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Facebook Advertisements' Impact on Undergraduate Consumer's Purchasing Intention in Sindh, Pakistan

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Abstract

This study focuses on the impact of Facebook advertisements on undergrad consumer's purchasing intention in Pakistan. Furthermore, it explores undergraduate preferences toward Facebook advertisements. Another purpose is to determine the undergrad's attitudes toward Facebook advertisements among undergrad consumers' purchasing intentions. Last but not least is to evaluate the mediating role of brand image and brand equity through Facebook advertisements among undergrad consumers' purchasing intention. All constructs of the study are adopted from reviews of the previous literature. A total of 278 sampled data was collected among the undergraduate Facebook advertisement users at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan. Researchers applied the semi-structured survey within the purposive sample technique. The data was examined by SPSS version 28. The result of R Square ($R^2 = 0.529$) affirmed that Facebook advertisements have a favorable impact on consumer's purchasing intentions, which ensures the primary objective of this study. The key finding of the research reveals that Facebook advertisements have a positively significant impact on preferences, attitudes, brand images, and equity among undergraduate consumer's purchasing intentions. All findings have been constituted by the means of the proposed model.

Keywords: Facebook advertisements, consumer's purchasing intention, preferences, attitude, brand images, and brand equity.

1. Introduction

In the digital age, social media platforms have become integral channels for businesses to connect with consumers and promote their products or services. Social media advertisements have a 53.5 % positive influence on Bangladeshi adolescents toward online purchasing behavior (Nobi et al., 2023). Moreover, it has become part of a trillion Facebook users in their daily lives. Besides this, people also spend more time on social media (Appel et al., 2020). The current rate of social media users in Pakistan is about 71.70 million in January 2023, which equates to 30.1 % of the total population (Digital 2023). In early 2023, Facebook had 37.30 million Pakistani users (Digital 2023). However, Facebook's potential and reach in Pakistan fell by 6.3 million (-14.4%) from 2022 to 2023 (Digital 2023).

Scholars suggested research on moderate factors of Facebook advertisements, brand image, brand equity, consumer preferences, and purchase intention (Abuhashesh et al., 2021; Imtiaz et al., 2021; Murtiasih et al., 2014; Saternus et al., 2022). Additionally, research recommends exploring a wide range of brand product categories and celebrity endorsements to understand larger and more diverse participants from various ethnic backgrounds, age groups, and genders (Min et al., 2019).

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In Delta State, consumers don't trust digital advertisements, despite being informative (Ivwithren et al., 2023). Facebook advertisements are factors related to brand image, brand equity, and purchase intention (Imtiaz et al., 2021). In addition to this, the dominant factor among consumer purchasing intention is the competitive price (Azizan, Chew 2023).

Another factor is the consumer's buying intention influences the selection of products on Facebook (Meskaran et al., 2013). Similar to this, consumer purchase intention also influences one's decision to acquire a product or service (Marlien, 2018). However, satisfied buyers make repeated purchases of products (Marlien, 2018). Consumers have the intention to share information with them via social media (Sun et al., 2015). On the other side, the majority of new consumers hesitate to buy because of many issues in online buying, and this becomes a barrier to e-commerce growth (Nguyen et al., 2022). Hence, As a result, a greater understanding of purchase intention is critical for the company's business (Dachyar, Banjarnahor, 2017).

With the proliferation of social media platforms like Facebook, businesses have leveraged targeted advertising to reach specific audience segments. Understanding consumer preferences in Facebook advertisements is crucial for marketers to create effective campaigns that drive engagement and encourage purchasing intention. Therefore, additional study on these rising markets is required to fill the knowledge gap. This study aims to explore the undergrad's preferences towards Facebook advertisements and their impact on influencing consumers' buying intentions. Another objective is to determine the undergrad's attitudes toward Facebook advertisements on the purchasing intention of consumers. Last but not least is to evaluate the mediating role of brand image and brand equity through Facebook advertisements on undergrad consumers' purchasing intention. The present study is significant for e-commerce organizations, advertisers, social media practitioners, and government and private departments.

Theoretical Background, Conceptual Framework, and Hypothesis

Uses and Gratification (U&G) Theory: One of the most effective and useful theoretical frameworks is to examine why and how audiences use particular media to gratify their wants and needs (Menon, Meghana, 2021). Uses and gratifications (U&G) theory is essential in assessing how and why various wireless communication services are used by media audiences and in some cases replace older media (Baran, 2006). Baran (Baran, 2011) noted that this theory considers not only the people who seek pleasure but also attitudes from new media. In contrast, Facebook has emerged as the most popular and widely used social networking site for creating and distributing digital content (Menon, Meghana, 2021). Hence, the current study is primarily evaluation based on the conceptual framework of the uses and gratification theory.

Preferences towards Facebook Advertisements: In Pakistan, 75 % are Facebook users in Pakistan (Gallup Pakistan, 2022). In addition to this, advertisers pay extra attention to Facebook due to its large user base and attractiveness among young people (Nguyen et al., 2022). Facebook offers a wide range of advertising; including promoting certain Facebook pages, events, and apps, sending visitors to specific websites, and users user-generated content (Imtiaz et al., 2021). Facebook provides a "like" link feature that allows users to provide rapid input (Logan et al., 2012). In the context of Facebook advertisements, purchasing intention refers to 'a degree to which a consumer is willing to buy a product through an online store' (Pena-García et al., 2020). Imtiaz et al. (Imtiaz et al., 2021) referred the consumer intentions as 'the expressed plans, inclinations, and anticipated actions of individuals in response to a particular product, service, or brand'.

Hypothesis 1: Preferences of Facebook advertisements (PFA) have a significant impact on the consumer purchasing intentions (CPI) of undergraduate Facebook users.

H1: PFA → CPI

Attitude towards Facebook Advertisements on consumer intension: Another essential factor is the attitude towards Facebook advertisements 'is formed when the consumer evaluates the visual or verbal substance of the claim with its content' (Sander et al., 2021). When emotional responses are elicited, customers decide to buy, which is based solely on the attitude of the advertisements, without having brand information (Zhu, Kanjanamekanant, 2021). 'Attitudes toward Facebook advertisements refer to the individual's cognitive and emotional evaluation of promotional content presented on the Facebook platform' (Abuhashesh et al., 2021). Customer's attitudes towards Facebook advertisements enable marketers to work on selectively that affect or shape attitudes toward specific advertising messages or products, which also have an impact on brand images of advertising (Arora, Agarwal, 2019). Scholars found that attitude toward Facebook advertisements has a significant positive impact on the purchasing intention of consumers (Kurtz et al., 2021; Zhu,

Kanjanamekanant, 2021). Moreover, researchers affirmed that customers' intentions to buy are influenced by positive advertising (Lee et al., 2017; Weismueller et al., 2020). Hence, based on the literature review, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Attitudes toward Facebook advertisements have an impact on consumers purchasing intentions.

H2: AFA->CPI

The Brand Image (BI), Brand Equity (BE), and Consumers Purchase Intention (CPI): The most important factor is a brand image(BI), and brand equity (BE) can be stated as any brand or service intelligence that persuades the customers to choose a specific brand (Meenaghan, 1995). Particularly, students are better able to identify, define, and assess brand equity when they have a strong foundation in branding (Keller, Swaminathan, 2019). Brand equity involves attributes and liking customers have for the brand, as a result of the benefits, they receive from using the brand (Kevin, 2008). As an earlier study has concluded the impact of Facebook advertisements on consumers' intentions is that advertisements positively impact brand images. Thereby, strengthening brand reliability (Durrani et al., 2015). Another study found that brand websites and brand Facebook pages positively influenced brand images (Jokinen, 2016). The use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube is increasing for marketing purposes (Nasserdeen et al., 2017). To build brand image and connect with potential customers, most companies use Facebook's efficient features (Dehghani, 2013). In parallel to this, the possibility of a customer purchasing a particular product is referred to as their purchasing intention (Edelman, 2010). According to certain researchers, consumers are persuaded to purchase products that have been verified by other users after the use of the product (Oke et al., 2016). Hence, brand image positively affects customer's purchasing intention (Li et al., 2018). 'Brand equity generates persuasion among consumers to buy a product regardless of high price' (Dehghani, 2013). In another way, we can say that brand images and equity significantly influence consumers' purchasing intention (Dehghani, 2013). Thus, the study is based on previous literature reviews. The researcher can claim the hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 3: Facebook advertisements of Brand Image and Equity have a significant influence on consumer purchasing intentions.

H3: BIE->CPI

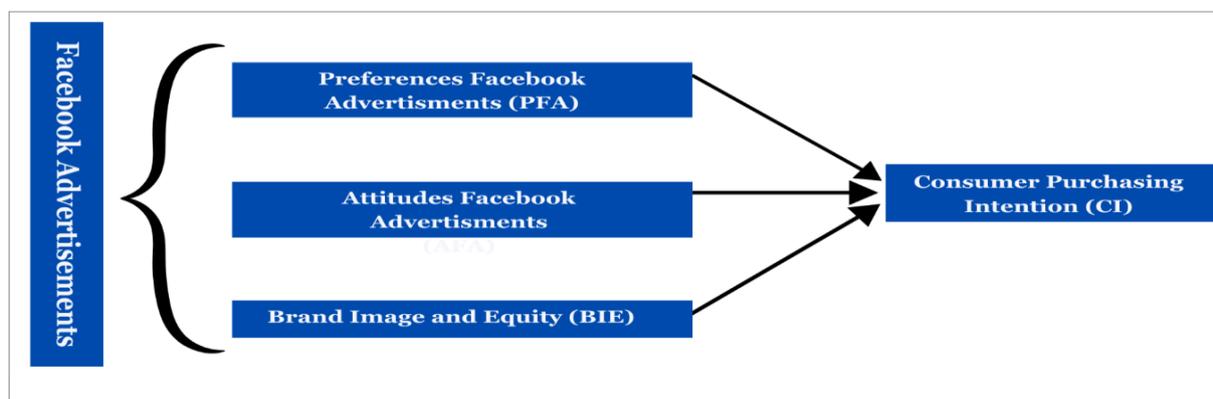


Fig. 1. Conceptualized Model Framework

2. Materials and methods

This research study is based on the quantitative research method for data collection, which provides a comprehensive framework for exploring the impact of Facebook advertisements on undergrads consumers' purchasing intention. According to the universal size of 1000 (Krejcie, Morgan, 1970), 278 is the calculated size of the purposive sample technique. Hence, 278 undergraduate students, ensures enough representation of the University of Sindh, Jamshoro. This sample size aims to provide statistical significance by considering the diversity of the student population. A descriptive survey with semi-structured questionnaires of a five-point Likert scale of measurement from strongly agree to strongly disagree was applied to analyze the main constructs

of the study. Initially, the questionnaire was pretested to 25 undergrad responders particularly, users of Facebook advertisements at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro on November 3rd, 2023.

The survey was completely based on the undergrad's Facebook advertisements users. The ambiguous and unclear questions were changed to get positive feedback from the responders. The study consists of 5 constructs including; preferences towards Facebook advertisements, attitudes towards Facebook advertisements, brand images and equity, and consumer purchasing intention. The total 37 questions were divided into five constructs. Each questionnaire was manually distributed among undergrads in the university from November 6th, 2023 to November 14th, 2023. Out of 350 respondents, 300 questionnaires were received, and 22 questionnaires were rejected due to incomplete information. A total of 278 forms were analyzed completely (See detail in [Table 1](#)). We have selected reflective measurements, as changes in the construct's measures suggest changes in the latent construct ([Edwards, Bagozzi, 2000](#)). Researchers have used established scales from the literature and customized them in their research situation. The reliability and validity of the reflection measurements were evaluated using frequency distribution, Cronbach's alpha, and multi-linear regression. The data was analyzed by using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28.

Table 1. Research Methodology Summary (Authors Source)

Items	Description
Statistics Software	SPSS Version 28
Research Approach	Descriptive Research
Sampling Design & Type	Purposive Probability Sampling
Target Population	Undergrad Facebook advertisement users of the University of Sindh, Jamshoro
Sample Size	278
Data Collection	Descriptive survey directed to undergraduate Facebook Users

3. Discussion

As of early 2024, there are over 5 billion active social media user identities worldwide, with a projected total of 5.04 billion ([Kem, 2024](#)). Today's social media user uses the platform for two hours and twenty-three minutes per day ([Kem, 2024](#)). The milestone is prior of Facebook's significant in social media ([Kem, 2024](#)). Remarkably, the largest apps of social media platform is Facebook, which captures the largest share of active user's time 58 minutes per user as an average daily engagement ([Ortiz-Ospina, Roser, 2023](#)). In the context of social media has become an inspirational source of information in education ([Shaikh et al., 2023](#)), and in advertisements ([Miltgen et al., 2019](#)). Facebook advertisements bring social values, trade-offs, perceived intrusiveness, privacy invasiveness, and trust which are also key factors, which is accepted by Facebook advertisements ([Miltgen et al., 2019](#)).

Notably, businessmen employ 92 % of advertisements on Facebook, which is 18.4 % of online advertisements attributed to Facebook ([Sindhujia et al., 2023](#)). Nowadays, people actively seek information about various products and services advertised on Facebook ([Li et al., 2018](#)). Let's discuss the reviews of the previous literature.

Preference towards Facebook Advertisements: Scholars agree that social media has moderating effects of usage on the influence of advertisement ([Saternus et al., 2022](#)). Particularly, Facebook is capable of acquiring better results on 'productivity, competitive position, and customer value', in less time and budget, and it performs an important role in making any brand images ([Eiaydi, 2018](#)). Similarly, researchers have found a significant relationship between brand preferences and Facebook advertising in Ethiopia ([Mengistu, 2020](#)). Social Media users have high engagement potential for brands and consumers ([Lou, Yuan, 2019](#)). However, an advertisement disclosure has activated persuasive knowledge ([Boerman, 2020](#)). It is notable that advertising has significantly increased worldwide and social media platforms are a great source to get the attention of a large audience, especially Facebook advertisements have become a marketing 'Have', for businesses across the global world ([Saternus et al., 2022](#)).

Besides this, Deveirman and Hudders (Deveirman, Hudders, 2020) indicated that a sponsorship disclosure negatively influences a brand's images through increased advertisement recognition, which induces advertisement skepticism and lowers the influencer's credibility.

Attitudes toward Advertisements: In the contemporary era, the business landscape hasn't only been shaped by digital media, but also influencing people's attitudes by various advertising (Abuhashesh et al., 2021). Facebook advertisements play a significant role in shaping individual attitudes toward products, however, it relate to the cultural dimension too (Abuhashesh et al., 2021).

On the other side, gender has various deep attitudes towards Facebook advertisements (Lin, Wang, 2020). In the same way, men focus on sports while women focus on showbiz, fashion, lifestyle, and hobbies (Lin, Wang, 2020). Besides this, individuals with a substantial number of contacts on Facebook are likely to be influenced by other attitudes and opinions (Loureiro et al., 2018). However, customers often don't consider all of the brand's information, while purchasing a product (Zhu, Kanjanamekanant, 2021). Nevertheless, researchers have demonstrated that Facebook advertisements have an influence on customer's attitudes toward behavioral elements; such as, how people behave toward a brand's message (Wang, Sun, 2010; Wiese et al., 2020).

Another study shows that customers' attitudes did not significantly attract young female consumers' intention to online purchase beauty goods and brand loyalty (Macheka et al., 2023). However, Muslim consumers' attitude was also found to be significantly positively influenced by consumer's purchasing intention toward social media advertising (Kamalul Ariffin et al., 2022).

Brand Image and Brand Equity: Unlike traditional channels, social media offers rapid brand information dissemination and prompt customer feedback (Voorvel et al., 2018). In view of Elaydi (Elaydi, 2018) Facebook is capable of acquiring better productivity, competitive standards, and the customer's values within less time and budget, which performs an important role in making brand images successful. In addition to helping with brand positioning, this connection is crucial for businesses since they post a favorable perception among consumers (Low, Lamb, 2000). According to Yoo et al. (Yoo et al., 2000) 'brand image' is the combination of brand awareness and brand association. In addition to this, the relationship between social media participation and consumers' intentions to make both online and offline purchases is mediated by brand equity (Fatima et al., 2022). The protocol of brand images and brand association has different categories of products (Low, Lamb, 2000). On the other side, brand strategy play an essential part in building brand images, product selling and help consumers in bringing opportunities, protection and prestige (Durmaz, Vildan, 2016).

Consumer's Purchasing Intentions: The emerging usage of the Facebook platform, and advertising is altering the business world, in reaction to the consumer's needs and desires (Imtiaz et al., 2021). Another study shows the factor of trust in online purchases increases during COVID-19, with online buy intentions, whereas, social media participation shows a weaker correlation with physical purchase intentions (Fatima et al., 2022). In social media platforms, credibility and trust are still crucial in attracting the consumer's engagement in online media (Van et al., 2018). Moreover, customers' online purchases of sports products are believed to be significantly influenced by the celebrities' trustworthiness and attractiveness (Akoglu, Ozbek, 2024). From the perspective of Facebook advertising, the consumer's credibility is the key to increasing the consumer's intention to buy online products (Chen et al., 2023).

4. Results

Respondent's Demographic Profile: The respondents' sample (n=278) consists of 110 (39.6 %) female and 168 (60.4 %) male. Most of the undergrad's Facebook users' age lies between 23 to 26. However, the majority of the undergrad respondents are the students of the bachelor program in the final year (BS part IV) of the study.

Table 2. Respondent's Demographic Profile (n= 278) (Source: Author's Data)

Variables	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender			1.40	.490
Male	168	60.4		
Female	110	39.6		

Variables	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age			1.67	.592
19 to 22	105	37.8		
23 to 26	163	58.6		
27and above	10	3.6		
Qualification			3.05	1.072
BS Part I	27	9.7		
BS Part II	56	20.1		
BS Part III	82	29.5		
BS Part IV	113	40.6		

Measurement of the Reliability: This study ensures the measurement of the reliability. The reliability of the constructs was used to evaluate the measurement model of a conceptual framework. More information is provided in Table 3. The composed reliability indexes of constructs reliability are presented in Cronbach's alpha. The value ranged from 0.5 to 0.734, which is 0.5 meets the criteria of reliability (Hair et al., 2017). One construct that has less than 0.5 did not fulfill the criteria of composed reliability. See Table 3 for details.

Table 3. Reliability Analysis (Source: Author's Data)

Constructs	Items	Cronbach's α	Authors Source
Preferences towards Facebook Advertisement	9	0.221	Imtiaz et al. (2021).
Attitudes towards Facebook Advertisement	8	0.530	Abuhashesh et al. (2020)
Brand Image and Brand Equity	9	0.605	Murtiasih et al. (2013).
Consumer Purchasing Intention	11	0.734	Imtiaz et al. (2021).
Total	37	0.800	

As we can see in Table 4, Pearson's correlation between preferences towards Facebook advertisements, attitude towards Facebook advertisements, brand images brand equity, and consumer purchasing intention. Table 4 depicts that preferences towards Facebook advertisements correlate with consumer's purchasing intention, where Pearson's $r = 0.288$ and the level of significance is $p = .01$. Similarly, attitudes towards Facebook advertisements show a significant relationship ($p = .01$, $r = 0.549$), and brand images and brand equity ($p = .01$, $r = 0.645$) have also a moderate correlation with consumer's purchasing intention at the level of significant $p = 0.01$ positively correlation. As referred in the study of Hee, Yen, (2018).

Table 4. Correlation between variables (Source: Author's Data)

Variables	P	R
Preferences towards Facebook Advertisements → Consumer Purchasing Intention	0.01	0.288
Attitudes toward Facebook Advertisements → Consumer Purchasing Intention	0.01	0.549
Brand Image and Brand Equity → Consumer Purchasing Intention	0.01	0.645

Notes: **Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 5. Model Summary, Predictors: (Constant), CI, PFA, AFA, BIE (Source: Author's Data)

Model	R	R Square	Adj R2	Std. Error of the Estimate	F
1	0.727a	0.529	0.524	0.380	102.466

Multiple Regression Analysis: [Tables 5](#) and [6](#) show the multiple linear regression analysis among independent variables and dependent variables of consumer purchasing intention. [Table 5](#) shows the R-Square ($R^2 = 0.529$) of the variance of consumer purchasing intention can be interpreted by the three variables of Facebook advertisements. [Table 6](#) shows that preferences toward Facebook advertisements have a significant positive relationship with consumer purchasing behavior ($\beta = .173$, $p < 0.000$). Hence H1 approved. On the other side, it has been found that attitude towards Facebook advertisements has a positively significant association with consumer purchasing intention ($\beta = .289$, $p < 0.000$). Hence, H2 proved. One more variable has shown remarkable results that brand image and brand equity have a significantly positive relationship with consumer purchasing intention ($\beta .497$, $p < 0.000$). Thus, H3 is supported. See [Tables 5](#) and [6](#) for details.

Table 6. Regression Analysis (Source: Author's Data)

Variables	B	β	t	P	Sig	VIF
(Constant)	-.171		1.039	.300	0.001b	
PFA	.226	.173	4.080	.000		1.048
AFA	.297	.289	6.122	.000		1.297
BI&BE	.552	.497	10.700	.000		1.252

Finally, the results of the study show that preference and attitude toward Facebook advertisements, brand images, and equity relationships have a significant positive impact on the consumer's purchasing intention (See [Table 4](#) in detail). Therefore, results show that preferences, attitudes, brand images, and brand equity towards Facebook advertisements have a mediated impact on the undergrads consumer's purchasing intention.

5. Conclusion

The conceptual framework model is used to evaluate undergrad consumers' responses (preferences, attitudes, brand images, and brand equity, and consumer purchase intention) toward Facebook advertisements in this study. The conclusion was based on the following empirical analysis:

First, consumer preferences and consumer's attitudes toward Facebook advertisements are added to the model to further explore undergraduate buying intention. As a result, researchers have gained an understanding of these two factors' influence on the consumer's purchasing intention. According to the findings of the study, consumer preferences and attitude are the most essential predictors of consumer's purchasing intention toward Facebook advertisements. That's why, in the university, undergraduate consumers are more likely to view Facebook advertising favorably when they believe that the sources are reliable.

Secondly, the result of R Square ($R^2 = 0.529$) affirmed that Facebook advertisements have a favorable impact on consumer's purchasing intentions, which ensures the primary objective of this study. These results of the study are compatible with the previous research studies ([Imtiaz, et al., 2021](#); [As'ad, Alhadid, 2014](#)).

The results show that the proposed model fits better with the data sample (see [Figure 2](#)). It has been found while analyzing the results that a moderate correlation among the constructs indicates that undergrad consumers have brand-related information and sharing of opinions through Facebook advertisements. Notably, Facebook advertisements assess enhancing brand images ([Jokinen, 2016](#); [Nasseraldeen et al., 2017](#)), brand equity, consumer's attitude towards Facebook advertisements, their preferences, and purchasing intention of the product ([Durrani et al., 2015](#)). This study proves that undergraduate consumers are more likely to prefer Facebook

advertisements and increase purchasing intention. It shows that undergrad consumers are more motivated to buy through Facebook advertisements. The result is consistent with the review of the previous research study (Chen et al., 2023).

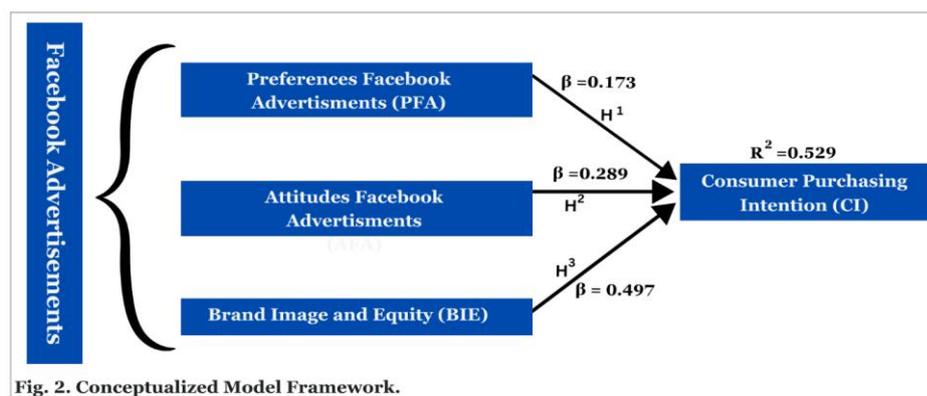


Fig. 2. Conceptualized Model Framework.

Implementation, Limitations, and Recommendation: The findings of the study would be implemented by Facebook advertisers, and international and national brand companies to customize consumer's preferences, attention, attitude, wants, and needs. In addition to this, marketers can increase the consumer's purchasing intention after paying attention to Facebook advertisements (Marlien et al., 2018). The study has considered only a limited number of responders, which is limited to generalization. This study requires evaluating more factors of consumer's purchasing intention. The more important limitation is that this study just conducted on all brands, products, and services of Facebook advertisements, and could not focus on national or international specific categories of band, geographical area, and race. Furthermore, qualitative-based research techniques need to be conducted to identify the perception of online purchasing intention of undergraduate students at the university level in the country.

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