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## ROLES OF REMUNERATION ON CONSUMER RESPONSES TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING: A PAKISTANI PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

The study explores the association between remuneration motivation and the underlying behavioral intentions to purchase and participate in electronic word of mouth (eWOM), through social media advertising (SMA). The study proposes that this relationship is mediated by perceived social media advertising value (PSMAV) and consumers' attitudes towards social media advertising (CATSMA). The survey draws evidence from a set of 673 usable responses comprising of young and active social media users, belonging from recognized universities of the twin cities (Islamabad & Rawalpindi) of Pakistan. A component-based structural equation modeling technique has been utilized through SmartPLS 3. The findings reveal that remuneration exerts a significant impact on PSMAV and CATSMA but shows an insignificant association with behavioral intentions. Both PSMAV and CATSMA fully mediate the relationship between remuneration and behavioral outcomes. The paper extends advertising literature on social media within an under-researched context of Pakistan's fashion industry. It also assists the advertisers in backing their social media campaigns with financial rewards for enhancing advertising value and generating positive consumer attitudes.

**Disciplinary:** Marketing Sciences, Information Technology, and Social Media.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The consumers of today have extended their communication platforms through a dynamic Web 2.0 based technology, known as social media. Also referred to as the fifth "P" of marketing (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Social media serves as a hybrid element of any company's promotional mix (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Now, the product perceptions and attitudes have been inclined towards this multi-dimensional advertising platform, where consumers are able to interact and engage with greater empowerment and control (Algharabat et al., 2018; Shareef et al., 2019). Both, the

practitioners and research scholars are now focusing on this emerging phenomenon, in terms of attaining a better understanding of consumer behavior (Casaló & Romero, 2019; Ismail, 2017).

Although a growing body of literature has been working on social media but still, a significant amount of scholarly work needs to be inculcated towards it. Social media behavior is still passing through an embryonic process with its marketing nature under exponential evolution (Duffett, 2017; Hamouda, 2018; Harb et al., 2019). Further, due to a lack of explicit theoretical support (Knoll, 2016; Mao & Zhang, 2017). Most examinations are leading to inconclusive outcomes. Further, many studies have focused on developed societies (Odoom et al., 2017) which cannot easily be contextualized to under-developed nations (Marakarkandy et al., 2017).

This study aims to address the aforementioned gaps by deepening the understanding of consumer responses toward social media advertising (SMA). The main objective is to examine an emerging social media motivation, known as remuneration (Muntinga et al., 2011; Muralidharan & Men, 2015) and evaluate its impact on the perceived social media advertising value (PSMAV), consumers' attitudes towards social media advertising (CATSMA) and behavioral intentions. Besides these linkages, the mediating roles of PSMAV & CATSMA between remuneration and behavioral intentions are also examined, which have previously remained unaddressed. The study also advances marketing literature in an under-researched context of Pakistan (Raziq et al., 2018), where studies pertaining to consumer attitudes and intentions remain scant.

To be more specific, the current research work focuses on the fashion advertising industry of Pakistan. The country has been categorized as a "Fast-track Asian economy", which has rapidly adopted the latest technology, with advertising expenditures increasing at an average growth rate of nine percent (Zenith, 2018). The top three Pakistani industries on the world's most popular social networking platform i.e. Facebook; consists of fashion, e-commerce and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG). With an online fan base crossing eighty-seven million, fashion has turned out to be a way of life for Pakistani netizens (Socialbakers, 2018). With brands getting global, social media is now considered as an inexpensive way of promoting a company's products (Roult et al., 2016); with greater reach and rapid response. Hence, the study considers the fashion industry of Pakistan for analyzing the role of remuneration on a consumers' social media behavior.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1 REMUNERATION MOTIVATION & PERCEIVED SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING VALUE (PSMAV)**

Within the context of media usage, motivations are recognized as drivers that influence an individual's selection and utilization of media content (Rubin, 2002). Prior studies (Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006; Rodgers et al., 2005) have shown that consumer motivations exert an impact on advertising effectiveness, consumers' attitudes and behavioral responses. Remuneration is regarded as an emerging social media motivation (Muralidharan & Men, 2015), demanding empirical investigation (Muntinga et al., 2011). It does not only strengthens consumers' engagement behaviors but also induces them towards futuristic rewards. These rewards represent economic incentives; comprising of money, contests, and sweepstakes (Muralidharan & Men, 2015; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2003).

The value of advertising refers to the extent to which, an individual considers promotional content to be effective, in terms of its proposed utility (Ducoffe, 1995). He stated that information, entertainment and irritation are the key predictors of PSMAV. Later, Brackett and Carr (2001) added credibility as the fourth predictor of advertising value. The current work extends the advertising literature and examines remuneration as the key antecedent of PSMAV. Earlier, Muntinga et al. (2011) explored remuneration through instant messaging (IM) interviews, for examining consumers' online brand-related activities (COBRAs). Kim and Han (2014) later found a statistically significant relationship between incentives and the perceived value of smartphone advertising. Based on the arguments, the study hypothesizes a positive relationship between remuneration and PSMAV, within the context of fashion advertising on social media. So, the first hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H1(a): *There exists a significant positive relationship between remuneration motivation and consumers' perceived social media advertising value (PSMAV).*

## **2.2 REMUNERATION MOTIVATION & CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING (CATSMA)**

An individual's attitude is a mere representation of his evaluative criteria (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and his motivation towards an ad is a basic predictor of his attitude towards advertising (Chi, 2011; Rodgers & Sheldon, 1999). Historically, Pollay and Mittal (1993) found that the variable of "good for the economy", positively influenced the attitudes towards advertising; for both collegians and older householders. In terms of online advertising, Wolin et al. (2002) showed a contrasting result, with the variable "good for the economy", depicting no association with consumer attitudes towards web advertising. However, in a cross-cultural study by Wang and Sun (2010), the same variable turned out to be the most significant predictor of attitudes towards online advertising. Furthermore, remuneration was also termed as "incentive offering" (Suk, 2007) and it exerted a positive impact on consumers' attitudes towards advertising on social networks (Luna-Nevarez & Torres, 2015). Thus, this research investigates the association of remuneration with CATSMA, in a fashion advertising context on social media. Hence, the next hypothesis is proposed as

H1(b): *There exists a significant positive relationship between remuneration motivation and consumers' attitudes towards social media advertising (CATSMA).*

## **2.3 REMUNERATION MOTIVATION & BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS**

The role of incentives and financial rewards has played an instrumental role in accelerating a company's brand image, generating higher ad clicks and strengthening positive perceptions to reap desirable behavioral responses (Luna-Nevarez & Torres, 2015; Robinson et al., 2007). Remuneration has also been considered as an individualistic motivation, that carries an intrinsic tendency to trigger eWOM engagement behaviors for attaining economic benefits; in the form of coupons and free samples (Muralidharan & Men, 2015). Earlier, Kim and Han (2014) found a statistically supportive relationship of an individual's incentive seeking behavior with advertising value and flow experience, in the context of smartphone advertising. Extending their work, the present study within the context of SMA; not only tests the relationship of remuneration with PSMAV but also with behavioral intentions. This extension in marketing literature highlights the unaddressed relationship of remuneration motivation and consumer's behavioral intentions of purchasing and engaging in

eWOM. Thus, the hypothesis is postulated,

*H1(c): There exists a significant positive relationship between remuneration motivation and behavioral intentions.*

## **2.4 PERCEIVED SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING VALUE (PSMAV) & BEHAVIORAL INTENTION**

As attitudes represent an individual's evaluation of the world he sees around himself, a behavioral intention reflects his inner willingness to perform a specific behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Specifically, an individual's behavioral intentions on social networks represent his purchase intentions and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) intentions (Luna-Nevarez & Torres, 2015). Ducoffe (1995), who pioneered the concept of advertising value, stated that any type of advertising that enhances its effectiveness ultimately leads towards favorable consumer perceptions and behavioral intentions.

Choi et al. (2008) and Zeng et al. (2009) identified that the value of advertising had a statistically significant relationship with behavioral intentions, in the context of mobile advertising in Asian economies. Building on to it, Dao et al. (2014) observed a significant relationship between PSMAV and behavioral intentions, while examining social media behavior in South Asian transitional economies. Based on the scholarly evidence and considering Pakistan as a transitional economy (UNDP, 2018), the second hypothesis is posited

*H2: There exists a significant positive relationship between perceived social media advertising value (PSMAV) and behavioral intentions.*

## **2.5 CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING (CATSMA) & BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS**

Generally, consumers' attitude towards an ad and attitude towards a brand is a reflection of their potential behavioral intentions (MacKenzie et al., 1986; Raziq et al., 2018). As attitudes turn out to be favorable, greater advertising recalls and better buying interests are formulated (Bauer & Greyser, 1968; Mehta & Purvis, 2006). Nelson et al. (2004) view that positive attitudes towards video advertisements lead to higher purchase intentions. With respect to social networks, Luna-Nevarez and Torres (2015) also point out a statistically significant relationship between attitudes towards social networking advertising and their underlying intentions to engage in eWOM. Similarly, the scholarly work of Zhang and Mao (2016) also shows that desirable motivations generate positive ad click behaviors to purchase and engage in eWOM. Specifically, in an SMA context, the studies of Hamouda (2018) and Johnston et al. (2018) also propagate a significant relationship between CATSMA and consumers' underlying behavioral responses. Hence, the third hypothesis is given as

*H3: There exists a significant positive relationship between consumers' attitudes towards social media advertising (CATSMA) and behavioral intentions.*

## **2.6 MEDIATING ROLES OF PERCEIVED SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING VALUE (PSMAV) & CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING (CATSMA)**

From a media perspective, value has been recognized as a consequence of an individual's belief and motivational factors (Rayburn & Palmgreen, 1984). In terms of mobile advertising, Liu et al.

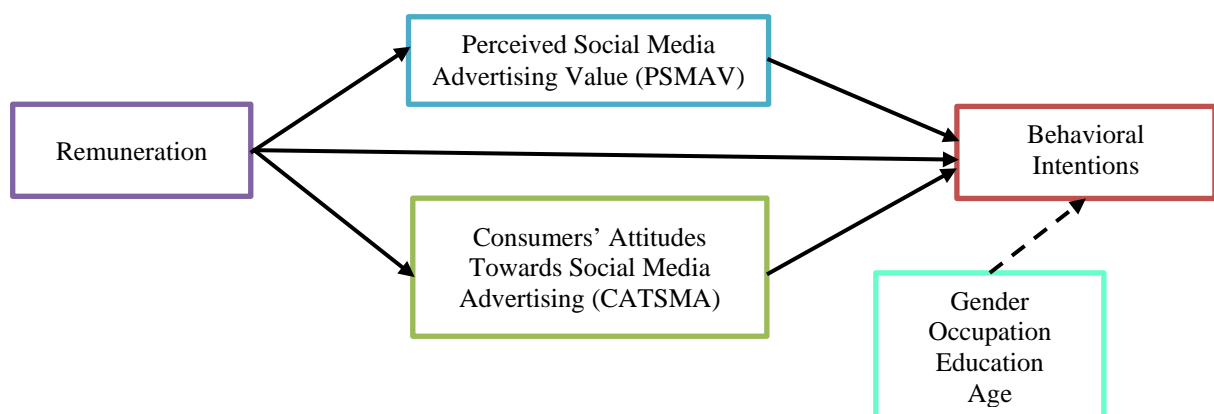
(2012) investigated the role of consumer perceptions on advertising value but did not evaluate its mediating effect between its predictors and resulting attitudes. While examining smartphone advertising behavior, again the mediating effect of advertising value between incentives and purchase intentions remained ignored (Kim & Han, 2014). Similarly, in an SMA context; Dao et al. (2014) utilized the construct of advertising value for analyzing its basic antecedents and its ultimate effect on purchase intentions, but again did not examine its mediating nature. The present study extends the aforementioned works and explores the unaddressed mediating effect of PSMaV, between remuneration motivation and behavioral intentions. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is posited as

H4: *Perceived social media advertising value (PSMAV) mediates the relationship between remuneration motivation and behavioral intentions.*

Consumer attitudes towards advertisements have been referred to as vital mediators of advertising effectiveness (MacKenzie et al., 1986). With respect to online advertising, both Drèze and Zufryden (1998) and Wang and Sun (2010) found attitudes, as effective mediators between beliefs and behavioral responses. In a study on SMA, Muk et al. (2014) propagated that the mediating effect of attitudes needs to be validated under various cross-cultural settings. Following it, Jung et al. (2016) seconded the mediating effect of attitudes between social media characteristics and behavioral intentions on Facebook; in a South Korean context. Similar findings were also reported by Johnston et al. (2018) while examining social media behavior in Taiwan and Vietnam. So, this work proposes its fifth hypothesis, within the social media context of Pakistan, as

H5: *Consumers' attitudes towards social media advertising (CATSMA) mediates the relationship between remuneration motivation and behavioral intentions.*

Based on the hypothesis development, the study presents its conceptual model accompanied by four control variables (See Figure 1). This helps in controlling the demographic characteristics of the selected sample (Dao et al., 2014; Haridakis & Hanson, 2009).



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Model.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 COLLECTION OF DATA & SAMPLING METHOD

A structured questionnaire was emailed to the major universities, belonging to the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The selected varsities comprised of Comsats University, Air University,

Riphah International University, and Arid Agriculture University. Making use of Google Docs, 720 questionnaires were floated, out of which 673 usable responses were generated for data analysis. University students are considered as ideal subjects for research on consumer behavior (Peterson & Merunka, 2014); specifically social media (Hamouda, 2018; Shareef et al., 2019). Pakistani collegiate and university students consider social media as a way of life and actively utilize networking platforms for online fashion shopping (Socialbakers, 2018). Moreover, convenience sampling has been deemed more appropriate for data collection. Being a non-probability sampling technique, the under-graduate and post-graduate students have been selected on ease of accessibility and geographical proximity. Not only has this method been widely applied and accepted for studies pertaining to advertising (Pollay & Mittal, 1993; Wang & Sun, 2010) but also SMA (Permatasari & Laydi, 2018; Sanne & Wiese, 2018).

### **3.2 MEASURES & TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS**

A seven-point Likert Scale, with wider discrimination opportunities (Cooper & Schindler, 2014), was utilized for structuring the questionnaire; ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. The measures of each construct representing the research model were adopted from previous literature. A three-item scale for remuneration was adopted from the work of Luna-Nevarez and Torres (2015) and Wang and Fesenmaier (2003). The three-item scale for PSMAV was attained from the study of Dao et al. (2014), while the six-item scale for CATSMA was adopted from Taylor et al. (2011). Lastly, the behavioral intention scale comprised of six items, originating from the studies of Dao et al. (2014) and Luna-Nevarez and Torres (2015).

For demographic analysis, SPSS v.23.0 was applied. For analyzing measurement and structural models, variance-based structured equation modeling was used through SmartPLS 3. The partial least squares (PLS) approach is one of the most emerging and dynamic techniques for conducting quantitative research (Hair et al., 2016; Sarstedt & Cheah, 2019). For authenticating convergent validity, composite reliability and discriminant validity; Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was applied. For testing the proposed hypotheses, the bootstrapping method (500 resamples) was undertaken (Henseler et al., 2009).

## **4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION**

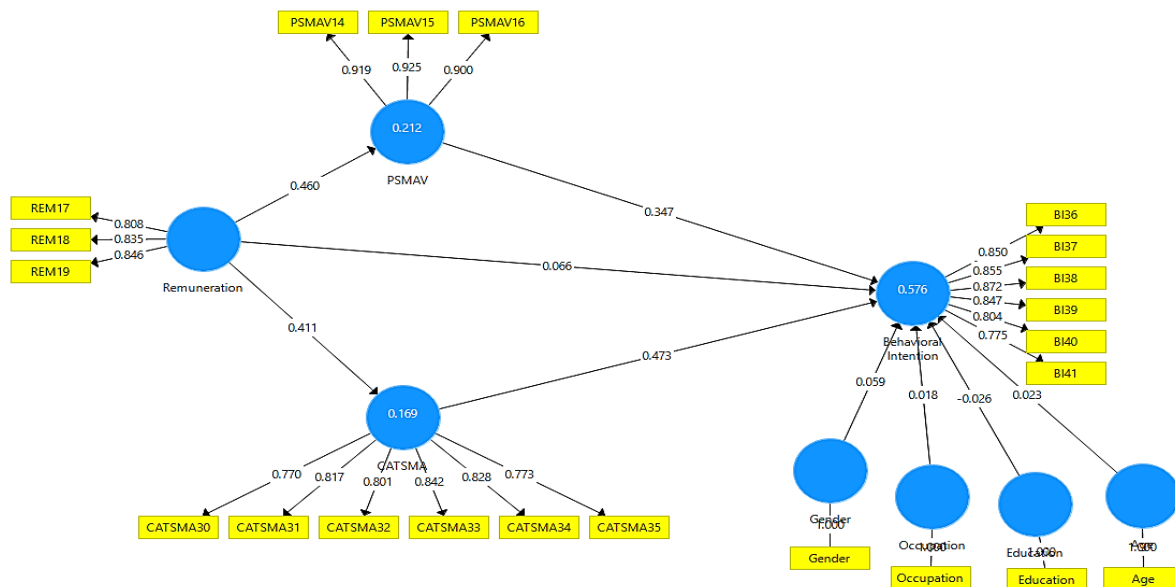
Table 1 shows the sample characteristics of the respondents; based on gender, age, occupation, and education. Out of 673 usable responses, males represented 61.2% while females represented 38.8% of the sampling frame. In terms of age, 60 % are the younger age bracket of 19-25. These millennials consider technology as a part of their daily lives (Bolton et al., 2013) and actively use social media (Hamouda, 2018). The older segment crossing the age of 46, only constituted 2% of the sampling frame. With respect to occupation, only 5.3% did not belong to any specific category. The majority belonged to the full-time student segment, with 48.3% of the total representation; while 36.1% of the students were also employed in various jobs. Only 10.3% of the university students had also started their entrepreneurial ventures. Finally, the educational profile reflected 45.5% of undergraduate students while 54.5% were post-graduate students.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics.**

Attribute	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	412	61.2
	Female	261	38.8
Age	19-25	404	60.0
	26 –32	205	30.5
	33– 39	34	5.1
	40-46	15	2.2
	46 and above	15	2.0
Occupation	N/A	36	5.3
	Student	325	48.3
	Salaried Person	243	36.1
	Self-employed	69	10.3
Education	Undergraduate	306	45.5
	Postgraduate	367	54.5

**4.2 MEASUREMENT MODEL**

The measurement model (see Table 2) authenticates the convergent and discriminant validity of the scales measuring the latent constructs (Gefen & Straub, 2005). It represents the factor loadings (see Figure 2), the Cronbach’s alphas, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). The factor loadings, Cronbach’s alpha, and CR are ideally above 0.7 and the AVE crosses the standard of 0.5. This reflects good convergent validity (Hair et al., 2018). For discriminant validity, the values of the AVE square root were also greater than the constructs’ correlation coefficients (see Table 3). This depicted that they were completely unrelated (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The study’s endogenous variable (behavioral intentions) had an R Square of 0.576, showing effective predictability of the research model (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).



**Figure 2: Measurement Model.**

**Table 2: Convergent Validity.**

Constructs	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
1 Behavioral Intentions	0.912	0.932	0.696
2 CATSMA	0.892	0.917	0.649
3 PSMVA	0.902	0.939	0.837
4 Remuneration	0.779	0.869	0.689

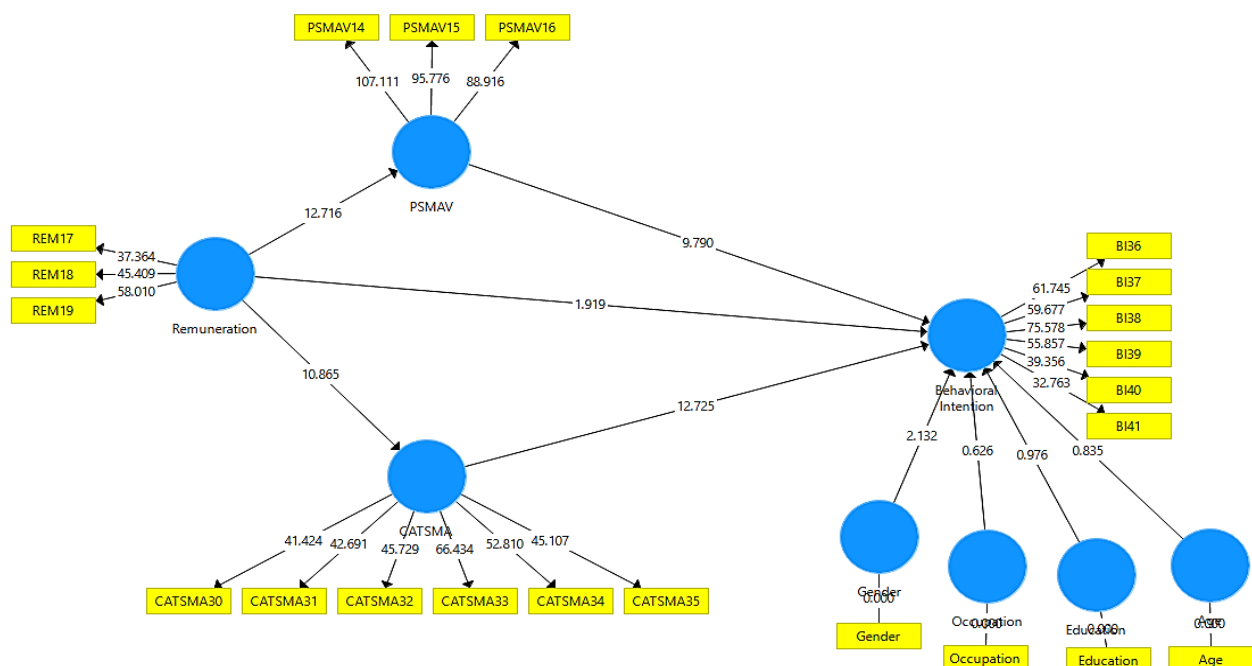
**Table 3: Discriminant Validity**

	Constructs	Behavioral Intention	CATSMA	PSMAV	Remuneration
1	Behavioral Intention	0.834			
2	CATSMA	0.690	0.806		
3	PSMAV	0.635	0.551	0.915	
4	Remuneration	0.418	0.411	0.460	0.830

### 4.3 STRUCTURAL MODEL

The structural model (see Figure 3) is a basic representation of the statistical significance of underlying relationships, which could be direct and indirect. Table 4 depicts the significance of the path coefficients, where the t-values need to be above 2 and p-values to be less than 0.05 (Hair et al., 2016). Seeing Table 4, remuneration exerts a significant positive impact on PSMAV and CATSMA, which confirms our hypothesis H1(a) and H1(b). The association between remuneration and behavioral intentions remain statistically insignificant, as the t-value and p-value do not record the set benchmarks. So, the hypothesis H1(c) is rejected. Further, the relationships between PSMAV & behavioral intentions and CATSMA & behavioral intentions remain statistically significant. Hence, the hypotheses H2 and H3 are accepted. While considering the control variables of the study, the only gender exerted a significant impact on behavioral intentions. This shows that demographic characteristics play an influential role in examining social media behavior.

For verifying the presence of any mediation among the constructs, the specific indirect effects need to be analyzed (see Table 5). With reference to the hypothesis H4, PSMAV mediates the relationship between remuneration and behavioral intentions, as the indirect effect remains statistically significant (Hair et al., 2016). Similarly, for the hypothesis H5, CATSMA also mediates the relationship between remuneration and behavioral intentions. For validating partial or full mediations, the direct effect between remuneration and behavioral intentions also needs to be observed (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014); which has already proven to be insignificant through hypothesis H1(c). Hence, both PSMAV and CATSMA fully mediate the relationship between remuneration and behavioral intentions.



**Figure 3: Structural Model.**



**Table 4: The Direct Effects.**

Hypotheses	Path Coefficients	T-Stats	P-Values
H1(a): Remuneration → PSMAN	0.460	12.716	<0.001
H1(b): Remuneration → CATSMA	0.411	10.865	<0.001
H1(c): Remuneration → Behavioral Intention	0.066	1.919	0.056
H2: PSMAN → Behavioral Intention	0.347	9.790	<0.001
H3: CATSMA → Behavioral Intention	0.473	12.725	<0.001

**Table 5: The Indirect Effects**

Hypotheses	Path Coefficients	T-Stats	P-Values
H4:Remuneration→PSMAN→Behavioral Intention	0.160	7.624	<0.001
H5:Remuneration→CATSMA→Behavioral Intention	0.195	8.569	<0.001

In terms of the study's discussion, the significant relationship of remuneration motivation with PSMAN extends the advertising model of Ducoffe (1996) and portrays that additional factors can also enhance the value of advertising. Earlier, Kim and Han (2014) showed a statistically supportive relationship of incentives to the value of smartphone advertising. The current work attests to this association within a social media context, highlighting the need for providing economic incentives on advertising done on social networks. Similarly, the significant relationship of remuneration with CATSMA shows that this motivational construct also plays an instrumental role in enhancing consumers' positive evaluations towards SMA. While considering the basic determinants of advertising, Pollay and Mittal (1993) found a supportive relationship of "good for the economy" with global attitudes of the consumers whereas Wolin et al. (2002) observed an insignificant relationship within the context of web advertising. The study's supportive relationship contributes to advertising literature pertaining to social media behavior.

Moreover, the unsupportive association of remuneration with behavioral intentions points towards the fact that financial rewards may not be the sole factor in effecting consumers' responses towards SMA. There could be causal factors (PSMAN & CATSMA) that could ultimately lead to desirable behaviors. The statistically significant relationship of PSMAN with behavioral intentions depicts that as the relative utility of advertising is raised, consumer responses to purchase and engage in eWOM behavior are also accelerated. This relationship corresponds to the work of Dao et al. (2014) who observed a positive association between PSMAN and purchase intention but propagated that it should also be tested in South Asian transitional economies. Further, a significant association of CATSMA with behavioral intentions supports the work of Hamouda (2018), who was also of the view that positive SMA evaluations ultimately lead towards desirable consumer responses; in the tourism context of Tunisia. The present work authenticates this relationship within an unexplored fashion advertising perspective of Pakistan.

In terms of indirect effects, the research work shows that PSMAN fully mediates the relationship between remuneration and behavioral intentions. Likewise, CATSMA also fully mediates the relationship between the predictor and the outcome variable. This clearly shows that economic incentives provided through SMA would not lead towards effective behavioral outcomes unless the relative utility of advertising is enhanced or desirable consumer attitudes are developed. Recently, Johnston et al. (2018) tested the mediating effects of advertising values and attitudes while considering the predictors of infotainment and credibility. By considering the causal effects of PSMAN and CATSMA between an untested motivation of remuneration and behavioral responses,

again contributes to the marketing literature on social media.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study aimed to explore an additional predictor of advertising value i.e. remuneration and examined its impact on PSMAN & CATSMA and ultimately on behavioral intentions. The investigation took place in an iterative perspective of social media which is still passing through an evolutionary phase (Harb et al., 2019). The full mediation effects of both PSMAN and CATSMA were also observed. As the research work portrayed that remuneration enhances advertising value, therefore advertisers need to back their promotional campaigns with financial rewards and incentives. Moreover, it also strengthened consumers' attitudes, which can ultimately assist the fashion-oriented organizations in promoting engagement behaviors, through social media pages and brand communities. As the current work took remuneration motivation for examining social media behavior, futuristic scholarly endeavors can empirically examine additional variables to enrich the proposed conceptual model. This may include experiential learning (Raziq et al., 2018), creativity (Lee & Hong, 2016) and corporate reputation (Hamouda, 2018).

## 6. DATA AND MATERIAL AVAILABILITY

Information can be made available by contacting the corresponding author.

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