The role of digital marketing, CSR policy and green marketing in brand development

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CHRONICLE	ABSTRACT

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy, digital marketing and green marketing are considered as some of the most emerging topics. However, the major problem is associated with the lack of CSR policies, development and adaptation of green marketing in the companies operating in manufacturing companies in the UK. In this manner, this study aimed to determine the role of digital marketing, CSR policies and green marketing in brand development. Concerning this, the case of UK's manufacturing companies was considered which can help the manufacturing companies operating in the UK to make the development of brand more effective, as the consumers would perceive the brand which complies with the environmental laws. To attain the aim, the researchers utilized a quantitative method of data collection where a close-ended survey questionnaire was utilized. The data was collected from the concerned participants working in the manufacturing sector of the UK and the sample size considered for the analysis was based on 404 participants. The analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) on Smart PLS. The analysis revealed that the overall impact of green marketing, CSR policy and digital marketing was statistically significant on the brand development of UK's manufacturing companies. Considering this, it has been recommended to the manufacturing companies in the UK to focus on environmental disclosure, green innovation, green alliance and promotional activity for the purpose of ensuring brand development. However, this study is limited to the geographical bounds of the UK; therefore, it has a certain room for future research.

1. Introduction

The marketing of a product is the traditional concept which has been evolved based on the change in society, which is in particular, the change in behavior of people. In this manner, the strategies which are used by the companies have also been changed (Rasche et al., 2017; Indumathi, 2019). The development of brand has become a crucial challenge for the companies as the contemporary business environment has been evolving which requires the companies to adopt contemporary practices (Al-Hawary & Al-Fassed, 2021; Grubor & Milovanov, 2017). The marketing strategies used by the companies in this era of internet advancement for the purpose of selling the product are referred to as digital marketing. In the early stages, the concept of digital marketing emerged just to provide the text-based information of products and services offered by the company (Kumar et al., 2020; Makrides, Vrontis& Christofi, 2020). In contrast to this, the growth in the use of the Internet and social

media marketing has made the concept of digital marketing beyond the provision of information. In addition to this, digital marketing serves as the platform for advertising while helping the manufacturers in terms of interacting with the customers (de Ruyter, Keeling & Ngo, 2018; Low et al., 2020). It is due to the reason that the presence of consumers on digital platforms like social media has increased, which has led the companies to focus more on digital marketing.

On the other hand, the increased awareness of environmental sustainability has also increased the demand for products which are manufactured through sustainable practices or are sustainable themselves (Al- Quran et al., 2020; Al-Hawary & Al-Khazaleh, 2020). It has been argued in the study of Annunziata, Mariani and Vecchio (2019) that the increased awareness of sustainability among the consumers has increased the demand for sustainable products. In this manner, it generates the need for the companies to adopt the sustainable practices of product manufacturing or to present sustainable products for the consumers. For this purpose, most of the company's focus towards the development of CSR policies which helps them to build a positive image of the brand in the minds of the consumers (Alhalalmeh et al., 2020; Ramesh et al., 2019; Al-Hawary et al., 2013; Afiuc et al., 2020). Brand development is an essential aspect for companies in terms of operating in the contemporary business environment. It is because of the purpose that the increased globalization has also increased the competition among the firms, which requires every company to focus on brand development (Zameer, Shahbaz& Vo, 2020). Therefore, with the development of CSR policy, the companies can help generate a positive image of the company while developing a positive perception of the brand in the minds of the consumers.

With respect to the increased demand for sustainable products, it generates the need for the companies in order to focus towards the manufacturing of green products which require green innovation. It has been argued in the study of Eneizan et al. (2016) that green marketing has emerged as the concept which has provided immense benefits for the companies. It refers to the marketing of sustainable and environmentally friendly services and products. The concept has become popular pertaining to the increased concern of people with regards to the environmental issues. In addition to this, it also helps the consumers to decide whether they want to spend their money in a manner that would be kinder towards the planet. The major problem is associated with the lack of CSR policies development and adaptation of green marketing in the companies operating in manufacturing companies of the UK (Obeidat, 2016). In this manner, this study has aimed towards determining the role of digital marketing, CSR policies and green marketing in brand development. In this manner, the results of this study will help the manufacturing companies operating in the UK to make the development of brand more effective as the consumers will perceive the brand which is complying with the environmental laws. In addition to this, it will also help the manufacturing companies to increase the sales as the consumers will be more inclined towards the purchase of sustainable products.

2. Literature Review

The development of the brand is dependent on various strategies of digital marketing which have been used in contemporary business practices (Alolayyan et al., 2018). Among these strategies, promotional activities are the ones which help the company in terms of generating the awareness of the brand in the minds of the consumers. It has been argued in the study of Godey et al. (2016) that the promotional activities help the brand to promote its products or services while increasing the awareness of the brand in the minds of the consumers. In this manner, promotional activities have been considered for the purpose of developing the brand. It has been stated in the study of Shen (2020) that there is a significant influence of promotional activities on brand development. Therefore, the effect of promotional activities over the brand development has been tested in the context of companies operating in the UK. The first hypothesis of the study in this regard is provided below:

H₁: *There is a significant influence of promotional activities over the brand development.*

The second factor of digital marketing is social media which has been considered as one of the most significant contributors toward brand development (Al-Hawary & Obiadat, 2021). It has been argued in the study of Sanny et al. (2020) that social media marketing has a huge influence on the generation of awareness regarding the brand in the minds of the consumers. In this manner, companies can ensure brand development by creating awareness through social media. Therefore, social media play a significant role in terms of developing the brand and attracting a greater number of consumers along with the reduced cost of marketing. It has been stated in the study of Kumar and Singh (2020) that there is a huge influence of social media on brand development. In this regard, the second hypothesis of the study has been developed with respect to the association between social media and brand development. This hypothesis has been provided below:

H₂: *There is a significant influence of social media over brand development.*

With respect to the CSR policies, the factor which has been considered in this study is environment disclosure. It is due to the reason that if the company can communicate the information regarding how the product is about to affect the environment, the consumers are able to make the purchase decision more easily. It has been argued in the study of Bellamy, Dhanorkar and Subramanian (2020) that it is essential for the companies to disclose the information regarding the environmental impact of the products or services. In addition to this, it also creates a positive perception of the brand in the minds of the consumers. Therefore, the effect of environment disclosure is necessary to be determined over the brand development especially in the context of manufacturing companies, as these companies are more vulnerable to environmental pollution. The study of Lu et

al. (2020) stated that the disclosure of environmental information has a significant influence over the brand development. Therefore, the third hypothesis of the study has been developed in this context which is provided below:

H₃: *There is a significant influence of environmental disclosure on brand development.*

The manufacturing companies are more susceptible to the increased pollution of the environment as it involves exploitation of natural resources. Moreover, most of the manufacturing companies operate in less developed countries due to minimizing cost of manufacturing. It has been argued in the study of Kordos and Vojtovic (2016) that the manufacturing companies mostly operate in less developed countries due to cheap resources. Therefore, the exploitation of resources in these countries makes it necessary for them to pay back to the society in which they operate. In this manner, providing such information regarding social work helps to persuade consumers as they are more attracted to the social cause of the company. It has been stated in the study of Lawal, May and Stahl (2017) that there is a huge influence of social disclosure on brand development. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis of the study has been developed for the purpose of testing the effect of social disclosure over the brand development of manufacturing companies in the UK. This hypothesis has been provided below:

H₄: *There is a significant influence of social disclosure on brand development.*

To ensure green marketing, the manufacturing companies need to present green and sustainable products or services to the consumers. It has been argued in the study of Papadas, Avlonitis and Carrigan (2017) that the companies need to develop green products and services for the purpose of adopting the concept of green marketing. In this manner, the companies need to focus more on the green innovation which can help these manufacturing companies towards the manufacturing of sustainable products. It will also help the company to ensure the development of the brand. It has been stated in the study of Chen et al. (2016) that there is a significant influence of green innovation towards brand development. In this regard, the effect of green innovation towards brand development has been tested in the context of manufacturing companies in the UK. The fifth hypothesis of the study has been provided below:

H₅: *There is a huge influence of green innovation on brand development.*

On the other hand, the concept of the green alliance has also emerged as it is considered as one of the most essential determinants of green marketing. It is due to the reason that the green alliance helps the company to focus on alliances with the suppliers and retailers who are already practicing green marketing. It has been argued in the study of Bond (2016) that green alliance is considered as the form of strategy in green marketing along with several types of alliances which are set out. Therefore, it is essential for the manufacturing companies to ensure green alliance in terms of developing the brand. It has been stated in the study of Yadav and Pathak (2016) that there is a significant influence of green alliance towards brand development. In this manner, the effect of the green alliance has been tested over the brand development in the context of manufacturing companies in the UK. The sixth hypothesis of the study has been provided below:

H₆: *There is a significant influence of green alliance on brand development.*

3. Theoretical Framework

This study has focused on determining the role of digital marketing, CSR policy and green marketing in brand development which is the evidence from manufacturing companies in the UK. Since the adoption of these concepts related to the sustainability of the environment is influenced by the increased demand of the consume; therefore, the legitimacy theory has been adopted in this study. The legitimacy theory is also considered as the tool for the purpose of managing the perceptions of the stakeholders for the purpose of attaining the organizational legitimacy. It has been argued in the study of Dowling and Pfeffer (1975) that legitimacy theory has been derived from the organizational legitimacy which emphasizes over the management of stakeholder's perception based on their needs for the adoption of CSR practices and green marketing. In this manner, the legitimacy theory has been employed in this study for the purpose of determining the perception of stakeholders i.e., consumers specifically towards the adoption of digital marketing, CSR policy and green marketing which also relates to the development of the brand.

4. Conceptual Model

Fig. 1 below depicts the conceptual framework of the study with respect to the variables adopted in this study. It can be determined from Table 1 that digital marketing has been the independent variable of the study which involves promotional activity and social media as the factors. On the other hand, the CSR policy is the second independent variable of the study which includes environment disclosure and social disclosure as the control variables. In addition to this, green marketing has also been considered as the third independent variable of the study which involves green innovation and green alliance as the factors. Moreover, brand development is the dependent variable in this study and the effect of digital marketing, CSR policy and green marketing has been tested over brand development. In addition, the proposed conceptual model also supports the hypotheses proposed in the earlier sections of the paper.
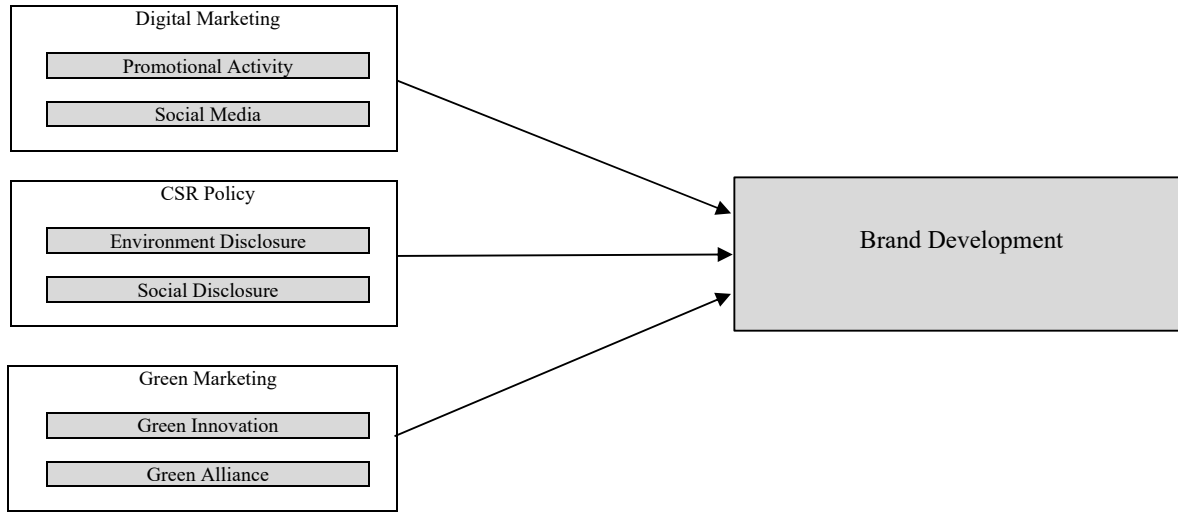
Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Data Collection Process

According to the study conducted by Billups (2019), data collection can either be primary, secondary, or tertiary. However, the following research utilizes the primary method of data collection. The researcher has targeted the manufacturing sector; therefore, the employees working in the manufacturing sector of the UK were approached. The researcher distributed the survey questionnaire to all the participants working in different manufacturing companies who were mainly associated with the marketing and finance department. Survey questionnaire has been used since the study intended to incorporate quantitative data and assessment to test the proposed hypotheses. The questionnaires were self-developed and self-administered; therefore, they were distributed to 500 employees to get a sufficient response rate.

5.2 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Primarily, there are two main sampling techniques that are probability and non-probability (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). This research specifically uses probability sampling and simple random sampling in order to collect the data. The employees working in the manufacturing sector were approached using only Google Forms online channels; therefore, all the employees working in the targeted firms were given an equal chance of selection. Besides, the sample size targeted was 500 and the sample size has been chosen based on the following formula:

$$n = \frac{z^2 \times p \times (1-p)}{e^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 384$$

The formula presented above is also used by the study of Ryan (2013) and this suggests that based on z-score at 95% confidence level (1.96) and proportion of the population equals to 0.5 and error of 5% or 0.05, the minimum sample to be approached is 384 participants. Considering this aspect, the researcher of the study approached 500 participants in order to exceed the prescribed limit and to obtain appropriate results. However, only 404 eligible responses were received; therefore, the response rate is computed to be 80.8%. The questionnaires were distributed using online channels such as Google Forms.

5.3 Research Instrument

Since the study has used a quantitative research design; therefore, a close-ended survey questionnaire has been utilized for data collection having a Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 5 depicting strongly disagree to strongly agree. The research instrument was self-developed based on the literature and it has been distributed by the researcher. Moreover, the questionnaire was made in a simple language and the respondents were free to contact the researcher in case of any ambiguity.

5.4 Data Analysis Technique

The following study utilizes Partial Least Square (PLS) based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze the data accumulated from the survey questionnaire. The analysis has been done on Smart PLS considering the nature which is non-normal. The study conducted by Wong (2013) asserted that PLS-SEM does not assume the data has to be normally distributed. In this regard, it incorporates Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), path assessment, and assessment of the predictive relevance of the model using blindfolding.

6. Results

The following section presents the analysis conducted as per the discussed method. In addition, it also presents a summary of the proposed hypotheses.

6.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Firstly, the researcher of the study has analyzed the factor structure using CFA analysis and the results pertaining to reliability and convergent validity have been presented in Table 1. In accordance with the research of Wong (2013), reliability of latent constructs can be tested using Cronbach Alpha and composite reliability whose thresholds are 0.7. In this concern, the results presented in Table 1 indicate that none of the latent constructs has Cronbach Alpha below 0.7 and neither is the composite reliability below 0.7. This indicates that none of the latent constructs is required to be re-evaluated. However, for the evaluation of the factor structure, the researcher has used factor loadings which have a threshold of 0.6 according to the study of Ramayah et al., (2018) and this is used for the validity of factors. The results indicate that all the factors sufficiently represent their underlying latent constructs, and this shows their reliability. On the other hand, one of the significant aspects for CFA is to determine the convergent validity of the latent constructs, which assesses the degree of relatedness, and its threshold is 0.5 (Vinzi et al., 2010). Based on this fact, the results in Table 1 depict that none of the latent variables utilized in this study has any issue of convergent validity since all values are higher than 0.5. The measurement model can also be seen in Fig. 2.

Table 1
Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Reliability and Convergent Validity)

Latent Constructs	Indicators	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Development	BD1	0.957***	0.959	0.974	0.925
	BD2	0.965***			
	BD3	0.963***			
Environmental Disclosure Quality	EDQ1	0.926***	0.920	0.949	0.862
	EDQ2	0.938***			
	EDQ3	0.922***			
Green Alliance	GA1	0.924***	0.917	0.948	0.858
	GA2	0.948***			
	GA3	0.906***			
Green Innovation	GI1	0.897***	0.822	0.894	0.739
	GI2	0.874***			
	GI3	0.806***			
Promotional Activity	PA1	0.912***	0.857	0.913	0.777
	PA2	0.872***			
	PA3	0.860***			
Social Disclosure Quality	SDQ1	0.913***	0.908	0.942	0.845
	SDQ2	0.922***			
	SDQ3	0.922***			
Social Media Marketing	SM1	0.872***	0.878	0.925	0.804
	SM2	0.925***			
	SM3	0.892***			

***: showing significance at 1%

After the assessment of convergent validity, discriminant validity is also determined using the HTMT ratio. The study of Hair et al., (2016) asserts that it is helpful for the determination of distinctiveness and the value should be below 0.9 as a liberal criterion. In this regard, the results have been presented in Table 2 and none of the associations violates the stated maximum limit which is 0.9. Concerning this aspect, it can be stated that the data possess a distinctive nature.

Table 2
Discriminant Validity using HTMT Ratio

	Brand Development	Environmental Disclosure Quality	Green Alliance	Green Innovation	Promotional Activity	Social Disclosure Quality
Environmental Disclosure Quality	0.711					
Green Alliance	0.780	0.653				
Green Innovation	0.781	0.747	0.819			
Promotional Activity	0.726	0.677	0.705	0.743		
Social Disclosure Quality	0.744	0.876	0.743	0.797	0.798	
Social Media Marketing	0.768	0.798	0.783	0.860	0.848	0.838

6.2 Path Assessment

Since CFA is conducted and it has been confirmed from the assessment that all the factors and latent constructs are valid; therefore, the researcher has carried out a path assessment for the evaluation of the proposed hypotheses. It has been conducted using bootstrapping which is a resampling method for obtaining significance as stated by the study of Hair et al., (2017). Concerning the mentioned aspects, the results have been presented in Table 3. In accordance with the results, it can be stated that the effect of environmental disclosure quality on the brand development of the UK's manufacturing sector is statistically significant and positive [B= 0.172; p-value= 0.001< 0.05]. The positive effect indicates that improving the environmental disclosure quality can result in the improvement in the brand development of the manufacturing companies. In furtherance, the effect of social disclosure is also tested which is computed to be statistically insignificant since the p-value is computed to be above 0.05. Therefore, it can be inferred that amongst CSR policy, environmental disclosure possesses more significance concerning the case of the UK. However, in terms of digital marketing, promotional activity as a general approach is computed to be affecting the brand development significantly [B= 0.158; p-value= 0.001< 0.05] whereas, the effect of social media marketing (SMM) is insignificant [p-value> 0.05]. This indicates that there might be other mediating or moderating factors that might stimulate or affect the association of SMM with brand development. In the context of green marketing the effect of both green alliance and green innovation are computed to be positive and statistically significant having [B= 0.319; p-value= 0.000< 0.05] and [B= 0.149; p-value= 0.003< 0.05] respectively on the brand development. The positive association indicates that improvement in the green marketing by the firms operating in the UK can lead to an improvement in the brand development and this becomes more crucial to the ones that are operating in the manufacturing sector. Precisely, it can be stated that green marketing, CSR policy and digital marketing affect brand development significantly concerning the case of UK manufacturing companies. However, the path can also be seen in Fig. 3.
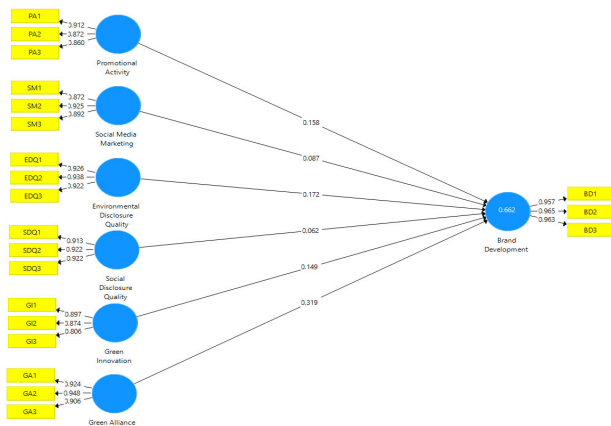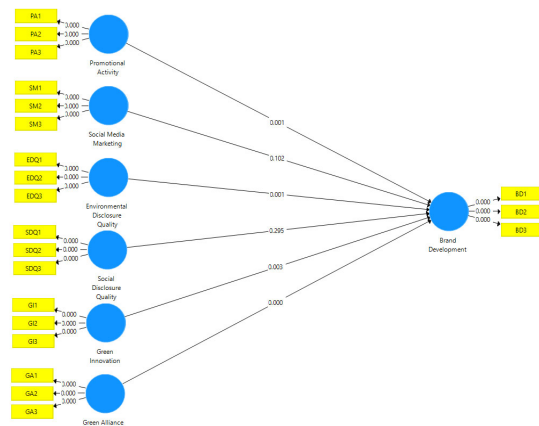

Fig. 2. Measurement Model

Fig. 3. Path Assessment

Table 3
Path Assessment

Path	Path Coefficient	T Statistics	P Values
Environmental Disclosure Quality → Brand Development	0.172***	3.179	0.001
Green Alliance → Brand Development	0.319***	6.094	0.000
Green Innovation → Brand Development	0.149***	3.025	0.003
Promotional Activity → Brand Development	0.158***	3.366	0.001
Social Disclosure Quality → Brand Development	0.062	1.048	0.295
Social Media Marketing → Brand Development	0.087	1.636	0.102

***: indicating significance at 1%; **: at 5%; *: at 10%

*6.3 Model's Quality and Predictive Relevance*

Following the assessment of the factor structure and path analysis, the researcher has analyzed the quality of the model as well, using R-squared and adjusted R-squared. The results have been presented in Table 4. According to the results presented in Table 4, the R-squared is computed to be 66.15%. This indicates that the variance in green marketing, CSR policy and digital marketing is explaining 66.15% variance in the band development of UK's manufacturing companies. However, following the adjustment of the errors and penalizing the data for the additional independent constructs, the variance explained is reduced to 65.64%. This can be deemed as a sufficient variance explanation or model's quality. In addition to the quality of the model, the researcher has assessed whether the hypothesized model of this study is capable of prediction or not. In this concern, the researcher has conducted blindfolding and obtained Stone-Geisser's Q-square and according to the study of Wong (2019), the value of Q-square should be greater than 0 in order to state that the model possesses any predictive relevance.

The results have been presented in Table 4, where the value of Q-square is computed to be 0.602. This infers that the model hypothesized in this study can be used for prediction since 0.602 is greater than 0. It can also be viewed in Fig. 4.

Table 4
Model's Quality and Predictive Relevance

	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Q Square
Brand Development	66.15%	65.64%	0.602
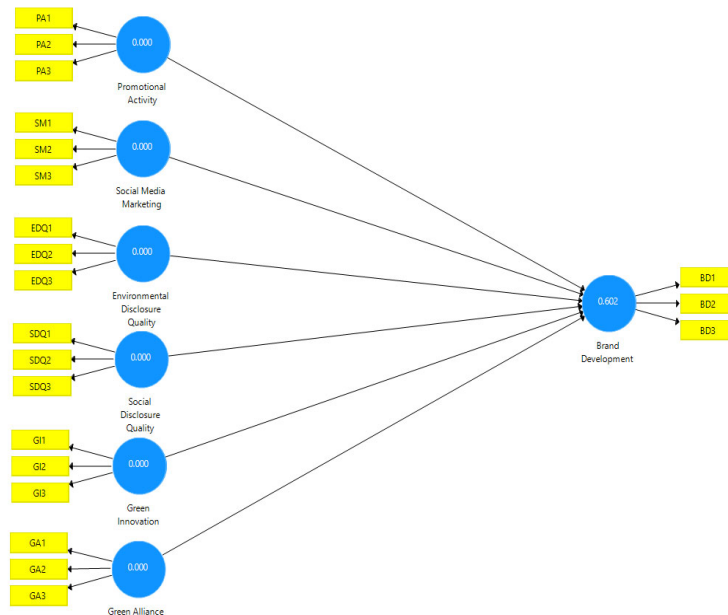
Fig. 4. Blindfolding

6.4 Hypotheses Assessment Summary

Based on the path analysis conducted in the previous sections, the summary of the proposed hypotheses has been presented in Table 5. According to the table, except for two hypotheses, all are accepted.

Table 5
Summary of the Proposed Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Decision
H1: There is a significant influence of promotional activities over the brand development.	Accepted
H2: There is a significant influence of social media over the brand development.	Rejected
H3: There is a significant influence of environmental disclosure on brand development.	Accepted
H4: There is a significant influence of social disclosure on brand development.	Rejected
H5: There is a huge influence of green innovation on brand development.	Accepted
H6: There is a significant influence of green alliance on brand development.	Accepted

7. Discussion

On the basis of the analysis, it has been determined that there is a significant effect of promotional activity over the brand development. It also aligns with the study of Shen (2020) that there is a significant influence of promotional activities on brand development. On the other hand, the hypothesis that there is a significant effect of social media over brand development has been rejected as the effect was determined to be insignificant. It contradicts with the study of Kumar and Singh (2020) that there is a huge influence of social media on brand development. In addition to this, the hypothesis that environmental disclosure quality has a significant influence on brand development has been accepted as a significant effect determined among the variables. It has also been supported in the study of Lu et al. (2020), which stated that the disclosure of environmental information has significant influence over the brand development. With respect to the hypothesis that there is a significant influence of social disclosure over brand development, it has been determined that there is an insignificant influence of

social disclosure quality over brand development. It contradicts with the study of Lawal, May and Stahl (2017) that there is a huge influence of social disclosure on brand development. Moreover, the hypothesis that there is a significant influence of green innovation on brand development has been accepted. It also aligns with the study of Chen et al. (2016) that there is a significant influence of green innovation towards brand development. Lastly, the hypothesis that there is a significant influence of green alliance towards brand management has also been accepted. It has also been supported in the study of Yadav and Pathak (2016) that there is a significant influence of green alliance towards brand development.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

The increased competition among the firms has made it necessary for the companies to increase their emphasis on brand development. Also, there are issues related to the lack of digital marketing adoption along with the development of CSR policies and green marketing among the manufacturing companies of the UK. Therefore, this study has focused on the role of digital marketing, CSR policies and green marketing in brand development with respect to the manufacturing companies in the UK. In this manner, the data has been gathered from 404 managers and employees through a survey questionnaire. The data gathered from the respondents were analyzed using the SEM technique in which confirmatory factor analysis and path assessment were carried out. Based on the analysis, it has been determined that there is a significant influence of environmental disclosure, green innovation, green alliance and promotional activity over the brand development of manufacturing companies in the UK. However, the effect of social disclosure and social media marketing has insignificant influence over brand development. Therefore, it is recommended for the manufacturing companies in the UK to focus on environmental disclosure, green innovation, green alliance, and promotional activity for the purpose of ensuring brand development.

9. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study has focused on determining the role of digital marketing, CSR policies and green marketing in brand development with respect to the manufacturing companies in the UK. In this manner, the results of this study are restricted to the manufacturing sector of the UK. Therefore, it is recommended for future researchers to consider other industries in the country or to focus on other countries in the region. In this manner, they will be able to present more broad findings of the existing literature. On the other hand, there are more factors which contribute to brand development and must be considered for the purpose of enhancing the performance of the companies. Since the effect of SMM and social disclosure were computed to be statistically insignificant; therefore, it is recommended that the future researchers test some moderators or mediators between the association of SMM and brand development; for instance, brand vision or social media strategy. Moreover, this study is limited to the UK, Therefore, in future, comparative analysis between different countries can also be conducted. The inclusion of qualitative evidence from interviews can also enrich the analysis in future with more insights.

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