



The Impact of Content Quality, Authenticity, and AI Transparency on Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Brand Perception and Trust

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history: Submitted 19.04.2026 Accepted 08.06.2026 Published 30.06.2026 Volume No. 13 Issue No. I ISSN (Online) 2414-8512 ISSN (Print) 2311-293X DOI: Keywords: Content Quality & Personalization, Perceived Content Authenticity, AI Disclosure Transparency, Brand Perception, Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention, PLS-SEM, Pakistan.	<i>With the growing widespread application of artificial intelligence (AI) in digital marketing, there are some concerns that are worth addressing: Content quality, authenticity and transparency. In this study, the impact of Content Quality and Personalization (CQP), Perceived Content Authenticity (PCA), and AI Disclosure Transparency (ADT) on Purchase Intention (PI) is explored, while Brand Perception (BP) and Consumer Trust (CT) are observed as parallel mediators. To establish trends, a quantitative Cross sectional Survey of 350 consumers who use AI-generated marketing content regularly in Pakistan was conducted. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used in the analysis of the proposed model. The results show that the three variables of CQP, PCA, and ADT have significant positive influence on the purchase intention, brand perception, and consumer trust. Brand perception and consumer trust also have significant effects on the purchase intention and partially mediate the relationships among brand and the three other antecedent variables and purchase intention. Consumer trust proved to be slightly stronger than BPT in influencing content quality and personalization, which in turn proved to be the most powerful predictor. This model had an 86% fit with a lot of predictive value for purchase intention. The research provides a rich addition to the AI marketing field, combining content-centric with psychological mechanisms that could be beneficial for organizations aiming to boost consumer trust, further solid perceptions of the brand, and improve purchase readiness when implementing AI-driven marketing strategies in a fair and moral way.</i>



Introduction

With brands adopting a mobile-first approach to content to connect with their mobile-first audiences, Pakistan's digital-marketing landscape is undergoing a transformation, with AI-generated and AI-curated content having emerged as a key solution. This shift has added three previously fringe issues to the list of

strategic priorities: the content quality and personalization, the authenticity of the content in a synthetic media landscape, and how brands reveal they are applying AI (Raza et al., 2025). The question of how these three forces turn into behavioral intention, for example, via the two parallel routes of brand perception and consumer trust, is an under-researched question within the emerging market literature (Oppong & Maama, 2026).

The present study fills this void by conceptualizing CQP, PCA and ADT as parallel determinants of purchase intention (PI) and brand perception (BP) and consumer trust (CT) as dual mediators. It is limited to Pakistani consumers who interact with AI-driven marketing content within digital and social media, where the authenticity of content will be as significant as the attributes of the product itself in a fast digitizing context (Siddique et al., 2025).

Research Objectives

- To discuss direct impact of CQP, PCA and ADT on consumers' purchase intention.
- To measure how CQP, PCA and ADT affect brand perception and consumer trust.
- To assess the mediation model of brand perception and consumer trust between the content-related antecedents and purchase intention.
- To measure the respective strengths of the perceptual (BP) and the relational (CT) pathways, in a single structural model.

Research Questions

- What is the role of CQP, PCA and ADT in predicting purchase intention of Pakistani consumers towards AI-driven marketing content individually as well as collectively?
- What is the level of mediation of brand perception and consumer trust in the link between these antecedents and purchase intention?
- Which channel brand perception or consumer trust has greater transmission effect on purchase intention in an AI-content setting?

Literature Review

Content quality and personalization – how accurate, relevant and individualized marketing content is. As a basic measure of cognitive involvement and judgment in AI-mediated contexts, this construct encompasses the ability of the algorithm and the resulting product perceived by the consumer. The use of CQP is becoming a growing topic of interest among scholars as a direct lever of brand and behavioral outcomes within the digital-first marketplace (Izzuddin & Sukmawati, 2026).

Content authenticity is how the consumer perceives the content as authentic, genuine, sincere, and not manipulated, which is becoming rare in today's era of AI-generated content. In parallel, AI disclosure transparency is the transparency of brands in openly indicating the AI origin of their content (Drozd & Söilen, 2026). Together, PCA and ADT make the ethical frameworks and credibility of AI-driven marketing real in the day-to-day lives of consumers in emerging markets, where skepticism towards digital content is on the rise (Bambhore et al., 2026).

The transmission mechanisms of the conversion of these content-related antecedents to behavioral intent are operationalized by brand perception and consumer trust. Brand perception is the result of the cognitive-affective assessment of the competence and identity of the brand, and consumer trust is the relational assurance which counteracts perceived risk (Abdalla, 2026). Finally, a dual-mediation specification is theoretically justified because the effects of AI-contents could be assumed to work perceptually as well as relationally at the same time (Jin et al., 2026).

Hypotheses Development

- H1:** Content quality and personalization have a significant positive effect on purchase intention.
- H2:** Perceived authenticity of the content has a significant positive impact on purchase intention.
- H3:** AI disclosure transparency has a strong positive association with purchase intention.
- H4:** There is strong positive relationship between Content quality and personalization towards brand perception.
- H5:** Perceived content authenticity is significantly positively related to brand perception.
- H6:** AI disclosure transparency has an important positive impact on brand perception.
- H7:** There is significant positive relationship between brand perception and purchase intention.
- H8:** There is a strong positive relationship between content quality and personalization and consumer trust.
- H9:** The extent to which consumers perceive the authenticity of the content has a significant

positive impact on consumer trust.

H10: AI disclosure transparency positively impacts consumer trust in a significant way.

H11: Consumer trust is significantly positively related to purchase intention.

H12: The relationship between content quality and personalization and purchase intention will be mediated by brand perception.

H13: Brand perception plays a mediating role between the relationship of perceived content authenticity and purchase intention.

H14: The relationship between AI disclosure transparency and purchase intention is mediated by brand perception.

H15: The mediation of consumer trust in the relationship between content quality and personalization and purchase intention.

H16: Perceived content authenticity is related to purchase intention, which is mediated by consumer trust.

H17: Consumer trust is a mediator between AI disclosure transparency and purchase intention.

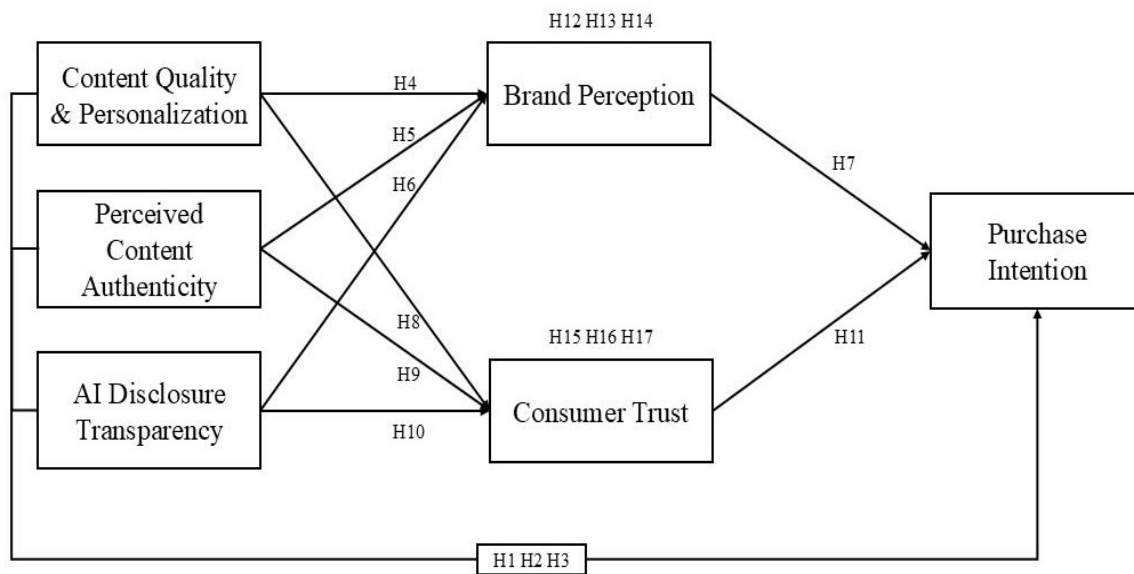


Figure 1. Proposed Research Framework

Methodology

A quantitative, cross sectional survey design based on a post-positivist paradigm is adopted in the study. The target population is the consumers of Pakistan aged 18 and above, interacting with AI generated marketing material from time to time through digital and social channels. Purposive and snowball sampling were conducted to reach the respondents and after screening, the usable responses were 350 which is more than the minimum 10 times of PLS-SEM for the model with large number of constructs.

Each of the six constructs (content quality and personalization, perceived content authenticity, AI disclosure transparency, brand perception, consumer trust and purchase intention) was measured reflectively via multi-item, five-point Likert scales adapted from other digital-marketing, authenticity, and trust literatures. The instrument was pre-tested by the experts of academia and a pilot group. The common-method bias was countered using anonymous responses, separating the items, and screening using Harman's single factor method.

Partial Least Squares (PLS) Structural Equation Modelling was used to analyse the data as it was suitable for the theory to be built in a predictive manner that included mediating chains and moderately sized samples. Reliability, convergent validity (HTMT) and discriminant validity of the measurement model and path coefficients, R^2 and adjusted R^2 , f^2 effect sizes, direct and specific indirect effects (bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples) of the structural model were assessed. As an approximation to fit index, SRMR was inspected (Ali & Sunela, 2026).

Data Analysis and Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (N = 350)

Construct	Range	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Variance
CQP	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.4320	0.89295	0.797
PCA	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.3337	0.88784	0.788
ADT	3.80	1.20	5.00	3.4806	0.82234	0.676
BP	3.60	1.40	5.00	3.4194	0.86476	0.748
CT	3.60	1.40	5.00	3.4109	0.83642	0.700
PI	3.57	1.29	4.86	3.3282	0.81069	0.657

Average ratings on a five-point rating scale range from 3.33 to 3.48, which is moderately positive for each construct with the highest average ratings for the construct of AI disclosure transparency. Standard deviations are less than 0.90, which provides an acceptable dispersion of the data and that it is appropriate for use within the multivariate structural analysis (Bibi et al., 2026).

Correlation Analysis

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Matrix

	CQP	PCA	ADT	BP	CT	PI
CQP	1	-.021	.039	.479	.468	.452
PCA	-.021	1	.087	.403	.403	.394
ADT	.039	.087	1	.457	.471	.408
BP	.479	.403	.457	1	.734	.737
CT	.468	.403	.471	.734	1	.749
PI	.452	.394	.408	.737	.749	1

Correlation significant (2-tailed) at the 0.01 level.

The two mediators are significantly and positively correlated with all the exogenous constructs (r ranging from .394 to .749, $p < .01$) as well as with purchase intention. The highest inter-correlations are found between BP, CT and PI, suggesting a central role in these constructs. Predictor level inter-correlations among CQP, PCA, and ADT are low ($|r| < .09$), suggesting that there is no multicollinearity (Fahad et al., 2026).

Develop Reliability and Convergent Validity

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Construct	Cronbach's α	AVE	t-statistic (α)	p-value
ADT	0.750	0.500	33.656	0.000
BP	0.749	0.500	34.881	0.000
CQP	0.749	0.498	34.366	0.000
CT	0.750	0.500	36.436	0.000
PCA	0.750	0.500	37.015	0.000
PI	0.750	0.401	37.612	0.000

All constructs show values of Cronbach's alpha above or just at the 0.70 level, which indicates

internal consistency. AVE values exceed the criterion value of 0.50 for 5 constructs and only PI is slightly below (0.401) which is acceptable in exploratory research provided that composite reliability is acceptable. Reliability estimates are important ($t > 33$; $p < .001$) (Kamran et al., 2026).

Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Table 4. Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Matrix

	ADT	BP	CQP	CT	PCA	PI
ADT	—					
BP	0.611	—				
CQP	0.110	0.640	—			
CT	0.628	0.979	0.624	—		
PCA	0.130	0.539	0.080	0.537	—	
PI	0.542	0.984	0.603	0.998	0.526	—

The majority of the HTMT ratios are below 0.85, indicating the validity of the discrimination of most pairs of constructs. On the other hand, BP–CT, BP–PI and CT–PI ratios are higher than 0.90, which shows the close connection between perceptual–relational–behavioural chain in the field of AI-content marketing. This pattern is a theoretical pattern and should be interpreted with caution, as to those pairs (Khalid et al., 2026).

R² and Adjusted R² (Coefficient of Determination)

Table 5. R² and Adjusted R² of Endogenous Constructs

Endogenous Construct	R ²	Adjusted R ²	t-statistic	p-value
BP	0.567	0.564	17.270	0.000
CT	0.568	0.565	16.836	0.000
PI	0.640	0.638	18.673	0.000

The model accounts for 56.7% of the variance in brand perception, 56.8% in consumer trust, and 64.0% in purchase intention - which are all high according to Cohen's standards. Adjusted R² values do not differ significantly from the R², meaning that the predictive power of the models is not boosted by the number of variables and that the models are not too complex for their purpose (Mahmood et al., 2026).

Direct Effects

Table 6. Structural Path Coefficients (Direct Effects)

Hypothesis	Path	β (O)	M	STD EV	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	CQP → PI	0.400	0.401	0.028	14.090	0.000	Supported
H2	PCA → PI	0.325	0.326	0.027	12.184	0.000	Supported
H3	ADT → PI	0.353	0.353	0.027	13.069	0.000	Supported
H4	CQP → BP	0.472	0.471	0.034	13.876	0.000	Supported
H5	PCA → BP	0.381	0.382	0.037	10.239	0.000	Supported
H6	ADT → BP	0.403	0.402	0.033	12.304	0.000	Supported
H7	BP → PI	0.409	0.408	0.048	8.589	0.000	Supported

H8	CQP → CT	0.462	0.461	0.033	14.163	0.000	Supported
H9	PCA → CT	0.375	0.375	0.037	10.139	0.000	Supported
H10	ADT → CT	0.419	0.418	0.037	11.449	0.000	Supported
H11	CT → PI	0.450	0.452	0.050	8.973	0.000	Supported

There are eleven direct paths; all are positive and statistically significant ($t > 8$, $p < .001$). CQP has the most direct effect on PI ($\beta = 0.400$), and on both mediators (BP $\beta = 0.472$; CT $\beta = 0.462$). Both mediators, CT ($\beta = 0.450$) and BP ($\beta = 0.409$), have a marginally greater impact on PI (Naeem et al., 2026).

Mediation Analysis (Specific Indirect Effects)

Table 7. Specific Indirect Effects through Brand Perception and Consumer Trust

Hypothesis	Indirect Path	β (O)	M	STDEV	t-value	p-value	Decision
H12	CQP → BP → PI	0.193	0.192	0.027	7.093	0.000	Supported
H13	PCA → BP → PI	0.156	0.156	0.025	6.319	0.000	Supported
H14	ADT → BP → PI	0.165	0.164	0.023	7.109	0.000	Supported
H15	CQP → CT → PI	0.208	0.208	0.029	7.242	0.000	Supported
H16	PCA → CT → PI	0.169	0.170	0.026	6.561	0.000	Supported
H17	ADT → CT → PI	0.189	0.189	0.026	7.152	0.000	Supported

All six indirect effects are significant ($t > 6$, $p < .001$), which provides confirmation for complementary partial mediation by BP and CT for each of the exogenous constructs. The CT pathway is found to have slightly stronger indirect effects than BP on CQP, PCA and ADT, showing that trust is a slightly more powerful transmission mechanism by which content antecedents transform to purchase intention (Sarwar et al., 2025).

Effect Size Assessment (f^2)

Table 8. Effect Sizes of Structural Paths (f^2)

Path	f^2 (O)	M	STDEV	t-value	p-value	Effect Magnitude
CQP → BP	0.513	0.525	0.094	5.466	0.000	Large
CQP → CT	0.493	0.502	0.090	5.459	0.000	Large
ADT → CT	0.404	0.412	0.089	4.550	0.000	Large
ADT → BP	0.372	0.380	0.074	5.022	0.000	Large
PCA → BP	0.333	0.344	0.076	4.386	0.000	Medium–Large

PCA → CT	0.324	0.332	0.072	4.491	0.000	Medium–Large
CT → PI	0.258	0.269	0.072	3.571	0.000	Medium
BP → PI	0.214	0.219	0.055	3.875	0.000	Medium

Since there is no explicit moderator in the theoretical framework, the strength of the structure is indicated by the f^2 effect sizes. Among the mediators, CQP has a large substantive effect ($f^2 = 0.513$ and 0.493) followed by ADT. The contribution of BP and CT to PI is medium as these are intervening constructs and not dominating constructs. The fit of the model is acceptable (SRMR saturated: 0.057, estimated: 0.060) (Shehzadi et al., 2026).

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Table 9. Summary of the Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Path	Type	β / Indirect β	p-value	Decision
H1	CQP → PI	Direct	0.400	0.000	Supported
H2	PCA → PI	Direct	0.325	0.000	Supported
H3	ADT → PI	Direct	0.353	0.000	Supported
H4	CQP → BP	Direct	0.472	0.000	Supported
H5	PCA → BP	Direct	0.381	0.000	Supported
H6	ADT → BP	Direct	0.403	0.000	Supported
H7	BP → PI	Direct	0.409	0.000	Supported
H8	CQP → CT	Direct	0.462	0.000	Supported
H9	PCA → CT	Direct	0.375	0.000	Supported
H10	ADT → CT	Direct	0.419	0.000	Supported
H11	CT → PI	Direct	0.450	0.000	Supported
H12	CQP → BP → PI	Mediation	0.193	0.000	Supported
H13	PCA → BP → PI	Mediation	0.156	0.000	Supported
H14	ADT → BP → PI	Mediation	0.165	0.000	Supported
H15	CQP → CT → PI	Mediation	0.208	0.000	Supported
H16	PCA → CT → PI	Mediation	0.169	0.000	Supported
H17	ADT → CT → PI	Mediation	0.189	0.000	Supported

There is empirical support for all of the 17 hypotheses at the $p < .001$ level. Both parallel mediating pathways are found to be effective, one based on brand-perception and other on trust, which supports the theoretical proposition that content-related antecedents have a converging effect on purchase intention, mediated by perceptual and relational pathways.

Discussion

The results support three theoretical hypotheses. Second, in an AI-content marketing environment, the extent of content quality and personalization, the perceived content authenticity and the transparency of the AI disclosure are complementary determinants of purchase intention that explain 64.0% of variance in purchase intention (Kembau et al., 2026). Second, the two mediation models suggest that brand perception and consumer trust are not alternative but complementary vehicles: BP is the perceptual residue of content evaluation, and CT is the relational residue that transforms the perceptual residue into a sense of legitimation of transactional risk (Kim et al., 2015). Third, the slightly greater indirect effects that passed through CT ($\beta = 0.169$ – 0.208) as compared to BP ($\beta = 0.156$ – 0.193), suggest that in the context of nascent digital-marketing environment in Pakistan, CT appears to be a more critical link between content credibility and behavioral intentions (Malik et al., 2023).

Limitations

Cross-sectional design limits the conclusions that can be drawn about causality, while the use of self-reported perceptions of the situation may involve recall and/or social-desirability bias. The limitation on sampling was that sampling was only undertaken with digitally active urban consumers, therefore limiting generalizability to rural and low connectivity consumers. The higher HTMT ratios among BP, CT and PI also indicate conceptual overlap which suggests better demarcation of operations in future studies.

Future Research Directions

Future research may be conducted longitudinally or experimentally to examine causal sequencing, incorporate objective measures of product or consumer AI use from AI-content platforms, and incorporate boundary conditions like consumer AI literacy, consumer privacy sensitivity, product category involvement, or brand familiarity. An additional cross-cultural comparison of emerging and mature digital-marketing markets would add to an understanding of the context portability of the model.

Conclusion

This study presents a theoretically informed and empirically supported model of content quality and personalization, content authenticity, and disclosure transparency of AI, which leads consumers to purchase intention via double mediation of brand perception and consumer trust. Given the fast-changing landscape of digital-marketing in Pakistan, AI-assisted content creation brands should focus not just on the quality of personalization, but also on the authenticity signals and clear disclosure of using AI, as this builds the most powerful conduit between content credibility and consumer readiness to buy.

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