



FACTORS INFLUENCING ONLINE PURCHASE INTENTION WITH THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Shafique-ur-Rehman^a, TalatBano^b and AnamBhatti^c

^a*Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz School of Accountancy, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Kedah. Email:shafiqueurrehman2018@gmail.com*

^b*Department of Business Administration, University of Sargodha, Gujranwala Campus, Pakistan.(Email:talatbano4@gmail.com)*

^c*College of Business, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia. (Email: Gujranwalaanam091@gmail.com)*

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the paper is to determine the mediating role of customer satisfaction between celebrity endorsement, brand equity, corporate social responsibility and online purchase intention in Pakistan. Some 600 questionnaires were distributed among consumers for data collection through convenience sampling. Out of these, 398 questionnaires were returned, 14 questionnaires had some missing values and were removed from the sample; only 384 questionnaires were finally used in the analysis. Punjab has a total of 36 districts and data were collected from 16 districts having the majority of the population. PLS-SEM was used for data analysis. Results reveal that only celebrity endorsement has a direct influence on online purchase intention. Furthermore, independent variables have a significant influence on customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction significantly mediates between celebrity endorsement, brand equity, corporate social responsibility, and online purchase intention. This study contributes to practice in that online retailers can consider celebrity endorsement, brand equity, corporate social responsibility, and customer satisfaction in their decision to enhance online purchase intention. This paper is one of the pioneer studies that determine celebrity endorsement, brand equity, and corporate social responsibility at second-order with customer satisfaction as a mediating variable with online purchase intention.

JEL Classification: M37, M14, M31

Keywords: Celebrity endorsement, Brand equity, Corporate social responsibility, Customer satisfaction, Online purchase intention

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, online purchase intention (OPI) is rapidly increase due to rapid change in internet technology. Online transaction is the feasible as internet technology is considered a vital tool for business and communication all over the world (Kamalul Ariffin, Mohan, and Goh, 2018). Internet World Stats (2018) reported that 4.2 billion people use internet in 2017, representing a 577% increase over internet users in 2000. According to Statista (2018), more than 1.66 billion users bought goods online worth 2.3 trillion US dollars.

In Pakistan, the total population is 194.8 million and only 30 million people use the internet that is 18% of total population (Bhatti, Saad, and Gbadebo, 2018). However, it is expected that internet users in Pakistan will reach 56 million in 2019 (Bhatti et al., 2018). In Pakistan, only 3% of the people purchase goods online and the remaining 97% purchase traditionally and there is a significant gap available to study this area to see what factors determines OPI (Rehman, 2018). However, as OPI is an emerging area for developing country and need to study further.

Literature shows that celebrity endorsement (CE), brand equity (BE), corporate social responsibility (CSR) and customer satisfaction must be used to determine OPI (Gauns et al., 2018; Hanaysha, 2018) and these factors cannot be ignored. Celebrity endorsement is a valuable advertising tool in the current market all over the world. Online retailers use celebrity endorsements because it helps to increase consumer intention to purchase goods (Gauns et al., 2018). Organizations pay more attention to celebrities to promote products and services with every passing day.

Nowadays, most of the organizations focus to develop a strong brand because it has several benefits in creating organizational identity in the market and gaining competitive advantage. Evidence recommends that brand equity considerably influences consumer brand variety intentions (Lu, Gursoy, and Lu, 2015). Consumer-based brand equity including brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand quality, and brand association all play a role in enhancing consumer purchase intention (Liu et al., 2017). CSR is one of the significant factors that organizations use to achieve competitive advantage because organizations responsible for society have a significant image in the mind of customers and cannot be ignored in measuring consumer intention to purchase goods. This study uses customer

satisfaction as a mediating variable between celebrity endorsement, brand equity, CSR, and online purchase intention.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 RETAIL INDUSTRY IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan is a developing economy with more youth population that is more tech-savvy as compared to older generations (Profit, 2018). According to Nielsen, in Pakistan the growth of internet transactions rapidly increase over the last few years due to accelerated internet and mobile phone penetration, and 82% of Pakistani urban consumers made an online purchase in 2018 (Profit, 2018). The total number of local e-commerce retailers registered with banks reached 1,094 and the consumers carried out 3.4 million internet transactions valued at Rs. 18.7 billion (Profit, 2018). In Pakistan, e-commerce sales reached Rs. 622 million dollars and it is estimated to reach one billion dollars by 2020 (Profit, 2018). Hence, this is an emerging area in Pakistan that warrants further study. In Pakistan, less attention has been paid to celebrity endorsement, CSR, brand equity, and customer satisfaction (Rabia et al., 2019; Raza et al., 2018); and this study focuses on these factors.

2.2 CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT (CE)

Celebrity endorsers are the persons well-known for their achievements, attractiveness, expertise, and beneficial to society. CE is a marketing strategy and most of big organizations engage famous celebrities and this gives enormous advantage to them. Despite this, celebrity endorsers sometimes do not offer effective results and are not cost-effective for organizations. Friedman and Friedman (1979) defined celebrity endorsers as “persons well-known in society due to their area of achievement”. CE has many dimensions but in this study, CE includes physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise.

CE plays an important role in determining consumer purchase intention (CPI) in both traditional and modern environments. CE has captured much attention for researchers as well as organizations to determine CPI; but CE does not necessarily benefit the organization every time because sometimes it may have minimal effect. Nevertheless, CE is considered an important

indicator in determining CPI (Priyankara et al., 2017). In fact CE has shown some mixed results (positive and negative) (Abbas et al., 2018), or no influence (Vidyanata, Sunaryo, and Hadiwidjojo, 2018) on OPI. Moreover, customer satisfaction is a significant factor in examining CPI (Chi, 2018). Furthermore, CE is a significant factor that influences customer satisfaction (Prasad, 2013). As the findings between CE and CPI are inconclusive, this calls for further study with the help of a mediator that explains this relationship well. The following are the proposed hypotheses:

- H1: CE has a significant influence on OPI
- H2: Customer satisfaction significantly mediates between CE and OPI
- H3: CE has a significant influence on customer satisfaction
- H4: Customer satisfaction has a significant influence on OPI

2.3 BRAND EQUITY (BE)

BE refers to the worth and importance of a specific brand and it is a marketing tool used to enhance the worth of the specific brand. Buil, Martínez, and De Chernatony (2013) described BE as a core concept of marketing and a highly studied area but the literature on BE is largely fragmented and still inconclusive. Aaker (1991), and Keller (1993) developed the base for consumer-based equity. Consumer-based brand equity includes brand awareness, brand association, brand quality, and brand loyalty.

BE is an indicator that should be used to measure consumer purchase intention as it plays a significant role in enhancing consumer intention to purchase in both the offline and online perspective. Dimensions of BE such as brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand quality, and brand association are considered among the most significant factors in enhancing CPI (Liu et al., 2017). Conversely, literature demonstrates that BE has mixed results with CPI (Walangitan, Pangemanan, and Rumokoy, 2015). For instance, BE and brand association has a significant influence; while brand awareness and brand loyalty have no influence on CPI. Inconclusive results between BE and CPI, however, call for further studies. All BE dimensions such as brand awareness, brand association, brand quality, and brand loyalty plays a significant role in explaining customer satisfaction (Kumar, 2014). The following are the proposed hypotheses:

- H5: BE has a significant influence on OPI
 H6: Customer satisfaction significantly mediates between BE and OPI
 H7: BE has a significant influence on customer satisfaction

2.4 CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

CSR refers to a situation, where organizations not only work for the betterment of their businesses only, but also responsible for the betterment of society. In these days, CSR is attracting much attention because high competition in the market demands that organizations differentiate by performing something extra for society. In this study, CSR includes economic responsibility, legal responsibility, ethical responsibility, and philanthropic responsibility.

CSR is an indicator differentiating traditional/offline organizations from modern/online organization. It is an important factor that can influence CPI. Few of the studies conclude that corporate social responsibility is crucial in determining CPI (Bhatti, 2018). Several studies demonstrate that CSR is an important factor that must be considered at the time of determining CPI (Guchait, Anner, and Wu, 2011). However, one of the studies reveals that there is a need to study CSR with CPI in future (Amin and Cudjoe, 2015). CSR dimensions such as economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic have a significant influence on customer satisfaction (Irshad et al., 2017). However, CSR has shown mixed findings with customer satisfaction; ethical responsibilities and philanthropic responsibilities have significantly increase customer satisfaction, while economic responsibilities and legal responsibilities have no influence on customer satisfaction (Hassan, Nareeman, and Pauline, 2013). Hence, this relationship needs further study in the future. The followings are the proposed hypotheses:

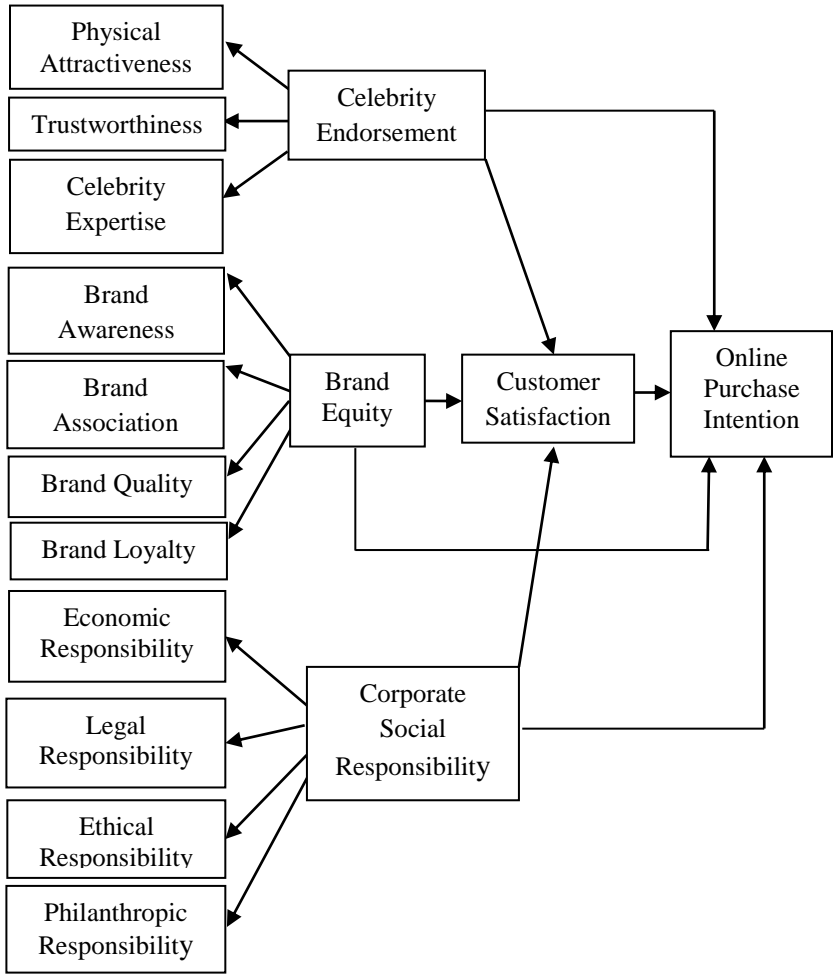
- H8: CSR has a significant influence on OPI
 H9: Customer satisfaction significantly mediates between CSR and OPI
 H10: CSR has a significant influence on customer satisfaction

3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

Researchers give high attention to research methodology because it helps to achieve objectives in any type of study (Rehman, Mohamed, and Ayoup, 2019). To solve both theoretical and practical problem there is a need to use appropriate analysis techniques (Rehman et al.,

2019). Therefore, the current study used quantitative and correlational in nature to achieve the research objectives. In addition, data were collected by using questionnaire technique.

FIGURE 1
Theoretical Framework



3.1 QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT

The theoretical framework of this paper consists of five constructs and each construct is measured by using some items. The questionnaire was designed on the basis of some prior studies regarding study variables and items of all constructs adapted rather

than adopted. The questionnaire has a total of 53 items on (celebrity endorsement, brand equity, corporate social responsibility, customer satisfaction, and OPI). Questionnaire items were measured by using a five-point Likert scale ('1' for strongly disagree and '5' for strongly agree). In the CE, physical attractiveness (five items), trustworthiness (five items), and celebrity expertise (five items) were adapted from Ohanian (1990). In the BE, brand awareness (three items) and brand loyalty (three items) were adapted from Yoo and Donthu (2001), brand association consists five items adapted from Aaker (1991), and brand quality consists of four items adapted from Aaker (1991) and Yoo and Donthu (2001). Under CSR, economic responsibility consists of five items, legal responsibility consists of five items, ethical responsibility five items, and philanthropic responsibility consists of five items adapted from Carroll (1991). Customer satisfaction consists of three items adapted from Wixom and Todd (2005) and Zhou (2011). OPI consists of three items and adapted from Zhao, Deng, and Zhou (2017).

3.2 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

In this research, our respondents were consumers that want to purchase online in the Pakistani environment. There are five provinces in Pakistan namely Punjab, Sindh, Pakhtoon Khuwah, Baluchistan, and Gilgit Baltistan. In this study, our focus was on Punjab province because its literacy rate is much higher than in other provinces. In Punjab, there are 36 districts and we collected data from 16 districts: Lahore, Gujranwala, Bahawalpur, Faisalabad, Jhelum, Mandi Bahauddin, Multan, Okara, Sialkot, Gujarat, Narowal, Rawalpindi, Vehari, Sahiwal, Sheikhpura, and Sahiwal. We personally visited and gathered consumers in one place in front of various big shopping malls and asked who already experienced online shopping, then gave questionnaires to those consumers. Some 600 questionnaires were distributed using the personal administered technique in 16 districts. In this study, we used convenience sampling technique.

3.3 SAMPLE SIZE

According to Comrey and Lee (1992) there are different levels of sample size such as less than 50 respondents is considered weaker sample, between 50 to 100 respondents is considered weak sample, 200 respondents considered adequate sample size, 300 respondents good sample, 500 respondents very good, and 1000 respondents considered excellent. Hence, 600 respondents chosen are considered

a very good sample size. Out of 600 questionnaires, 398 questionnaires were returned, 14 were deleted because of some missing and misleading values, and final analysis was run on only 384 questionnaires.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, SmartPLS 3.2.8 used to determine the theoretical model because this is growing quickly as a second generation technique recommended (Hair et al., 2016). In SmartPLS tool bootstrapping is a technique used to calculate factor loadings, as well as path coefficients as suggested by (Hair et al., 2016). Some of the prior researchers conclude that partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) gives better results regarding construct validities rather than covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) (Afthanorhan, 2013; Hair et al., 2016). By performing PLS-SEM techniques researchers compute two research models such as the measurement model and structural model.

4.1 MEASUREMENT MODEL

In computing the Measurement model we measured the convergent validity and discriminant validity.

4.1.1 CONVERGENT VALIDITY

According to Rehman, Bhatti, and Chaudhry (2019) convergent validity refers the level that items of a particular construct measure that construct. Moreover, convergent validity refers to a situation where all items reflect efficiently to their linked indicators (Zhou, 2013). In convergent validity, researchers need to calculate three things such as factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR) as suggested (Hair et al., 2016). The standardized criterion for these indicators is recommended (Hair et al., 2016). For instance, factor loadings and AVE values must be equal to or higher than 0.70 and CR values should be at least 0.70.

Hayduk and Littvay (2012) reveal that researchers eliminate all items with factor loadings below 0.50 to get good results regarding AVE and CR. Another reason behind eliminating factor loading below 0.50 is that this act strengthens the theoretical model. Table 1 demonstrates how the AVE, CR, and factor loadings values fulfill the above-mentioned criterion. A construct that has

Cronbach's alpha 0.70 or more is deemed outstanding (Mallery and George 2003). Hence, this study fulfills this condition as mentioned in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Convergent Validity

First Order Constructs	Second Order Constructs	Items	Factor Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Physical Attractiveness		PHA1	0.705	0.592	0.853	
		PHA 2	0.731			
		PHA3	0.830			
		PHA4	0.806			
Trustworthiness		TRW1	0.709	0.596	0.880	
		TRW2	0.824			
		TRW3	0.796			
		TRW4	0.760			
		TRW5	0.766			
Celebrity Expertise		CEXP1	0.907	0.805	0.925	
		CEXP2	0.917			
		CEXP3	0.867			
	Celebrity Endorsement	Physical Attractiveness	0.896	0.831	0.936	0.920
		Board Independence	0.926			
		Board Diversity	0.913			
Brand Awareness		BAW1	0.902	0.768	0.868	
		BAW2	0.849			
Brand Association		BAS1	0.953	0.912	0.954	
		BAS2	0.957			
Brand Quality		BQ1	0.817	0.736	0.848	
		BQ2	0.897			
Brand Loyalty		BL1	0.910	0.809	0.894	
		BL2	0.888			
	Brand Equity	Brand Awareness	0.812	0.614	0.864	0.852
		Brand Association	0.794			
		Brand Quality	0.740			
		Brand Loyalty	0.787			

TABLE 1 (continued)

First Order Constructs	Second Order Constructs	Items	Factor Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Economic Responsibility		ECR1	0.926	0.857	0.923	
		ECR2	0.925			
Legal Responsibility		LGR1	0.737	0.646	0.845	
		LGR2	0.840			
		LGR3	0.830			
Ethical Responsibility		ETR3	0.925	0.812	0.896	
		ETR4	0.877			
Philanthropic Responsibility		PHR1	0.933	0.871	0.931	
		PHR3	0.933			
	Corporate Social Responsibility	Economic Responsibility	0.741	0.685	0.896	0.890
		Legal Responsibility	0.890			
		Ethical Responsibility	0.795			
		Philanthropic Responsibility	0.877			
Customer Satisfaction		CUS1	0.841	0.619	0.829	0.719
		CUS2	0.733			
		CUS3	0.783			
Consumer Purchase Intention		CPI1	0.759	0.672	0.859	0.760
		CPI2	0.886			
		CPI3	0.809			

4.1.2 DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

Discriminant validity means a condition where every construct differs from other constructs in a theoretical framework (Rehman et al., 2019). There are two basic methods to compute discriminant validity and researchers can use any one method (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). First, AVE square root values compared with correlation values. Second, AVE values compared with the squared correlations. In this paper, we use the first method to compute discriminant validity. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), upper diagonal values in the discriminant validity table should be higher than other values in respect of same column and rows and Table 2 fulfill this criterion as shown in bold form.

TABLE 2
Discriminant Validity

Variables	CE	BE	CSR	CUST	CPI
CE	0.911				
BE	0.299	0.783			
CSR	0.541	0.222	0.827		
CUST	0.104	0.222	0.286	0.787	
CPI	0.200	0.226	0.300	0.256	0.820

4.2 STRUCTURAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

Structural equation model is the second requirement in SmartPLS after computing measurement model requirement. In this paper, we use the SmartPLS 3.2.8 tool for running a structural model. Two things have been done while running structural models such as algorithm and bootstrapping technique. Bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples used to get significant values of factor loadings and path coefficients as suggested (Hair et al., 2016). Table 3 demonstrates that this has total 10 hypotheses, out of which seven hypotheses are direct (without mediating or moderation) and three hypotheses are indirect (mediating).

Table 3 reveals that celebrity endorsement has a significant positive influence on online purchase intention with the beta value = 0.108, t-value = 3.015, and p-value = 0.003; hence H1 is accepted. Moreover, brand equity has a significant influence on online purchase intention with beta value = 0.011, t-value = 0.359, and p-value = 0.720 so our hypothesis H2 is not accepted. In addition, corporate social responsibility has no influence on online purchase intention with beta value = 0.006, t-value = 0.212, and p-value = 0.832 which means our hypothesis H3 is not supported. Meanwhile, customer satisfaction has a highly significant and positive influence on online purchase intention with beta value = 0.814, t-value = 57.371, and p-value = 0.000, so hypothesis H4 is accepted. Celebrity endorsement has significant and positive influence on customer satisfaction with beta value = 0.120, t-value = 2.088, and p-value = 0.037, hence H5 is supported. In addition, brand equity has positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction with beta value = 0.190, t-value = 2.488, and p-value = 0.013 and this means hypothesis H6 is accepted. Meanwhile, corporate social

responsibility has a significant and positive influence on customer satisfaction with beta value = 0.309, t-value = 5.392, and p-value = 0.000 and it means H7 is accepted. Besides that, customer satisfaction significantly mediates between celebrity endorsement and online purchase intention with beta value = 0.097, t-value=2.085, p-value = 0.037 hence H8 is supported Moreover, customer satisfaction significantly mediates between brand equity and online purchase intention with beta value = 0.154, t-value = 2.518, and p-value = 0.012 and this means H9 is accepted. And because customer satisfaction significantly mediates between corporate social responsibility and online purchase intention with beta value = 0.251, t-value = 5.428, and p-value = 0.000 hypothesis H10 is accepted.

TABLE 3
Direct Relationships

Hypotheses	Paths	Original Sample	Std. Dev.	T-values	P-values	Results
H1	CE--> OPI	0.108	0.036	3.015	0.003	Sig
H2	BE --> OPI	0.011	0.031	0.359	0.720	Not Sig
H3	CSR --> OPI	0.006	0.03	0.212	0.832	Not Sig
H4	CST --> OPI	0.814	0.014	58.370	0.000	Sig
H5	CE--> CST	0.120	0.057	2.088	0.037	Sig
H6	BE --> CST	0.190	0.076	2.488	0.013	Sig
H7	CSR --> CST	0.309	0.057	5.392	0.000	Sig
H8	CE--> CST--> OPI	0.097	0.047	2.085	0.037	Sig
H9	BE--> CST--> OPI	0.154	0.061	2.518	0.012	Sig
H10	CSR--> CST--> OPI	0.251	0.046	5.428	0.000	Sig

CE= Celebrity endorsement; CST= Customer satisfaction; BE= Brand equity; CSR= Corporate social responsibility; OPI= Online purchase intention

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The objective of this study is to determine the mediating role of customer satisfaction between celebrity endorsement, brand equity, CSR, and OPI in the context of Pakistan. The results reveal that celebrity endorsement has a significant influence on OPI. The findings are consistent with the findings of Maroof (2017) and Priyankara et al. (2017). Moreover, customer satisfaction significantly mediates between celebrity endorsement and OPI. Celebrity endorsement also plays a crucial role in determining customer satisfaction and organizations feel that their customers

accept their product when they hire the services of a famous celebrity. The results are consistent with the work of Prasad (2013). Moreover, customer satisfaction is deemed a significant construct in determining OPI (Chi, 2018). In addition, brand equity has no direct influence on OPI. The findings are similar to the findings of Pangemanan et al. (2015) that brand equity has no influence on purchase intention. Customer satisfaction significantly mediates between brand equity and online purchase intention. In addition, brand equity has a significant influence on customer satisfaction. These results are consistent with Kumar (2014) that CSR has no influence on OPI. The results suggest that consumers do not focus on CSR only but also other factors in making a purchase decision. The results are similar to that in Eshra and Beshir (2017). Moreover, customer satisfaction significantly mediates between CSR and OPI. In addition, CSR is considered a significant factor in measuring customer satisfaction. The results of this study are consistent with (Irshad et al., 2017).

6. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Theoretically, this study contributes as a pioneer study that used customer satisfaction as mediating variable between three second-order variables such as celebrity endorsement, brand equity, and CSR with OPI by using the theory of planned behavior that previous studies largely ignored. This study suggests that customer satisfaction plays a vital role in explaining the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. Findings of this study have a variety of practical contributions that may benefit online retailers. In Pakistan, internet purchase is an emerging trend and, in the future, customers are expected to move from offline buying to online buying. This study found that BE and CSR have no direct influence on OPI but have an indirect influence. Hence, customer satisfaction cannot be ignored in determining OPI. Online retailers can focus on these constructs in their planning if they want to boost CPI.

7. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This research was carried out in the Pakistani culture and there is a chance that findings differ when applying this theoretical framework in other countries. The findings of this research significantly contribute to literature on celebrity endorsement, brand equity, CSR,

customer satisfaction, and OPI. The results of the current study cannot be generalized to the whole world. Hence, this model deserves further study in other economies before the results can be generalized. In addition, we studied only celebrity endorsement, brand equity, CSR, and customer satisfaction in determining online purchase intention. In future, researchers can increase exogenous variables by adding perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, commitment, trust, and past experience to determine OPI. There is a need to test the current study model in both developing and developed economies with help from the theory of planned behavior.

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