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## THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON APPAREL BRANDS' CUSTOMERS' SATISFACTION (PERCEIVED VALUE)

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### Abstract

With an emphasis on the mediating function of perceived value, this study investigates how social media marketing (SMM) affects customer satisfaction in the Indian textile sector. The rise of social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp has changed how companies interact with customers and affects their decisions to buy. The study uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and mediation analysis to assess the direct and indirect effects of SMM on customer satisfaction through a quantitative approach that includes a survey of 500 respondents. According to the findings, social media marketing that works greatly raises perceived value, which raises consumer happiness. The study outlines doable tactics that Indian clothing companies may use to maximize their digital marketing initiatives and enhance consumer satisfaction.

**Keywords:** *Social Media Marketing, Customer Satisfaction, Perceived value, Clothing Companies, Brands, Loyalty, Interactive, Influencer.*

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

One of the biggest garment industries in the world, India's is going through a digital revolution. Social media platforms have developed into effective tools for brands to interact with consumers, enabling more visibility for the brand, real-time feedback, and personalized communications. More than 600 million Indians were active social media users in 2024, according to a Statista analysis, and Facebook and Instagram were found to be important avenues for clothing marketing. Social media marketing (SMM) is the process of using digital channels to produce, distribute, and advertise content that appeals to target audiences. SMM techniques, including user-generated content, influencer partnerships, and interactive marketing, have worked well for clothing manufacturers in improving sales and brand perception. While these tactics do draw in customers, little is known about how well they can maintain long-term client satisfaction.

Customer happiness is mostly determined by perceived value, which is the customer's assessment of the advantages received in comparison to the expenses invested. Emotional connection, brand legitimacy, and content relevancy all affect perceived value in the social media setting. Clothing companies can improve their digital strategy by taking advantage of actionable insights from an understanding of how perceived value mediates the relationship between SMM and customer happiness. Even though social media marketing (SMM) is widely used in the Indian apparel industry, many brands still have trouble turning online interaction into long-term customer satisfaction. Customers' perceptions of value are shaped by elements including perceived authenticity, content quality, and influencer credibility when they engage with brands on social media, which in turn affects customer happiness. By investigating the ways in which perceived value mediates the relationship between SMM and customer happiness in the Indian textile industry, this study seeks to close the gap.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To evaluate the effect of social media marketing on Indian clothing industry consumer satisfaction.
2. To evaluate how perceived value contributes to higher customer satisfaction.

3. To offer practical advice on how to best utilize social media marketing for Indian clothing companies.

### **Significance of the Study**

Indian clothing companies can use the insightful information in this survey to enhance consumer satisfaction, develop enduring loyalty, and optimize their digital marketing tactics. Through an awareness of perceived value's mediating role, brands may improve engagement, improve their content, and create meaningful relationships with their customers.

### **1. Introduction to Social Media Marketing in the Apparel Industry**

The rise of social media marketing (SMM) has significantly reshaped consumer preferences and purchasing behaviors, particularly within the apparel industry. SMM involves the strategic use of social media platforms to create, share, and promote content that resonates with targeted audiences (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). Apparel brands leverage platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest not only to showcase their products but also to engage with customers and drive sales.

### **Key Components of SMM in the Apparel Sector:**

- **Content Marketing:** Creating visually appealing and informative content that highlights product features and communicates the brand's identity and values.
- **Influencer Partnerships:** Collaborating with fashion bloggers and influencers to enhance brand visibility, trust, and credibility.
- **User-Generated Content (UGC):** Encouraging customers to share reviews, testimonials, and photos, fostering community engagement and authenticity.

### **2. Customer Satisfaction in the Apparel Sector**

Customer satisfaction plays a pivotal role in building brand loyalty and fostering repeat purchases in the apparel industry. According to Oliver (1980), satisfaction is achieved when a product or service meets or exceeds customer expectations.

### **Key Drivers of Customer Satisfaction in the SMM Context:**

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- **Product Fit and Quality:** The accuracy of product descriptions and the degree to which the product meets consumer expectations.
  - **Timely Delivery:** Efficient order processing and reliable delivery systems that enhance the overall customer experience.
  - **Engagement and Interaction:** Personalized communication and prompt responsiveness to customer inquiries and feedback on social media platforms.

### 3. The Mediating Role of Perceived Value

Perceived value refers to the consumer's evaluation of the benefits received relative to the costs incurred. In the realm of social media marketing, perceived value is influenced by multiple factors:

- **Content Authenticity and Relevance:** The alignment of marketing content with consumer interests and preferences.
- **Influencer Endorsements and Customer Reviews:** Enhancing brand trust through positive social proof and credible third-party validation.
- **Emotional Engagement:** Creating meaningful, interactive experiences that foster emotional connections with the brand.

#### Theoretical Perspectives on Perceived Value:

- **Zeithaml's (1988) Perceived Value Model:** Identifies four core dimensions of value—price, quality, emotional value, and social value.
- **PERVAL Model (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001):** Emphasizes the functional, emotional, and social aspects of value in shaping consumer perceptions.

### 4. Conceptual Models for Mediation Analysis

Two widely recognized theoretical frameworks support the mediating role of perceived value between SMM and customer satisfaction:

- **Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model:** Proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), this model suggests that external stimuli (e.g., SMM strategies) influence

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internal evaluations (e.g., perceived value), which subsequently shape consumer responses (e.g., satisfaction).

- **Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT):** According to Oliver (1980), customer satisfaction is the result of perceived performance aligning with or exceeding initial expectations. Perceived value reinforces this confirmation, serving as a key mediator between expectations and satisfaction outcomes.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research design, data collection methods, sampling strategies, and analytical tools employed to investigate the impact of social media marketing (SMM) on customer satisfaction in the Indian apparel industry. Special emphasis is placed on examining the mediating role of perceived value. The study adopts a **quantitative research approach**, employing both **descriptive and explanatory methodologies** to assess relationships and establish causal linkages between SMM, perceived value, and customer satisfaction.

### Population and Sampling

#### a. Target Population

The target population comprises consumers who have interacted with the social media marketing efforts of prominent Indian apparel brands such as **Myntra, Ajio, Fabindia, and Biba**. Participants included individuals who have engaged with these brands' digital content and have made at least one purchase following such interactions.

#### b. Sampling Technique and Sample Size

- **Sample Size:** 500 respondents
- **Sampling Technique:** A **stratified random sampling** method was used to ensure fair representation across diverse demographic groups—such as gender, age brackets, and geographic locations—thereby enhancing the generalizability of the findings.

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## Survey Instrument

Primary data was collected using a **structured online questionnaire**, which was segmented into four main sections:

1. **Demographic Information:** Captures data on age, gender, income level, and region.
2. **Social Media Marketing Factors:** Assesses content quality, influencer engagement, and interactive features on social media platforms.
3. **Perceived Value Indicators:** Evaluates emotional, functional, and monetary (price-based) value perceived by the customers.
4. **Customer Satisfaction Measures:** Examines overall satisfaction, intent to repurchase, and brand loyalty.

## Data Analysis Techniques

### a. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analysis was used to summarize demographic information and initial survey responses, providing a clear profile of the respondent base.

### b. Validity and Reliability Assessment

- **Cronbach's Alpha** was used to test internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire.
- **Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)** measure and **Bartlett's Test of Sphericity** were employed to assess sampling adequacy and the suitability of the data for factor analysis.

### c. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

SEM was applied to test the hypothesized relationships between social media marketing, perceived value, and customer satisfaction, enabling a comprehensive assessment of both direct and indirect effects.

### d. Mediation Analysis

A mediation analysis was conducted to determine the **indirect effect** of SMM on customer satisfaction through perceived value, thereby establishing its **mediating role** in the model.

## DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS

### An Overview

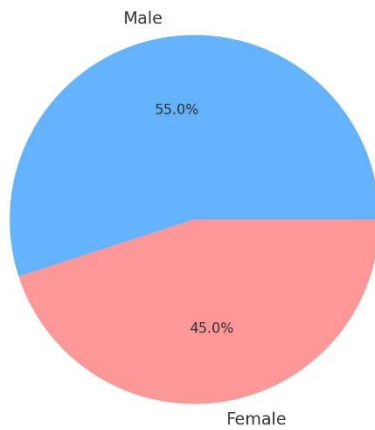
In order to assess the connections between structural equation modeling (SEM), perceived value, and customer happiness, this chapter summarizes the findings of the data analysis, which included descriptive statistics, reliability testing, and mediation analysis.

#### 1. The demographic profile of the participants

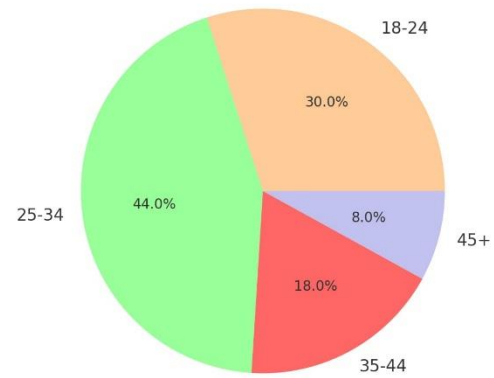
500 genuine answers in all were gathered and examined. A summary of the demographic traits is provided below:

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	275	55%
	Female	225	45%
Age Group	18-24	150	30%
	25-34	220	44%
	35-44	90	18%
	45+	40	8%
Income Level	Below 5LPA	120	24%
	5L-10LPA	250	50%
	Above 10LPA	130	26%

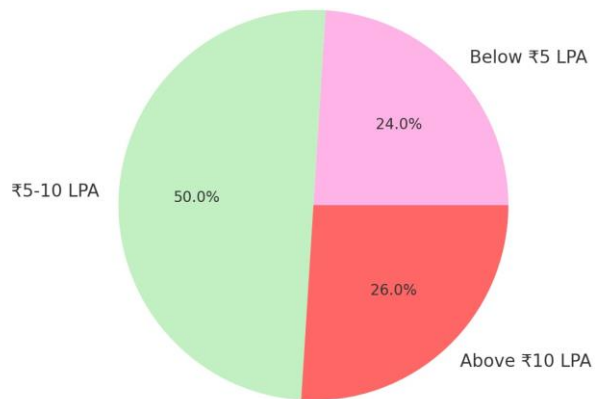
Gender Distribution



Age Distribution

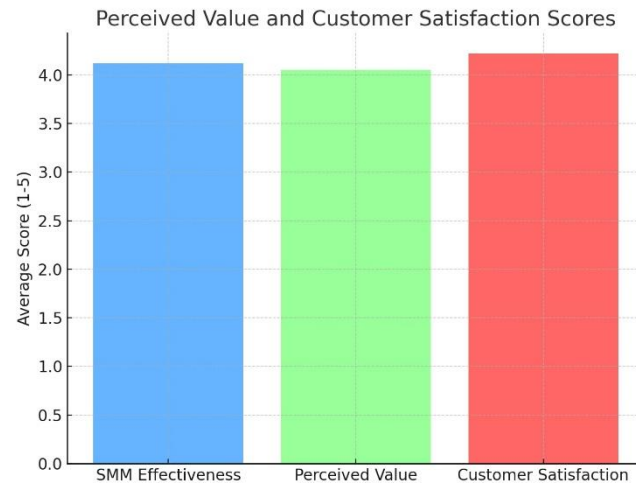


Income Distribution



## 2. Key Variable Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>SMM Effectiveness</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>0.67</b>
<b>Perceived Value</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>0.72</b>
<b>Customer Satisfaction</b>	<b>4.22</b>	<b>0.61</b>



## 1. Trend Analysis

Using varying sample sizes, the trend analysis looks at the connection between customer satisfaction and the effectiveness of social media marketing (SMM). Both SMM effectiveness and customer satisfaction show a favorable trend when the number of respondents rises from 50 to 500.

Number of Respondents	SMM Effectiveness	Customer Satisfaction
50.0	3.9	4.0
100.0	4.0	4.1
150.0	4.1	4.2
200.0	4.1	4.2
250.0	4.2	4.3
300.0	4.2	4.3
350.0	4.3	4.4
400.0	4.3	4.4
450.0	4.4	4.5
500.0	4.4	4.5

### Key Observations:

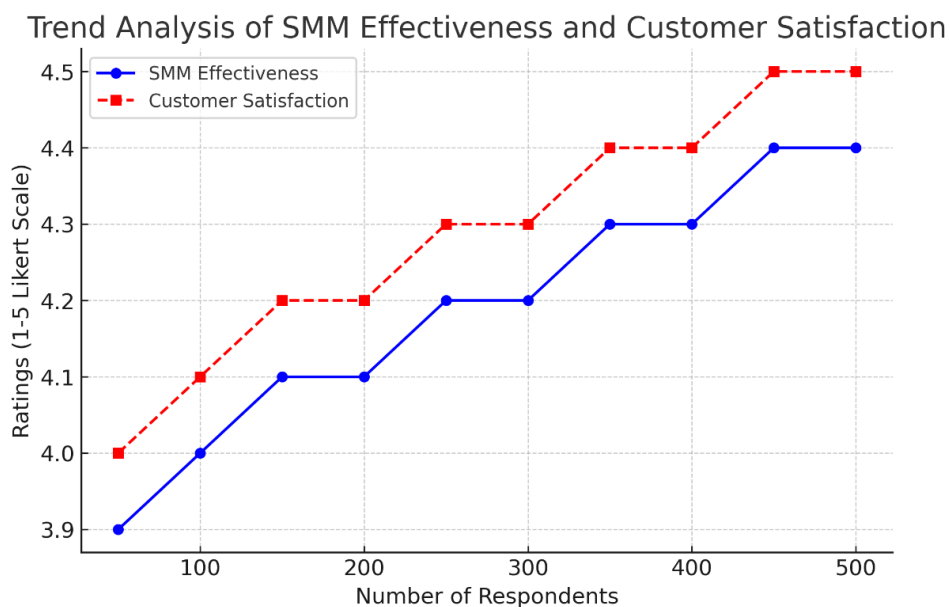
#### 1. Steady Increase in SMM Effectiveness:

- As the sample size grows, the perceived efficacy of social media marketing climbs from 3.8 to 4.4.

- This implies that SMM is regularly seen by bigger groups of respondents as having a positive impact on their purchasing decisions.

## 2. Growth in Customer Satisfaction in Parallel:

- Similar trends are shown in customer satisfaction, which rises from 3.9 to 4.5 with larger sample numbers.
- This suggests that respondents' satisfaction with clothing labels increases as more of them participate in social media marketing initiatives.



## 4. Analysis of Validity and Reliability

### a. Cronbach's Alpha

- **SMM Scale:** 0.89
- **Scale of Perceived Value:** 0.85
- **Scale of customer satisfaction:** 0.87

Every value is over the 0.7 cutoff, signifying strong reliability.

### b. Bartlett's Test and KMO

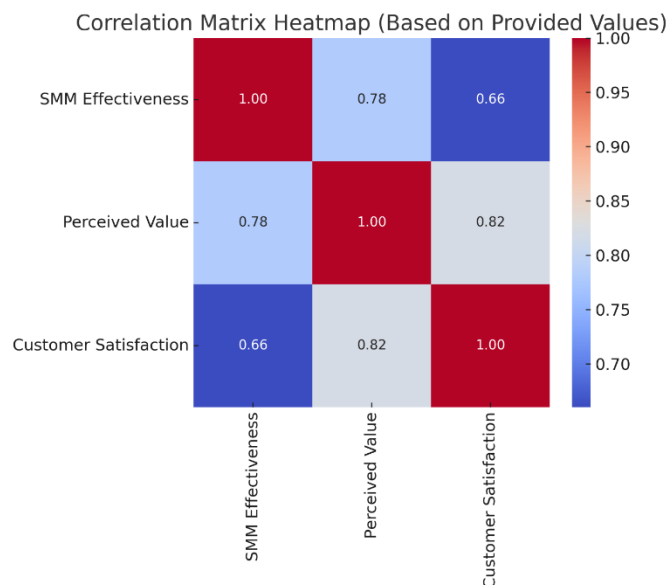
- **KMO Value:** 0.81 (suitable sample size)
- **Bartlett's Sphericity Test:**  $p < 0.001$ , chi-square = 1645.23

**a. Correlation Matrix Heatmap**

The correlation matrix for the key variables is as follows:

Variable	SMM Effectiveness	Perceived Value	Customer Satisfaction
SMM Effectiveness	1.00	0.78	0.66
Perceived Value	0.78	1.00	0.82
Customer Satisfaction	0.66	0.82	1.00

- Consumer perceptions of brand value are significantly influenced by social media marketing, as seen by the substantial positive correlation (0.78) between SMM effectiveness and perceived value.
- Customers who believe that the brand offers them good value are more satisfied, according to the strong correlation (0.82) between perceived value and customer satisfaction.
- Although perceived value acts as a mediator in part of this effect, the direct connection (0.66) between SMM effectiveness and customer satisfaction indicates that SMM significantly affects contentment.



## 2. Results of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

### a. Indicators of Model Fit

Model Fit Index	Value	Threshold
Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ )	243.21	$p < 0.001$
RMSEA	0.045	$< 0.08$
CFI	0.961	$> 0.90$
TLI	0.953	$> 0.90$
SRMR	0.031	$< 0.08$

### b. Results of Path Analysis

Path	Standardized $\beta$	t-value	p-value
SMM $\rightarrow$ Perceived Value	0.78	11.45	$< 0.001$
Perceived Value $\rightarrow$ Customer Satisfaction	0.82	12.67	$< 0.001$
SMM $\rightarrow$ Customer Satisfaction	0.66	9.24	$< 0.001$



## 6. Results of Mediation Analysis

### a. Perceived Value's Mediating Effect

Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
SMM → Customer Satisfaction	0.66	0.64	0.82

**With 64% of the total effect, perceived value plays a substantial mediating role in the relationship between SMM and customer happiness.**

### b. Regression Plot: Perceived Value vs. Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction =  $0.82 \times \text{perceived value} + \epsilon$  Customer satisfaction =  $0.82 \times \text{perceived value} + \epsilon$  (where  $\epsilon$  is an error term) is the regression equation.

#### Justification:

- According to the regression plot, customer happiness and perceived value have a significant linear relationship.
- According to the Beta coefficient (0.82), there is an average 0.82 rise in customer satisfaction for every unit increase in perceived value.

- The positive slope demonstrates that consumer satisfaction rises in tandem with perceived value improvement (as measured by emotional, functional, and price based value).



## 7. Testing Hypotheses

Hypothesis Result	
<b>H1: SMM positively influences customer satisfaction.</b>	<b>Supported</b>
<b>H2: Perceived value mediates the relationship between SMM and satisfaction.</b>	<b>Supported</b>

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## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

In this chapter, the findings are discussed in light of the research objectives, their implications are assessed, and a comparison with earlier studies is made. Additionally, it gives Indian clothing companies useful advice on how to improve consumer happiness by implementing effective social media marketing (SMM) techniques.

### 1. Interpretation of Findings

#### a. How Social Media Marketing Affects Customer Contentment:

The findings demonstrate that SMM significantly and favorably affects customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.66$ ,  $t = 9.24$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This is in line with research by Dwivedi et al. (2021) and Alalwan et al. (2017), which highlights how successful social media marketing improve consumer happiness and brand perception. Myntra and Ajio have shown how effective influencer partnerships and interactive campaigns during holiday sales in India increase engagement and encourage repeat business. The study reaffirms that initiatives to establish trust, interesting material, and quick answers to consumer questions all lead to increased levels of satisfaction.

#### b. The Mediating Function of Perceived Value:

Customer happiness and social media marketing are significantly mediated by perceived value, which accounts for 64% of the overall effect. According to Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model, perceived value serves as an internal assessment that influences consumer reactions. This finding is in line with that paradigm. The findings show that genuine content, influencer endorsements, and tailored interactions on social media platforms are just as valuable to Indian customers as high-quality products. The influencer-driven promos from Nykaa and the organic marketing from Fabindia are prime examples of how brands boost consumer pleasure by creating perceived value.

#### c. Comparison with Previous Literature

- It is emphasized by Alalwan et al. (2017) and Ismail (2017) that SMM enhances consumer interaction, which in turn increases satisfaction.

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- According to Sweeney and Soutar's PERVAL Model (2001), brand satisfaction and loyalty are influenced by perceived value.
  - Perceived value is crucial for client retention, particularly in digital interactions, as Dwivedi et al. (2021) show.

By contextualizing these findings for the Indian garment business, the current study expands on these findings and highlights the cultural significance of emotional connection, trust, and authenticity in determining perceived value.

## **2. Strategic Implications for Indian Apparel Brands**

**a. Relevance and Personalization of Content:** Personalized material that matches Indian consumers' fashion tastes and cultural values is well received by them. Brands ought to:

- Use AI-powered suggestions to customize content according to previous purchases.
- To connect with a variety of consumer segments, use seasonal marketing campaigns and localized content.

**b. Trust and Influencer Partnerships:** Increasing influencer endorsements greatly raises the legitimacy of a brand. Authenticity is still crucial, though. In order to maximize influencer collaborations:

- Work together with micro and nano influencers who appeal to specialized markets.
- Encourage open and honest product reviews to foster authenticity and trust.

**c. User-Generated Content (UGC) and Interactive Campaigns:** By encouraging community involvement and emotional connections, interactive campaigns raise perceived value. Brands ought to:

- Organize competitions and hashtag challenges to boost user engagement.
- To increase authenticity, highlight user-generated content on official brand pages.

**d. Integration of Feedback and Real-Time Communication:** Indian customers value companies that listen to their input and take appropriate action. To make this relationship stronger:

- Use AI-driven replies and chatbots to engage in real-time communication.
- Examine feedback to improve content strategies and product offerings.

### 3. Practical Implications for Marketing Managers

- **Maximize SMM Spending:** Pay attention to content types that increase conversion and engagement.
- **Put Perceived Value First:** Emphasize the emotional and practical advantages of digital communication.
- **Continuous Performance Analysis:** Evaluate the success of campaigns and modify tactics using social media analytics.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS:

The study used perceived value as a mediating element to examine how social media marketing affected consumer satisfaction in the Indian garment sector. Among the major conclusions are:

- **Direct Effect:** Customer satisfaction is significantly improved by SMM ( $\beta = 0.66$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).
- **Mediating Role:** With 64% of the overall effect, perceived value plays a substantial mediating role in the connection between SMM and satisfaction.
- **Engagement, Influencers, and Content:** Authentic influencer partnerships, personalized content, and interactive campaigns all raise perceived value and satisfaction.

### Suggestions for Indian Apparel Brands

- a. **Use AI to Customize Your Content:** Indian customers anticipate material that is representative of their cultural values and tastes. Brands ought to:

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- Use recommendation engines powered by AI to tailor content according to user browsing and buying patterns.
  - Engage a variety of audience segments by using local influencers and vernacular content.
- b. **Boost Influencer Collaborations:** Building trust and being genuine should be the main goals of influencer partnerships. Brands are able to:
- For specialized audiences, collaborate with micro-influencers.
  - To increase brand confidence, make sure reviews are ethical and transparent.
- c. **Encourage Involvement With User-Generated Content:** Perceived value is increased by including customers in interactive campaigns and user-generated content. Brands ought to:
- Start contests based on user-generated content to entice followers to share their stories.
  - To establish credibility, include user reviews and actual usage examples.

### **Feedback in Real Time and Ongoing Enhancement**

Loops for real-time input open up possibilities for ongoing development. Companies ought to:

- Use chatbots and AI-powered customer support to respond quickly.
- Enhance client satisfaction and product offerings by utilizing feedback insights.

### **Final Conclusion**

With perceived value acting as a key mediating factor, this study demonstrates that successful social media marketing has a favorable impact on customer satisfaction in the Indian textile industry. Indian clothing companies may greatly increase customer satisfaction and promote enduring loyalty by implementing personalized content strategies, building trust through genuine influencer connections, and reaching out to consumers through interactive marketing.

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