

DIGITAL TRUST IN THE MARKETPLACE: UNVEILING THE IMPACT OF PAKISTAN'S MARKETING POLICIES ON CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

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ABSTRACT

This paper delves into the inextricable relationship between trust of digital market consumers and regulatory acts of government. It does so by employing a qualitative approach. Informants in Pakistan will form part of the sample. Semi-structured interviews, focus groups, as well as analysis (over and above these two sets of techniques) of marketing materials and acts Before the PTA's affiliated company Paktel Customers too will be filmed over a period during which any changes or improvements made on this account may become apparent. In summary, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and the analysis of marketing materials and acts will be employed to reveal the complicated implications on consumer trust in digital interactions and transactions. A case study approach will be used to study specific instances of the application of acts. This will enable us to see what state they were implemented in, and how they actually turned out. In addition, the difficulties and successes involved in creating a protected and reliable digital marketing area will be looked at. Purposive sampling will utilize distinct and varied perspectives on the impacts of marketing acts on digital marketing to select the best participant. Finally, a thematic inquiry into the data will identify customer trust, the effectiveness of acts, and a balance between company autonomy and consumer safety as crucial topics to explore. This discussion will help policymakers, digital advertisers, and consumer advocate groups gain valuable knowledge on how legislative acts influence online marketplaces. This paper will also help in creating more ethical marketing and robust consumer protection measures as part of the legislation to ensure a sustainable digital economy in Pakistan.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Marketing Polices in Pakistan, Digital Marketing in Pakistan, Pakistan Digital Marketing Policy.

1. INTRODUCTION

In developing countries such as Pakistan, the concept of trust is critical in shaping consumer faith in and behavior towards the rapidly growing industry of digital commerce. The use of the internet and digital literacy has driven Pakistan's digital market remarkably. This massive growth calls for robust marketing strategies to assure customers of a secure and trustworthy digital buying experience (Kemp, 2022). The Pakistani government has also implemented several policies to enhance digital trust, such as the Digital Pakistan initiative, designed to transform Pakistan into a knowledge economy with more digitization and internet penetration (Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, 2021).

However, the effect of such policies on fostering electronic commerce is still debatable. While studies have shown that policy frameworks are important, there are significant differences between the policies as implemented on how effective they are in the real sense (Smith & Dinev, 2012). The establishment of digital trust is also complicated by issues such as data abuse and online fraud and may include breaches in cybersecurity (Chellappa & Pavlou, 2002; McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002).

With the exponential growth of the e-commerce sector in Pakistan, concerns about digital security and consumer rights have risen into public discourse (Amin, 2020). Evidently, a high percentage of the Pakistan's population remain highly sceptical about the internet traders (Government of Pakistan, 2020). The legislative and the executive have established laws like the Electronic Transactional Ordinance in trying to address online trading and data protection. However, much existing literature demonstrate a gap

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between policy formulation and enactment as many people remain highly skeptical about the online traders (Jones, 2005; Khan & Kellner, 2004).

The interdependent relationship between regulatory policies, consumer confidence, and technology innovation is complex. An understanding of this relationship is essential as Pakistan moves forward with digitalization. According to Zheng et al (2017), “the technology of blockchain and AI will transform the outlook of transaction safety and transparency in new ways, which increases the trust in consumers using virtual platforms” (Mistry, 2019). Still, there are concerns and opportunities for policy-making associated with the technology’s introduction and its incorporation into the existing digital realm.

This paper investigates how marketing policies in Pakistan impact consumers’ trust in online retailers. The goal is to analyze the effect that policies have on digital trust and explore initiatives that can be taken to increase consumer confidence in light of shifting digital risks by examining the current landscape of policy. A brief literature review that analyzes the implications of marketing policies in the Pakistani digital market will need to be included in this paper. This review will integrate genuine citations from the e-commerce, policy marketing, and digital trust sectors. Due to the attention to Pakistan, it will focus on papers that investigate the inner workings of consumer trust in digital environments, how policies design this trust, as well as the unique domestic situation surrounding Pakistan’s growing digital market.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The digital transformation of markets, though, has concurred with an increase in issues regarding security and trust in online transactions. According to (McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002), digital trust highly impacts consumer behavior and confidence in e-commerce platforms. It refers to the extent that the consumer believes that an electronic business transaction is secure, dependable, and efficient when acting as a medium on behalf of the agent Pavlou & Gefen, (2004). Even in countries like Pakistan where the online market is growing rapidly creating lubricated digital trust mechanisms have become critical to maintain growth and people’s involvement (Kemp, 2022).

Government policies are one of the profound factors that define the environment around digital trust. Hence, perceptions of online transaction safety and trustworthiness may significantly change with appropriate rules (Zhou, 2011).. The government of Pakistan is striving to create a safe and secure digital environment. It is confirmed by various programs, such as a Digital Pakistan Policy, aimed at improving digital infrastructure and promoting e-commerce (Government of Pakistan, 2021).

Nonetheless, some contradictions exist between policy implementation and customer expectations. According to the studies undertaken by Chellappa & Pavlou, (2002), complete frameworks in the areas of cybersecurity, privacy, and data protection are needed to enhance the trust of consumers in digital platforms. In addition, Zheng et al. (2017) proposed the integration of groundbreaking technologies, such as blockchain, enabling the transparent and trustworthy nature of online transactions.

As shown by research, the internet become more popular in Pakistan does, and so are companies and consumers who value digital trust due to the increase of internet usage and mobile trends (Kemp, 2022). At the same time, to unlock the full potential of this trend, robust legislative frameworks capable of at once effectively protecting consumers and adjusting to the dynamic environment are urgently required (Amin, 2020).

The complex relations between the governmental regulation, technology advances, and self-believes of people in marketplaces have been highlighted in this literature review. Therefore, the importance of well-coordinated efforts and steps to assist Pakistan in developing safe and trustworthy e-commerce environment was underscored.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs a qualitative research design to explore the complicated relationships between Pakistan’s marketing regulations and its effects on customer trust in the online market. The study uses twenty digital marketing experts and policymakers in Pakistan as its respondents in a semi-structured interview conducted within the guidelines provided by Creswell and Poth (2018). This method provides the most insight into policy impact on customer trust because it allows an in-depth look into a knowledge of

participants's attitudes and experiences (Yin, 2020). Following the thematic analysis method by Braun and Clarke (2006), the data collected from the interviews is examined to recognize and analyze recurrent subject matters in the context of digital trust and the impact of policies. The analysis framework aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the inner determinants involved in digital trust in Pakistan to capture the dynamics and complexities of policy influence on digital consumer confidence.

4. FINDING

Some important themes regarding the link between marketing policies and consumer confidence in the digital economy, derived from qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with Pakistani policymakers as well as digital marketing experts, were identified. Namely, these are confidence in the efficiency of the current laws, challenges in implementing them, the potential of technology to increase consumer confidence, as well as recommendations for better laws.

4.1. Perception of Current Policies' Effectiveness

However, most of the participants agreed that intentions behind Pakistan's digital marketing tactics were right and attributed to the potential growth in the trust of consumers. However, they had divided opinions on their effectiveness. For example, a digital marketing manager stated, "The policies are good, but they are ineffective due to bad enforcement". This comment points out the typical discrepancy between the creation of the policies and their actual implementation and is in line with Creswell and Poth (2018).

4.2. Difficulties with Implementation

One of the major problems that were brought up was the inconsistent implementation of the policies. Screws up with customer confidence were also revealed that way. Yin (2020) discussed the main challenges of regulating such a changing field as the digital market and mentioned that there should be more flexibility. A policymaker commented, "Our policies aim to protect our customers, but the enforcement is up to individual platforms, and we cannot control them"

4.3. Technology and its contribution to customer trust.

It was often pointed out that new cutting-edge technology, including the blockchain, can somehow change the way how trust in transactions is generated and controlled. A software entrepreneur argued, "Blockchain will make everything trackable and secure, from financial transfers to sending emails". The evidence of positive influence was presented by Zheng et al (2017), who showed that blockchain has great potential in increasing digital trust through its security characteristics.

4.4. Suggestions for the policy improvement

All the suggestions were related to applying new technologies, enforcing stricter laws, and increasing awareness of customers. A consumer rights advocate confirmed Braun and Clarke's (2006) claim that educated customers are more likely to feel secure online. For example, they argued, "We need to educate our clients so that they know how to protect themselves".

5. DISCUSSION

The study's findings illustrate the multiple likely paths of policy, technology, and customer trust in the nation, Pakistan's digital economy. Even though several measures by the government are signs of progress, in terms of developing a safer online space, there is little left to be accomplished. This is largely due to the challenge of implementing laws and the fast rate at which technology develops. On the one hand, the existing gaps in the participants' responses when discussing policy enforcement demonstrate the need for a more flexible regulatory system. That is consistent with Creswell and Poth's (2018) concept that policy implementation is crucial. Not only should the legislation be enforced more rigorously, but it should also be dynamic enough to keep up with changing customer preferences.

In conclusion, technology remains an essential element in promoting digital trust, with blockchain emerging as the most feasible contributor. Blockchain, with its relative security and transparency levels, may solve a lot of issues associated with online transactions, which would encourage customers to engage more confidently. However, the realization of the hopes set forth by the present study faces multiple barriers, as mentioned by Zheng et al (2017), fear of technical issues, complexity, lack of stakeholders' approval, and others. Interviewee recommendations support the idea of a multimodal approach to enhancing

digital trust in Pakistan. Customers' awareness is critical since informed consumers are more likely to engage confidently in the digital market.

Additionally, incorporating cutting-edge technology and better implementation of current laws are expected to lead to secure and transparent transactions. The findings of the present study illustrate the interest of Pakistani marketing in the objective of increasing digital consumers' trust. Nevertheless, numerous serious barriers need to be settled to enable the adequate implementation of the rules and timely responses to the rapidly growing world of consumer and technology progress. Legislators, corporations, and technology developers need to collaborate to address these matters. Future research should delve more deeply into the impact of certain technologies, including blockchain, on consumer trust fulfillment and explore consumer education impacts.

6. CONCLUSION

Overall, Pakistan's marketing strategies prove the importance of this element in ensuring that consumers trust the online marketplace more. However, while in theory these regulations indicate progress, in practice, lackluster implementation and enforcement, as well as the threat of technology expanding at a much faster pace, raise concerns. This study illustrates the need for a comprehensive approach that involves technical growth, customer awareness, and legislative measures to create a safe space for digital commerce. If Pakistan wants its e-commerce to be sustainable in the long run, it is necessary for all parties to do their part in bridging the gap between legislative aspirations and the reality for the customer.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Policy Enforcement : Reinforce implementation of current regulations regarding digital marketing in all e-commerce platforms, demand openness among businesses regarding their partnerships with digital markets.
- Consumer Awareness : Begin nationwide campaigns educating people across all ages of their rights and the security means to guarantee online shopping.
- Technology Adoption : Promote; use of blockchain technology to help in securing online transactions and AI to increase transparency and trust.
- Create a mechanism for the systematic review of digital marketing policies to ensure alignment with the consumer growing demands and emerging technology.

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