

Crafting Equity via Experience: A Stimulus–Organism–Response Study of Content Marketing in Pakistan

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Abstract: This research investigates digital content marketing's (DCM) effects on consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) by exploring the mediating role of brand experiences in Pakistan's market context. The research implements the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) framework to study how DCM affects brand experiences which subsequently influences the perceptions of CBBE among Pakistani consumers on the internet. This study adopted a quantitative approach using structured surveys which gathered data from 386 participants who engaged with social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram) and e-commerce sites (including Daraz.pk and AliExpress among others) on a regular basis. Research instruments built on validated findings assessed DCM components (informational and entertaining and social and self-expressive content) supplementing brand experience dimensions (sensory and affective and intellectual and behavioural) and CBBE elements (brand awareness and perceived quality with brand associations and brand loyalty). Structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis and mediation tests established that DCM delivers significant brand experience improvements thus proving effective digital content strategies boost consumers' multi-faceted brand interactions. Traditional analysis showed that brand experience plays a key role in developing CBBE because authentic brand connexions help consumers build stronger brand equity. The relationship between DCM and CBBE did not reach statistical significance indicating that DCM primarily affects brand equity by influencing brand experience levels. The application of mediation analysis established brand experience as a crucial intermediary factor that connects DCM to CBBE while demonstrating its substantial mediating power. Brand experience emerges as a critical element which converts digital content marketing initiatives into positive brand equity results.

Key Words: Digital Content Marketing, Brand Experience, SOR Model, Consumer Based Brand Equity

Introduction

The rapidly evolving digital ecosystem has revolutionized marketing strategies, with digital content marketing (DCM) emerging as a pivotal tool for building and sustaining consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) (Beig & Khan, 2018). As brand interactions increasingly shift to digital platforms, consumer perceptions are being shaped by content shared via social media, e-commerce, and other interactive environments (Aditya Syahputra & Kurniawati, 2023). DCM, as defined by Pulizzi (2012) and further refined by Holliman and Rowley (2014), involves the strategic creation and dissemination of valuable, consistent content to attract, engage, and ultimately convert target audiences.

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Unlike traditional advertising, DCM is inherently consumer-centric—it seeks to meet informational, emotional, and social needs, thereby fostering deeper brand involvement and long-term loyalty (Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). As consumers increasingly demand personalized, meaningful brand interactions (Salonen et al., 2024), DCM offers a scalable, cost-effective mechanism to build trust, authenticity, and emotional resonance with target audiences.

However, while DCM's practical benefits are widely acknowledged, the psychological mechanisms through which it influences CBBE remain underexplored. Research shows that Digital Content Marketing creates positive consumer outcomes such as purchase intent and perceived value (Lou & Xie, 2020) but lacks an established theoretical framework to explain its impact on increased brand equity. This research fills the existing gap through the application of brand experience as a mediator within the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theoretical model.

The S-O-R model demonstrates how external stimuli (digital content) produce internal consumer states (organism) that drive behavioural responses (brand loyalty). The psychological "organism" of brand experience functions as the intermediary mechanism linking DCM to CBBE within this framework. Current digital adoption patterns and online brand engagement behaviour in Pakistan justify the evaluation of this correlation because the market has recently experienced rapid digital transformation (Terho et al., 2022; Triono et al., 2021).

The growth of Pakistani e-commerce platforms like Daraz.pk, AliExpress, Homeshopping.pk and Telemart.pk has not received sufficient attention from researchers who study the DCM impact on brand equity within Pakistan. The research addresses a knowledge gap through analysis of DCM-driven brand experience's effect on brand awareness and perceived quality and brand associations and brand loyalty in Pakistani markets.

This research creates both conceptual and empirical infrastructure to advance DCM psychological effects theory while providing specific marketing guidance for Pakistan's fast-growing digital sector (Tuncer, 2021, Umber et al., 2023).

Objectives

- ▶ To assess the impact of DCM on CBBE among Pakistani online consumers.
- ▶ To examine the mediating role of brand experience in the DCM–CBBE relationship within the SOR framework.

Research Questions

- ▶ How does digital content marketing influence consumer-based brand equity among Pakistani online shoppers?
- ▶ What is the role of brand experience in mediating the relationship between digital content marketing and consumer-based brand equity?

Research Problem

Despite increasing interest in DCM as a brand-building tool, there is insufficient understanding of the psychological mechanisms that explain how DCM affects CBBE. Prior studies have linked DCM to intermediate outcomes like perceived value and purchase intent, but few have contextualized these effects within a holistic model such as the SOR framework. Specifically, the mediating role of brand experiences—the consumer's internal, multidimensional response to brand stimuli—remains understudied. This research addresses that gap by proposing and empirically testing a model where brand experience translates the influence of DCM into stronger consumer-based brand equity outcomes.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on Pakistani customers who actively interact with digital content across Facebook, Instagram, and major e-commerce sites including Daraz.pk, AliExpress alongside several others. The research analyses the impact of four DCM content types (informational, entertaining, social, self-expressive) on four experiential dimensions (sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioural) which determine

the components of Customer-Based Brand Equities (brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty).

By integrating brand experience as a mediating construct within the SOR framework, this study offers a novel psychological perspective on how DCM influences consumer brand evaluations. It extends current branding and digital marketing literature by empirically demonstrating how specific content types and experiential dimensions interact to form brand equity in consumers' minds.

Literature Review

Digital Content Marketing (DCM)

The implementation of content marketing strategies to enhance brand equity stands as an essential requirement for digital commerce success according to AHMAD et al. (2021). Digital advertisement strategies based on personal connexions shifted past mass marketing methods as companies use interactive contact methods to find consumers (Jeon & Yoo, 2021). Digital Content Marketing stands as the standard marketing practise because it provides meaningful content to specific audiences which endures in significance (Pulizzi, 2012).

Through digital platforms DCM shares content that combines educational material with entertainment aspects which help build viewer-to-viewer emotional connexions (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Modern consumers require marketing content that represents their life principles thus current shifts in marketing strategies fulfil these needs (Kannan & Li, 2017). Brands utilise social media platforms and video-sharing tools and blogs to develop authentic consumer relationships for distributing their content according to Lou et al. (2019). DCM utilises a combination of content elements that combine status update features with infographics and video content that leverages interactive functionalities. The success of DCM strategy depends on delivering high-quality content that matches particular contexts through informational entertaining socially influential and self-expressive categories (Kannan & Li, 2017). The range of diverse methods used in DCM serves both consumer needs and motivational factors which makes the strategy complicated to implement.

Traditional vs. Digital Content Marketing

Traditional content marketing employs multiple platforms which include print advertisements alongside television and radio programmes and direct mail distribution for audience targeting. Traditional marketing tools gain market visibility and establish legitimacy according to Ho et al. (2020) yet they experience mounting cost challenges and restricted audience contact and interaction shortcomings Kaur and Sharma (2024). Traditional marketing methods waste effectiveness because they lack personalization features and real-time feedback along with their single-direction messaging approach (Kotler & Keller, 2018, Kumar & Gupta, 2016).

The distinctive features of DCM comprise of dual consumer connexions and instant response capabilities and personalised content generation through user behaviour data (Aditya Syahputra & Kurniawati, 2023). DCM allows brands to experiment with various formats while they gain marketing knowledge from data tracking and analyse consumer feedback to make their strategies more efficient (Gülsoy & Leblebici Koçer, 2023). The strong capabilities of DCM outperform conventional methods through its enhanced scalable and flexible structure that involves lower operational expenses.

Table 1

Aspects of Traditional and Digital Content Marketing

Aspect	Traditional Content Marketing	Digital Content Marketing
Reach and Accessibility	Limited by geographical and logistical constraints (e.g., print, TV)	Global reach with access to a vast online audience (e.g., websites, social media)
Engagement and Interaction	Mostly one-way communication, limited interactivity (e.g., print ads)	Two-way communication, real-time engagement (e.g., social media interactions)
Cost and Efficiency	High production and distribution costs (e.g., printing, broadcasting)	Lower production and distribution costs (e.g., online publishing, email)



Aspect	Traditional Content Marketing	Digital Content Marketing
Measurability and Analytics	Indirect and less precise metrics (e.g., circulation numbers, TV ratings)	Detailed and accurate analytics (e.g., web traffic, social media insights)
Personalization	Limited ability to personalize content for individual consumers	High ability to tailor content based on user data and behavior
Content Longevity	Often static and long-lasting (e.g., print magazines, billboards)	Can be updated and refreshed frequently (e.g., blog posts, social media updates)
Consumer Privacy Concerns	Generally lower, as traditional methods don't rely heavily on personal data	Higher, due to the use of personal data for targeting and personalization
Adaptability	Less flexible and slower to adapt to changes (e.g., print deadlines)	Highly adaptable, with the ability to quickly change strategies and content
Content Saturation	Lower, as traditional channels have limited space for content	Higher, due to the vast amount of content available online
Innovation	Slower pace of innovation (e.g., print design changes)	Rapid innovation with new tools and platforms emerging constantly

As shown in Table 1, the differences between traditional and digital content marketing span key dimensions such as reach, interaction, cost structure, personalization, and adaptability. These distinctions underscore why brands increasingly prioritize DCM in their strategic planning, particularly in dynamic and digitally saturated markets.

Theoretical Foundation: Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) Model

The Stimulus–Organism–Response model developed by Russell and Mehrabian (1974) provides an effective framework to connect environmental triggers with internal psychological processes which lead to consumer actions. The S–O–R model presents a three-step structure where external stimuli (such as digital content) trigger internal cognitive and emotional processes (known as brand experience) resulting in observable outcomes (including brand loyalty and purchase intention) (Dolan et al., 2019).

The S–O–R model has become widely used within marketing research to understand how marketing stimuli change consumer attitudes and perceptions along with their subsequent behaviours (Buxbaum, 2016). Different digital content acts as stimulating factors in DCM which causes cognitive and affective responses in consumers. Internal processes referred to as “organism” states work through brand experience to drive brand equity enhancements (Albarq, 2021). S–O–R usage in this particular study holds significant worth since it helps understand the psychological and emotional interactions that occur with digital content. Aesthetic content that arrives at the right time with appropriate relevance triggers sensory and emotional and intellectual responses that form brand-based perceptions and consumer brand actions (Dolan et al., 2019; Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). Through S–O–R framework researchers gain a structured approach to study how DCM creates brand outcomes using brand experience as the mediating element.

Brand Experience as a Mediator

Brand experience consists of multiple dimensions which describe the internal consumer reactions including cognition and emotion and sensorial perception as well as behavioural elements that stem from brand stimulus encounters (Schmitt, 2014; Brakus et al., 2009). Brand experience develops from both direct and indirect brand touchpoint encounters which substantially affects customer perceptions of brand value and trust and loyalty levels (Amoroso et al., 2021).

Every aspect of brand experience creates different roles during the formation of consumer–brand relationships. Brand recall and appeal increase through visual and auditory perceptual cues together with other sensory stimuli (Altaf et al., 2017). The emotional experiences consumers have with brands create both joyful moments and nostalgic experiences that build strong bonds between consumers and their brands (Tafesse & Wien, 2018; Dessart et al., 2019). The informative content in media stimulates mental learning while participation in events with media interaction generates behavioural experiences according to Amoroso et al. (2021).

As a strategic tool DCM delivers an effective mechanism to generate brand experiences. Content with informational value such as tutorials and how-to guides facilitate intellectual engagement while visually captivating content such as Instagram posts and AR features deliver sensory activation (Ferreira et al., 2022). The implementation of emotional brand content through storytelling and humorous elements builds intense emotional bonds that lead consumers to form stronger brand loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009; Hollebeek et al., 2019).

Through experiential integration DCM develops lasting brand perceptions which create awareness and consumer-based brand equity. Brand experience functions as an essential delivery mechanism through which digital content delivers Brand-Related effects to consumers (Vahabi et al., 2022; Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2019).

Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE)

Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) represents the value consumers assign to brands through their brand-related perceptions combined with their product experiences and mental associations (AHMAD et al., 2021). According to Keller (1993) CBBE requires four important components that contain brand awareness along with perceived quality in addition to brand associations and brand loyalty. A combination of brand elements determines how consumers evaluate brands, and which brands they select for purchase.

Brand awareness represents the consumers' capacity to identify or recall brands in different circumstances. Customer assessments of brand superiority led to product or service quality perceptions known as perceived quality (Akyüz et al., 2019). Brand associations describe the mental images and thoughts and consumer-related attributes that people link with specific brands. Brand loyalty indicates that customers maintain continuous brand purchases and recommendations because of their satisfaction as well as trustful bonds and emotional connexions (Keller & Brexendorf, 2019).

DCM stands out as crucial in digital platforms because it clarifies messaging while enhancing their impact and relates the messages to brand perception. Business content that delivers value and engages audiences effectively enhances brand visibility through positive connexions that establish trust while improving quality perceptions (Ebrahim, 2020; Almestarihi et al., 2021). Consumer loyalty builds when brands deliver content that speaks to their core values and lifestyle priorities (Trivedi & Sama, 2019; Kumar & Kaushik, 2018) because this material resonates with personal identity and requirements.

Brands maintain long-term brand equity through consistent content delivery that both informs and delights audiences (Tuten, 2022).

Conceptual Model and Hypotheses Development

Guided by the S-O-R framework and supported by prior empirical research, this study proposes a conceptual model in which digital content marketing (stimulus) influences consumer-based brand equity (response) through the mediating role of brand experience (organism).

This model not only addresses the direct effect of DCM on CBBE but also incorporates the psychological mechanisms—particularly brand experience—that shape how consumers internalize and respond to marketing stimuli. The multidimensional nature of both DCM (content types) and brand experience (experiential responses) provides a rich foundation for understanding how marketing inputs are translated into brand outcomes.

Research Hypotheses

- ▶ **H1:** Digital content marketing has a positive impact on consumer-based brand equity.
- ▶ **H2:** Digital content marketing has a positive impact on brand experience.
- ▶ **H3:** Brand experience has a positive impact on consumer-based brand equity.
- ▶ **H4:** Brand experience mediates the relationship between digital content marketing and consumer-based brand equity.

These hypotheses reflect a sequential causality as per the S-O-R model. The digital content (stimulus) first activates psychological processes (organism) in the form of brand experience, which in turn drives brand outcomes (response) as reflected in CBBE (Albarq, 2021; Vahabi et al., 2022).



Conceptual Framework Diagram

Figure 1

Research Framework



The proposed model, visually representing the hypothesized relationships between DCM, brand experience, and CBBE. It integrates both theoretical and empirical foundations to offer a robust model for testing in emerging digital markets like Pakistan.

Contextual Relevance: Digital Content Marketing in Pakistan

The strategic application of digital content marketing is particularly relevant in the context of Pakistan, where rapid digital adoption has reshaped consumer behaviors and marketing landscapes (Terho et al., 2022). With increased smartphone penetration and internet accessibility, Pakistani consumers are engaging with brands more frequently via digital platforms such as Daraz.pk, AliExpress, Homeshopping.pk, and Telemart.pk, alongside social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram (Triono et al., 2021).

The Pakistani market shows limited research on DCM psychological effects even though its consumer base keeps expanding. Companies that function in Pakistan using domestic brands together with international platforms create multiple content strategies without validating their impact on consumer-based brand equity. The market segment increasingly prefers media content that delivers education while providing entertainment elements and emotional depth (Tuncer, 2021; Umer et al., 2023). The unique market environment of Pakistan creates perfect conditions for researchers to investigate how different digital content materials influence brand experience and CBBE while using the S-O-R framework. The research environment provides insights into cultural aspects and technological and behavioural elements of content effectiveness for findings applicable to developing digital marketplaces. Digital content marketing (DCM) surpasses standard advertising because it delivers meaningful messages that establish both mental and emotional and behavioural consumer engagement according to scholarly studies. Brand experience acts as an important intermediate element according to the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model to transform digital inputs into meaningful consumer brand reactions. The current literature lacks sufficient understanding because very few empirical studies examine DCM's psychological effects and brand results within Pakistan's developing digital markets.

Methodology

Sampling and Participants

Pakistani consumers who used Facebook alongside Instagram and accessed e-commerce sites including Daraz.pk, AliExpress, Homeshopping.pk, and Telemart.pk made up the research subject pool. These online platforms serve as the main channels through which people in Pakistan encounter DCM thus their user base provides an appropriate demographic for understanding digital branding dynamics in emerging markets.

The study employed convenience sampling as a non-probability method to ensure accessibility for respondents using multiple digital platforms. Digital marketing research often uses this strategy because it examines internet user behaviour patterns within undefined population contexts. The study aimed to achieve demographic diversity by obtaining participants who belonged to three distinct age ranges between 16–21, 22–35, and 36–45 years.

A quantitative survey design employing cross-sectional methods studied how digital content marketing influences consumer-based brand equity through brand experience as a mediation variable. The sample size determination followed Hair et al. (2017) recommendations for structural models by using ten respondents for each estimated path. The conceptual model with three structural paths (DCM to brand

experience to CBBE) indicated that 30 respondents were needed for the study. The initial data collection yielded 430 responses, but the analysis used 386 valid responses after conducting completeness and validity cheques.

Participants were eligible for inclusion if they (a) resided in Pakistan, (b) were at least 16 years old, and (c) had prior interaction with digital marketing content via social or e-commerce platforms. Participants made voluntary decisions to participate in the study after electronically providing their consent.

Measurement Instruments

The study measurement system included a structured questionnaire for assessing digital content marketing in combination with brand experience and consumer-based brand equity. The survey items obtained from peer-reviewed scales ensured content validity from start to finish of adaptation work. Digital content marketing was measured using a multidimensional scale adapted from Koay et al. (2019), encompassing four content types: informational, entertaining, social influence, and self-expressive. Informational content referred to practical and product-related information. Entertaining content included elements designed to amuse or engage. Social influence content captured peer interactions and recommendations, while self-expressive content allowed users to identify with brand narratives that aligned with their identity or values.

The study utilized Brand experience items from Brakus et al. (2009) but adapted them following Chiu et al. (2006) and Nuseir and Elrefae (2022). The model presented a second-order construct which included four dimensions such as sensory (visual and auditory stimuli), affective (emotional arousal), intellectual (cognitive engagement and stimulation) and behavioral (user participation with brand elements). This study utilized measurement items from Sürücü et al. (2019) and MacCann et al. (2020) that originated from Keller (1993) CBBE framework. Brand awareness and perceived quality with brand associations and brand loyalty were the target indicators measured through this evaluation scale. Established research practices (Bryman & Bell, 2015) enable the survey to employ a five-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to monitor consumer attitudes.

To ensure linguistic clarity and comprehension, the questionnaire was developed in English, which is widely understood among educated Pakistani consumers. A pilot test involving 30 respondents was conducted to assess reliability and comprehension. No substantial changes were required, indicating good preliminary scale performance.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was carried out via an online survey administered through Google Forms. The survey link was distributed through digital channels including WhatsApp groups, email lists, and relevant social media communities. The online, self-administered format was selected to ensure anonymity, minimize interviewer bias, and facilitate efficient data collection across geographically dispersed respondents. The survey was divided into two sections. The first gathered demographic data (age, gender, and education), while the second included construct measurement items. Completion time ranged from 8 to 12 minutes. Out of 430 total responses, 386 were retained following data quality checks. These checks involved screening for incomplete entries, inconsistent response patterns, and straight-lining behavior.

Results and Analysis

The analysis of data through valid responses from 386 participants produced empirical findings for this study. The research results present a detailed overview that begins with demographic analysis of survey respondents followed by tests for measurement model reliability and validity and the SEM model assessment and conclusion about hypotheses and mediation effects.

Demographics

The participants represent digital users across various demographics which comprise both men and women in different age brackets. A sample of 386 individuals included 54.1% female participants while 45.9% identified as male according to the survey data. The study participants showed that 49.5% belonged to the 18 to 24 years age range while 31.9% were between 25 and 34 years old and 14.2% were distributed



across the 35 to 44 years range with 4.4% being above 44 years of age. The study participants demonstrated varying levels of education as 45.3% held bachelor's degrees while 32.4% earned master's degrees and 13.7% finished high school or had equivalent qualifications along with 8.5% who attained their doctorate degrees. The data shows that Daraz.pk was used by 43% of respondents while Instagram received usage from 25.9% of the participants. Digital content marketing campaign target users are confirmed by the substantial majority of respondents (over 77%) who spent more than 10 hours each week on digital platforms.

Descriptive Statistics

The analysis of primary constructs demonstrated a medium level of user involvement with positive consumer reactions. Study participants indicated moderate levels of acceptance towards Digital Content Marketing (DCM) by averaging 3.08 on the scale (SD = 0.54). Brand Experience (BE) exhibited a mean of 3.82 (SD = 0.58), reflecting generally favorable brand interactions. Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) recorded a mean of 4.17 (SD = 0.51), indicating strong consumer perceptions regarding brand recognition, quality, and loyalty. These values provide an encouraging empirical context to assess the hypothesized relationships.

Measurement Model Evaluation

The confirmatory factor analysis determined how well the measurement model functioned. The measurement model reached acceptable internal consistency standards because Cronbach's alpha values exceeded 0.70 for each construct: DCM ($\alpha = 0.819$), BE ($\alpha = 0.823$), and CBBE ($\alpha = 0.813$). Composite reliability (CR) values confirmed the scale reliability by ranging between 0.819 to 0.914. The constructs reached convergence validity levels according to Average Variance Extracted (AVE) metrics above 0.50 with DCM having 0.720 and BE showing 0.680 and CBBE achieving 0.780. Discriminant validity was established through Fornell-Larcker criterion analysis where construct correlations with other measures were lower than the square roots of Average Variance Extracted values. The measurement structures indicated discriminant validity through their MSV levels which stayed under their corresponding AVE amounts.

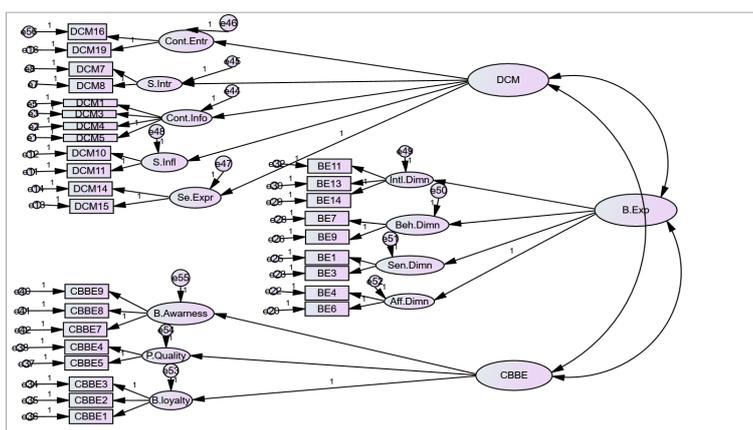
Table 1
Convergent and Discriminant Validity analysis

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	CBBE	B. Exp	DCM
CBBE	0.914	0.780	0.640	0.978	0.883		
B. Exp	0.867	0.680	0.640	0.891	0.800	0.825	
DCM	0.819	0.720	0.651	0.882	0.551	0.807	0.849

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

A Structural Equation Modelling analysis evaluated the proposed theoretical construct relationships. Observed data aligned well with the proposed model through multiple fit indices with CMIN/df < 3, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) > 0.90, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) > 0.90 and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) < 0.08. These results demonstrate how the structural model both describes variable relationships and maintains strong statistical performance.

Figure 2
Measurement Model



Regression Analysis

The study performed regression analysis with structural modelling to validate the established relationships between its constructs. The investigation shows a meaningful association among variables since brand experience maintains its role as the fundamental construct in the model structure.

The analysis reveals a strong positive statistical connection between digital content marketing (DCM) and brand experience ($\beta = 0.872, p < .001$). The findings show that users who engage with purposefully designed digital content develop stronger brand experiences. The research indicates that DCM initiatives which implement informational content along with socially or emotionally compelling material generate experiential feedback that covers sensory, affective, intellectual and behavior aspects.

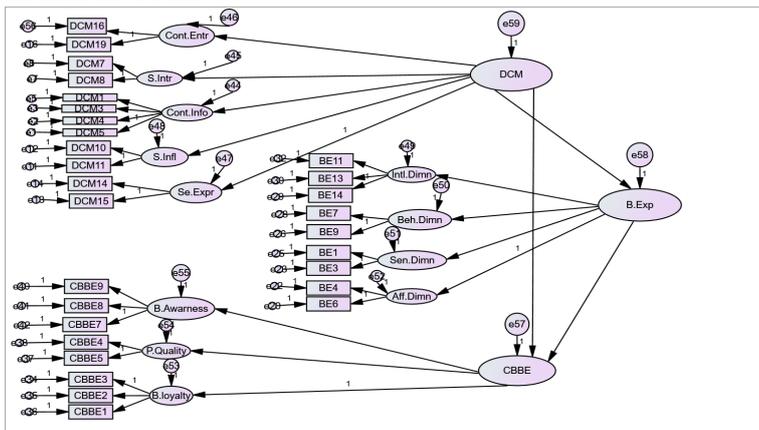
The research demonstrates that brand experience leads to a significant increase in consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) ($\beta = 0.908, p < .001$) because consumers develop strong brand loyalty, quality and awareness perceptions during favourable brand interactions. From the consumer standpoint experience plays an essential part in developing lasting brand value.

The research did not establish a direct statistical connexion between digital content marketing and consumer-based brand equity ($\beta = -0.223, p = .076$). The research indicates DCM does not create immediate brand equity effects but uses brand experience as the psychological link to affect brand equity.

Table 2
Regression Analysis Results

Relationship	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
DCM → Brand Experience	0.872	0.087	7.658	< 0.001
Brand Experience → CBBE	0.908	0.186	4.981	< 0.001
DCM → CBBE	-0.223	0.120	-1.772	0.076

Figure 3
Structural Model



Mediation Analysis

A bootstrapping analysis with 5,000 resamples investigated whether brand experience serves as a mediational link between digital content marketing and consumer-based brand equity. The examination evaluated direct and indirect impacts by employing bias-corrected confidence intervals. The research results validated total mediation because brand experience functioned as a significant statistical intermediary ($\beta = 0.672, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.396, 1.265], p < .001$) between digital content marketing and consumer-based brand equity. The results demonstrated that DCM interacts with CBBE independent of other factors since their statistical link displayed no significance at $\beta = -0.223 (p = .076)$.

Table 4
Mediation Analysis

Effect	Estimate	Lower Bound (LC)	Upper Bound (BC)	Two-Tailed Significance (BC)
Direct Effect (DCM → CBBE)	-0.223	-	-	0.076
Indirect Effect (DCM → B. Exp → CBBE)	0.672	0.396	1.265	<0.001



These findings validate the theoretical foundation which includes the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) model. The model demonstrates how digital content functions as a stimulus to create brand experiences that drive brand-related outcomes including brand loyalty and brand awareness as well as overall brand equity. Statistical findings demonstrate that brand experience operates as a fundamental psychological mechanism by which DCM strategies develop consumer-based brand equity.

Hypothesis Testing

The research results from regression and mediation analysis helped validate the four hypotheses in the conceptual framework.

- ▶ H1, which posited a direct positive relationship between DCM and CBBE, was not supported, as the effect was negative and not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.223, p = .076$).
- ▶ H2, proposing that DCM positively influences brand experience, was supported. The relationship was strong and significant ($\beta = 0.872, p < .001$), highlighting the efficacy of digital content strategies in stimulating favorable experiential responses.
- ▶ H3, which stated that brand experience positively affects consumer-based brand equity, was also supported ($\beta = 0.908, p < .001$), confirming the pivotal role of experiential factors in brand value formation.
- ▶ H4, suggesting that brand experience mediates the relationship between DCM and CBBE, received full empirical support. The indirect effect was significant ($\beta = 0.672, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.396, 1.265], p < .001$), and the absence of a significant direct effect confirms the mediating role of brand experience.

These results reinforce the theoretical assumptions of the study and emphasize the psychological mechanism through which digital marketing affects brand outcomes. In particular, they highlight the importance of designing content that not only reaches the audience but also activates emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement, ultimately leading to improved brand equity.

Table 5

Summary of Hypothesis Testing and Interpretation

Hypothesis	Supported	Interpretation
H1: DCM → CBBE	No	Direct effect of DCM on CBBE is not significant.
H2: DCM → Brand Experience	Yes	DCM has a positive impact on Brand Experience.
H3: Brand Experience → CBBE	Yes	Brand Experience has a positive impact on CBBE.
H4: DCM → Brand Experience → CBBE	Yes	Brand Experience mediates the relationship between DCM and CBBE.

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The research evaluated Digital Content Marketing's (DCM) influence on Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) while analyzing brand experience as a mediating element. The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework is used by this research in Pakistan to demonstrate how DCM strategies develop brand worth by triggering specific psychological reactions in customers.

The utilization of DCM leads to better brand experience that creates positive effects on CBBE. Research confirms that digital content operational systems operate as described in H2 and H3. Brand experiences that include sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioural dimensions emerged from research by Hudson et al. (2016), Hollebeek et al. (2014) as well as Algharabat et al. (2019) after they investigated the combination of informative content with emotional resonance and visual appeal. Consumer brand perception development takes place after these brand-related experiences because they build brand awareness and loyalty while strengthening quality perception and positive brand associations that represent essential CBBE principles (Brakus et al, 2009; Hollebeek et al, 2014).

Brand experience acts as a complete mediation link between DCM components and CBBE because significant direct causation between them is non-existent (H4). The results support using brand experience as a fundamental psychological construct in the S–O–R framework which connects external marketing input with brand perception outcomes. Brand experience serves as a fundamental explanatory

mechanism which transforms digital content into meaningful brand outcomes according to Vahabi et al. (2022) and Rodríguez-Torrico et al. (2019). Contextually, the findings reveal that platforms such as Daraz.pk, AliExpress, and Homeshopping.pk—alongside socially driven media like Instagram and Facebook—play a pivotal role in facilitating DCM strategies in Pakistan. These platforms offer multimedia-rich environments that support immersive, visually engaging content and user interaction. Brands leveraging these digital ecosystems can deepen consumer engagement and cultivate lasting brand relationships by strategically deploying content tailored to local consumer behaviors and preferences.

The study makes a theoretical contribution by extending the S–O–R framework to the domain of digital branding and empirically validating brand experience as a mediator in the DCM–CBBE relationship. Moreover, it contributes granular insights into the specific dimensions of DCM (informational, entertaining, self-expressive, and social influence) and how they interact with corresponding brand experience facets.

Looking forward, the findings raise relevant questions for further research. For example, the effectiveness of specific DCM content types may vary across product categories. Informational content may better suit high-involvement products, while entertaining content may align more with lifestyle or experiential brands. Additionally, the role of user-generated content (UGC)—an emerging force in digital environments—was beyond this study’s scope but represents a promising avenue for understanding consumer co-creation in brand value formation.

Theoretical Implications

This research contributes to the growing body of literature at the intersection of digital marketing and branding by advancing the application of the S–O–R model in a digital context. Specifically, it enriches our understanding of how content-based stimuli (DCM) are processed through internal experiential states (brand experience) to generate strategic brand outcomes (CBBE).

Through this research the theoretical constructs became more refined by determining which content types and response experiences have the most significant impacts. The research streamlines consumer–brand modelling while creating opportunities to compare various models that include mediation and moderation effects.

The analysis highlights how important it is to maintain flexible strategies and continuous feedback loops in DCM approaches. Market volatility along with consumer behavioural changes demands ongoing content assessment from marketers who should implement feedback cycles within their branding strategies. A successive method of analysis provides potential conceptual support for marketing strategies that adapt quickly or execute in real-time.

The research concludes by emphasising the requirement of integrated marketing efforts which link DCM to other contact points including store experiences and customer service and traditional media channels to build a unified brand environment.

Practical Implications

The research results provide strategic insights for practitioners who want to maximise their DCM operations for brand equity improvement. Brands need to focus on creating superior content materials which provide valuable information combined with emotional appeal. The combination of informational content helps establish credibility while explaining products better while engaging visual content creates emotional connections that develop brand affection.

Local digital content should be integrated with cultural characteristics and consumer preferences that exist in Pakistan's market. When marketing approaches are culturally sensitive content becomes more relevant to customers, and they become more receptive to it.

Multi-channel distribution is essential. Utilizing a coordinated content strategy across e-commerce platforms and social media ensures broader reach and consistent brand messaging. Cross-platform integration not only maximizes exposure but also reinforces experiential cues that drive brand equity. Finally, the findings highlight the need for data-driven personalization. Marketers should leverage behavioral data and analytics to tailor content by segment, ensuring resonance with different demographic



and psychographic groups. The experience reaction to DCM, one of the psychological mechanisms described in this study, can be used as a foundation for developing more focused, successful content strategies.

Limitations

The study bears various constraints while delivering its essential findings. The research results may have limited widespread application because a convenience sampling method was used. Future research initiatives should incorporate probability-based sampling to improve the study representativeness. The use of a cross-sectional design limits researchers from establishing causal relationships. The continuous transformation of brand perceptions requires experimental or longitudinal studies to adequately capture these changes.

Third, the research was conducted exclusively within the Pakistani market, and the cultural specificity may limit applicability to other contexts. Comparative studies across regions or cultures are warranted to explore whether the DCM–brand experience–CBBE linkages hold globally.

Fourth, this study did not account for potential moderating variables, such as user engagement levels, product involvement, or consumer demographics. Future work could model these moderators to explore variations in the strength of DCM's impact across different consumer segments.

Prospects for Further Research

This study suggests a number of directions for further investigation. In order to gain insight into the sustainability of brand-building initiatives, longitudinal studies could look at how DCM influences CBBE over time. Cross-cultural comparisons are also recommended to assess the universality or cultural contingency of the mediation process observed here.

Additionally, the integration of emerging technologies such as AR, VR, and AI in DCM strategies represents a promising frontier. Understanding how these tools enhance brand experience and influence equity formation would extend the theoretical model into next-generation digital contexts.

Future studies might also explore the interface between DCM and other digital strategies such as influencer marketing or experiential marketing, examining their relative and combined effects on brand equity. Research on segmentation strategies, including age, socio-economic status, or digital literacy, could also inform more precise personalization of content.

Finally, scholars should examine negative outcomes of DCM, including content fatigue or perceived intrusiveness. Not all digital content is beneficial and identifying tipping points where content begins to erode rather than enhance brand equity would offer a critical counterbalance to prevailing assumptions.

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Questionnaire

What platform do you use most frequently for online purchases

Daraz.pk Ali Express Homeshopping.pk Telemart.pk
 Instagram pages/links Facebook Pages/Links

Time Consumed on Digital Platform

5-10 Hours
 10-15 Hours
 15 hours and above

Please tick ✓ under the appropriate option

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Digital Content Marketing
Content Information**

1.	The content about products on the digital platform is efficient to get information.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2.	The content about products on the digital platform provides the latest information.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3.	The content about products on the digital platform satisfies my needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4.	The content is helpful in making purchase decisions about the products.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5.	The content provides details on product features and specifications I need	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Social Interaction (SI)

6.	The content about products on the digital platform can meet my expectation to interact with like-minded people.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7.	I maintain close social relationships with some users.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8.	I spend a lot of time interacting with some users on this digital platform	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9.	The content enables me to connect with a community of users with similar interests.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Social Influence

10.	I like to know which digital platform make good impressions on others	<input type="checkbox"/>				
11.	I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing from the same digital platform that others purchase from.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12.	I often choose the digital platform my friends expect me to buy from	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Self-Expression (SE)

13.	The content on this digital platform reflects my personal choices	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14.	The content about products on the digital platform can make me gain a sense of belonging	<input type="checkbox"/>				
15.	I feel that content on digital platform reflects who I am	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Content Entertainment (CE)

16.	The content about products on the digital platform is exciting	<input type="checkbox"/>				
17.	The content about products on the digital platform is entertaining	<input type="checkbox"/>				
18.	The content is creative and innovative	<input type="checkbox"/>				
19.	The content about products on the digital platform is attractive	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Brand Experience

Sensory Dimension

- 20. This digital platform makes a strong impression on my visual senses or other senses
- 21. This digital platform does not appeal to my senses
- 22. This digital platform appeals to my visual and aesthetic sense

Affective Dimension

- 23. This digital platform induces feelings and sentiments
- 24. I do not have strong emotions for this digital platform
- 25. The content on the digital platform elicits positive emotions about the brand

Behavioural Dimension

- 26. This digital platform results in bodily experiences
- 27. This digital platform is not action-oriented
- 28. I engage in buying behavior when I use this digital platform

Intellectual Dimension

- 29. I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this digital platform
- 30. This digital platform stimulates my curiosity and problem solving
- 31. This digital platform does not make me think
- 32. The content encourages me to learn more about the digital platform
- 33. I feel mentally stimulated by thinking about the digital platform content

Consumer-Based Brand Equity

Brand Loyalty

- 34. I consider myself to be loyal to the digital platform
- 35. The digital platform would be my first choice
- 36. I will not buy from another platform, if this digital platform is available

Perceived Quality

- 37. The likely quality of the digital platform is extremely high
- 38. The likelihood that the digital platform would be functional is very high

Brand awareness/associations

- 39. I can recognise the digital platform among others.
- 40. I am well aware of the digital platform
- 41. Some characteristics of the digital platform come to my mind quickly
- 42. I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of the digital platform
- 43. I have difficulty in imagining the digital platform in my mind

Demographics

1. Gender Male Female 2. Age 18-24 25-34 35-44 45 & above

3. Education SSC/Equivalent FA/Equivalent Bachelor/Equivalent Master PhD

THANKS FOR YOUR TIME!