

CHALLENGES OF ONLINE BUSINESS IN PAKISTAN; BUYER'S PERSPECTIVE.

MUHAMMAD TUFAIL

INSTITUTE OF BANKING AND FINANCE

BAHAUDDIN ZAKARIA UNIVERSITY MULTAN PAKISTAN

muhammادتufail0085@gmail.com

FARRUKH FAZAL

School of International Trade and Economics

Shandong University of Finance and Economics, Jinan, China

farrukhghumro@gmail.com

TOOBA KHAN

School of International Trade and Economics

Shandong University of Finance and Economics, Jinan, China

ktooba625@gmail.com

MUHAMMAD DAOOD

INSTITUTE OF BANKING AND FINANCE

BAHAUDDIN ZAKARIA UNIVERSITY MULTAN PAKISTAN

muhammad786daood786@gmail.com

ROA MUHAMMAD JAWAD

INSTITUTE OF BANKING AND FINANCE

BAHAUDDIN ZAKARIA UNIVERSITY MULTAN PAKISTAN

Raojawad789@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The main aim of the study is to highlight the challenges in online business in Pakistan. Apart from the challenges some other factors; buyers' perceptions, preferences, experiences and frequency of online shopping, were also studied. For this purpose, the research was conducted in the South Punjab region of Pakistan, and the sample consisted of 48 business students from the public university named Bahauddin Zakariya University. Exploratory research was employed, and questionnaires were delivered through the mail. The response rate remained at 70%, which was quite acceptable. Out of the 34 respondents, 21 were male students and the responses were analysed using content analysis techniques. The results showed that buyers were preferring online business because of the convenience. However, they were hesitant due to trust issues that could be mitigated by a review and rating system. Understanding the nuances of online business challenges and exploring the barriers to the seamless adoption of online business in Pakistan is imperative to unlocking the full potential of e-commerce as a driver of economic growth. It not only provides valuable insights for decision-making for policymakers, businesses, and consumers, but is also helpful for researchers interested in developing innovative solutions, improving consumer experiences, and conducting consumer research.

INTRODUCTION

The Internet has bestowed its users with many products, but e-commerce is a great achievement. Due to the convenience that it provides, e-commerce is widely accepted across the world. Despite the vast acceptance of e-commerce across borders, Pakistan has not yet observed a remarkable response toward online ventures. The online mode in the business of Pakistan penetrated only 19%, as in 2021, the data revealed that only 19% of the population has preferred to buy one online product at least (ecommercedb, 2022).

There are several reasons estimated behind the slow pace of online business in Pakistan. Some of them are unstable political environments, poverty, in which 40% of the population of Pakistan is below the poverty line, and digital illiteracy (Kundi, 2007). Demographic factors of buyers and previous online shopping experience significantly influence their perception of online shopping adoption. Female shoppers face more barriers in adopting online shopping (Qureshi, Fatima, & Sarwar, 2014). According to Hooria Adnan, developing countries like Pakistan and India have the potential to develop e-commerce, but it will take time as internet penetration in these countries is still low compared to developed countries (Hooria, 2014).

Online shopping entailed certain risks regarding availability, pricing, payments, and deliveries, which presented challenges and opportunities for both buyers and sellers involved in online transactions. In the context of Pakistan, buyers were particularly concerned about reliability and privacy. These concerns could be mitigated by implementing various feedback tools, such as reviews and ratings, which allow buyers to assess sellers. Additionally, keeping up with the latest

technologies in online platforms, such as e-commerce websites and applications, could help to address these challenges.

The study consists of variables of critical nature in e-commerce. The study tends to estimate consumer perceptions and behaviour regarding the patterns of online shopping by Pakistani buyers. Consumer perception/behaviour: Thoughts and attitudes are considered to be named in terms of perceptions and behaviours respectively, depicted by consumers. Online shopping pattern are referred to as the consequences of several factors, including acceptance and reluctance due to trustworthiness, attractive dealings, and convenient modes of shopping or transactions. The world is advancing towards innovation, and the global market is taking advantage of these innovations. As technology and innovation prevail in every walk of life, all nations need to adopt the latest technology in their operations.

Existing literature largely celebrates the growth of e-commerce in Pakistan but overlooks the detailed examination of customer satisfaction and the specific challenges they face in their online shopping experiences. This study conducted exploratory research using an open-ended questionnaire survey to gain more insight from buyers and allow them to express their opinions. The research also looked at the product and platform preferences of Pakistani shoppers and their purchase frequency. This study will be a convincing tool for the need for digitization in business modes in Pakistan and taking initiatives to bring buyers towards online purchasing. Online platforms are the future of every field, whether education, business, or others. The study targets the role players in the online world of shopping, which are consumer behaviour and perceptions in acceptance of online shopping modes.

The study is based on the fact behind the online shopping trends in Pakistan context regarding the perspective of buyers that online shopping is facing challenges of adoption in the local market despite having enough popularity in the international market.

Research questions:

This finding of the study tried to answer the question about online shopping from the buyers' perspective in Pakistan.

1. What are the factors affecting online businesses in Pakistan?
2. Why is online business still facing challenges in Pakistan despite enough global acceptance?
3. How can online businesses in Pakistan overcome the barriers?

Research Objectives:

1. Factors affecting the purchasing behaviour of online buyers.
2. Finding the challenges faced by online businesses in Pakistan.

3. Finding helpful tools to reduce barriers to online business in Pakistan

Research Significance:

1. The main objective behind finding out the challenges on behalf of buyers' perceptions is to assist the online business in Pakistan in developing the market in comparison to the international online world.
2. The study is beneficial in new business introduction to the online world and for already existing businesses that are planning to go on the online market.
3. This study is lucrative for future researchers who want to study consumer behaviour in online shopping.

LITERATURE

Many authors have studied the impact of demographic variables on online shopping. The study by (Lubis, 2018) showed that sex, income levels, and online shopping applications strongly influence online shopping decisions. Factors such as everyday life, age, and education do not significantly affect shopping preferences, both online and traditionally. Another study found a positive impact of age and income on the online purchase of products and a negative impact on gender and occupation (Sakkthivel, 2009). (Awan & Abbas, 2015) investigated the effect of demographic factors (age, gender, income, and education) on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers in Multan. The results of their study revealed that age and gender have an inverse relationship with impulse buying behaviour of consumers. Further, they found that income and education are directly related to the impulse buying behaviour of consumers. NFC, Faisalabad, has also researched the effects of online shopping on consumer behaviour, and they found out that the main buyers of online platforms are from Gen-Z. They mostly prefer online modes of shopping over physical ones (Nazir, Tayyab, & sajid, 2012).

Buyers' perceptions of online businesses have been a major concern of researchers in many past studies. (Soopramanien & Robertson, 2007) concluded that convenience and time savings positively influence buyers' perceptions. Similarly, a study by (Schaupp & Belanger, 2005) concluded that e-commerce has made it easier to find customers by reducing effort and time. (Chang & Wang, 2011) suggested that the variety of products in online stores affects the perception of buyers. Similarly, (Keisidou & Sarigiannidis, 2011) concluded that the consumer seeks convenience through the various products available on online platforms. Another study concluded that convenience refers to Internet shopping methods that can reduce buyers' time and effort in the shopping process (Chen, Hsu, & Lin, 2010). Online shopping is better than traditional shopping due to convenience and ease of use, thus gaining more acceptance in Pakistan concluded (Rehman, Ashfaq, Rehman, & Ansari, 2011). (Mityko & Teiu, 2012) investigated product perception in the case of frequent online buyers. They observed that the more experience a person has with online shopping, the more familiar they are with the process, the familiarity that indirectly results from

repeat purchases, and familiarity turns into purchase perception. (Pakaya & Tasik, 2019) concluded that people are reluctant to adopt new technology due to insecurity arising from fraudulent activities and their previous bad experiences. Fraudulent activities negatively affected the perception of buyers.

Various past studies explain the effects of the emerging digital platforms of businesses on postoperative aspects, such as sales, profits, returns, and revenues. (Ghazal & Zaman, 2021) has found that the effective utilisation of digital platforms is helping companies increase sales. However, the study observes that risk factors have not influenced consumer purchasing behaviour, which is the main focus of our concern. Digitalization has disrupted the business environment in various aspects, such as increasing sales orders, evolving supply chain processes, influencing customer behaviour, minimizing physical stores, and more (Akram, Fulop, & Tudor, 2021). With the help of digitalization, the sale graphs of businesses are booming within weeks (Dar & Neelofer, 2021). (Raval & Bhatt, 2021) suggested that the platform needs to raise security and privacy concerns for user satisfaction. According to Raval Amazon gained market leadership not only by using advanced tools and cost competitiveness, but also by focused customer concerns. The fast-growing online business platform allows shoppers to enjoy an affordable variety of products. However, in recent years, issues of trust and product authenticity in Taobao have adversely affected buyers' perceptions (Liu & Zheng, 2018).

Factors affecting online purchases mostly revolve around the risks involved in the online purchase from the buyer's perspective, which directly affect the online business and its prospects. Risks such as availability, pricing, payments, and deliveries hold great importance. A study has mentioned five distinct types of risks prevailing in online business: product risk, financial risk, convenience risk, non-delivery risk, and product delivery risk (Tham, Dastane, Johari, & Ismail, 2019). These risks are the real drivers of consumer perceptions. However, these factors are not just confined to the challenges in the online market industry; some factors also serve as motivations for buyers to purchase online products. Dian Novita and Nurul Husna analysed those conveniences, such as cost-saving in terms of pricing and time, are real motivators for online buyers, especially in online food delivery services (Novita & Husna, 2020).

Although online purchasing is no longer a new trend in the economy of Pakistan, it still faces major challenges in various fields, such as CRM (customer relationship management), supply chain management, and retention. In terms of customer relationship management, research by Omkar Dastane has found that digital marketing plays a significant role in positively impacting purchase intention (Dastane, 2020). Many other challenges are considered in the online version of shopping, and they have a long-lasting effect on consumer perceptions. These challenges are mostly related to cultural aspects and business reach. E-commerce websites should keep in mind that their ethical practices, fair pricing, and efficient delivery are crucial to winning the hearts of consumers (Tarar, 2017).

Online shopping has not only changed the way individuals make purchases but has also modified the practices of B2B (business-to-business) transactions. There is ample room to identify areas where digital influences are relevant and more productive. These areas were also explored in a study by Muhammad Tanveer, who found that reliability/fulfilment, and non-deception are the most important elements of relationship building in the business of small e-commerce firms (Awan M. T., 2021).

Another study on customer retention in Saudi Arabia during COVID-19 by Dr. Owais Barkat Al-Gharaibah demonstrated that responsiveness, customer satisfaction, ease of use, and attitude are important for online customer retention (Al-Gharaibah, 2020). The study explains the role trust plays in moderating the effect of factors on retention. The article also emphasizes the need for better delivery services and rewards in the event of late deliveries.

(Bukhari, Akram, & Hayat, 2021) identified online shopping behaviour in students of Lahore during Covid-19, and they found that students preferred online shopping during periods of social distancing, lockdown, and other restrictions. The new generation has responded positively to the implementation of technology in various life fields. Our studies have also primarily focused on students, considering the buying behaviour they exhibit while shopping online.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research aims to identify the barriers that prevent Pakistani consumers from using online shopping as their primary shopping mode and to know the attitude of Pakistani consumers towards online shopping. The research adopts an exploratory approach and uses an open-ended questionnaire survey to collect primary data from a conveniently selected sample of buyers in South Punjab. Exploratory research is used to reveal ways of using opinions and intellect to delve deeper into an issue (Mbaka & Isiramen, 2021). A qualitative research method was employed to collect the data. The study opted for a qualitative approach to make it more practical and applicable (Miller, 2019). The main purpose behind using qualitative research is that it requires a small sample size and yields faster results compared to other methods. Thus, the research process was open-ended, allowing for the exploration of specified insights and unbiased data.

Our sample size was 48, and the response rate was 70%, with 34 responses, which is greater than the ideal response rate for any research, considering 30 as the maximum. Results were mainly gathered from a sample of 48 business students, including both genders, i.e., male and female, who were between the ages 20 and 24. The research target was primarily business students of Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan, a public university in South Punjab. The selection of the sample was based on the fact that these students have sufficient awareness of business, which is highly relevant for responding to the research questions. Additionally, they have a future in the e-commerce market in South Punjab, Pakistan.

The reason the region holds much potential regarding online business is that it is considered to be the hub for many industries like education, commerce, and agriculture. There are many functional brands present in the market, and the business sector has a portfolio of 25 years. However, there is still room for improvement due to modern alterations in business models driven by the contemporary world of digitalization (Javed, 2020). The study mainly targets business professionals and officials to draw their attention towards the emerging trends of e-commerce in the area.

The study used content analysis to summarize the findings and identify themes, patterns, and insights from the responses. According to (Holsti, 1968), content analysis is a technique for evaluating messages by systematically and objectively identifying specific characteristics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire has two parts. The first section includes demographic factors such as age, gender, and education, are summarized in Table 1. Section two includes questions about buyers' perceptions, and experiences, which products and platforms they prefer, and the frequency of their online purchases. It also includes a question about the challenges of online shopping. At the end of Section 2, respondents' suggestions on future aspects of online business in Pakistan are also included.

Demographic preferences of online shopping

Demographic aspects have great importance in determining online shopping trends and future perspectives. The most relevant demographic data collected includes gender, age, and education. However, contradictions arise when some studies do not focus on the impact of these factors in defining the preferences of customer for online shopping.

Our data suggests that age greatly influences the future of online shopping businesses. As heavy and savvy internet users, millennials tend to be familiar with online shopping (Dharmesti, Seta Dharmesti, & Kuhne, 2021). Youngsters are more attracted to the online mode of shopping, payments, and product deliveries due to its time-saving and energy-conserving features.

As far as gender is concerned, it is observed that there is not much difference in gender preferences towards the online mode of shopping, but females are slightly more inclined towards online platforms compared to males. Similarly, (Lim & Cheng, 2019) revealed that men are more in favour of online shopping, have a positive attitude towards web advertising, and perceive online shopping as more useful compared to women. On the other hand, women users perceive online shopping to be more joyful than men.

Another demographic aspect playing its part in determining online mode preferences is education, which comes under the umbrella of literacy. If the literacy rate of Pakistan is considered, then no

doubt it is slightly above the average at 58%. So, online modes of shopping are more popular among the literate in comparison to the illiterate, due to a lack of information, awareness, and technology. Educated individuals are more open-minded and accepting of the innovations in the digital world, including digital markets and online shopping platforms. (Crosta & Ceccato, 2021) also found a positive effect of education on non-necessities.

It is very important to consider demographic factors while making preferences for online products and platforms for market segmentation, strategies, and competition in specific markets.

Table 1: Demographic summary of participants

	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	21	61.8%
	Female	13	38.2%
	Total	34	100%
Age	20	2	5.9%
	21	15	44.1%
	22	11	32.3%
	23	4	11.8%
	24	2	5.9%

Product & platforms

Table 2 depicts the preferences regarding online products and platforms from the buyer's perspective. The people of South Punjab are more reluctant to buy electronic products from online platforms, but the ratio of lifestyle products is relatively high. The reason demonstrated by this research was that people are concerned about the quality of electronic products and the risks related to delivery and replacements.

Buyers are conscious of reliable platforms and product quality because, according to the respondents in Pakistan, the product in an advertisement is not delivered to the buyers. As far as online platform preferences are concerned, Daraz is the most famous platform for online shopping in Pakistan, and the population of South Punjab is also highly associated with it (Ariba, Hassan, & Tirmizi, 2021). However, international platforms like Amazon and Alibaba are still in low favour due to the lack of awareness and acceptance of online shopping methods among the local masses of Pakistan. The main reason behind this is the infancy of the e-commerce industry in Pakistan (Alvi, 2022).

Table 2: Product categories and online platforms

Themes	Sub-themes	Frequency
Products	Life-Style	18
	Daily consumption	12
	Electronics	4
Platforms	Daraz	12
	Amazon	8
	Ali baba	6
	Saman.pk	2
	Others	6

Frequency of online shopping

According to the findings in Table 3, the frequency of online shopping is based on the demand of buyers, which is ultimately associated with factors like budget, sales, discounts on online products or platforms, customer satisfaction, and occasional offers. However, the majority of the respondents purchase quarterly.

Buyers' Perception

The sample of our research was 95% in favour of online shopping, as they found the online mode convenient in saving time, money, and energy. They regarded online shopping as hassle-free compared to physical shopping. Business students at BZU have suggested online shopping as the most preferred alternative during periods of crisis, as the world recently experienced during the pandemic conditions. Most of the respondents were keenly fond of online payments because of the ultimate technological convenience of online services while shopping, like fast delivery and easy methods of payment. 5% of the responses were not inclined towards online shopping, as they were extremely concerned about the quality of the products and the reliability of online platforms. Some of them had not yet experienced the online mode of buying. For themes and subthemes, Table 3 is given.

Quality is the backbone of online shopping, and it has a long-lasting effect on the perception of the buyer. Buyers gauge online business efficiency on behalf of quality. The research respondents are highly concerned by the quality of their preferred electronic products, as their online demand is the lowest. It is also proven by the study, which proposed that trust is the main factor behind the strong relationship of an electronic market, where it plays a great role in reducing the uncertainties of the transactions (Khan, Zubair, & Maria, 2019). Many buyers are attracted to online shopping just because of the increase of more availability of products in variety as compared to physical

marketplaces. This feature can be a great source of motivation for buyers, but on the other side, it is a proven source of challenge for online businesses. Variety is regarded as more complementary as compared to the alternative source of shopping for buyers (Robinson, Riley, & Rettie, 2007).

Experience

The buyers in the research depict their experiences in a ratio of 80-20. 80% of buyers reveal their great experience and regard the positive effects of seller authenticity and the passage of time while buying. The services of online businesses are the real players in the e-commerce field in Pakistan. The rest of the buyers say that they faced fraudulent activities in the delivery of the products.

Consumer satisfaction plays a significant role in explaining the preferences of buyers towards online shopping. According to the buyers in our research, satisfaction is both a challenge and an opportunity for businesses. Once the buyer is satisfied with the online service of the platform, the chances of revisiting become greater, ultimately leading to customer retention. Customer satisfaction includes factors like confidence, trust, assurance, reliability, and commitment.

Table 3: Frequency, Experience and Perception

Theme: Frequency of online shopping
Subtheme: Quarterly
Subtheme: Depends on budget
Subtheme: Discount offers
Theme: Experience
Subtheme: Good experience
Subtheme: Satisfactory
Subtheme: Platforms are reliable
Theme: Buyer's perception
Subtheme: Convenient
Subtheme: Variety of products
Subtheme: Time saving
Subtheme: Updated market

Issues Of Online Shopping

According to the respondents to the second last question, inadequacies, reputational concern and poverty are the main challenges to online business in Pakistan. The online market is not new, but it is at different stages in the global market. The global market is a fusion of economies from developed countries and developing countries. The online market has already attracted the maximum number of consumers from developed countries like the USA and Europe, while developing countries are still in the nurturing phases at different levels (Hooria, 2014). Pakistan is a developing country, and online shopping gained popularity in the region during the pandemic days.

In the context of the online market, customers are concerned with website-related problems, customer service issues, privacy assurance, and transactional problems (Mazhar, Ting, & Abbasi, 2022). Now, the issues that become obstacles to digital e-commerce acceptance are discussed below.

Inadequacies

The most important issue faced by digital modes of shopping is the lack of resources. Pakistan has been facing severe economic ups and downs, making it critical for any business survive in such a cutthroat competition with limited resources and social biases. Other online issues include a lack of awareness, information, and technology as well. The lack of personalization and confidence in online business are also prevalent issues faced by buyers in Pakistan.

Moreover, a lack of understanding of the holistic nature of sustainable development could act as a hindrance to driving sustainable consumption in the country. These inadequacies are not just prevailing in Pakistan, as a study conducted in Kenya also confirmed that factors such as a lack of IT awareness, lack of trust, and lack of proper physical addresses are proven obstacles in the adoption of a new culture of online purchases (Kimana, 2020).

Reputational concerns

Online scams and frauds are devastating for the reputation of digital sales and purchase platforms. Many research studies have confirmed the effect of reputation on online trust, such as fact that online trust and attitude positively influence purchase intention (Jadil & Rana, 2022). These issues are also caused by illiteracy and a lack of awareness among the masses. The main concern of checks and balances is also absent for online businesses. There are no regulatory bodies available to keenly observe the online market trends and propose the relevant rules and regulations to eradicate these online scams and frauds. This is also the reason for the existence of numerous fake websites for shell companies.

The ultimate factor in online shopping from the perspective of Pakistan is trust, which is achieved through quality services in the form of reliable products, transparent and secure payment methods, and timely, fast deliveries. If an online business provides services of the highest quality, it is a proven step towards gaining a competitive edge in the complex market of Pakistan's economy, where many difficulties prevail at every stage of the business cycle, whether it is online or physical markets or commerce platforms. It is empirically confirmed that commitment and trust significantly moderate the relationship between consumer purchase intention and internet shopping behaviour, and they also have a direct influence on online shopping behaviour (Rehman, Bhatti, & Mohamed, 2019).

Poverty

Respondents are highly convinced that poverty is a reason behind the low-paced acceptance of online shopping behaviours. In Pakistan, the majority of people belong to the middle class and lower middle class. They don't have positive attitudes towards online shopping; rather, they are resistant to the acceptance of online modes. Previous research by (Bender & Mattoso, 2022) tried to identify the reasons for such a negative attitude, which include limitations in education, health, housing, and transport in terms of income and knowledge. So, adopting new technology is quite difficult for these poor people, especially low-income consumers.

SUGGESTIONS & IMPLICATIONS

The study is highly relevant in terms of online business, as managers can act against the risks and challenges mentioned in the study that buyers face while experiencing online shopping. The study highlights the areas of buyers' concerns and provides businesses with the opportunity to improve their services in these aspects.

The study suggests two of the most important concerns of the buyers:

1. Reliability
2. Privacy

Addressing these concerns can ultimately lead to the satisfaction of online buyers if they are provided with the utmost levels of confidence and security. Both can be achieved through methods of feedback, such as ratings and reviews about the services, and regular updating of online platforms, such as apps and websites, to improve and secure the business.

Feedback

Feedback is considered to be the backbone of any business, and its improvements are highly dependent upon the nature of the feedback it is obtaining. Feedback is important, whether it is positive or negative. A business should highly encourage its feedback mechanism from its stakeholders. From a business perspective, the customer is the king. So, in the online world, customers' opinions are highly valuable. A business generates sales leads based on customer feedback present on its profile regarding the product's quality, pricing, services, and delivery.

Reviews & Ratings

Feedback is very critical to customer retention. Feedback in the online world is based on ratings and reviews. Different businesses set a rating system, such as 5-star ratings and pictorial reviews, for feedback based on their performance. Some customers also send feedback messages for the business portfolio. Credible reviews are vital for customers, whether they are based on positive or negative facts with justification about a product or service (Roy & Datta, 2018). Customers prefer to buy from a platform that has maximum positive feedback as they develop their perception of

the services that were previously delivered, and this leads to a halfway towards trust and satisfaction even before the delivery of the products.

The interrelationship of emerged variables in the results suggested that online shopping from the perspective of the buyer is highly effective in terms of various factors such as quality and colour of products, convenient ways of shopping, feedback (i.e., reviews and ratings), captivating product features like pricing, variety, and availability, online offers (i.e., sales and discounts), free sampling and free shipping, product satisfaction, brand value, savings in terms of time, money, and energy, and services like delivery, payments, returns, and replacements. All of these factors make online shopping extremely irresistible to buyers. These are not just factors but also drivers of online business, as buyers find them graciously influential.

If these factors are explored in terms of Pakistan's online market, the economy is more concerned about revenue, and the online payment methods are in more control regarding the buying process (Anjum & Chai, 2020). Brand value is also of great importance in building the online shopping trend. Brand awareness has a positive and significant impact on the decision-making process for the purchase of online products (Soomro & Khaskheli, 2020).

Another important factor is regularly modifying the market as technology updates, so the online market is also changing accordingly. As the abundance comprises, the younger generation is deemed highly commendable under modern global terms. They need the latest version of everything related to their demands for life and concerns.

Despite these factors, online markets in Pakistan have risks and benefits at the same time. Risks are related to the challenges faced by both ends of the online business. The risks having negative effects are considered to be financial risk, product risk, and security risk, as previously proved by the literature of the research and also by several other studies (Anwar, Nawaz, & Ahmad, 2021).

The study has great scope for the future of the online market, as there is a full basket of opportunities in the region of South Punjab. The study focuses on the youth of different areas. And the exposure to institutes in the region of Multan makes the study more practical while measuring the buying behaviour of the masses present in the target places of the online market. 70% of the research respondents were confident in the growth of online shopping in the future, and they see a bright future for the online market in Pakistan due to high trends in technologies and updating awareness.

CONCLUSIONS

The study focuses on South Punjab business students regarding the behaviour of online buyers. It proposes vital variables such as online products and platforms, which have distinct features such as convenient ways of transactions and delivery and savings of time, money, and energy. These

features lead to an incredible rise in online buying frequency, and this pattern of buying leaves an influential impact on the buyers, heading towards their maximum satisfaction and making them more experienced in online buying through exposure to risks and benefits in a positive way.

Major challenges faced by online buyers in Pakistan are the lack of technology, lack of trust, lack of awareness, lack of personalization, lack of safety, and poor services (i.e., delivery and quality issues). Eventually, buyers in Pakistan are more inclined toward the reliability of the seller in the online marketplace.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was confined to a limited population in South Punjab, with a small sample group consisting mainly of business students, primarily youth from a public university in the region. Therefore, a larger sample covering a more diverse population could be a better source for further study. The sample of the study was also limited to university students with a specific focus on business graduates, so a more general study is needed to explore broader implications.

It is suggested to incorporate other regions of Pakistan into the research to integrate diversity in terms of culture, lifestyles, and other demographic factors. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of online buying behaviour in Pakistan.

References

- A. S., Hassan, T., & Tirmizi, F. (2021, Feb 16). *Daraz is number one in Pakistani e-commerce. Can it stay that way?* Retrieved from Profit by Pakistan Today: <https://profit.pakistantoday.com.pk/2021/02/06/daraz-is-number-one-in-pakistani-e-commerce-can-it-stay-that-way>
- Akram, U., Fulop, M. T., & Tudor, A. T. (2021, 7 15). Impact of Digitalization on Customers' Well-Being in the Pandemic Period: Challenges and Opportunities for the Retail Industry. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*.
- Al-Gharaibah, O. (2020, May). ONLINE CONSUMER RETENTION IN SAUDI ARABIA DURING COVID 19: THE MODERATING ROLE OF ONLINE TRUST. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(9).
- Alvi, A. H. (2022, July 5). *A Survey of Online Shopping Behavior in Pakistan. Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan*. Retrieved from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/survey-online-shopping-behavior-pakistan-ahmad-habib-alvi>
- Anjum, S., & Chai, J. (2020). Drivers of Cash-on-Delivery Method of Payment in E-Commerce Shopping: Evidence From Pakistan. *Sage Journals*.
- Anwar, U., Nawaz, A. R., & Ahmad, S. (2021, March 25). Benefits and Risks of Online Shopping with Consumer's Perspective: A Case Study of Pakistan. *International Journal*

- of Academic Research in Accounting Finance and Management Sciences*, 11(1), 499 - 511.
- Awan, A. G., & Abbas, N. (2015). Impact of Demographic Factors on Impulse Buying Behavior of Consumers in Multan-Pakistan. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 7.
- Awan, M. T. (2021, April). ANALYTICAL APPROACH ON SMALL AND MEDIUM PAKISTANI BUSINESSES BASED ON E-COMMERCE ETHICS WITH EFFECT ON CUSTOMER REPURCHASE OBJECTIVES AND LOYALTY. *Journal of Legal Ethical and Regulatory Issues*, 24(3).
- Bender, L. G., & Mattoso, C. d. (2022). ATTITUDES TOWARDS ONLINE PURCHASES BY LOW-INCOME CONSUMERS WHO HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET. *Consumer Behavior Review*.
- Bukhari, A., Akram, M., & Hayat, A. (2021, October 13). University Student's Behavior Towards Online Shopping during COVID-19 Pandemic in Lahore, Pakistan. *Multicultural Education*, 7(10).
- Chang, H. H., & Wang, H. W. (2011, 6 21). The moderating effect of customer perceived value on online shopping behaviour. *Online Information Review*, 35, 333-359.
- Chen, Y. H., Hsu, I. C., & Lin, C. C. (2010, 9-10). Website attributes that increase consumer purchase intention: A conjoint analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(9-10), 1007-1014.
- Crosta, A. D., & Ceccato, I. (2021, Aug 16). Psychological factors and consumer behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic. *PLOS ONE*, 16(8).
- Dar, T. M., & N. T. (2021, March). Footprints of Digital Marketing on Customers' Purchase Decisions. *Electronic Research Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(1).
- Dastane, O. (2020, May 18). Impact of Digital Marketing on Online Purchase Intention: Mediation Effect of Customer Relationship Management. *Journal of Asian Business Strategy*, 10(1), 142-158.
- Dharmesti, M., Seta Dharmesti, T. R., & Kuhne, S. (2021, July 6). Understanding online shopping behaviours and purchase intentions amongst millennials. *Young Consumers*, 22(1), 152-167.
- ecommercedb. (2022). Retrieved from The eCommerce market in Pakistan: <https://ecommercedb.com/>: <https://ecommercedb.com/markets/pk/all>
- G. Z., & Zaman, S. u. (2021). EFFECTIVE USE OF DIGITALIZATION TO BOOST COMPANY SALES A STUDY OF ONLINE CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR TOWARDS E-COMMERCE SHOPPING PLATFORMS. *International Journal of Marketing Research Innovation*, 5.
- H. A. (2014). An Analysis of the Factors Affecting Online Purchasing Behavior of Pakistani Consumers. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 6.
- Holsti, O. R. (1968). Content Analysis. In *Handbook of Social Psychology* (Vol. 2).

- Jadil, Y., & Rana, N. P. (2022). Understanding the drivers of online trust and intention to buy on a website: An emerging market perspective. *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights*.
- Javed, A. (2020, December 9). Prospects and Problems for E-commerce in Pakistan. *Asian Journal of Economics, Finance and Management*, 2(4), 131-139,.
- Keisidou, E., & Sarigiannidis, L. (2011). Consumer characteristics and their effect on accepting online shopping, in the context of different product types. *International Journal of Business Science & Applied Management (IJBSAM)*, 6(2), 31-51.
- Khan, M. A., Zubair, S. S., & M. M. (2019, Nov 4). An assessment of e-service quality, e-satisfaction and e-loyalty: Case of online shopping in Pakistan. *South Asian Journal of Business Studies*, 8(3), 283-302.
- Kimana, V. (2020). Factors affecting E-commerce adoption among Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Developing Countries. *The Context of Kenya*, 32.
- Kundi, G. M. (2007). eBusiness in Pakistan: Opportunities and Threats. *Journal of Internet Banking and Commerce*, 12.
- Lim, Y. M., & Cheng, B. L. (2019). Gender Differences in Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Online Shopping: A Study of Malaysian Consumers. *Journal of Marketing Advances and Practices (JMAP)*, 1(2).
- Liu, X. P., & Zheng, W. T. (2018). Analysis of the Impact of Customer Trust on Consumers' Purchase Behavior Based on Online Shopping Platform: Taking Taobao Shop as an Example. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 221.
- Lubis, A. N. (2018). EVALUATING THE CUSTOMER PREFERENCES OF ONLINE SHOPPING: DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND ONLINE SHOP APPLICATION ISSUE. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, 17(2).
- Mazhar, M., Ting, D. H., & Abbasi, A. Z. (2022, May 18). Gauging customers' negative disconfirmation in online post-purchase behaviour: The moderating role of service recovery. *Cogent Business & Management*.
- Mbaka, N., & Isiramen, D. O. (2021, 12 13). THE CHANGING ROLE OF AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH IN MODERN ORGANISATION. *GPH-International Journal of Business Management*, 4(12), 27-36.
- Miller, B. (2019, March 23). *19 Advantages and Disadvantages of Qualitative Research Methods*. Retrieved from <https://greengarageblog.org/19-advantages-and-disadvantages-of-qualitative-research-methods>
- Mityko, D. V., & Teiu, C. (2012). Product perception in the case of frequent online buyers empirical evidence. *Emerging Markets Queries in Finance and Business*.
- Nazir, S., Tayyab, A., & sajid, A. (2012, 5). "How Online Shopping Is Affecting Consumers Buying Behavior in Pakistan?". *International Journal of Computer Science Issues*, 9(3).
- Novita, D., & Husna, N. (2020). THE INFLUENCE FACTORS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIORAL INTENTION TOWARDS ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY SERVICES. *Jurnal TECHNOBIZ*, 3, 40-42.

- Pakaya, F., & Tasik, H. H. (2019, 8 28). THE IMPACT OF FRAUDULENT MARKETING PRACTICES AND EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING ON SENIORS RESISTANCE IN ADOPTING NEW TECHNOLOGIES (IN CASE OF E-COMMERCE). *Jurnal Riset Ekonomi, Manajemen, Bisnis dan Akuntansi*, 7.
- Qureshi, H. A., Fatima, R., & Sarwar, A. (2014). BARRIERS TO ADOPTION OF ONLINE SHOPPING IN PAKISTAN. *Oral Science International*.
- Raval, H. P., & Bhatt, D. V. (2021). ASSESSMENT OF SERVICE QUALITY OF SELECTED ONLINE SHOPPING PLATFORMS.
- Rehman, K. u., Ashfaq, M., Rehman, I. u., & Ansari, S. (2011). Examining online Purchasing Behavior: A case of Pakistan. *International Conference on Social Science and Humanity*, 5.
- Rehman, S. U., Bhatti, A., & Mohamed, R. (2019). The moderating role of trust and commitment between consumer purchase intention and online shopping behavior in the context of Pakistan. *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research*.
- Robinson, H., Riley, F. D., & Rettie, R. (2007, March). The role of situational variables in online grocery shopping in the UK. *The Marketing Review*, 7(1), 89-106.
- Roy, G., & Datta, B. (2018, July 24). Role of electronic word-of-mouth content and valence in influencing online purchase behavior. *Journal of Marketing Communications*.
- Sakkthivel, M. (2009, 1). Impact of demographics on online buying behaviour towards different products. *International Journal of Electronic Finance*, 3, 284-296.
- Schaupp, C., & Belanger, F. (2005). A CONJOINT ANALYSIS OF ONLINE CONSUMER SATISFACTION. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 6.
- Soomro, H. J., & Khaskheli, G. A. (2020, 5 31). Intervening analysis of internet marketing between the relationship of brand awareness and online purchase decision of mobile products among the students of Heis in Pakistan. *INDIAN JOURNAL OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY*.
- Soopramanien, D., & Robertson, A. (2007, 1). Adoption and usage of online shopping: An empirical analysis of the characteristics of “buyers” “browsers” and “non-internet shoppers”. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 14(1), 73-82.
- Tarar, M. A. (2017, August 14). *Five reasons why Pakistanis avoid online shopping*. Retrieved from Dawn: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1351491>
- Tham, K. W., Dastane, O., Johari, Z., & Ismail, N. (2019, November). Perceived Risk Factors Affecting Consumers' Online Shopping Behaviour. *Journal of Asian Finance Economics and Business*, 6, 249-260.

ANEXURES

RESPONSES DATA LINK

Transcript of surveyed questionnaire responses are given below.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1RooyX8TGJ-ElzuTmVklAk9u-b3BOEmzYgF92fcty6Hs/edit#gid=380393883>

Sampling

