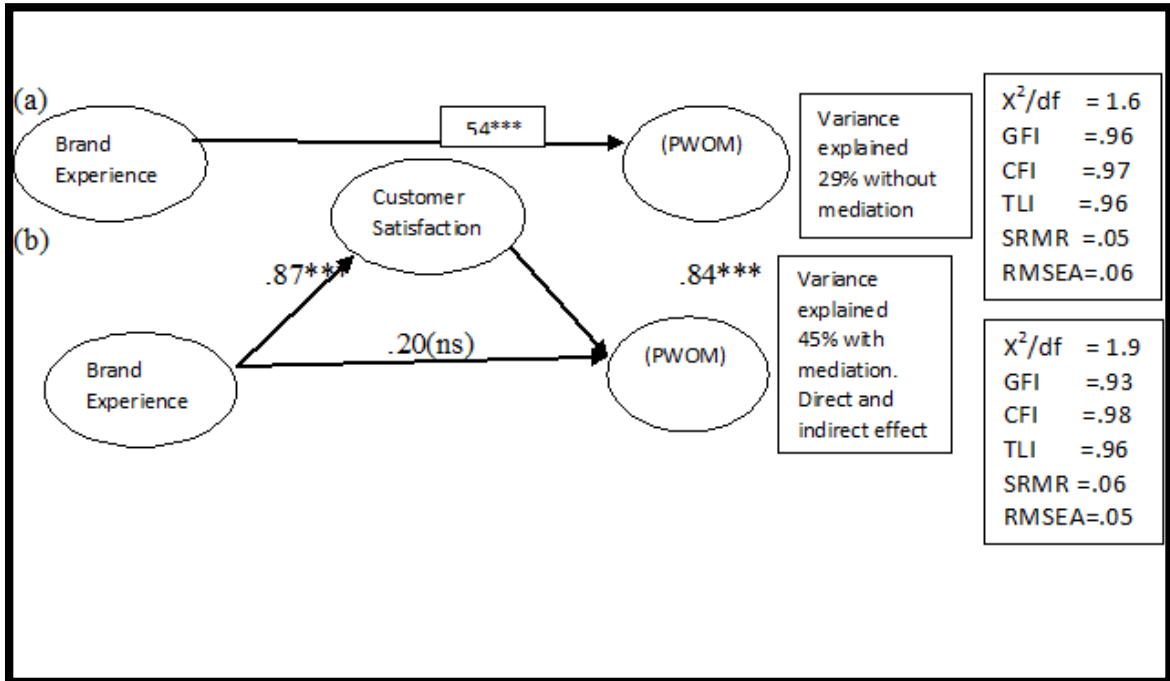
Table (B) direct and indirect effect

Path	Direct effect without mediation	Direct effect with mediation	Indirect Effect	Mediation Effects	Variance explained without mediation	Variance explained with mediation
BE-CS-PWOM	.54(p<.000)	.20(ns)	.84(p<.000)	Full Mediation	.29	.45

Source: authors

Figure 03: (a) & (b) Standardized estimates of direct and indirect effect.

Source: Authors .



5-1 Managerial implications:

Managers are ought to acknowledge (PWOM) is a type of social cooperation. It has been found that the marketing content can be verified with the help of different brands or products, this can be understood in a manner that the (PWOM) presentation was dissimilar from the personal to community needs. For instance, a few people buy new things somewhat so they can talk (show off) to their companions and associates about their buying. This kind of conduct or behavior demonstrates correspondence techniques could be built up that empower buys dependent on capacity to take part in (PWOM). Significant useful ramifications important to brand methodologies was decorated as the part of consequences in the research investigation. A research question arises here that how the positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) can be increased and how the negative Word of Mouth (NWOM) can be reduced. Simply the positive Word of Mouth(PWOM) is the direct answer of the research question when the brand experience would be the predictor and customer satisfaction was deployed as mediator as here in this case. The results of



this study clearly highlights about the role played by the corporate managers or marketing managers were to focus on positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) in the following main categories. i.e. personal development, having good PR with community, dealing the clients community as the family.

In this connection a marketing campaign can be scheduled whose purpose was to focus on the positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) communication when in the community representation was carried out by the marketing managers by asking such type of the questions like, have you mentioned to your friends that you have made a decision by purchasing such cell phone or either you have compared your cell phone with others then check their responses based on such research questions. As an example, students' talk regularly incorporates discussions about ongoing network shows that they watched online on the YouTube or any other players or media. This portable and social media has been recently discovered and it raised sudden consumption was also evident. Applications can be structured in which the message to the customer would be less about the brand or trademark and progressively about the increase related while giving out important views. The brand name would be the main element of discussion among the purchasers and consumers if the brand name is associated with any word of picture than the consumers in the social chitchats and get to gathers recommend that brand to each other. Then afterwards the level of brand name position increases as well as. For instance, web based or social media platforms that empower offering positive and stifling negative encounters or incidents with a brand must offer the stage that: (1) the social liking and disliking by other can be established by developing common or collective fundamentals by compensating social interactions (2) the negative Word of Mouth (NWOM) can be reduced and Positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) can be increased or accomplished when brand shows unique and different self character outside the brand context (3) describing the brand in collective value by supporting other people is more important rather than not highlighting the difference of good brand or bad brand and (4) in any event when required the negative Word of Mouth(NWOM) can be removed from the communication through strong and rich media campaign.

Before physical encounter of the brand with the customer if social media campaign was well executed than it has impact on positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) communication. This will lead to successful buying after a physical encounter the brand with the customer than after this technique would be significantly important. For the managers this research that brand experience has positive influence on Positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) in the presence of customer satisfaction would be an eye opener to implement the strategies regarding customer satisfaction than the experiences would be positively recommended to other customer i.e. colleagues and subordinates and personal contacts. The performance of the brand is measured with the help of satisfaction from its functional performance. The better than expected encounters (e.g., quality, administration, brand picture of the Smartphone, and so on.) will energize self-actualization. The mutual or collective aspect will encourage social holding or reunion and will increase positive word of mouth (PWOM) communication.



5-2 Theoretical implications

This investigation has broadened the extent of brand experience research inquires highlighted the importance academic writing on branding or brand management by creating the importance of the brand experience concept and analyzing its effect on customer satisfaction and positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) . Brand experience is seen as a multidimensional construct comprising of four factors: sensory experience, affective experience, behavioral experience and intellectual experience (Brakus J, Schmitt BH, Zarantonello L., 2009). The brand experience is a significant indicator of positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) practices. Brand experience is developed from the utilization of brand or services. About our research examination, Smartphone brand experience was developed from the views or thoughts of the individual or most importantly students undergraduates of the campus who uses advance Smartphone in the campus. As brand experience builds, there is an expansion in undergraduates inspiration to offer positive remarks about the advanced smart phones to other people means class fellows or campus fellows.

In spite of the fact that the finding that brand experience directly affects WOM isn't unforeseen, note that in research project it has been found the “impact of brand experiences on positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) was completely intervened by consumer satisfaction (the level of undergraduates understanding dependent on emotions, thoughts, actions and intellect for making comparison on different products and services used on the basis of performance and expectations).i.e. smart phones. Our incorporation of customer satisfaction in the model improves our comprehension or understanding of brand experience impact on positive Word of Mouth (PWOM). It has been evident that undergraduate’s satisfaction predicted the positive word of mouth (PWOM) while this isn't unforeseen; it is remarkable that consumer satisfaction completely intercedes the effect on positive Word of Mouth (PWOM). Consequently, the mindset of undergraduates with respect to understanding from the Smartphone of the college understudy was a significant construct that has commonly been ignored in earlier research on satisfaction and experience effect on behavioral activities with regard to smart phones. Hypothetically, it is additionally obvious that the inclusion of customer satisfaction as a middle variable or mediator hypothetically make the model stronger.

5-3 Future directions and limitations

While this research makes numerous commitments or contribution the academic writing, there are a few limitations of the investigation as well. The first limitation of this research examination is that convenience-sampling technique was used for data collection so the results cannot be generalized to overall population. The Second limitation of this study is that it was done on the aspect of Smartphone products alone. Hence, in future this model can be verified on services as well as other products like courier service providers like M&P, TCS and Pakistan post, microfinance banks etc. It is very conceivable that customers of retail banks may have an alternate reaction to the survey that was directed. Third, in the present examination, just positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) communication by customers has been studied and the effect of negative Word of Mouth (NWOM) has not been studied. The brand experiences scale responses were measured through positive responses. In future, it is recommended that negative items may be incorporated in the



questionnaire .i.e., reverse coding may be then employed while analyzing the data. The effect of different factors on WOM can be contemplated and these investigations could concentrate on customers having a place with assorted assistance organizations like retail locations what's more portable communication administrations. In future brand involvement can be used as the moderator variable while this model can be tested on high involvement good or products like (cars). It is also suggested that what factors which create positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) and make differentiation in negative Word of Mouth (NWOM). In this research, just individual-to-individual WOM suggestions have been considered. Future examinations can research the components that influence electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) among customers who shops online.

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