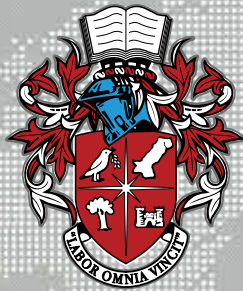


# NEW HORIZONS

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Faculty of  
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## **EDITORIAL NOTE**

Greetings the New Horizons, we are proudly presenting you the latest edition of New Horizons Volume 18, Issue 1. This issue includes research articles from Literature and Linguistics, Education, International Relations, Political Science, Socio-Economics and Sociology Fields, where authors emphasized the effects of the economic, social and technological impacts.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of Dr. Naveed Mughal and Dr. Rab Nawaz for their support to publish this issue and also the support rendered by the editorial assistants.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude the authors, reviewers, the publisher, the advisory and the editorial boards of the journal and the office bearers for their support in bringing out yet another volume and look forward to their unrelenting support for the successful release of upcoming editions.

**Dr. Muhammad Asif Khan**

Editor

New Horizons

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# **ADAPT MODEL FOR APPAREL INDUSTRIES FOR THEIR BETTER PERFORMANCE IN MARKETING & SALES**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The objective of the paper is to examine the effects of the prevailing economic conditions (2020-2023) on the apparel sector and assess the efficacy of the ADAPT model in augmenting the marketing and sales tactics of apparel brands and altering consumer purchasing patterns. The research will be carried out using a qualitative methodology, specifically employing thematic analysis in conjunction with an inductive approach to examine data gathered from surveys and interviews with industry specialists. The study's objective will be to ascertain the obstacles encountered by apparel brands amidst the prevailing economic climate and examine the ways in which these companies have modified their marketing and sales approaches to confront these obstacles. Furthermore, the study will investigate the potential application of the ADAPT model in enhancing the operational efficiency of apparel brands amidst the prevailing market circumstances. The results of the study will provide valuable perspectives on the practical application of the ADAPT model within the apparel sector, emphasizing the advantages and possible obstacles associated with its integration. By presenting empirical evidence on the efficacy of the ADAPT model in augmenting marketing and sales strategies and altering customer behavior towards apparel brands amidst the prevailing economic conditions, this study will make a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge. The ultimate goal of this research is to provide apparel manufacturers with a deeper comprehension of how to remain competitive and adapt to current market conditions.*

**Keywords:** ADAPT model, pricing strategy, marketing and sales, consumer behavior; inflation

## **Abbreviations**

### **ADAPT MODEL:**

- A:** Adjust discounting and promotion
- D:** Develop the art and science of price change
- A:** Accelerate decision making tenfold
- P:** Plan options beyond pricing to reduce cost
- T:** Track execution relentless

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The ADAPT Model is a rapidly implementable pricing strategy designed for the apparel industry to mitigate the risks associated with inflation. By enhancing comprehension of the market, consumer sentiment, and the factors contributing to decreased sales, retailers can modify price points, promotional activities, and discount policies. It also expedites decision-making, enables cost-saving planning of alternatives beyond pricing, and ensures relentless execution monitoring. This assists retailers with a focus on sales in stabilizing costs, preserving profit margins, and maintaining prices to ensure long-term consumer retention. The model aids retailers in optimizing their pricing strategies, devising innovative approaches to price adjustments, expediting decision-making processes, and considering alternatives to pricing to achieve cost reductions. The ADAPT Model, when applied by retailers, guarantees consumer retention by preventing price fluctuations and preserving profit margins.

### **1.1. Overview of the Topic:**

Inflation is high, while Pakistani apparel brands anticipate the effects of COVID-19 are diminishing. Inflation averaged 8.2% between 1960 and 2021; in February 2023, consumer prices peaked at 31.5%, the highest level since 1974 (Trading Economics, 2023), for a total price increase of 11,207.52%. For context, a product that was assessed at Rs. 100 in 1960 would be worth Rs. 11,307.52 when the year 2022 commenced (World Data, 2022). Rising prices challenge businesses, impacting profits and customer relations. To navigate this, apparel brands must adopt holistic strategies (Abdelnour et al., 2022). During crises, firms face choices: maintain high prices with lower short-term profit or offer lower prices for market share.

Increasing advertising budgets and astute promotions increase sales during recessions, according to research. Achieving a balance between pricing and costs is of utmost importance for the short - term market share of the apparel industry. "Kim (1992), Werner (1991), and Quelch (2008), for instance, analyzed the effects of economic crises on advertising strategies. It was discovered that during and after a recession, increasing or maintaining advertising budgets resulted in greater sales revenue and market share. Conversely, advertising budget reductions had the opposite effect. In addition, during a recession, a company's performance can be positively impacted by utilizing value-driven promotion techniques (e.g., coupons, bonuses, free samples), low-cost online advertising, and personal selling (Ang et al., 2000; Koksall and Ozgul, 2007). During a crisis, it is advisable to modify distribution policies by

reallocating resources and eradicating unprofitable channels (Notta and Vlachvei, 2015).

Inflation-affected businesses can maintain long-term success and preserve profit margins with the assistance of a comprehensive strategy, such as McKinsey's ADAPT model (Hamdan et al., 2022).

### **1.2.ADAPT MODEL:**

When prices increase, inflation may strain relationships with customers. Organizations may capitalize on this circumstance to attend to consumer apprehensions while safeguarding their profit margins. The ADAPT Model provides a versatile pricing strategy that aids revenue-driven retailers and brands in cost control, profit margin protection, and customer retention in the face of high inflation, thereby securing sustainable business value over the long term. This model is composed of five elements.

1. Modify pricing and promotional strategies while optimizing non-price mechanisms
2. Master the science and craft of price modification
3. Tenfold the rate of decision making
4. Plan alternative pricing options to reduce expenses
5. Constantly monitor execution (Abdelnour et al., 2022).

### **1.3.Purpose of the Study:**

The objective of this study is to provide assistance to apparel retailers and brands that prioritize sales in enhancing their pricing strategies amidst periods of inflation. The objective is to assist them in maintaining long-term cost control, adjusting to declining sales, and recognizing shifting consumer preferences. It is suggested that the ADAPT Model increase brand value and consumer loyalty

### **1.4. Research Questions:**

- RQ1:** How the current economic situations (2020 – 2023) affect the Apparel brands in Pakistan?
- RQ2:** How ADAPT Model can help in changing customers' buying behavior towards Apparel brands?
- RQ3:** How ADAPT Model can efficiently enhance the sales and marketing strategies of Apparel brands?

### **1.5. Objectives of the study:**

The main objectives of the research study are as follows:

- To understand the effect of the current economic situation on Apparel brands.
- To find out if the ADAPT Model can help in changing customer buying behavior towards the Apparel brands.
- To understand the efficiency of the ADAPT Model in enhancing the sales and marketing strategies of Apparel brands.

## 2. Literature Review

The detail covered in the literature review was obtained from previous or past sources like articles and other publications that were accessible online.

### 2.1. Introduction to Marketing and Sales:

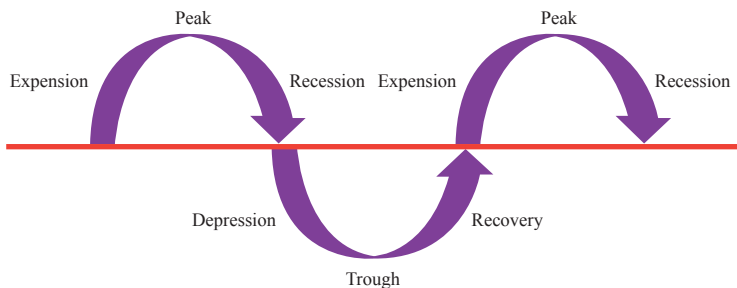
Numerous non-marketing factors influence marketing strategies, with environmental awareness being of the utmost importance. The macroeconomic system influences inflation, national income, and development. In market economies, economic fluctuations including expansion, contraction, and recuperation characterize the business cycle. Marketers must maintain flexibility in response to evolving consumer demands, competitive landscape, and environmental factors.

### 2.2. Economic Recession:

Economic fluctuations, which include cycles of expansion, contraction, recession, and recovery, affect the entire economy. The duration of these cycles exhibits variation and can be monitored via manufacturing data, including production. Marketing strategies are adjusted to sustain profitability and customer satisfaction amidst a recession. This requires modifications to the target market or marketing formula. Each of the four segments comprising the business cycle — peak, recession, trough, and recovery — has a distinct impact on the economy.

#### 2.2.3. Definition and Economic Indicators:

The business cycle is a regular economic pattern of expansion and contraction, with four phases: peak, recession, trough, and recovery.



**Figure 1:** Business Cycle (Corporate Finance Institute, n.d.).

**Peak:** This phase sees a temporary high in real GDP, with strong job growth and profits.

**Trough:** The trough occurs just before real GDP begins to rise again, marked by high unemployment and unused capacity since the last recession.

**Recovery:** GDP rises during this phase, with expanding industrial production, increased profits, and moves toward full employment.

**Recession:** A significant decrease in output, income, employment, and trade characterizes a recession, often lasting around six months to a year and leading to economic downturns (Rose, 1969).

**2.3. Severity of Current Decline I.e., Inflation:**

The inflationary recession, political unrest, and skyrocketing manufacturing costs have placed Pakistan's apparel industry through its most difficult period in decades. The increased price of imported raw materials is a result of the devaluation of the Pakistani rupee, while high inflation and financing expenses impede industry expansion. Exports of apparel have decreased as a result of travel complications. Unemployment and workforce reductions are precipitated by obsolete technology and exorbitant production expenses (A. Khan and Khan, 2010).

**2.4.Theories of Inflation:**

In the field of economics, inflation is defined as a pervasive escalation in the costs of products and services, which leads to a depreciation of currency units' purchasing power (Anyanwu, 1993). The Consumer Price Index (CPI), a significant indicator of inflation, monitors the costs of a representative assortment of products (Essien, 2002). John Maynard Keynes' Keynesian theory ascribes demand inflation to heightened aggregate demand and proposes countermeasures such as tax increases and reductions in government expenditure (Parkin, 2014).

When nominal wage growth exceeds labor productivity growth, cost-push inflation ensues, frequently as a result of wage demands imposed by trade unions (Montiel, 1989). Profit-push inflation occurs when market-dominant firms increase prices in order to increase their profits (Montiel, 1989). Since its inception approximately four decades ago, the notion of structural inflation has established a connection between inflation and societal and national transformations that are influenced by elements such as economic progress and population expansion (Totonchi, 2011; Harrison, 1994; McCallum, 1987) (Ali and Ibrahim, 2018).

**2.5 Impact of Inflation in Current Recession 2020-2023:**

The increasing inflation in an economy has a significant effect on increasing unemployment, decreasing retail sales, increasing interest rates, and more.

**2.5.1. Increasing Unemployment:**

The unemployment rate in Pakistan is determined by dividing the number of individuals who are actively seeking employment but are presently unemployed by the total number of workers in the country. The unemployment rate in Pakistan increased by 6.50% in 2021, from 4.40% in 2020. (Economies of Trading, 2022)

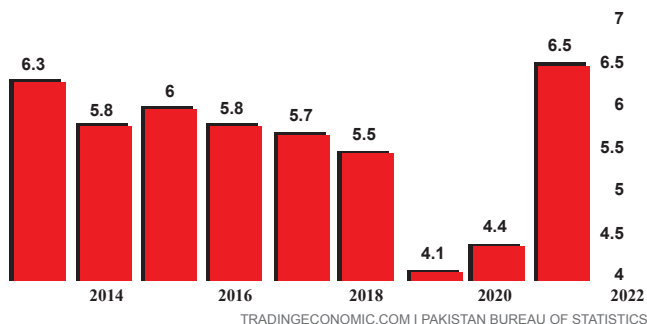


Figure 2: Pakistan Unemployment Rate

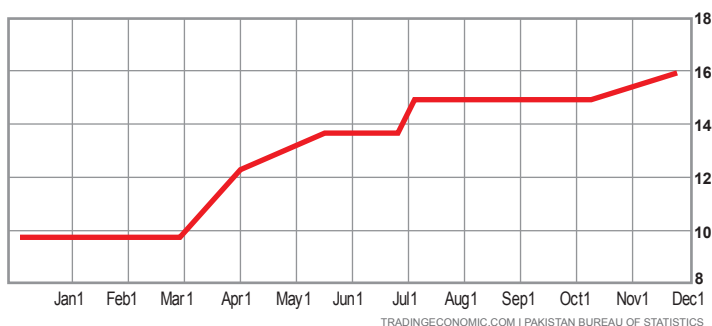
In the long term, our econometric model predicts Pakistan's unemployment rate to be around 6.40% in 2023 and around 8.50% in 2024.

**2.5.2. Decreasing Retail Sales:**

As stated by Redman (2020), Ishaq et al. (2021), and Shafqat and Ahmed (2022), there is a discernible trend in international consumer behavior wherein necessities are being given precedence over desires. As consumers reduce their material possessions, prioritize affordability and emotional well-being, and simplify their lives, apparel retail sales decline.

**2.5.3. Increasing Interest Rates:**

To stimulate economic expansion, governments reduce interest rates during recessions. To control inflation and living expenses, economies generally experience expansion until interest rates increase, which frequently precipitates recessions and prompts a reversion to low-interest rates as a means to stimulate growth (DeNicola, 2020).



*Figure 3: Increasing Interest Rates*

Over expectations, the Bank of Pakistan increased its key interest rate by 100 basis points on November 25, 2022, to 16%, the highest level since 1999. The anticipated inflation rate for FY 2023 is between 21 and 23 percent. Notwithstanding a significant decline in the current account deficit resulting from reduced imports in September and October, it is anticipated that growth will hover around 2%, culminating in a GDP current account deficit of 3% in 2023 (Trading Economics, 2022).

**2.6. Impact of Inflation on Apparel Industries:**

Ali and Ibrahim (2018) state that inflation has detrimental consequences for businesses, such as impeding productivity development, misallocating resources, diminishing corporate valuations, and laying the groundwork for recessions. Apparel industries must assess inflation risk, comprehend true costs, and safeguard margins and investments to be protected. A moderate inflation rate can increase profits via price hikes, whereas high inflation disrupts operations and drives up expenses.

**2.7. Influences of Apparel Industries:**

The effects of inflation on industries and consumers have economic repercussions. The interplay between rising inventories diminished consumer spending, and

unemployment, and demand. Consumer coping mechanisms identified by Nigel Hollis (Millward Brown, 2009) include restricting purchases and substituting more affordable brands (Bam, 2010).

## **2.8. Marketing Strategies in Economic Downturn:**

### **2.8.1. Introduction to Marketing Strategy in Apparel Retail:**

"To manage business operations, guarantee growth, customer satisfaction, competitive advantage, and financial performance, strategy is indispensable" (Thompson et al., 2010). Monitoring environmental alterations in the Eastern business environment is a critical function of marketing research, which is in a constant state of flux (Cant et al., 2006:34). To capitalize on opportunities and minimize risks, marketing managers must maintain a vigilant stance in this ever-changing market environment (Cant et al., 2006:46).

### **2.8.2. Influence of Inflation on Marketing:**

In the event of an economic downturn, our business may be negatively impacted as the business cycle enters a recession phase. Additionally, (Anon, 2009) outlines the various effects that a recession can have on a business.

#### **2.8.2.1. Consumers' Spending Might Go Down:**

The potential consequence of consumers exercising greater prudence and restricting their expenditures to essential goods is a decline in the sales of non-essential products. Although a business may sustain sales, profit margins can diminish. It could be necessary for businesses to devise novel and inventive strategies to attract consumers.

#### **2.8.2.2. Competition Could Get Fierce:**

During a recession, competition among businesses can become more intense as they compete for a smaller market share. But this cycle also causes weaker competitors to go bankrupt.

#### **2.8.2.3. Expenses Will Go Up:**

As the economic burden of inflation extends beyond the company's revenue, its expenses will also be constrained. This results in financial hardship for the organization, which is entangled in the downturn. Prioritize expenditures that have a direct impact on the operation of the business over those that do not.

#### **2.8.2.4. Businesses Will Become Unpredictable:**

These economic fluctuations have the disadvantage of rendering business unpredictable. Occasionally, fluctuations in consumer demand may be observed, followed by periods of increased sales. Sustaining composure is crucial during such circumstances.

#### **2.8.2.5. Employees Could Demand Higher Salaries:**

To preserve their standard of living, employees may request wage increases as inflation diminishes their purchasing power. It may be necessary for management to terminate inefficient personnel to maintain current salary levels.

## **2.9. ADAPT Model:**

### **2.9.1. Adjust Discounting and Promotions:**

Apparel companies can modify their product offerings, discontinue promotions, and restrict clearance pricing to mitigate the effects of inflation. Specialty retailers may encounter more formidable obstacles in this regard and ought to contemplate expanding their selection of omnichannel service options to assess consumer responses.

### **2.9.2. Develop the Art and Science of Price Change:**

Pricing strategies for apparel ought to be precise, taking into account consumer value, product attributes, and inflationary pressures. Loyalty programs and personalized promotions are included. Ongoing surveillance of customer feedback facilitates the modification of product assortments and safeguards brand equity and profit margins in categories susceptible to inflation.

### **2.9.3. Accelerate Decision Making Tenfold:**

To optimize their operations, apparel retailers may consider refining processes, increasing cost visibility, and facilitating information sharing with vendors. It is crucial to prioritize pricing activities that yield high returns and to accelerate the decision-making process. By optimizing pricing procedures and capitalizing on digital platforms to facilitate prompt modifications, organizations can mitigate the financial impact of inflation.

### **2.9.4. Plan Options Beyond Pricing to Reduce Cost:**

Successful design and category architecture techniques can help clothing retailers deal with increased prices without placing undue pressure on suppliers. Using a design-to-value (DTV) strategy, manufacturers can reduce production costs by finding more economical ways to assemble their products. Profit margins can be increased by switching to private-label goods. Savings per customer can be increased with personalized discounts depending on their shopping habits. To combat price increases, stores might use sophisticated procurement instruments, such as adjusting prices or product mixes or negotiating with suppliers.

### **2.9.5. Track Execution Relentlessly:**

Apparel companies must monitor consumer behavior and employ key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess the efficacy of their strategies in the current inflationary climate. Variations in basket size and category volume may serve as indicators of evolving price sensitivity. Despite the potential stability of apparel prices, inflation in critical sectors could potentially impact consumer purchasing patterns. Monitoring competitors is essential for gaining a competitive edge, particularly in terms of pricing. Promptly reacting to price increases via short-term strategies is critical. Proactive apparel enterprises may encounter obstacles as well as prospects due to inflation; by doing so, they can establish enduring profits and position themselves for advantageous price fluctuations once inflation abates (Hamdan et al., 2022).

## **3. Research Methodology**

The research methodology guides how the study is conducted, ensuring data accuracy and reliability. We used Saunders's research onion.



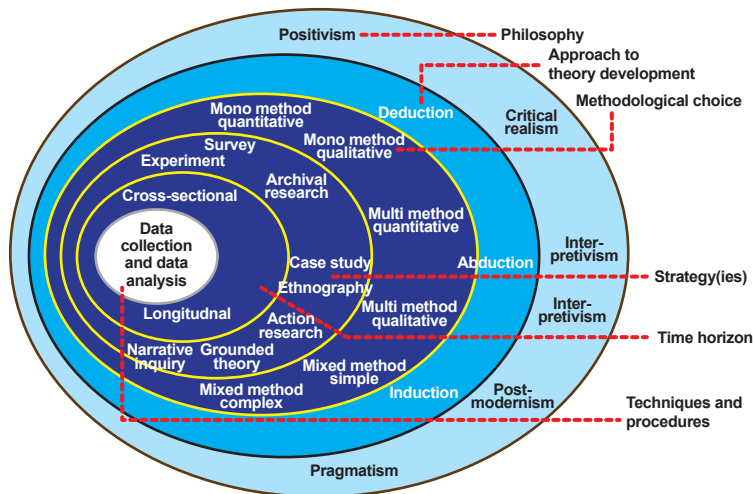


Figure 4: The Research 'Onion' (Saunders et al, 2016)

**3.1. Research Type:**

We shall undertake "Descriptive Research" in a methodical fashion to elucidate the intricacies of a subject matter, addressing inquiries about its what, where, when, and how, before delving into the "why."

**3.2. Research Approach:**

"Qualitative research" is well-suited for investigating and comprehending perceptions via visuals, words, body language, and body language. This characteristic renders it appropriate for exploratory inquiries, such as evaluating perspectives on political candidates or events.

**3.3. Methods of Data Collection:**

To evaluate the effects of inflation on apparel retail and brands, we collected primary data that specifically examined industry experiences and survival. Utilizing questionnaires as the principal means of data collection.

**3.3.1. Primary Research:**

- By circulating Questionnaires

**3.4. Sample Size:**

**3.4.1. Target Audience:**

- Income Range = Rs. 50,000 – 300,000
- Gender = Male & Female both

**3.5. Sampling Method:**

We opt for Convenient Sampling to collect data from accessible respondents by distributing questionnaires among the targeted audience for convenience.

**3.5.1. Surveys/ Questionnaires:**

We collected information from all respondents regarding their attitudes, opinions, and experiences via questionnaires. Closed-ended queries with predetermined answer options comprise the survey.

**3.6. Data Analysis:**

A thematic analysis approach was employed to examine qualitative data, including surveys and interviews, through the identification of recurring themes, concepts, and emergent patterns.

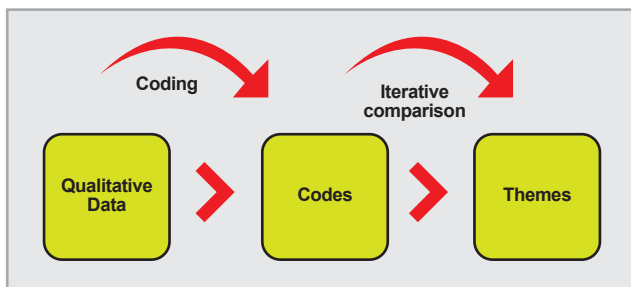


Figure 5: Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

**3.6.1. Inductive Analysis:**

We employed Inductive Thematic Analysis to develop hypotheses, commencing with restricted data to construct theories de novo. This process consists of three distinct stages:

1. Observations
2. Look for patterns
3. Expand your theory.

**4. Results and Discussion**

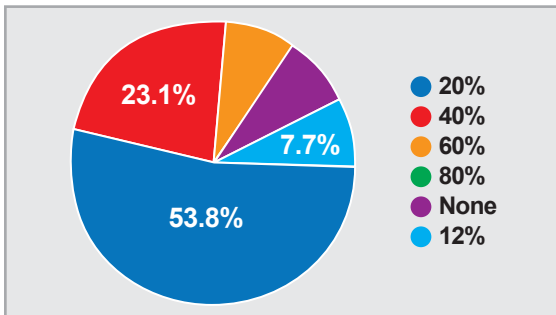
**4.1. Results:**

The perspectives of respondents regarding the economic recession, its effect on sales, decision-making, and competitive adaptation strategies are utilized to acquire primary data for this study. Additionally, opinions on the ADAPT Model framework are gathered. We utilized retail manager questionnaires that were disseminated in the apparel and retail industries.



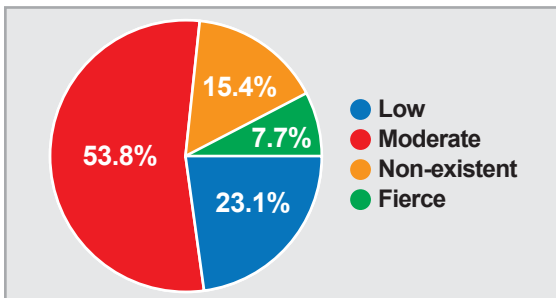
Figure 6: Impact of inflation on the Marketing & Sales department of apparel company.

Figure 6 displays the impact of the economic downturn on apparel retail sales and marketing strategies. Findings reveal that 46.2% of respondents saw reduced monthly sales due to global inflation. Furthermore, 23.1% faced difficulties in gaining new customers and retaining existing ones, leading to lower sales. Lastly, 7.7% noted increased investment but reduced profit margins.



**Figure 7:** Approximate percentage, the apparel company loss their sales in the current scenario.

Figure 7 outlines the percentage of sales lost by apparel retail industries in the current inflationary period. The data shows that 53.8% of respondents had a 20% monthly sales decrease. Moreover, 23.1% experienced a substantial 40% decline in monthly sales, while 7.7% observed a 12% reduction across their entire stock.



**Figure 8:** Price competition among apparel industries during inflationary environment

Figure 8 depicts the extent of price competition among apparel retailers in the current inflationary setting. The majority (53.8%) viewed it as moderate, with 23.1% perceiving it as low. Furthermore, 15.4% of respondents felt there was no competition, while 7.7% described it as fierce and highly impactful.

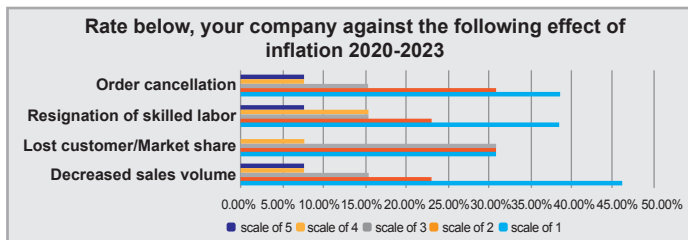


Figure 9: Companies against the given effect of Inflation (2020-2023)

Figure 9 illustrates inflation's impact on apparel and retail industries from 2020-2023:

**Sales Volume Decline:** 46.2% noted a small decline, 23.1% moderate, 7.7% significant, and 7.7% heavy impact.

**Lost Customer/Market Share:** 30.8% reported minimal loss, 30.8% some, 30.8% moderate, and 7.7% substantial.

**Skilled Labor Resignation:** 38.5% least impact, 23.1% some, 7.7% moderate, 15.4% significant, and 15.4% major impact.

**Order Cancellation:** 30.8% had minimal monthly cancellations, 38.5% some, 15.4% moderate, 7.7% high, and 7.7% frequent monthly cancellations.

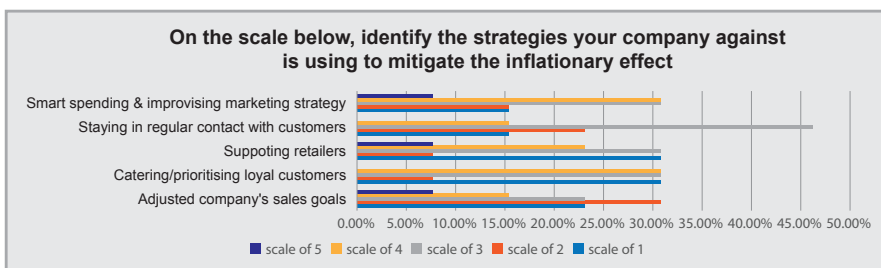


Figure 10: The strategies companies use to mitigate the inflationary effect.

Figure 10 illustrates strategies used by apparel and retail industries to address inflationary risks:

**Adjusted Sales Goals:** 23.1% made minimal adjustments, 30.8% adjusted some, 23.1% had neutral changes, 15.4% made significant adjustments, and 7.7% adjusted the most.

**Catering to Loyal Customers:** 30.8% made the fewest efforts, 7.7% adopted some strategies, 30.8% moderately adapted, 30.8% used more strategies, and none showed the most adaptation.

**Supporting Retailers:** 30.8% provided minimal support, 7.7% supported, 30.8% were neutral, 23.1% supported more, and 7.7% supported the most.

**Contacting Customers:** 15.4% had the least contact, 23.1% stayed in touch, 46.2% maintained moderate contact, 15.4% increased contact, and none had the most contact.

**Improving Marketing:** 15.4% showed minimal interest, 15.4% had some interest, 30.8% moderate, 30.8% more, and 7.7% had the most interest in smart spending and marketing improvisation.

#### **4.2. Discussion (Thematic Analysis):**

The thematic analysis is carried out based on the data gathered through the questionnaire administered to retail managers for a thesis on the “ADAPT model for apparel industries for their better performance in marketing and sales”

##### **4.2.1. The Impact on Apparel Industries:**

In this inflationary period, apparel companies grapple with a 20% drop in monthly sales volume due to various factors, including COVID-19, global inflation, store closures, and competitive pressures. The ADAPT Model offers a solution to adapt and enhance sales performance.

Pricing competition is another challenge, with moderate competition in the apparel sector. Companies must balance competitive pricing with profitability and differentiate through unique value propositions to stay competitive.

##### **4.2.2. Marketing and Sales Strategies Implementing ADAPT Model:**

Apparel companies using the ADAPT model focus on effective brand communication, customer experience enhancements, and data-driven strategies to boost sales. Training managers in the ADAPT model is essential for successful implementation. Managers should possess strong soft skills to lead teams and create positive customer experiences, ultimately driving sales. Engaged employees play a pivotal role in delivering positive customer experiences.

##### **4.2.3. Examples of the Companies That Have Successfully Implemented the ADAPT Model:**

Many brands and companies, including Dell, Uber, and Sainsbury's, have successfully implemented the ADAPT model in their marketing strategies. This digital framework utilizes real-time data and customer feedback to enhance customer engagement and conversion rates. The model's versatility extends across various industries, such as retail, e-commerce, travel, and healthcare, offering opportunities for apparel brands in Pakistan to improve profitability and growth.

##### **4.2.4. Benefits of ADAPT Model:**

The ADAPT model promotes sustainability, social responsibility, effective communication, and structured change management. It helps companies reduce their environmental impact, enhance their reputation, and cut costs. It also encourages social responsibility, stakeholder engagement, and systematic change management for success in today's dynamic business environment.

##### **4.2.5. Potential Challenges:**

Implementing the ADAPT model in Pakistan's apparel industry may face challenges such as resistance to change, cultural differences, limited resources, skills gaps, infrastructure issues, and supply chain complexities.

Introducing new processes and practices may be met with resistance from employees and stakeholders. Some of its assumptions and values may not be directly applicable in the Pakistani cultural context as it was developed in the western culture. Small and medium-sized enterprises in Pakistan may have limited resources for implementing

large-scale change initiatives. Implementing the ADAPT model may require new skills and expertise that are not currently available in the apparel industry in Pakistan. Limited access to electricity and water, which may impact the ability to implement the ADAPT model effectively. Coordination with stakeholders from multiple countries and regions, may require additional resources and expertise to manage effectively.

Tailoring the model and addressing these challenges through investment, training, and collaboration will be crucial for successful implementation.

#### **4.2.6. Practical Implementation of ADAPT Model in Apparel Industries of Pakistan**

The ADAPT Model is a framework that emphasizes the importance of adaptability and flexibility in responding to changing circumstances. To implement the ADAPT Model effectively, apparel industries in Pakistan should focus on these key steps:

**Awareness:** Raise awareness about the need for change through workshops, training, and communication campaigns.

**Desire:** Foster a desire for change by involving employees and addressing concerns while showcasing benefits.

**Ability:** Ensure employees have the necessary skills through training and support.

**Promotion:** Promote the ADAPT Model across the organization, emphasizing its advantages.

**Transfer:** Expand the model to all areas of the organization, embedding adaptability and flexibility in the culture.

Engaging employees, providing resources, and cultivating a culture of adaptability are critical for successful implementation in Pakistani apparel industries.

#### **4.2.7. Applicability of ADAPT Model in Apparel Industries of Pakistan:**

The ADAPT Model is a useful framework for businesses to adapt to changing market conditions also it can be relevant for the textile retail and apparel sector. Here are some recommendations for how this element can be applied progressively:

##### **4.2.7.1. Adjusting Discounts and Promotions:**

In Pakistan's apparel sector, a popular clothing brand uses customer data to personalize promotions effectively. They segment customers based on purchase history, demographics, and location, offering loyalty rewards, referral incentives, and seasonal discounts. Sustainability is also a focus, with eco-friendly promotions highlighted on their website and social media. This data-driven approach helps them adapt to market changes and build customer loyalty.

##### **4.2.7.2. Develop Art and Science of Price Change:**

A prominent textile retail chain in Pakistan employs dynamic pricing, using pricing analytics to adjust prices in real-time based on consumer behavior and market demand. They raise prices during peak seasons and offer discounts during off-peak times. These changes are communicated transparently through their website and social media. The retailer also adheres to ethical pricing principles, ensuring fairness and transparency, avoiding price gouging, and building trust with customers.

#### **4.2.7.3. Accelerate Decision Making Tenfold:**

A Pakistani fashion brand has embraced data-driven decision-making to enhance competitiveness. They collect data on customer behavior, market trends, and inventory, using insights to optimize inventory, product design, and marketing. Decentralized decision-making empowers teams to act swiftly within established criteria. Cross-functional collaboration is encouraged to ensure efficient production. This data-driven approach has resulted in agile decision-making, staying competitive, and meeting customer demands.

#### **4.2.7.4. Plan Options Beyond Pricing to Reduce Cost:**

A Pakistani textile retailer let's say is facing rising costs due to inflation and increasing competition in the market. They include:

**Optimizing Supply Chain:** Implementing lean processes and just-in-time inventory management.

**Sustainable Practices:** Using eco-friendly materials and reducing energy consumption.

**Leverage Technology and Automation:** Implementing automated checkout processes.

**Alternative Sourcing Options:** Exploring lower-cost sourcing options.

**Product Innovation:** Investing in R&D for unique, higher-priced products.

These strategies aim to reduce costs, enhance sustainability, and boost profitability beyond price reductions.

#### **4.2.7.5. Track Execution Relentlessly:**

If a Pakistani apparel company, has recently launched a new product line targeted at young adults to monitor a new product line, the company can:

**Monitor Sales and Customer Feedback:** They could track sales data and customer feedback, analyze which products are selling well, as well as which marketing campaigns and promotions are driving sales.

**Use Technology to Track Inventory and Supply Chain:** They could use technology to track inventory levels and supply chain performance, allowing them to identify bottlenecks and inefficiencies.

**Implement Performance Metrics and Kpis:** They could implement performance metrics and KPIs to track progress towards their goals. By regularly reviewing these metrics, they can identify areas for improvement and make data-driven decisions.

**Conduct Regular Reviews and Evaluations:** Apparel brand could conduct regular reviews and evaluations of their new product line, to analyse sales data, customer feedback, and performance metrics.

These steps ensure adaptability and competitiveness in Pakistan's apparel sector. It can help the company stay on top of market trends and achieve long-term success.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusion:**

In summary, the paper examined the impact of the economic environment spanning from 2020 to 2023 on the apparel sector, exploring the potential of the ADAPT model to enhance sales and marketing tactics, as well as to shape consumer buying behavior. By means of qualitative research and thematic analysis, the obstacles that apparel brands encounter when attempting to adjust to the current economic climate were revealed, along with the approaches they employed to surmount these obstacles.

The results of the research emphasized the possible benefits that the ADAPT model could offer in terms of enhancing the performance of clothing brands in the present market environment. This all-encompassing framework provides apparel brands with the means to adapt their marketing and sales strategies flexibly, by changing economic circumstances, improve their overall performance, and establish a competitive advantage within the sector.

Furthermore, this study underscored the criticality of understanding consumer preferences and behaviors in the current economic environment. It has become apparent that to strengthen brand loyalty, apparel brands must embrace a customer-centric strategy, place significant emphasis on providing valuable content to customers, and cultivate strong customer relationships.

Fundamentally, this research not only provides practical recommendations for the effective application of the ADAPT model in the apparel sector, but also illuminates its strengths and potential challenges. The inclusion of empirical evidence in this study contributes to the body of knowledge by illustrating how the ADAPT model can effectively guide and improve sales and marketing strategies, as well as impact consumer behaviour in the apparel industry amidst the current economic climate.

In summary, this study has significant ramifications for the apparel industry and will serve as a foundation for future investigations in the discipline. This serves as evidence of the industry's ability to withstand and adjust to economic difficulties.

### **5.2 Recommendations:**

Some of the potential future recommendations for qualitative research to further explore the ADAPT model's impact on marketing and sales are:

**Long-Term Impact Analysis:** Long-term studies tracking the ADAPT model's impact could yield crucial insights into its enduring effectiveness and sustainability.

**Cross-Cultural Analysis:** Comparing the impact in different cultural contexts could provide insights into how the model can be adapted to meet the needs of diverse markets.



**Multi-Level Analysis:** Conducting multi-level analysis at different organizational levels; such as individual, team, and organizational levels, could provide valuable insights into its effectiveness in different contexts.

**Digital Transformation:** Exploring the role of digital transformation could provide insights into how technology can be leveraged to improve marketing and sales performance in the apparel industry.

**Best Practices:** Identifying best practices could provide insights into how to overcome challenges and achieve success in the implementation of organizational change initiatives.

These suggestions for future research could help us learn more about how the ADAPT model affects marketing and sales performance in the apparel industry and figure out how to make the model more applicable to other fields.

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# A STUDY OF GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE USE OF URDU DISCOURSE MARKERS

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to determine how gender affects the use of Urdu discourse markers. Taxonomy of Discourse Markers by Fraser (2009) has been used as theoretical frame work. 12 Urdu newspaper articles written by male and female writers have been purposively selected to identify the gender differences in the use of Urdu discourse markers. 06 articles were taken from male writers and 06 articles were from female writers. The newspaper articles have been taken from daily Urdu newspaper 'The Jung' and 'The Express'. The mixed method research design was used to analyze the data. To achieve above stated objective, the use of Urdu discourse markers were explored and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The results of the article show a significant gender difference in the use of Urdu discourse markers. Urdu male writers use DMs more frequently. This accounts that Urdu male speakers might depend upon argumentative use of language, while female speakers are inclined towards more cooperative and compromising attitude in the use of language. Furthermore, it can be suggested that on the basis of the themes of the articles, there might be a gender variation in the use of DMs. So, to make the generalizations more reliable and authentic, a large scale study should be done.*

**Keywords:** Discourse Markers (DMs), gender differences, taxonomy, distribution, purposive sampling

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Discourse Markers (DMs) play a crucial role in helping socially situated language that can fulfill its communicative aims in both written and spoken discourse. DMs are communicative tools that help to organize and assess ideas in a discourse; thus, these linguistic features are employed to connect the text's communicative aim.

A lot of work with different perspective has been done on DMs in the last few decades. The role and distribution of discourse markers across genres has been the subject of numerous researches. These studies focused on the use of conjunctive discourse markers in textbooks and scientific research articles (Verikait, 2005), as well as the use of discourse markers in telephone conversations and television interviews (Verdonik, et al., 2008), and discourse markers in essays (Verdonik, et al.,

2008); inferential discourse markers (Feng, 2010) in psychology research articles in English and Persian (Kaveifard & Allami, 2011; Sharndama & Yakubu, 2013). Although discourse markers have been studied in other genres, the media discourse of opinion articles in Urdu has received comparatively less attention. The distribution and roles of discourse markers used by Urdu male and female writers is the subject of this study.

Conversation markers are commonly used in written and spoken discourse to attain communicative goals in the social use of language. The objective of discourse markers across the borders of sentences, according to Kohlani (2010), is to connect above-sentence textual units and aid in the interpretation of text-receiver material in accordance with the producer of text-goals. Despite their importance in text production, discourse markers are regarded grammatically optional and semantically empty. Though they are often dismissed as useless and aesthetic, Brinton (1996) claims that discourse markers have pragmatic tasks on two levels of the conversation: textual and interpersonal. Although discourse markers have limitations in written and spoken conversation, they appear to fulfill the textual role of discourse as a turn-taker in speaking and a marker for an episode in writing.

Discourse markers (DMs) are communicative devices that systematize and express the speaker and writer's point of view to the listener/reader, as well as maintain an interpersonal link between the reader and writer. Indeed, discourse markers evaluate the discourse's concepts; therefore, these language markers are important.

### **1.1 OBJECTIVES**

For achieving the goal of study, the subsequent objectives were set:

- To find out the gender differences in the use of Urdu discourse markers
- To analyze the frequency and distribution of Urdu discourse markers used by male and female writers.

### **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Following research questions are to be sought:

1. Do Urdu male and female writers use different types of discourse markers?
2. What is the frequency and distribution of Urdu discourse markers used by male and female writers?

### **1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

DMs play a significant part in the successful perception and production of an effective text and discourse. Discourse markers are required in a pragmatic sense, although they are optional in terms of semantics and syntax. Misuse of discourse markers in text produces communication breakdowns, makes writing or conversation weird, and affects acceptance. The importance of discourse markers as a component in maintaining the acceptability, effectiveness, and naturalness of any language's content cannot be overstated. While the above-mentioned aspects are regarded fundamental in general text studies across languages, because every language has its unique method for using discourse markers in terms of kind, frequency, and distribution in text.

The present study is significant to know about the nature of Urdu discourse markers. Moreover, it is important to identify the gender difference in the use of language. Newspaper articles were chosen as the study's primary written genre because of their prominence in print media. Journalists influence readers' thinking and also describe society's thoughts, culture, and ideology. Even if news is definitely one aspect of journalistic discourse, a newspaper is more than its news department. A newspaper's philosophy is moulded by its departments, particularly the non-news section. As a result, journalism as an integrated conversation should be prioritized. The findings of this study are expected to be valuable for the students of journalism and to serve as a guide for Urdu newspaper article writers. The importance of Urdu DMs in creating the effect of text on readers will be explained in this study.

#### **1.4 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

This article is delimited to only written discourse, and its focus is on gender differences. Only 12 Urdu newspaper articles have been selected as sample. The articles have been taken from only two Urdu newspapers daily *The Jung* and *The Express*.

#### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

To define discourse markers in a clear and absolute manner is considered to be a difficult task. However, discourse markers are generally taken as expressions that are used to connect sentences in order to make sense of the text and to indicate the writer's and speaker's attitude toward what they wish to communicate. According to Ghil'ad (2009), the words and phrases that were measured as discourse markers were traditionally described as "fillers" or "expletives," and those words had no function in the past; however, they are now analyzed at various levels of analysis such as discourse planning and reformulation. These functions are divided into three categories: relationships among utterances, relationships between the message and the speaker, and relationships between the speaker and the hearer. Because it is difficult to structurally delimit such entities that stem from different word classes, discourse markers have been described in terms of their function. Defining discourse markers by their function, however, has also proven to be problematic, as suggested by Fischer (1998) that because such definition has to account for very different functions. Previous research on these expressions i.e. DMs has revealed that they are a group of items having a variety of discourse functions, according to Lenk (1998). Different definitions of discourse markers presented by distinct research highlight different features of the various functions that these items fulfill in conversation. Regardless of the fact that Schiffirin (1987) recognizes the global function of discourse markers, she only studies and specifies markers that indicate how immediately adjacent segments of text are connected.

Discourse markers' function is a popular and important field for researchers, and numerous ways have been developed because of its importance. Halliday and Hasan (1973) developed Systemic functional grammar (SFG) that is one of the approaches. The great deal of research on DM functional domains is based on Halliday's (1973) language functions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Brinton (1996), Ajimer (2002), Hyland and Tse (2004), and Muller (2005), for example, divide DMs into two types: interpersonal and textual.

Fraser proposes another perspective on discourse markers (1996). The concept that discourse segments encode two forms of information: “content information” and “pragmatic information” underpins Fraser’s (1996) examination of discourse markers. Pragmatic markers, of which discourse markers are one sort, express the latter.

According to Fraser (1996), these markers are indicators of “the various forms of non-propositional statements a sentence can express.” Diverse approaches to the examination of discourse markers result in different explanations of the functions supplied by these items. Most of the studies have been done with reference to textual and interpersonal functions of discourse markers using model of Brinton (1996).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 APPROACH**

The present work is mainly descriptive in nature; as its aim is to describe the gender differences in the use of Urdu Discourse Markers. Mix Method research design is used for the present study. The major goal of employing a mixed-method approach is to broaden the scope of the research. It was attempted to eliminate the shortcomings of one approach, namely quantitative and qualitative approaches, in order to acquire a more in-depth understanding. So, one main target is to obtain the accuracy that can be achieved through mix method research design. This accuracy is the prime indicator of high level of achieved triangulation.

#### **3.2 POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

The sample of the study was 12 Urdu newspaper articles. 12 Urdu newspaper articles written by male and female writers have been purposively selected to identify the gender differences in the use of Urdu discourse markers. 12 articles were taken from male writers and 12 articles were from female writers. The newspaper articles have been taken from daily Urdu newspaper The Jung and The Express. The articles have been selected from 1st December, 2018 to 16th December 2018. The mixed method research design is used in this study to analyze the data.

#### **3.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Fraser’s (2009) taxonomy of three functional classes of discourse markers with the addition of temporal DMs is used to identify and classify Urdu DMs. Following four types are given by Fraser (2009).

##### **1. Contrastive discourse markers**

According to Fraser (2009), contrastive markers indicate that the utterance is in contrast to the propositional meaning of the previous utterance. Following are some important contrastive DMs:

*but, however, still, yet, rather, regardless, though, whereas although, despite (this/that), however; even so, in comparison, in contrast, alternatively, instead, nonetheless, in spite of, nevertheless, contrary to expectations, notwithstanding, on the other hand, on the contrary, conversely.*



## 2. Elaborative discourse markers

These discourse markers operate as a refinement of the preceding discourse in some way. For instance following elaborative DMs are found in English:

*and, above all, also, in other words, in fact, moreover, besides, after all, or, alternatively, by the correspondingly, same token, for example, equally, for instance, further (more), in particular; in addition, likewise, more accurately, more precisely, in other words, more importantly, moreover; on that basis, on top of it all, otherwise, rather; that is to say, more to the point, similarly.*

## 3. Inferential discourse markers

Inferential discourse markers indicate that the utterance's force is a conclusion drawn from the preceding discourse. Following is the list of inferential DMs.

*After all, so, therefore, thus, so, as a conclusion, consequently, as a result (of this/that), for this/ that reason, hence, it follows that, accordingly, in this/that/any case, because (of this/that), as a consequence (of this/that), on this/that condition, on these/those grounds, then, therefore, thus, all things considered.*

## 4. Temporal discourse markers

This type of DMs serves the function of signaling the time reference in the utterance or text. They are useful in organizing the structure written discourse. Following temporal DMs are found in English:

*firstly, finally, when, after, then, eventually, before, afterwards, meantime, as soon as, immediately, subsequently originally, meanwhile, secondly.*

## 4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Newspaper articles were collected over a period of half of a month (from Dec 01, 2018 to Dec 16, 2018). The themes of the newspaper articles focus on political, social, economic and religious issues. Two renowned male writers and two female writers were purposively selected. Male columnists are Dr. Safdar Mehmood and Dr. Mujahid Kamran. The female columnists are Kishwar Naheed and Zahida Hina. Zahida Hina belongs to daily *Express*, rest of the writers are attached with daily *Jung*. Dr. Safdar Mehmood's columns are selected from the dates of December 07, 09 and 11, 2018. Respectively their topics are: *talimi inhetat - bara almiya* (Educational Demise - a great Tragedy), second column is also entitled with *talimi inhetat- bara almiya* (Educational Demise - a great Tragedy). His third column is titled with *December ka mahina aur tarikh ka ibrat kadah* (The month of December and Lesson of History). The social and political issues are discussed in these articles. The topics of Dr. Mujahid Kamran are: *Media aur Pak Fauj* (Media and Pak Army), *Media aur Taraqi* (Media and Development) and *Neiy Pakistan ke liye Good Governance ke chand nuskhe* (Some Prescriptions of Good Governance for new Pakistan).

Columnist Zahida Hina wrote on these topics: *Aag Christian hai ya Musalman* (Is Fire a Christian or Muslim), *Faisal Abad mien Adab ka Jashan* (Literary Conference in Faisal Abad) and *Shandar Shahr, Shandar Laug* (Elegant City, Elegant People).



Kishwar Naheed wrote these articles: *Kotwal ko Lalkarti Fehmida Riaz* (Fehmida Riaz calling a Policeman), *Bhek Mangna Qaumi aur Inferadi Shoaar Hai* (Begging is a national and Individual Custom) and *Mehkama Auqaf-Mazaroon Pe Kia Hota Hai?* (Department of What Happens on Shrines?)

#### 4.1 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF URDU DISCOURSE MARKERS

Newspaper articles are a type of written media. Because their language and structure are argumentative, newspaper articles are classified by the categories of summary, evaluation, and conclusion. A newspaper is, in fact, a type of persuasive and logical journalistic article. Discourse markers can be used to summarize, finish, or indicate an attitude, all of which can be valuable while writing a newspaper story. Additionally, logical markers can be used to move from one discourse unit to the next, and interactional discourse markers can be used to involve the reader in the discussion.

Following discourse markers were found in the opinion articles of Urdu male and female writers.

##### 1. Contrastive DMs

Following important contrastive markers, as described by Fraser (2009) are used by male and female writers:

*laikin / magar* (but), *is kebawajood* (despite), *hata k* (still), *bharhaal* (nevertheless) *k barukas* (contrary to), *balke* (even so), *warna* (otherwise).

##### 2. Elaborative DMs

These discourse markers serve as a refinement of the previous discourse. It means that they are the amplification or interpretation of some previous discourse. For instance following elaborative DMs are found in English:

*aur* (and), *ilawa* (besides), *misaa lketaurpe / maslan* (for example), *bhi* (also)

##### 3. Inferential discourse markers

Following is the list of inferential DMs:

*natijatan* (Consequently), *kiyun k / isliye* (because of), *is soorat mien* (in this case), *Chunke / chanachw* (Since)

##### 4. Temporal discourse markers

Temporal DMs are used to mention the time in the discourse. Following temporal DMs are found in Urdu newspaper articles:

*awlan* (firstly), *ab* (now) *doam* (secondly), *tab / phir* (then), *jab / kab* (when), *baad azan* (later on).

All the categories of Fraser's (2009) taxonomy were found in Urdu writing of both sexes. On the basis of data, it can be assumed that Urdu male and female writers use and rely upon the discourse markers. Furthermore, a variety of discourse markers are opted by Urdu columnists.

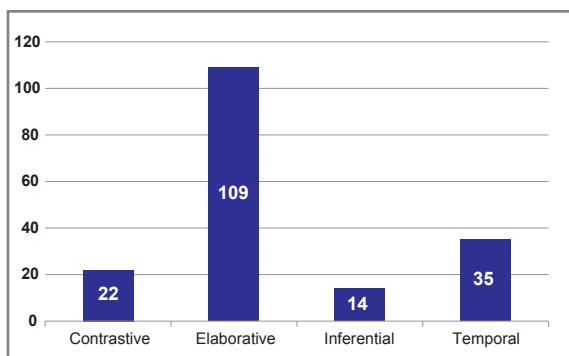
### 4.2 Quantitative Analysis of Urdu DMs used by Male and Female writers

Discourse markers investigated are analyzed quantitatively by using simple statistical operations of counting and percentage. Tables and figures are also used to evaluate data briefly.

**Table 4.1 Overall Distribution of Frequency of DMs in Male & Female Writing**

DM Type	Total	%
1. Contrastive	22	12.2%
2. Elaborative	109	60.6%
3. Inferential	14	7.7%
4. Temporal	35	19.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.1 indicates that contrastive total contrastive are used by both sexes are 22 with a percentage value of 12.2%. The total frequency of Elaborative discourse markers is 109 with a percentage of 60.6 % that is too high value as compare to the least occurred discourse markers inferential DMs (7.7%). Temporal DMs are used 35 times by male and female (with a value of 19.5%). Now, the data show that use of DMs in Urdu is varied by types of DMs. To have a short glimpse Figure 4.1 can be observed.



*Figure 4.1 Division of Frequency of Urdu DMs*

### 4.3 Gender Differences in the Use of DMs

Following data are presented to study the gender variation with reference to the use of DMs.

**Table 4.2 Overall Distribution of Frequency of DMs**

	Frequency in Male	Frequency in Female	Total
5. Contrastive	17	05	22
6. Elaborative	52	57	109
7. Inferential	12	02	14
8. Temporal	14	21	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>180</b>

Table 4.2 shows that Urdu male speakers use DMs more frequently than the female speakers. The frequency of DMs in male speakers is 95, whereas it is 85 in female speakers. This accounts for Urdu male speakers might depend upon argumentative use of language, while female speakers are inclined towards more cooperative and compromising attitude. All the four types of Urdu DMs are found in the articles of male and female writers, it denotes that all the types of Fraser’s (2009) DMs are used by Urdu male and female writers. The value of elaborative DM is far greater than any other type mentioned in the taxonomy. It can be assumed that Urdu writers rely mostly on elaborative language in opinion writing. A graphic picture of gender differences can be observed in Figure 4.2.

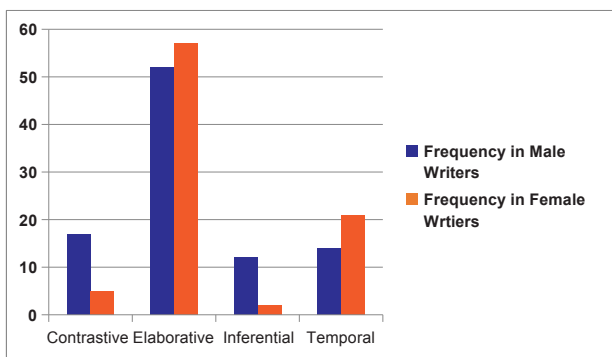


Figure 4.2 Overall Distribution of Frequency of DMs

Table 4.3 reveals that male columnists are inclined to use more discourse markers as compared to female. *Laikin/magar* (but) is used more frequently, furthermore some DMs are used by only one gender. *warna* (otherwise) is used by female writer, and *bharhaal* (nevertheless) occurred in male articles.

Table 4.3 Distribution of Frequency of the Contrastive Markers

	Frequency in Male	Frequency in Female
1. <i>laikin/magar</i> (but)	09	02
2. <i>is kebawajood</i> (despite)	01	00
3. <i>hata k</i> (still)	01	00
4. <i>bharhaal</i> (nevertheless)	02	00
5. <i>ke barukas</i> (contrary to)	02	00
6. <i>balke</i> (even so)	02	02
7. <i>warna</i> (otherwise)	00	01
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>05</b>

Table 4.4 Distribution of Frequency of Elaborative Marker

	Frequency in Male	Frequency in Female
1. <i>aur</i> (and)	49	57
2. <i>ilawa</i> (besides)	01	00
3. <i>misaal ke taur pe/maslan</i> (for example)	02	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>57</b>

As these DMs are generally used to introduce or signal initiality, their occurrence is high in both attributes of the gender. The variety of elaborative DM is somewhat limited, but they got highest score in the data. It indicates that Urdu writers intend to persuade the readers.

As previously stated *aur* (and) is the most frequently used DM in the article by both male and female authors. In these articles, DM *aur* (and) is used to indicate elaborative links between speech stretches. In other words, *aur* (and) serves as an elaborative marker. This signal, also known as an additive or elaborative marker, signifies that the next utterance adds to the information provided by the previous one. At the same time, *aur* (and) is used to indicate the writer's continuation of the topic.

**Table 4.5 Distribution of Frequency of Inferential Markers**

	Frequency in Male	Frequency in Female
1. <i>natijatan</i> (Consequently)	03	00
2. <i>kiyun k/isliye</i> (because of)	02	02
<i>is soorat mien</i> (in this case)	01	00
3. <i>chunke/chanachw</i> (Since)	05	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>02</b>

Table 4.5 indicates that inferential DMs signal a relationship of inference between discourse segments. In Urdu articles, inferential discourse markers are used in a very low amount both by male and female writers. By taking a gender view, results show that male writers opted inferences DMs more frequently. The writers or speakers use inferences using reasoning and justification. It may possible that the themes of male writers demand to make more justification of their argument. So, it can be a matter of argument to prefer inferential discourse markers rather than any other variable.

**Table 4.6 Distribution of Frequency of the Temporal Markers**

	Frequency in Male	Frequency in Female
1. <i>awlan</i> (firstly)	05	00
2. <i>ab</i> (now)	03	08
3. <i>doam</i> (secondly)	01	00
4. <i>tab/phir</i> (then)	01	09
5. <i>jab/kab</i> (when)	03	04
6. <i>baad azan</i> (later on)	01	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>21</b>

Table 4.6 shows that female writers intended to employ more temporal DMs. The themes and topic of their articles are related to chronological matters, so they use more DMs in this category as compare to male columnists. Temporal Markers ab (now) is used most frequently (value occurrence=08).

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The study has aimed at identifying gender differences in the use of DMs. The analysis of the study reveals that Urdu male writers use DMs more frequently. This accounts that Urdu male writers might depend upon argumentative use of language, while female writers are inclined towards more cooperative and compromising attitude in the use of language. The elaborative discourse markers are more common than any other DM in terms of their functions. The findings reveal a considerable gender disparity in discourse marker usage. So, the results confirm the assumption of Victor, at el (2014) that there is a significant difference in the usage of DMs. It might be a matter of power, dominance, authority, uncertainty and theme that form the choice of using a discourse marker. On the whole, the findings of the study suggest that gender has an impact on the frequency of DMs in messages and their functions. Because DMs are used by both men and women, they could be used to determine gender differences. In other words, gender can govern the use of discourse markers. However, it can also be posited that the writers are generally aware of the patterns of language use. So, discourse markers are used by speakers or writers systematically. Furthermore, it can be suggested that on the basis of the theme/subject of the articles there might be a gender variation in the use of DMs. Moreover, before any further generalization, a large scale data study can indicate more valid gender variation in term of usage of DMs.

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# “SIGNIFICANCE OF SOUND IN FILMMAKING AND CHALLENGES FACED BY PAKISTANIS”

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## ABSTRACT

*This research article investigates the significance of sound in the filmmaking process and the specific challenges faced by the Pakistani film industry in this domain. Commencing with an examination of Pakistan's music industry, notably exemplified by projects such as Coke Studio, the study elucidates the historical trajectory of sound within cinematic contexts, tracing its origins from Thomas Edison's Phonograph to the pre-partition era of cinema in Lahore. Despite the nation's rich musical heritage, the research underscores the impediments encountered by Pakistani filmmakers concerning sound recording, mixing, and studio infrastructure development. Employing qualitative research methodologies, the study conducts an in-depth analysis of the present state of sound production in Pakistani cinema, facilitated by interviews with industry experts. It elucidates the transition towards internalized sound mixing processes while highlighting enduring challenges, including the scarcity of adequate sound studios, reliance on antiquated equipment, and financial constraints. Moreover, the research delves into technological complexities, software utilization, and sound mixing techniques within the industry's current landscape. In conclusion, the study advocates for enhancements in sound production infrastructure, alongside investments in modern technologies and educational opportunities for sound producers. Emphasizing the necessity of addressing these challenges and prioritizing sound quality in filmmaking endeavors, the research posits that such measures can significantly augment the cinematic experience in Pakistan. By offering a comprehensive analysis of this often-overlooked facet of filmmaking, the study furnishes valuable insights conducive to the future advancement of the Pakistani film industry.*

**Keywords:** filmmaking, cinema, sound production, sound quality, production

## INTRODUCTION:

In the contemporary scenario, Pakistani music industry is doing wonders in form of multitude of music projects (Arshad, 2018). Coke Studio has been a major hit in this

era of technological advancement. Musicians all across Pakistan, have gathered on the platform of Coke studio and are presenting a diverse range of songs. However, the sounds in the film industry are still in its growth phase and experiencing sound management and studio development challenges.

Reviewing the history of cinema development original sound recording and management, it has been found that Thomas Edison is recognized as the founder of cinema, with his early film Fred Ott's Sneeze that was launched in 1894 (Gunning, 1989). He was the inventor of Phonograph, in 1877, which is the first sound recording device. Dickson, on the other hand, assisted Thomson, in synchronizing sound and film, but experienced failure. In the pre-partition era, Dialsukh M. Pancholi, was recognized as a popular Hollywood movie distributor. Pancholi Art Pictstudio was initially developed by him in Lahore and was recognized as Pancholi Film Co (Siddique 2017).

This studio produced mega hit Punjabi movies; Yamla Jatt (1940), Gul Bakavli (1939) and the Khazanchi (1941) which is an incredible Urdu/Hindi musical film. All the film studio's in Lahore, were destroyed due to political upheavals of that era. Pancholi rebuilt his studio on the Upper Mall Road of Lahore during February, 1948 (Pakistan Film Magazine, 2018). Later on, DeevanSardari Lal, an assistant of Pancholi, launched the first Pakistani film; "Teri Yaad" (1948). Malika Pukhraj, famous Pakistani singer, took the charge of Pancholi studios, and named it as Malika Studio. After sometime, Malika Pukhraj sold the studio which was then recognized as Jawidan Studio. Since then, Pakistani film industry has experienced many ups and downs (Dudrah, 2002; Kirk, 2016; Yousaf, Adnan, & Aksar, 2017). It is after 1965, that the Pakistani actors started to present their films across the borders. Notably, the film that was produced in Pakistan, was Shahida, featured Dilip Kumar's brother, Nasir Khan. Likewise, after decades of film industry development, Muhammad Ali, a Pakistani actor, got featured as a clerk of Manoj Kumar, an Indian actor. Mohsin Khan, Qatil Shifai, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Haseena Moin are big names of Pakistani film industry, they were welcomed by the Bollywood, 1980 onwards. Pakistani singers as Rahat Fateh Ali Khan and Atif Aslam are recognized as renowned performers in Bollywood. In 2019, there are 4633 artists working, 977 cinemas and approximately 9266 film songs produced (Pakistani Film Magazine, 2018). A number of Cinema's exist in Karachi; Capri, Nishat, Prince, Atrium, etc, with Capri cinema having 850 seating capacity and 7.1 Dolby sound system.

The term "sound" in the discipline of film making refers to the music, sound effects and words (Costanzo, 2017; Wilkins, 2016). Sound play a significant role in a movie. For instance, it helps in enhancing the plot, elevating the mood, serves as an explanation of film characters, provides relevant information regarding scene location, etc (Candusso, 2015; Wierzbicki, 2012). Empirically, sound can be classified as; Non-diegetic and Diegetic. In Diegetic sound, the sounds as door slamming, dialogue, and footsteps, etc. can be added. These audio facets come from sources that exist within the film world. However, the non-diegetic sound is inclusive of a source that comes from outside the film functional world (Savukova, 2010). For instance; the sound effects of screeches in shower scene recorded in film "Psycho". Some of the



filmmakers exhaust the sound to amplify the meaning or emotion in a movie scene. The character's threatening feature is reinforced in front of the audience. These exaggerated sounds are known as Pleonastic sounds.

These sound effects add flavors to the ecosphere or mood of the film, via the generation of a soundscape (Conde, 2017). These further, enhance the meaning of visuals that appear during the scene. Filmmakers alter the tempo, volume and pitch of these sounds, on the basis of his expectations from the audience, to respond to the noise in a certain manner (Mott, 2014; Tan, Pfordresher, & Harré, 2017). For example, in the horror movies, squealing tires or screams are high-pitched sounds, that create a sense of anxiety among the audience. On the contrary, a sense of calmness or mystery can be generated via low-pitched sounds. For instance, the swinging of a door, bird's voice, and sound of waves, etc. Nevertheless, the most captivating use of sound in a movie scene, is the absence of sound i.e., silence. Silence is often generated to augment a scene's intensity or to create suspense for an imminent doom. In the contemporary film industry, sound effects as phase blasts, animal and wind sounds are added to enhance the film experience (Wilkins, 2016). In the contemporary scenario, surround sound has been integrated to the film industry as a "directional" facet (Sheehan, 2018). For instance, the addition of echoes, a type of surround sound, gives an impression of three-dimensional sense of movie space. Another category of sound is known as unmotivated sound. These sound effects, has no logical connection with the scene, although they elevate and enhance emotional influence of the movie scene.

### **Methodology**

A qualitative research methodology has been adopted in this research. The film producers and singers have been interviewed and analysis has been presented. Convenient sampling strategy has been adopted and as per the convenience the selected film producers and singers have been interviewed.

### **Analysis**

A productive change can be seen in the Pakistani film industry. The sound mixing is now performed in Pakistan, but previously, people had to go to international locations as America, to record their sound and go through the procedure of sound mixing. Kashif Ejaz is working with the Pakistani film industry. He remained engaged for sound mixing etc, in Actor in Law, Namaloom Afraad, Teefa in Trounble, movies sound mixing. The sound effects in the aforementioned movies are of a high standard, and can be heard through the microphones. There are two types of sound mixing; mono channel and stereo channel.

The contemporary music directors in Pakistan works on Keyboard, however, the actual feel comes from real equipment's as Tabla and Violin. These instruments on the key board give fake music impacts. During interviews with Shuja Haider, Faizi and Ahmed Jahanzaib, it was found that these singers are mature, but still they rely on the keyboard. On the contrary, the singers like Bilal Maqsood, Shahi (Vital Sign) and Imran Kazim, as remarkable Music Directors mentioned that Orchrushna is the best tool that must be integrated.

However, during the interviews the biggest challenge faced by the film industry has been recognized. In Pakistan, there are limited number of sound studios; Radio Pakistan, Coke Studio, Pakistan Television Studio. There is no studio to record private production in Pakistan. Previously developed studio namely; Greece was initially a warehouse of Pepsi. This studio is not sound proof, and has mikes that are over sensitive. The singers mentioned that for Mehdi Hasan, a special mike was developed due to his low pitch. He was a remarkable semi-classical singer and a special mike was developed for him. Arguably, in Pakistan, singers like Shuja Haider and Ahmed Jahanzaib, are recognized as better singers than the Indian/Asian ones. It is obvious by the fact, with Pakistani singers outperform are in Indian events and conduct live concerts.

They outperform the Indian singers. Another challenge faced by the sound industry, is that the young Pakistani singers are not valued. They perform at small level, and paid less than they actually deserved for. There is huge talent in Pakistan and the Pakistan singers are experts in playing guitar, keyboard playing.

One of the interviewee highlighted that there are different types of music directors; tuner/composer and arranger. In Audio Dialogue Replacement (ADR), the dialogues are recorded first, and then during the shoot, the actors are asked to say those dialogues exactly in the same manner. Across, the globe, the sound in a movie is recorded between 5.1 or 7.1, Dolby surround sound and then it is converted into Digital Cinema Package (DCP) format so that it could be played in the Cinema. Unfortunately, Pakistani film industry is unable to record the sounds in between 5.1 or 7.1 Dolby. Rafiq Ghaznavi introduced the concept of Background Music Score (BGM). Sound mixing takes place via a number of steps. The Film Producers and Directors, working since 2000, in Pakistan, still rely on the Automatic Dialogue Replacement. The challenge is that Pakistan does not have the needed equipment. Nabeel Qureshi and Jalal, producer and director in Pakistani film industry, prefer location sound recording. In this the visual sound is recorded with the help of a third person, who holds mike. The mike cost is high that is between 4 to 5 lacks, and if the mike is being used, then there is no need to use ADR. Jack Foley, was the inventor of Foley sound, that is deemed as live action sound, which is generated at the studio, by means of routinely surfaces and objects (Wierzbicki, Platte, Smith, Beck, Ament, & Kerins, 2015; Reddell, 2018). The Foley effects are recorded by the Foley artists in the editing stage, with moving image, used for guidance. Apart from Foley, another sound effect is known as ambient sound (Owens, Wu, McDermott, Freeman, & Torralba, 2016), which is unique in context. Ambient sound is effective in recording blips in sound, in the form of a “patch”. Mikes that are available are of different types; uni-direction, bi-direction and omni-direction. The uni-direction mike is available in the form of hand and collar mike. Bi-direction mike has two sensors, and usually used in the FM studios and radio stations. The omni mike on the contrary, is a boom type multi-purpose mike usually known as folly. Music scores are prevalingly used by filmmakers as a tool to create an emotional response in the audience. Filmmaker’s are tremendously using these scores and let the audience react differently to different scenes. Music is often used as an opening gambit for a movie, while played at the backdrop. John William composed a brassy theme music, which gained massive

popularity and has been parodied by many. Music score has been integrated by the horror movie filmmakers and is responsible to generate suspense and tension, exactly before the monster had to attack. Concussively, music is used as a powerful tool in the representation of cultural or ethnic context. In the documentary films, there is a common practice of integrating voiceovers. One example is the *Original Blade Runner* film launched in 1982.

As the ADR is deemed highly expensive, therefore, due to unavailability of this equipment, only general sound is being recorded. The LSR records only mono-channel sounds, and then these sounds are them edited copy and pasted so that they can be used as stereo sound, which is 5.1 Dolby or 7.1 Dolby. Evidence has shown that technology is impacting the film industry with a rapid pace (Adrian, 2017). According to Adrian (2017), in the past decade, the cinema operator used to invest on a 35mm projector, which was having xenon bulbs or 7.1 and 5.1 sound. However, the challenges for the film directors are increasing. They are facing difficulty in understanding monetizing and operational management of sound options. This challenge is faced across the globe. Unfortunately, Pakistani film producers and directors are unable to manage the 5.1 Dolby or 7.1 Dolby yet. Only a couple of Pakistani music directors have managed to record their films internationally with the aforementioned Dolby formats. Additionally, there is a scarcity of financial budget in the Pakistani film budget. The filmmakers that have received higher education from international locations in the filmmaking are the only ones struggling to have films with high quality. After becoming successful in few of their films, they have now managed to develop their films in the 7.1 Dolby formats. However, in Pakistan, there is a significant crises in the development of sound studios, that could serve as a platform for new upcoming film sound producers and developers.

### **Conclusion**

Review of literature in the Pakistani music and cinema industry reveals a severe scarcity of sound research. There are challenges faced by the music directors and film directors in recording of the sounds and converting them into cinema sound formats, however, the literature does not highlight this. The information is available through media and YouTube channels; and there is a need to highlight the challenges faced by the Pakistani filmmakers in recording of sound.

### **Suggestions**

The paper has discussed the challenges related to the sound in the filmmaking faced by Pakistanis. This section presents suggestions for improvement of the sound in the Pakistani film industry. The interviews revealed that the Pakistani film industry is unable to manage the software issues. There is a shortage of equipment's for sound mixing. The music producers are affected largely. They have software issues. The folly sound is not taken seriously. There are technology and financial challenges. The sound studios are not completely equipped with latest sound mixing software. The music producers go abroad and then mix the sound, to be played in their movies. There are challenges associated at the Racket level. A high usage of plugin sound is evidenced in contrast to the 5.1 or 7.1 Dolby sound. The lacking of software enforces the music producers to use the crack versions, which are again a challenge.

In these scenarios, it is high time for the sound and music in the Pakistani film industry. There is a need to assign budget for the music and sound related issues. There is a need to invest in the latest technology and sound mixing software's so that a good quality sound can be produced in Pakistani films. The international training of the film sound producers may be a good option. However, this requires the transmittance of that knowledge amongst other film sound developers so that they could take maximum advantage from the international trainings and improve the sound mixing quality.

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# THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATION FACTORS ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION IN BANKING INDUSTRY OF PAKISTAN

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of organizational factors on employee motivation in the banking industry of Pakistan. The data was collected from 100 employees of different banks through close-ended questionnaire. For this research, the employees of different banks were selected, which implies that both females and males were considered for the online questionnaire. The sample size for this research was 100 participants, who were the employees at different banks operating in Karachi, Pakistan. The results showed that company culture and empowerment to have significant impact on employee motivation; whereas organizational factors of reward and pay, job security, and promotion had no significant impact on the employee motivation.*

**Keywords:** Motivation, Promotion, job security, empowerment, reward and pay

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of Research

The inner drive to perform or behave in a particular way is known as motivation and these inner circumstances are desires, goals that are set in motion to move in a specific direction.

It is the outcome of conscious and unconscious elements including the demand or need, the value of the incentive or reward, and the individual expectations and is critical in guiding an individual toward a specific goal. Motivation is a necessary feature in any organization to motivate personnel towards organizational success (Abdolshah et al., 2018). External rewards and intrinsic motivation are two different types of motivation where extrinsic motivation refers to external elements that may be measured in terms of money, such as salary and benefits and job satisfaction is an example of intrinsic motivation. The main motivation theories are offered based on the three concepts of need fulfillment including the goal-setting theory, expectation theory, and reinforcement theory that follow the three need satisfaction theories (Ahmad et al., 2019). Each of these theories will contribute significantly to this research as organizational performance is also heavily reliant on motivation and the motivational influence on employees is determined by these elements. This research

also looks at the characteristics that affect motivation, both positively and adversely. Many types of research have already shown that good effects on motivating employees to exist, but this study will add to the evidence. The data for this study was acquired through a survey, and because it was about the commercial banks, it was acquired from Pakistani banks. The outcomes of the study data analysis are determined using multiple regressions (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016).

This study was conducted in the Pakistan banking business to demonstrate the impact of many elements on employee motivation, such as financial incentives, personal traits, high compensation plans, audits, and workplace design. People are engaged in the implementation of all organizations, whether they generate services or products, where an organization capacity to encourage its personnel influences whether it will succeed or fail. It is critical to understand what motivates an organization and its members, and whether everyone is motivated by the same variables or if there are disparities between people that could be related to a common attribute like gender, differences, culture, or attitudes (Iqbal et al., 2018). The majority of researchers have discovered that different elements have varying effects on motivation at multiple stages. Good pay and personal factors such as gender, age, education, professional experience, relationship status, temperament, and monthly income are the independent variables, and work and motivation are dependent factors. Employee motivation is boosted by environmental influences. Shah and Asad (2018) claimed that to create an environment where employees may collaborate pleasantly, motivation and additional effort are considered as having a good link, inspirational motivation leads to a management style that benefits employees and certain motivation researchers play a key part in knowledge transfer. Employee motivation is increased by internal motivation, and extrinsic motivation, such as good rewards, really should not interfere with professional knowledge transfer. Intrinsic motivation, according to some studies, is characterized by the ability to assume worldwide assignments, difficulties, support, and a readiness to communicate. Abdolshah (2018) discovered that the quality, financial incentives, workplace design, development chances, and social relationships with coworkers are all motivating factors, with team motivation as the dependent variable (Khalid et al., 2016).

### **Statement of Problem**

Men and women have variances that affect how they engage with their environment, and these differences include not simply professional motivation but psychological, economic, and cultural factors. Men and women in organizations are motivated in various ways, and men and women are influenced by external motivations. Women make up the majority of workers in Pakistan banking business, and they frequently have more boring jobs than their male counterparts do do (Khan et al., 2017).

### **Scope of the Study**

The goal of this study is to find out what motivates people who work in Pakistan banks and to see if there are any disparities in motivation amongst men and women. The study also sought to establish a link between the independent and dependent variables where employee motivation is the dependent variable, with organizational culture, reward and pay, promotion, job security, and empowerment as independent variables (Saeed and Shah, 2016).



### **Research Objectives**

The reason for conducting this research is to investigate into the organizational factors affecting employee motivation in the banking industry of Pakistan. Based on the purpose, the objectives formulated for the research are as follows;

1. To identify the influence of company culture on employee motivation
2. To identify the influence of reward and pay on employee motivation
3. To identify the influence of promotion on employee motivation
4. To identify the influence of job security on employee motivation
5. To identify the influence of empowerment on employee motivation

### **Research Questions**

The research questions are formulated based on the aforementioned objectives are as follows;

1. What is the influence of company culture on employee motivation?
2. What is the influence of reward and pay on employee motivation?
3. What is the influence of promotion on employee motivation?
4. What is the influence of job security on employee motivation?
5. What is the influence of empowerment on employee motivation?

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

The hypotheses of the study are as follows;

**H1o:** Company culture has significantly positive impact on company employee motivation

**H2o:** Reward and pay has significantly positive impact on company employee motivation

**H3o:** Promotion has significantly positive impact on company employee motivation

**H4o:** Job security has significantly positive impact on company employee motivation

**H5o:** Empowerment has significantly positive impact on company employee motivation

### **Literature Review**

#### **Employee Motivation**

Motivation is a process that begins with physiological and psychological desires and ends with an increase in an organization's performance to reach a goal. Motivated employees strive to reach their company's ultimate aims and goals because they are aware of how important they are to the company's long-term success. Rewards are powerful organizational tools that can influence individual or group behavior and performance (Qayyum, 2012). Salaries, incentives, promotions, and other forms of recognition are commonplace in organizations, and they all serve to motivate people to do their best work. To achieve desired results, employees must be motivated to do their best work, which has a direct correlation to their results. Extrinsic and intrinsic rewards can contribute to job satisfaction if the workplace is



designed in such a way that it is conducive to this outcome. The term "intrinsic motivation" refers to the act of engaging in an activity out of a desire for personal fulfillment and enjoyment. Rewarding a person's capacity to satisfy their need for autonomy and self-sufficiency is a key component of self-determination and cognitive evaluation theories. A company's long-term success depends on its ability to effectively utilize and manage its human resource pool. Employee satisfaction and a clear understanding of the importance of their work are two further prerequisites for a successful firm. Intrinsic motivation is negatively impacted by monetary incentives (Aftab, 2012). Extrinsic rewards have long been thought to play a vital role in sustaining intrinsic drive. According to some researchers' results, employees' commitment to the business and the rewards that come with it are bolstered by dedication and affection, which some academics believe to be the most fundamental sources of motivation for workers. Many characteristics, including commitment, gratification, enjoyment, and readiness to leave the organization, can be used to quantify the amount of employee motivation, according to the current study. In the workplace, motivation is defined as the level of pleasure, contentment, and sense of purpose that encourages employees to put up the effort necessary to do their jobs well. When it comes to employee motivation, money is a powerful motivator, but other intrinsic variables like (appreciation, recognition, authority, etc.) also play a role in encouraging people to achieve at their highest level.

When it comes to predicting human behavior, motivation has long been considered one of the most important predictors and a critical performance analyst. The motivation revealed in a variety of regulation studies by academics and executives to embrace people's motivation to utilize social media and other tools on the company's behalf is not surprising. Application content is linked to motivational factors (such as recognition and accountability), while hygienic aspects (such as the workplace, interpersonal relations, income, a person's previous career history influences their current job security, status, and compensation. Some researchers classified parts of cleanliness as extrinsic characteristics that disturb employees' work approaches and lead to their eventual dissatisfaction with their jobs if the needs are not well addressed. Motivating staff is seen as an inherent trait that makes them happy when their requirements are met, and at the same time, does not make them dissatisfied (Qayyum, 2012). According to the findings, motivation occurs only when a person sees a positive connection between their efforts and their work performance, and their work success is directly linked to rewards. In addition, the objective locality theory of motivation is a critical tool that serves as an "immediate valve of individual behavior" to steer individuals toward achieving the goal. This theory is derived from the anticipation theory proposal. Direct focus, coordinating effort, rising determination and motivating plan are all ways in which the objective influences the performance. In addition, the earlier researcher had a perception of an individual's attitude, outlook, plan, and life goals. Because of this study, organizations can better understand their employees' goals in their professional and personal lives, as well as the importance of stimulating them. Employee involvement in their firms, reliability, and confidence in their work are all improved because of this. Positively, firms, executives, and leaders are at odds over how to accept the characteristics that a

influence employee motivation. Especially for those who have a different goal in life in mind People might have a wide range of wants, needs, morals, aspirations, and goals in life. Worker stimulation and other motivational features are examples of presuppositional motivational efforts that are intended to clarify the aspects that have direct or indirect pressure on company performance and employee motivation.

### **Recognition**

An employee's degree of performance and success, or an influence on the achievement of a goal, is recognized through "recognition." There are varieties of ways in which it can be done, from private to public. It is always adding up to pay. Employees, on the other hand, deserve appreciation as well. People enjoy sharing in each other's joy when they do something, and this needs to be acknowledged inside the company (Aftab, 2012). As long as the need is met, it serves as a powerful motivating factor. It is also likely that if an organization relies solely on compensation to acknowledge influence and performance, to protect the company's finances, employees' priorities will alter, and the outcome will be a tarnished corporate culture. Recognition serves as a low-cost means of increasing success and fostering a sense of belonging among employees.

### **Job Environment**

The work environment in which people accomplish their jobs might vary widely from those who are completely satisfied to those who are both challenging and unsafe to their health and well-being. Peripheral elements, such as the environment, weather, temperature, clamminess, breeze, lighting in the office, and incursion, gases, and other dangerous substances, can adversely affect the complicated operational settings. The work environment in which people accomplish their jobs might vary widely from those who are completely satisfied to those who are both challenging and unsafe to their health and well-being. Peripheral elements, such as the environment, weather, temperature, clamminess, breeze, lighting in the office, and incursion, gases, and other dangerous substances, can adversely affect the complicated operational settings.

In addition, it includes the employee's sexual characteristics and maturity as well as their exhaustion, repetitiveness, and an adverse stance during exertion. Another side of the business of production is the working hour, the working plan, the working occasion, the work pace, the extreme injury, and so on. Only those employees, who meet stringent criteria for maturity, gender, educational attainment, physical and mental toughness, as well as physiological and emotional makeup, are capable of working in high-stress environments. Employees' performance is influenced by a complicated operational environment. Also important is that employees are well-trained in the proper use of paraphernalia, as insufficient use of utensils can lead to mishaps or inaccuracies in recital, no matter how many or how many utensils were acceptable. Individuals must also be taught defensive tool usage and personal safety as part of their education

### **Rewards**

There are several ways that benefits might influence an employee's performance. Due to the low frequency of benefit payments, they are more affordable

for an employer in the market. Thus, it is more cost-effective to increase staff performance during the project. Benefits can sometimes be used as a substitute for salary. To examine the employer inquiry facts and prove the employee's lower-income after a few years of numerous benefits accrued to the employee. Because the benefits and compensation are seen as alternatives, employees are willing to give up their salary in exchange for additional benefits. While benefits are a significant component of employee compensation, they have only served as a means of arranging various studies, rather than serving as the focus of the in-depth investigation. Employee job approaches such as business assurance, motivation, and performance are all heavily influenced by the rewards that employees receive for their work. Rewards in cooperation play an important part in establishing and sustaining an obligation between workers that ensures an average job performance and employee loyalty in any firm. As a stand-in for the corporate entity, an employee enters the company with the exact set of skills needed to meet the company's objectives and anticipates returning to a respectable working environment where the employees can put their talents to good use and help the company meet its objectives. Organizational performance is boosted because of the awards, which help employees perform at a higher level and increase their productivity.

Both external and internal rewards fall under the broad category of extrinsic motivation. Wages, bonuses, and other advantages are given to employees in addition to job security and the opportunity for promotion. Tangible incentives and extrinsic rewards are both terms used to describe the same thing. Extrinsic incentives are those that have no connection to the actual work accomplished. However, intrinsic incentives are those that cannot be measured or quantified, but rather are fundamental to the profession itself. Examples include delegating authority to an employee, showing appreciation, rotating jobs, and presenting the individual with new tasks. Employers also show trust and a positive attitude toward employees. Extending an employee's wage to the point where intrinsic rewards become a primary source of motivation. When a business wants to achieve its goals, its human resources need rewards that go beyond monetary compensation. Firms need to develop efficient compensation policies to recruit and retain the best and most motivated employees, and these policies should be based on the employee's productivity. Employee motivation is heavily influenced by rewards, which is why so much research has been done on the topic. Many academics have attempted to investigate the effect of rewards on employee motivation. Such regulations and a compensation system must be developed by the top management to maximize employee happiness and motivation.

Performance and merit should be taken into account when awarding bonuses and incentives incentive structure of any business are shaped by the resources it possesses as well as the size of the organization. He also concludes that employees should be paid based on how well they perform. Various elements, both personal and organizational, have been found to influence the performance of employees, according to the literature on individual performance. Attitudes, cognitions, personality traits, and specific demographics of employees, such as age, education, and previous R&D experience, are all frequent individual elements that influence individual performance. Unique and original ideas that might be extremely valuable

to the company are a competitive advantage for any corporation Management is therefore tasked with ensuring that all the processes and procedures necessary to boost presence & #39;s performance are in place. Intrinsic rewards are those that are found inside the workplace itself. For example, the worker & #39;s autonomy and authority, the supervisor & #39;s admiration, and the sense of accomplishment that comes from meeting the goals and objectives. Unlike extrinsic rewards, such as pay, incentives, bonuses, fringe benefits, and promotions and so on, intrinsic rewards inspire the employees by providing them with a sense of purpose and fulfilment. Many important characteristics that help employees be more productive are highly valued and appreciated by them. Just a few examples are the impact of a company & #39;s remuneration plan on R&D spending and collaboration with third parties who provide technology. Research shows that firms with good policies for remuneration and rewards attract and retain personnel, while those with bad systems for rewarding employees for their accomplishments demotivate individuals, resulting in worse individual and, ultimately, organizational performance. Extrinsic (physical) or intrinsic (intangible) rewards have a significant impact on employee motivation and, as a result, staff productivity and efficiency, which in turn helps organizations grow and make an impact in the competitive business world.

### **Employee Performance**

When a specific task is completed according to a set of standards, it is deemed to have been done and the individual has fulfilled their obligation and responsibility. The performance of an employee is influenced by a wide range of circumstances. The following study focuses on employee motivation, which has a significant impact on the performance of employees, as well as other elements such as appraisal systems, motivating factors, employee happiness, incentive and pay, human resource training and development, and job security. Vroom & #39;s argument is based on the idea that motivating people to do their best work will lead to better performance and, ultimately, higher wages (Vroom, 1964). The more highly rewarded employees are, and vice versa, the more likely it is that they will be great performers. Yazidi (2008) found that morale and productivity are influenced by the organizational effectiveness and compensation management system. The majority of enterprises have discovered that to meet their specific goals and objectives, their incentive and performance systems were incentivizing employees to adopt an unproductive and dynamic mindset. The path-goal model, on the other hand, shows the connection between employee performance and the compensation system.

### **Organizational Commitment**

An individual & #39;s behaviour and attitude to maintain a connection with an organization and acceptance of the aims of the organization are described as & quot;organizational commitment.&quot; As a result, behaviour study cannot be complete without considering the concept of organizational commitment. Organizational commitment was broken down into three distinct types. Affective Commitment can be described as an individual&#39;s level of involvement with the organization (Shafiq & #amp; Naseem, 2011). If an employee leaves the company, they are expected to have a thorough understanding of and concern for their financial well-being. Normative Commitment refers to the feeling of responsibility to continue

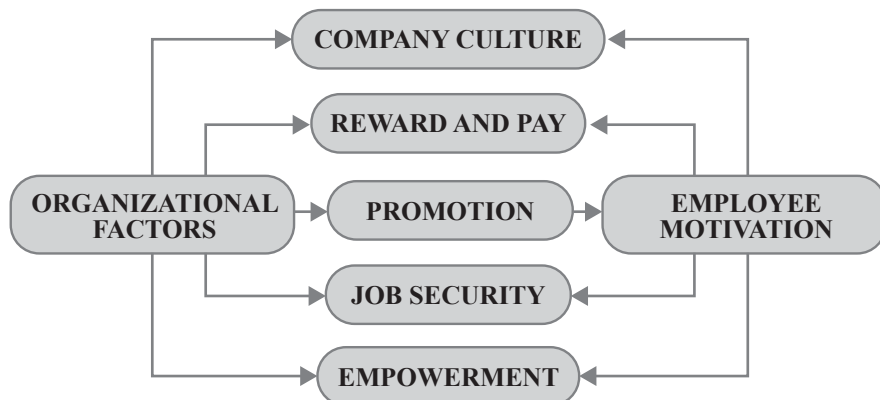
the job and maintain a long-term affiliation with the company. Theoretically, deciding on a job path is linked to a person's level of dedication at work. There may be a favourable correlation between employee motivation and organizational commitment. Commitment to the organization can be measured in three ways: emotionally, continuously, and normatively. Affective commitment has the largest influence on how committed an organization is to its mission. An employee's ability and willingness to commit to the company's long-term goals are the most important factors in determining how successfully they contribute to the company's success. The less likely an employee is to be absent or leave the organization, the more dedicated they are. Having a strong sense of belonging to the company has a big impact on job satisfaction as well. Many studies have indicated that employee performance is influenced by an individual's level of organizational commitment. Affective commitment, as opposed to the normative and continual dedication, is more likely to motivate and contribute to efficient and meaningful performance. Even in the most challenging and complex situations, highly devoted personnel are capable of performing at a high degree of efficiency. Organizational commitment-focused personnel do not feel the effects of stress and job dissatisfaction, whereas those with low commitment feel the effects.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is more about how employees feel about the results of their work than whether or not it provides them with pleasure and the primary factors they deem important. Employees who are happy with their jobs report higher levels of happiness and well-being than those who are unhappy (Locke, 1976). It is expected by employees that their employers will reward them for their hard work with a raise, promotion, and a better working environment based on how well they do (Luthans, 1998). Job satisfaction plays a critical part in human resource management. Employees that are happy in their jobs are more productive (Ramaiah, Janta, & Adesina, 2001). When employees are recognized by their superiors for meeting or exceeding company goals, they feel a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. When a leader expresses appreciation for their workers, it helps them to become more energized and happier in their jobs. As a result, higher levels of motivation among workers lead to better results. As a psychological phenomenon, job satisfaction encourages employees to do their tasks cheerfully, and recognition plays a significant part in improving performance (Khan 2006). When it comes to improving performance and organizational commitment, job satisfaction is a critical factor that should not be overlooked. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to stay on the job, which reduces absenteeism. Employees' job happiness is influenced by an organization's reward structure, particularly monetary benefits. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to display a high level of commitment and contentment with their work. Increasing the level of job satisfaction among employees should be a top priority for companies when formulating their long-term strategy.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual Framework on this research is as follows;



**Research Methodology**

**Geographic Distribution of Sample**

The geographic distribution of the sample was in accordance with the research purpose, which was to identify the influence of the organizational factors on the employee motivation at banks operating in Pakistan. In this context, the banks operating in Karachi were primarily selected based on the convenience of the researcher.

**Demographics Distribution of Sample**

For this research, the employees of different banks were selected, which implies that both females and males were considered for the online questionnaire. The demographic distribution was based on their current employment at the bank, and especially those with experience of banks operating in Karachi. It is also important to mention that the participants selected for the research were 18+ years of age, and this was to avoid any ethical issues during the completion of the research. The inclusion of the aforementioned demographics can be argued to be the reason for the collection of rich and valuable information for addressing the research questions and objectives.

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

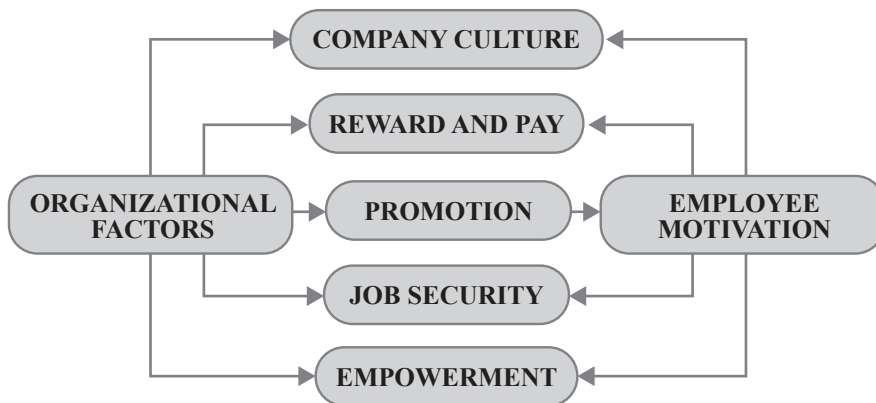
The sample size for this research was 100 participants, who were the employees at different banks operating in Karachi, Pakistan. The purpose of selecting these participants was to ensure that the researcher can be provided with accurate information about the organizational factors at the bank, and whether these factors can directly affect the motivation of employees. These participants were selected using convenience sampling technique, and this is quite evident from the use of online questionnaire for data collection. In particular, the use of this sampling technique enabled the researcher in the collection of accurate and reliable data.

**Research Design**

Quantitative design has been used in this research, since the purpose remains on establishing causal relationship in between the organizational factors (i.e. company

culture, reward and pay, promotion, job security and empowerment) and employee motivation. In addition, it is important to mention that since quantitative design has been used, the researcher has preferred the use of SPSS, which is statistical software for key statistical tests i.e. correlation analysis and regression analysis. Both of these statistical tests are considered for establishing the cause and effect relationship between organizational factors and employee motivation. The data for this research has been collected just once, which makes it cross-section in terms of research time orientation.

### **Conceptual Framework**



### **Research Instrument**

The research instrument of this research is online questionnaire, which was based on 5 point Likert scale. This scale was used to ensure that the collected data can be converted in numerical values, which can then be used for statistical tests. The key frequencies that were used in the questionnaire included; 1 for Strongly Disagree, 2 for Disagree, 3 for Neutral, 4 for Agree, and 5 for Strongly Agree.

### **Procedure of Data Collection**

The data was collected using online platforms, and this was for the convenience of the researcher as well as the participants. This enabled the participants to fill the questionnaire with ease and convenience, while enabling the researcher to use the data for different statistical tests, which not only included the demographics analysis, but also the frequency analysis of each variable, and descriptive statistics. All of these are critical tests in establishing detailed analysis of the data, and for identifying whether or not a cause and effect relationship exists between the identified variables in this research.

### **Reliability and Validity**

For the reliability of the collected data, the use of Cronbach’s Alpha played an instrumental role. In fact, previously conducted studies have used this test to determine whether the data collected from the instrument can be used in obtaining reliable and valid results. Furthermore, this test allowed the researcher in determining



the quality of the questionnaire. On the other hand, the validity of the research was determined through multiple linear regression, where each organizational factor was tested for their impact on employee motivation at banks operating in Karachi, Pakistan.

**Data Analysis & Results**

**Correlation Matrix**

Correlation analysis has been conducted on SPSS 20.0 to determine the strength of relationship in between the variables. The purpose remains on determining whether the variables being used in the research have positive relationship or not. This can be valuable findings for the research, since this can provide the researcher with an understanding of the strength as well as the nature of relationship between the variables of company culture (CC), rewards and pay (RAP), promotion (PRO), job security (JS), empowerment (EMP), and employee motivation (EM). The results from the correlation analysis are presented below;

**Table 6 : Correlation**

		CORRELATIONS					
		CC	RAP	PRO	JS	EMP	EM
CC	Pearson Correlation	1	.971**	.858**	.953**	.808**	.861**
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97
RAP	Pearson Correlation	.971**	1	.835**	.943**	.894**	.926**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97
PRO	Pearson Correlation	.858**	.835**	1	.910**	.634**	.681**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97
JS	Pearson Correlation	.953**	.943**	.910**	1	.738**	.790**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97
EMP	Pearson Correlation	.808**	.894**	.634**	.738**	1	.989**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97
EM	Pearson Correlation	.861**	.926**	.681**	.790**	.989**	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97

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

**Company Culture (CC) and Other Variables**

CC was determined to have strong relationship with all the variables in the study. This was based on the sig. value of each variable, which was higher than 0.70. In particular, RAP had a Pearson Correlation value of 0.971, followed by Pearson Correlation value of 0.858 for PRO, Pearson Correlation value of 0.953 for JS, Pearson Correlation



value of 0.808 for EMP, and Pearson Correlation value of 0.861 for EM. The relationship between the variables can be identified to be positive and linear, and this was determined based on the sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000, which represents linear positive relationship between CC and the aforementioned variables of RAP, PRO, JS, EMP, and EM.

### **Reward and Pay (RAP) and Other Variables**

RAP was determined to have strong relationship with all the variables in the study. This was based on the sig. value of each variable, which was higher than 0.70. In particular, RAP had a Pearson Correlation value of 0.971 with CC, followed by Pearson Correlation value of 0.835 for PRO, Pearson Correlation value of 0.943 for JS, Pearson Correlation value of 0.894 for EMP, and Pearson Correlation value of 0.926 for EM. The relationship between the variables can be identified to be positive and linear, and this was determined based on the sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000, which represents linear positive relationship between RAP and the aforementioned variables of CC, PRO, JS, EMP, and EM.

### **Promotion and Other Variables**

PRO was determined to have strong relationship with the variables of CC, RAP, and JS. This was based on the sig. value of each variable, which was higher than 0.70. In particular, PRO had a Pearson Correlation value of 0.858 with CC, followed by Pearson Correlation value of 0.835 for RAP, Pearson Correlation value of 0.910 for JS. However, the variables of EMP and EM had moderate relationship with the variable of PRO, and this was determined based on the Pearson Correlation value of 0.634 for EMP, and Pearson Correlation value of 0.681 for EM. The relationship between the variables can be identified to be positive and linear, and this was determined based on the sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000, which represents linear positive relationship between PRO and the aforementioned variables of CC, RAP, JS, EMP, and EM. Job Security and Other Variables JS was determined to have strong relationship with all the variables in the study. This was based on the sig. value of each variable, which was higher than 0.70. In particular, JS had a Pearson Correlation value of 0.953 with CC, followed by Pearson Correlation value of 0.943 for RAP, Pearson Correlation value of 0.910 for PRO, Pearson Correlation value of 0.738 for EMP, and Pearson Correlation value of 0.790 for EM. The relationship between the variables can be identified to be positive and linear, and this was determined based on the sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000, which represents linear positive relationship between JS and the aforementioned variables of CC, RAP, PRO, EMP, and EM.

### **Empowerment and Other Variables**

EMP was determined to have strong relationship with the variables of CC, RAP, and EM. This was based on the sig. value of each variable, which was higher than 0.70. In particular, EMP had a Pearson Correlation value of 0.808 with CC, followed by Pearson Correlation value of 0.894 for RAP, and Pearson Correlation value of 0.989 for EM. However, the variables of PRO and JS had moderate relationship with the variable of EMP, and this was determined based on the Pearson Correlation value of 0.634 for EMP, and Pearson Correlation value of 0.738 for JS. The relationship

between the variables can be identified to be positive and linear, and this was determined based on the sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000, which represents linear positive relationship between EMP and the aforementioned variables of CC, RAP, PRO, JS, and EM.

**Employee Motivation and Other Variables**

EM was determined to have strong relationship with the variables of CC, RAP, and EMP. This was based on the sig. value of each variable, which was higher than 0.70. In particular, EM had a Pearson Correlation value of 0.861 with CC, followed by Pearson Correlation value of 0.926 for RAP, and Pearson Correlation value of 0.989 for EMP. However, the variables of PRO and JS had moderate relationship with the variable of EM, and this was determined based on the Pearson Correlation value of 0.681 for PRO, and Pearson Correlation value of 0.790 for JS. The relationship between the variables can be identified to be positive and linear, and this was determined based on the sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000, which represents linear positive relationship between EM and the aforementioned variables of CC, RAP, PRO, JS, and EMP.

**Regression Analysis**

Unlike correlation matrix, regression analysis was conducted on SPSS 20.0 to establish causal relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. In this research, the independent variables included; company culture (CC), rewards and pay (RAP), promotion (PRO), job security (JS), and empowerment (EMP); whereas, the dependent variable in this research was employee motivation (EM). The application of regression analysis led to the following results.

**Model Summary**

Model summary is a critical aspect of regression analysis, and it shows the ability of the independent variables of company culture (CC), rewards and pay (RAP), promotion (PRO), job security (JS), and empowerment (EMP) to explain the changes in the dependent variable of employee motivation (MS). In this context, R Square value of 0.990 has been considered because of multiple independent variables being used in the research, and it depicts that these variables i.e. company culture (CC), rewards and pay (RAP), promotion (PRO), job security (JS), and empowerment (EMP) can explain 99 percent of the changes in employee motivation.

This is a significant finding of this research and can help in depicting the value and significance of each independent variable and their effect on employee motivation, especially concerning the banking industry of Pakistan.

**Table 7 : Model Summary**

<b>MODEL SUMMARY</b>				
<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
1	.995a	.990	.989	153

a. Predictors: (Constant), EMP, PRO, CC, JS, RAP

**Analysis of Variance**

This aspect of regression analysis generally helps in determining the goodness and fitness of the regression model being used in the research. In this case, the significance value is considered, and this 0.000 for the model used in the research. This reflects that the model being used in the research is fit for analysis and can provide the research with valuable and reliable findings, which in turn can enable the researcher to achieve the predefined aim and objectives for which the research has been conducted.

**Table 8 : ANOVA**

**ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	210.160	5	42.032	1806.486	.000b
	Residual	2.117	91	.023		
	Total	212.277	91			

a. *Dependent Variable: EM*

b. *Predictors: (Constant), EMP, PRO, CC, JS, RAP*

**Analysis of Coefficients**

This aspect of regression analysis concentrates on presenting the cause and effect relationship in between the independent variables i.e. company culture (CC), rewards and pay (RAP), promotion (PRO), job security (JS), and empowerment (EMP) and dependent variable of employee motivation. The analysis for each variable has been presented separately for better and accurate understanding.

**Table 9 : Coefficients**

**COEFFICIENTS<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.060	.044		1.378	.172
	CC	.285	.057	.375	5.208	.000
	RAP	-.150	0.95	-.141	-1.582	.117
	PRO	-.043	0.37	-.030	-1.153	.252
	JS	.034	.058	.032	.591	..556
	EMP	.851	.034	.887	25.007	.000

a. *Dependent Variable: EM*

**Impact of Company Culture on Employee Motivation**

The results obtained for the first independent variable showed significant impact of company culture on employee motivation. This was determined based on the significance value of 0.000 (p < 0.01), and this reflects that company culture at banks has significant effect on the motivation of employees. The findings are

somewhat similar to previously conducted studies, where it has been suggested that offering better working environment can be critical for banks to ensure that the employees remain motivated and satisfied with the job. In fact, some studies have even suggested that better culture at banks can reduce the possibilities of turnover intention; though, this is completely different aspect, but is valuable because it can reflect the motivation of employees. An important finding from coefficient analysis was in the form of beta coefficient, which was 0.295 or 29.5 percent, and indicates the ability of company culture to have a significant influence on employee motivation. Based on the coefficient analysis, it can be argued that the hypothesis “company culture has significantly positive impact on company employee motivation” has been rejected.

### **Impact of Reward and Pay on Employee Motivation**

The results obtained for the second independent variable showed significant impact of reward and pay on employee motivation. This was determined based on the significance value of 0.117 ( $p > 0.01$ ), and this reflects that reward and pay at banks has no significant effect on the motivation of employees. The findings are dissimilar to previously conducted studies, where it has constantly been suggested that offering better pay and rewards to employees at banks can improve their motivation, and can ultimately affect their performance and productivity. Based on the coefficient analysis, it can be argued that the hypothesis “reward and pay has significantly positive impact on company employee motivation” has been rejected.

### **Impact of Promotion on Employee Motivation**

The results obtained for the third independent variable showed significant impact of promotion on employee motivation. This was determined based on the significance value of 0.252 ( $p > 0.01$ ), and this reflects that promotion at banks has no significant effect on the motivation of employees. The findings are dissimilar to previously conducted studies, since there is a plethora of studies indicating about the significant role of career advancement and promotions on the motivation of employees. When employees are given the opportunity to undertake more challenging roles and responsibilities, they tend to become more responsible and this directly affects their behavior and attitude at work. In this context, the role of promotion is significant, and since employees are aware that their improved performance and productivity can make them eligible for promotion, they remain motivated and satisfied; thereby indicating that the findings of this research are significantly different from previous studies. Based on the coefficient analysis, it can be argued that the hypothesis “Promotion has significantly positive impact on company employee motivation” has been rejected.

### **Impact of Job Security on Employee Motivation**

The results obtained for the fourth independent variable showed significant impact of job security on employee motivation. This was determined based on the significance value of 0.556 ( $p > 0.01$ ), and this reflects that job security at banks has no significant effect on the motivation of employees. The findings are dissimilar to previously conducted studies, since there is a plethora of studies indicating about the significant role of job security on the motivation of employees. Based on the

coefficient analysis, it can be argued that the hypothesis “Job security has significantly positive impact on company employee motivation” has been rejected.

**Impact of Empowerment on Employee Motivation**

The results obtained for the last independent variable showed significant impact of empowerment on employee motivation. This was determined based on the significance value of 0.000 (p < 0.01), and this reflects that empowerment at banks has significant effect on the motivation of employees. The findings are somewhat similar to previously conducted studies, where it has been suggested that by offering the employees with an opportunity to make decisions can ultimately help them in developing a positive attitude towards the work, and to remain motivated simply because of the value given to them by the management. An important finding from coefficient analysis was in the form of beta coefficient, which was 0.851 or 85.1 percent, and indicates the ability of empowerment to have a significant influence on employee motivation. Based on the coefficient analysis, it can be argued that the hypothesis “Empowerment has significantly positive impact on company employee motivation” has been accepted.

**Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis	Sig Value	Result
Company culture has significantly positive impact on company employee motivation	0.000	Accepted
Reward and pay has significantly positive impact on company employee motivation	0.117	Rejected
Promotion has significantly positive impact on company employee motivation	0.252	Rejected
Job security has significantly positive impact on company employee motivation	0.556	Rejected
Empowerment has significantly positive impact on company employee motivation	0.000	Accepted

**Findings**

From the findings, it became evident that the variables of company culture and empowerment had significant impact on the motivation of employees at banks; whereas, the factors of promotion, reward and pay, and job security were identified to have weak or no impact on the employee motivation. Such findings in this research can be identified to be the result of numerous factors; for instance, the participants’ years of experience, as identified in demographics analysis confirmed about 38.1 percent having just 1 year or less experience at the bank, or the fact that they do not consider these factors significantly important.

**Another key**

reason could be the stress on the employees due to which they might have filled the questionnaire in haste; thereby affecting the quality of the findings.

### **Conclusion**

This research has exclusively concentrated on the factors of company culture (CC), rewards and pay (RAP), promotion (PRO), job security (JS), empowerment (EMP), and employee motivation (EM). Through this research, it was confirmed that employees nowadays are more concerned about empowerment and company culture to remain motivated and satisfied at work, and they do not consider the factors of promotion, rewards and pay, and job security to have significant influence on their motivation.

### **Recommendations**

The findings of this research have presented some meaningful insights about the impact of organizational factors on employee motivation. In this context, some of the most prominent recommendations being offered to the bank and their respective management are as follows;

- Banks are being recommended to concentrate on the needs and demands of the employees, since these can provide some information about the factors that employees care for. Meeting these needs and demands can ultimately enable the banks to have motivated and satisfied employees; thereby enabling the banks to experience improved productivity and performance.
- Banks are being recommended to introduce training and development programs, especially so that the employees can be offered with numerous opportunities to develop important skills and competencies. This in turn can influence them to remain motivated and satisfied with the job, which in turn can provide the banks with an opportunity to understand the behavior of the employees without any significant investment.
- Since banks operate in an intensely challenging and competitive environment, it has become a necessity for banks to have a unique and diversified plan for their employees. In this context, banks can concentrate on the empowerment of employees, where they should be rewarded and acknowledged for their contribution. In particular, banks should encourage the employees to make operational decisions based on their skills and competencies, for which they can be given feedback. This can allow the employees to quickly learn, while developing a sense of being respected and valued in the organization.

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# THE PERSUASIVE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON CONSUMERS' BUYING DECISIONS: A CASE STUDY OF INSTAGRAM

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## ABSTRACT

*This research focuses on examining the various SMI characteristics and their impact on acting as relevant sources to the consumers while making a buying decision. These characteristics include the quality of content they produce, their trustworthiness, and their credibility. A survey questionnaire of 200 respondents was conducted to determine the significance of these characteristics. The research findings revealed that all three independent variables (quality content, trustworthiness, and credibility) of Social Media Influencers have a persuasive impact on the consumers' buying decisions (dependent variable). Therefore, all the variables used in this study were accurate. It was suggested that brands willing to increase their online sales should incorporate Instagram into their marketing strategies. Marketers should also focus on selecting SMIs that fit with the brand's image and produce content that is relevant to their target consumers to properly increase the sales of the product that is being promoted.*

**Keywords:** Social Media Influencer (SMI), Instagram, Quality Content, Trustworthiness, Credibility, Consumers' Buying Decisions

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of Research

Every day, social media is creating new ways to help bring the world closer hence creating online public spheres with transparency as the base factor to establish an

ethical environment for all of us. In 2021, we anticipated that the popularity of social media would keep on increasing, and we were right about it. In April 2021, the average number of active social media users had increased to 4.33 billion. That's a 9.6% gain in just nine months. Hence, we were once again on the verge of beating the year-on-year growth till July. (Chaffey, 2021)

People are adapting to online platforms for carrying out their everyday activities and needs. Especially, due to the current Covid situation, people have shifted their shopping choices from offline to online as they consider it better to order something online at the facility of their home instead of going out and putting themselves in danger of contracting the virus.

Online reviews are taken seriously by 91 percent of people aged 18 to 34 as much as or more than personal advice. And 93 percent of consumers admit that online reviews determine their buying decisions. (Kaemingk, 2020)

Different businesses are focusing on upcoming trends and are using effective ways to advertise and market their products in a manner that is profitable to them and on mediums that are important out of which Instagram is on top. After 11 months of its successful launch in 2010 Instagram had 1 million registered users worldwide (Protalinski, 2012) as compared to December 2021 where only in Pakistan the Instagram audience is about thirteen million and above, out of which 63.8% are men and 36.2% are women. (Instagram users in Pakistan - December 2021)

Instagram is an amazing app where millions of users share pictures, videos or follow their favorite celebrities or influencers. Almost, 20 billion pictures are uploaded on the app with the app being used for 8 minutes and 500 million people using stories daily. Consumers stated that 74 percent of the time, they engaged with advertisements via Instagram stories. (How Video is Influencing Consumer Decision-Making in 2021 [Infographic])

The rise of social media influencers started in the 2000s when anyone could become an influencer or blogger by writing about their experiences and interests on topics such as food, travel, lifestyle, education, etc. and when no one had to necessarily become a celebrity to endorse a product but only needed a maximum number of followers to exercise their influence upon. They've succeeded celebrities because of their greater level of influence, because these customers trust these influencers just like they would trust their friends or relatives because of their transparent and personalized approach, hence influencing their buying decision in one way or the other. The type of content, information, entertainment, aesthetics, user-generated-content, the right timing, and their alignment are things that make them so credible. For this reason, there are about 6,050 social media influencers in Pakistan with a following of about 1,000 to 10m followers. (Top 1000 Instagram Influencers in Pakistan in 2022 | StarNgage, 2022).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The impact of Social Media Influencers (SMIs) is significant in many areas of influencer marketing but for SMIs to resonate with their audience in order to have an impact over their buying decisions is something that has been studied less. We do not

have enough data regarding the content that resonates with the audience which lessens the chance for the SMIs message to successfully reach their followers and acts as a hurdle between them and makes it difficult for them to trust the influencers and view them as credible sources. Therefore, I will be looking into the three characteristics of Social Media Influencers i.e. quality content, trustworthiness, and credibility as relevant sources to the consumers for making the right buying decisions and also help brands and marketers look for appropriate influencers depending on the variety of products and services to be promoted.

### **Scope of the Study**

The research will be valuable for the new researchers who would be looking for Social Media Influencer factors that impact the buying decisions of consumers on Instagram. It will provide them an insight into how marketers and brands can use SMIs successfully for their own and the consumer's benefit in Karachi and Lahore, Pakistan with the help of a quantitative research design. The study also helps to understand the effectiveness of the different types of quality content preferred by the Instagram audience and the use of Instagram features, reviews, endorsements, recommendations, regular posting, and user engagement to build the trust and credibility of the Influencer.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To understand the impact of Quality Content of SMIs on the consumers' buying decisions.
2. To determine the impact of Trustworthiness of SMIs on the consumers' buying decisions.
3. To analyze the impact of Credibility of SMIs on the consumers' buying decisions.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the impact of Quality Content of SMIs on the consumers' buying decisions?
2. What is the impact of Trustworthiness of SMIs on the consumers' buying decisions?
3. What is the impact of Credibility of SMIs on the consumers' buying decisions?

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

- H1.** The Quality Content of SMIs has a significant impact on the consumers' buying decisions.
- H2.** The Trustworthiness of SMIs has a significant impact on the consumers' buying decisions.
- H3.** The Credibility of SMIs has a significant impact on the consumers' buying decisions.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Social Media Influencers (SMI)**

With the increase in the significant impact of Social Media Influencers (SMIs), influencer marketing has become extremely popular. In the existing globalized marketing, social media influencer has taken the role of the opinion leader influencing

the attitudes, thoughts, and opinions of the consumers, hence impacting their buying decisions regarding particular products such as clothes, shoes, cosmetics, and services. This scientific contribution gathered knowledge around the influential characteristics of the SMIs, their expertise, individual skills, and personalities to help inform their consumers regarding current trends and gauge the intensity of the impact on the behavior and attitudes of the respondents. (Zak & Hasprova, 2020)

Referring to Rob Sanders article on types of influencers, mega influencers have more than a million followers (celebrities) on social media, macro-influencers: have 500,000 to 1 million followers, mid-tiers: have 50,000 to 500,000 followers, micro-influencers: have 10,000 to 50,000 followers, Nano-influencers: have 1,000 to 10,000 followers. (Sanders, 20)

The Asian Journal of Business Research claims SMIs to be more reliable, credible, and trustworthy due to their close relationship with the consumers, especially for brands whose target audience are young people. Any message communicated by an SMI is considered authentic because of their knowledge and expertise. A poll of 82% of followers proved that consumers are more likely to follow their favorite influencer's advice only. (Lim, Mohd Radzol, Cheah, & Wong, *The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Purchase Intention and the Mediation Effect of Customer Attitude*, 17)

Recent influencer marketing reports stated the importance of social media influencers in their campaign strategies. And also claimed it as one of their prior principles to call SMIs (with a large number of following) into their social media accounts as their brand representatives.

Media Kix reported that 80% of online marketers claimed that social media influencers are alone responsible for endorsing their products/services and have boosted their businesses to a newer level of success. Other reports claimed that 50% of brands made a significant increase in their fund allocation to hire social media influencers to promote their brands because of their sincerity and capability of delivering their endorsed product to their followers the right way. The reports and statistics mentioned above validate the success and impact of social media influencers in stimulating consumers buying decisions. (TapInfluence, 2015)

We characterize SMIs as trusted third-party actors who have laid out a substantial number of relevant associations with a certain quality and impact on authoritative partners through content creation, content dispersion, collaboration, and individual appearance on social media. (Enke & Borchers, 2019). SMIs serve as contemporary third-party actors who shape audience perspectives while utilizing different types of social media such as blogs, articles, tweets, etc. (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011)

This paper defines SMIs as individuals who have access to a big audience that attracts the consumers in engaging with them by liking or sharing their content to help them fulfill their marketing purposes for a specific industry. By doing so, they do not attract their actual audiences only but are also able to connect with people who do not follow them; people who are able to view, like, share or make a conversion because of their

content or perceived authenticity. The qualities and characteristics mentioned above are things that motivate others to help influencers extend their potential reach. With all of that stated, users must also understand the reason behind an individual's classification as an influencer. (Kay, Mulcahy, & Parkinson, 2020)

Endorsements by Social Media Influencers build trust for brands in the minds of their audiences. Making social media posts with the help of an influencer provides brands with access to the influencer's audience. As a result, the brand's reach on social media platforms can increase. Brands can invite influencers to try their products and services and give their reviews about them on social media. With the help of these reviews, brands can gain significant attention from their audiences and help them relate too. Using SMIs as a part of the brand strategy and hiring them to create content for the brand's promotion can help the influencer's audience trust the brand. But before doing all of this, a brand must identify the right influencers. There are various influencers on social media; hence it is necessary to narrow them down according to the brand's niche. The similarity between the influencer and the brand's niche makes the influencer's audience relate to the brand message because of which the brand's return on investment (R.O.I) has a greater chance to increase. It is also important to remember that each platform has its own group of influencers, meaning that an influencer who is good at promoting brands on Facebook, may not be good at promoting brands on Instagram and vice versa. Hence, finding the correct influencers that fit your brand's niche can be difficult but crucial. (13 Ways to Create Content for Social Media That Connects with Your Brand's Audience, 2019)

Social media influencers have gained immense success and growth due to the popularity of their reviews, tweets, and comments that consumers consider while making a buying decision. The marketers have also recognized the importance of incorporating User Generated Content (UGC) into their social media campaigns by utilizing the maximum potential of the SMIs to promote their brands or services. However, there are still some doubts regarding the influence of SMIs that stops the marketers and consumers from trusting them completely, raising several questions about their credibility and authenticity. For marketers, it is the return profit that they care for whereas, for consumers, it is the reliability of the information that matters. (Guruge, 2018). SMIs can even perform a combination of roles such as content distributor, community manager, intermediary, strategic counselor, creative content producer and even a host. The combination of these multiple roles in just one person opens new opportunities for brands and businesses in utilizing their overall strategic marketing costs in a better way. (Borchers, 2018)

### **Social Media Influencers and Instagram**

Instagram has brought a massive change in online shopping everywhere. 44 percent of Instagram users use it to discover brands and to conduct their research regarding new products. Brands are using this platform to connect with the right audiences to present them with worthy offerings. Marketers are also giving the audiences a chance to connect with them through the interesting formats of Instagram such as stories, posts, Instagram videos, etc. to further enhance the awareness of the brand being promoted. They are not only getting successful in informing the

audiences about their brands on a larger scale but are even allowing them to choose from a variety of products online. Nearly 60% of teens and middle-aged people use Instagram to watch travel blogs, search for restaurants, or to look for upcoming trends or fashion brands. With a big number of followers and presence, SMIs have an important role to play - specifically on this platform. Plus, there are a lot of people who get influenced by these SMIs and follow their path to become influencers too. Brands find it easy and profitable to collaborate with SMIs because of their close relationship with the audiences and also because they think that SMI reviews are more truthful than paid celebrity ones. (Negi & Pabalkar, 2020)

The purpose of this study on the Finish Influencer Marketing Agency was to get a deeper understanding of the influencer's impact on their audience and to understand how well informed and critical have the consumers become due to the increase in digitalization. The research indicated that using influencers to promote a brand or a market on Instagram can be described as a wise decision that marketers make because it is impossible for them to create/built the level of trust that is between an influencer and his follower hence that is enough evidence to prove why a company or brand should use influencer marketing as a marketing tool and develop an influencer marketing campaign on Instagram to create an impact on the consumers buying decision. (Sofie Biaudet)

This previous research focuses on two important aspects of influencer marketing. One of them is the mistake that businesses related to travel, fashion, food, cosmetics, and beverage industries make i.e. they do not realize the importance of social media platforms like Instagram and still rely on traditional media platforms for the success of their brands, that too when the influencer marketing has become a 10\$ billion industry and is still continuing to grow further. The second aspect is to find the right influencers to work with hence it is important to create a balance between the objectives of the campaign and the cost of the management and identification of influencers. It is recommended to work with a combination of both big and small influencers i.e. mega, macro, micro, and nano, and that too in accordance to the varying segments and situations. The #MyLindorMoment campaign is the best example to prove this aspect because of its collaboration with a number of 280 influencers belonging to varying proportions. With 800 posts and 425,000 reactions, this campaign reached a number of approximately 13.6 million making it the most successful marketing campaign in Switzerland. (Haenlein, et al., 2020)

### **Quality Content**

To gain information, people make use of all the available social media sites or networks. Now the quality of information has a relationship with the perceived credibility of the information. The trustworthiness and credibility of influencers' sponsored posts is positively influenced by its information value which further has a favorable impact on the buying intent of a consumer. People also use several social media sites to get entertained. According to consumers the evaluation of a social media advert depends upon its informative and entertainment value. Thus the perceived entertainment value of the influencer published content is likely to alter the credibility and buying decision as well. The finding of this previous research

also reveals that the credibility of the influencer is strongly enhanced by the information quality, entertainment value and trustworthiness. The entertainment value is an important part of an SMI's content as it consists of emotions which stimulate the buying decision of the consumer. (Saima & Khan, Effect of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Consumers' Purchase Intention and the Mediating Role of Credibility, 2020). SMIs can successfully promote brands and services through the management of their social media content by focusing on basic factors such as information, structure, technological quality, and uniqueness that impact consumer' brand-related activities. (Cheung, Leung, Aw, & Koay, 2022)

Social media networks allow users to create and share content on these platforms according to their desires, interests, and talents and participate in the progress and development of the network by doing so. Users can also view content posted by others. With the use of search engines and hashtags, users can find people with whom they share similar interests and can probably decide to follow them. In doing so, users try to save time by maximizing their list of followers to obtain high-quality content. (Pagan, Mei, Li, & Dörfner, 2021)

Owing to Instagram's enormous popularity and utilization of User Generated Content (UGC), 71% of US businesses say they utilize the platform to engage with customers and promote their goods and services in 2022. (Instagram by the Numbers (2021): Fun Facts, Statistics, and Demographics)

Creating content that best meets the interests and desires of customers is essential to establishing and maintaining relationships with them on social media. Thus far, research has been subjected to objectification and measurement in the context of social media background content of this caliber. This study explored a novel method to social media content that goes beyond the antiquated awareness quality standards to further the understanding of earlier research on online content quality. First, the study validated a number of aspects of the like-minded character of social media material, including elements that are introspective, practiced, stimulated, and encouraged. Second, the appropriate quality of social media content was discovered to influence ongoing attention, active confidence, and feedback openness. These findings are presented in terms of their practical and scientific relevance. (Aladwani, 2017)

### **Trustworthiness**

Consumer views regarding online shopping are dependent on trust and perceived benefits. Both of these are the products of perceived web quality whereas trust is also a result of Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Authors found that the perceived web quality has a compelling and positive impact on perceived benefits. They also found that 28% of online shopping attitudes changed by perceived benefit and trust. (Al-Debei, Akroush, & Ashouri, 15)

This research helps us identify the several behavioral patterns acquired from online communities' system-generated profiles to select trustworthy reviewers. A reviewer can successfully evoke his trust in other users with the help of his involvement and



affability. An influencer's trustworthiness is strongly related to him posting reviews and scoring or adding reviews of other members to his trust network. His uniqueness and area of expertise also define his level of trustworthiness. (Arenas-Márquez, Martínez-Torres, & Toral, 2021). Instagram celebrities or influencers are considered more trustworthy than traditional celebrities. A consumer's perception of endorsed brands is positively influenced by these Instagram celebrities' profiles and posts about them. Consumers feel extreme social pressure and get envious of them too. (Muqaddam & Jin, 2018)

Trustworthiness is the first most essential requirement for the success of an influencer, with attractiveness being the second one. These have a significant impact on the brand's image, trust, and satisfaction. And also influence the consumers buying intention. These two requirements also provide marketers and brands with solutions to their struggles as usage of the traditional advertising models and their belief in the numeric requirements such as the number of followers and counts can make them take the wrong decision. An influencer's success requirements are directly related to attractiveness and trustworthiness rather than their amount of followers. That's why these requirements are different and contrary to the celebrity and salesperson type of endorsers. (Wiedmann & von Mettenheim, 2020). Trustworthiness is the believability, honesty, impartialness, integrity, and expertise of an endorser. And is one of the dimensions of source credibility. Influencers are more reliable and persuasive if they are trusted enough to make their followers accept their recommended products. 54% of consumers recommend the purchased products to others if the company earns a consumer's trust. When Instagram users perceive an influencer as sincere, honest, and dependable, they are assumed trustworthy. There is a positive impact of trustworthiness on the effectiveness of influencers on their followers or consumers. (Abdullah, et al., 2020)

An individual is trusted by another person if he is honest, doesn't take advantage of the given opportunity, and fulfills his commitment by attempting to work hard. Trust is the physical, material, financial and emotional conveyance of resources. And is an essential factor in the buying decision process. Consumers would be more likely to become persuaded if the influencers are perceived as trustworthy, honest, sincere, and reliable sources and if their content has a personal aspect. When a consumer is interested in making a buying decision, the trust concerning the thoughts, reviews, and information posted on social media plays an important role. Trust is the main factor influencing change in consumer behavior throughout social media platforms. And that is what the author has also implied while stating that this is the reason for which consumers trust influencer reviews and information above company advertisements. (Al-Darraj, Zainab, Mansour, & Zahra, 1993)

E-commerce has increasingly developed since the wide accessibility of the Internet. When it comes to making buying decisions online, being well-informed is necessary. Before buying something, most potential customers collect relevant information and hold a comparison before making a decision. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is a trustworthy data source. Influencer and consumer reviews are examples of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). They portray consumers' sharing of their opinions and



encounters regarding services or products with other prospective buyers. There is a great deal of evidence that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) affects buying intent. Influencer reviews also have a positive impact on consumer buying. (Dwidienawati, Tjahjana, Abdinagoro, Gandasari, & Munawaroh, 2020)

### **Credibility**

According to the source credibility model, trustworthiness and expertise are still the principal characteristics of credibility and are things which help influence a consumer's buying decision at the end. (Saima & Khan, Effect of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Consumers' Purchase Intention and the Mediating Role of Credibility., December 2020)

This mixed-method research on Instagram reveals that consumers prefer sponsored content over conventional (online and offline) advertising methods. And having personal relationships with the SMI is one of the reasons for this preference. This research also exhibits that due to media literacy and confidence among consumers, their ability to recognize sponsored content is high even when the ad intent is unrevealed. To make influencer marketing extra transparent, the Australian Consumer Law (ACL) and the Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA) came out with a sponsored content disclosure legislation that went into effect in March 2017, declaring that sponsored content must be explicitly distinguished. This held brands and influencers answerable for what they post on social media. (Segova, 2020)

This study explores the activities of famous Social Media Influencers and the impact that they possess on their Instagram followers. For this purpose, a survey of 100 respondents was conducted. A sample size of 10 people aged 18-21 was selected for the experiment, and were shown videos and photographs of Instagram influencers reviewing and endorsing products. To comprehend their work, the researcher conducted interviews with 3 influencers. As a result of this survey, it was found that an influencer's work is positive and has a positive impact on their followers because they think of an influencer as a credible source and are interested in trying out the products and services being reviewed or endorsed by them. The influencers also receive positive feedback from the brands they work with and receive positive responses from their followers as well. (Nandagiri, 2018)

Social media influencers share photographs, texts, and videos of their everyday routine that reveal their consumers' preferences, opinions, and behaviors. They seem to be easy to access and have a closer relationship with their followers due to their regular communication with them and are perceived as more relatable and friendlier. For this reason, influencers are sponsored to promote brands and products by publicly acknowledging them that too in a spontaneous and organic manner, further attracting their followers to trust them. In doing so, influencers transfer their characteristics, identities, and meanings to the endorsed good or service. They lend product attributes of an extended self, a term coined by Belk to define the expansion of an individual's identity to products and services that they own or avail. (Silva, Farias, Grigg, & Barbosa, 2019)

Thanks to social media, a new breed of social media specialists known as "popular opinion leaders" has evolved. Some suggestions for managing the communication activities of the organizations include keeping an eye on the content that Social Media Influencers (SMIs) provide during the issues management phase, observing them in the decision-making and preventive phases, and establishing a connection with their third-party word-of-mouth endorsements. As some scholars have called them, SMIs can serve as effective proxy communicators or mediating endorsers, speaking on behalf of the organization. The idea remains the same even though the term "proxy communicators" was limited to executives and companies in similar industries. A company's credibility can be maintained with the use of proxy communicators. SMIs can be individuals or organizations, and they must exhibit persistence and credibility to persuade their audience to pay attention to and support their issues of interest. Once SMIs are identified, organizations work with them to increase their capability and promote messaging around pertinent communication targets. Additionally, studies have demonstrated that customers value personal recommendations and word-of-mouth recommendations higher than they do traditional forms of promotion. Every time SMIs engage with their followers, they give organizations the reliable third-party recommendations they need. (Yingzhi Tan, Bhardwaj Lakhanpal, Yue-Ming Kwan, Song-Qi Lim, & Pang, 2016)

### **Consumers' Buying Decisions**

The buying decision not only depends on the expertise of the influencer but also depends on how he influences people to make them a part of their Instagram audience by providing relevant information, because accounts followed by users have an immense impact over the customer's buying decision and behavior. 16–23-year-old (audiences) follow influencers, friends, stars and acquaintances whereas, 24–29-year-old follow influencers first and friends, acquaintances and brands second. Lastly, 30–39-year-old follow their friends and acquaintances first and stars second. (Kavaliauskienė & Margis, 2019)

The consumer's buying decision is influenced by a successful marketing campaign that relies on the combination of a quality product and a trusted influencer. This research also indicates that Social Media Influencers (SMIs) will have a positive impact on consumers' buying decisions when promoting products such as clothing, shoes, cosmetics, and services. (Zak, Hasprova, & Kliestik, The role of influencers in the consumer decision-making process, 2020)

This research paper states that there are 8 categories connected to the Social Media Influencer (SMI) characteristics of attractiveness, trustworthiness, similarity, and authenticity those impact consumers' buying decisions. SMIs can accomplish attractiveness by creating content that is appealing and grabs the attention of the consumer, hence influencing their buying decisions. SMIs can establish a sense of similarity by identifying their audience and developing a close relationship with them, hence influencing their buying decisions. SMIs can create a sense of authenticity by matching the brand that they work with and becoming honest and open about whom they collaborate with, hence influencing the consumer's buying decision. SMIs can develop a perceived sense of trustworthiness by conducting their preliminary research

on the brand that they're about to collaborate with, generate a sense of distinctiveness and show their expertise by creating content that is inspiring hence influencing the consumers' buying decisions. (Håkansson, Jansson, Kapteijn, & Halvarsson, 2020)

This research paper indicates that Instagram celebrities have a significant impact on the consumers' buying decisions, especially females because they view them as credible and are able to relate to them because of the portrayal of positive images and constructive reviews on their profiles. Consumers also give immense importance to image quality, aesthetics, attractiveness, and composition. (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017)

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Geographical Distribution of the Sample**

The focus of this research was people of Karachi and Lahore; the sample for the survey included Matric/O Level, Intermediate/A Level, graduate, postgraduate and doctoral students (both employed and unemployed male and female) from Karachi and Lahore (Pakistan). The questionnaire was prepared and collected through Google Docs. The research was conducted online, with the survey being sent primarily via WhatsApp. The form included 22 questions related to the impact of social media influencers on consumers' buying decisions. As a research method, convenience sampling was used.

### **Demographic Distribution of the Sample**

Since the purpose of this study is to determine the social media influencer characteristics that impact the consumers' buying decisions, case study of Instagram. It was considered that the sample was taken from people aged 18-34, as this age bracket represents the group of people who are being targeted. The survey was done with an aim to collect equal responses from the individuals.

### **Population, Sample & Sampling Technique**

For the researcher's convenience and due to limited resources, the population of the study will be including Matric/O Level, Intermediate/A Level, graduate, postgraduate and doctoral students (both employed and unemployed male and female) from Karachi and Lahore.

Convenience sampling will be used within this research. Convenience sampling includes respondents who are easily accessible and obtaining them does not require any set of rules or processes. They could be found on the street, in a public park, building, mall, or even at work and one can directly ask them for a response (Convenience Sampling - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics)

The data will be collected through questionnaires in a survey from 200 respondents. This will provide the researcher with a broad and reliable data to define the SMI characteristics that impact the consumers buying decisions. Case study of Instagram in Karachi and Lahore.

### Research Design

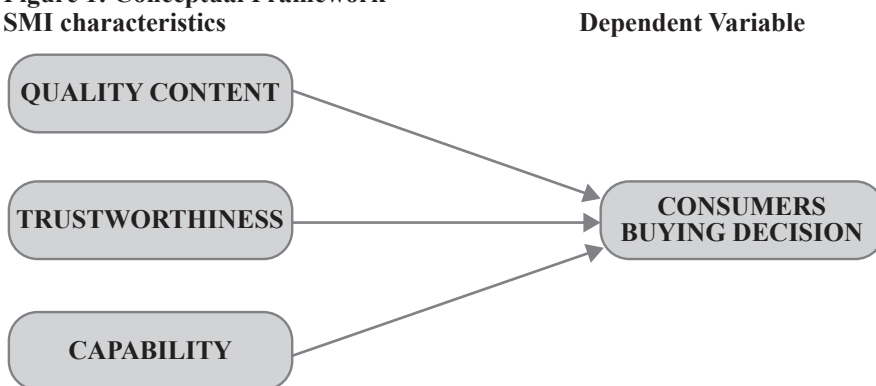
This research, which is applied and descriptive in nature, will examine the SMI features that influence consumers' purchasing decisions. An analysis of Instagram in Lahore and Karachi. Consumer purchasing decisions are the dependent variable in this study, whereas high-quality content, credibility, and trustworthiness are the independent variables.

In this study, a quantitative research methodology was used. Researchers use this technique to evaluate theories about people's attitudes and behaviors by using numerical and statistical data. Researchers gather information from a large number of users (e.g., through online polls, surveys, questionnaires, etc.) in order to obtain quantifiable, unbiased data about users in pertinent contexts.

The data will be collected from people aged 18 to 34 and above as this is the researcher's target audience and this will help in getting better results. The data will be collected with the help of a close-ended questionnaire. The survey method will be used to collect data. The responses will then be analyzed through different methods. The focus of the research will be on gathering numerical data from different respondents. Furthermore, the hypothesis will be extremely useful in analyzing the SMI characteristics that impact the consumers buying decisions.

A survey is used to gather data for this study. This will be accomplished using a closed-ended questionnaire using based on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). The population of the city Karachi and Lahore is fairly represented by the sample and will help in exhibiting the SMI characteristics that impact the consumers buying decisions'. Case study of Instagram in Karachi and Lahore. Below is the research's conceptual framework, which indicates the variables, investigated in the study;

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**  
SMI characteristics



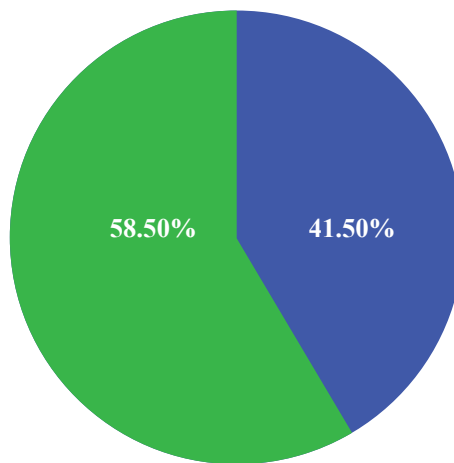
The diagram above shows that Quality Content, Trustworthiness and Credibility are being affected through Consumers Buying Decision

**DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

**Table 1: GENDER**

Categories	Male	Female	Total
Frequency	83	117	200
Percent	41.5	58.5	100
Cumulative Percent	41.5	100.0	

Gender  
 ● Male  
 ● Female

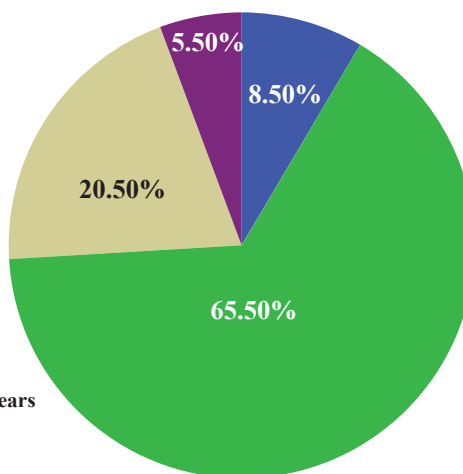


The frequency of the respondents’ gender is shown in the above table as well as graph. It states that out of a total of 200 participants, 83 were male while 117 were females.

**Table 2: AGE**

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
13-19 years	17	8.5	8.5
20-26 years	131	65.5	74.0
27-34 years	41	20.5	94.5
More than 34 years	11	5.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

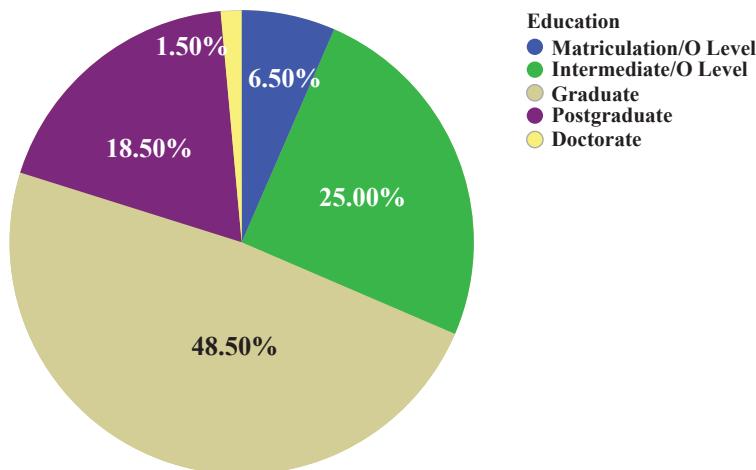
Age  
 ● 13-19 years  
 ● 20-26 years  
 ● 27-34 years  
 ● More than 34 years



The table and graph above display the age distribution of the responders. Of the 200 participants, it says that 17 were between the ages of 13 and 19, 131 were between the ages of 20 and 26, 41 were between the ages of 27 and 34, and 11 were over the age of 34.

**Table 3: EDUCATION**

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Matriculation/O Level	13	6.5	6.5
Intermediate/ A-Level	50	25.0	31.5
Graduate	97	48.5	80.0
Postgraduate	37	18.5	98.5
Doctorate	3	1.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

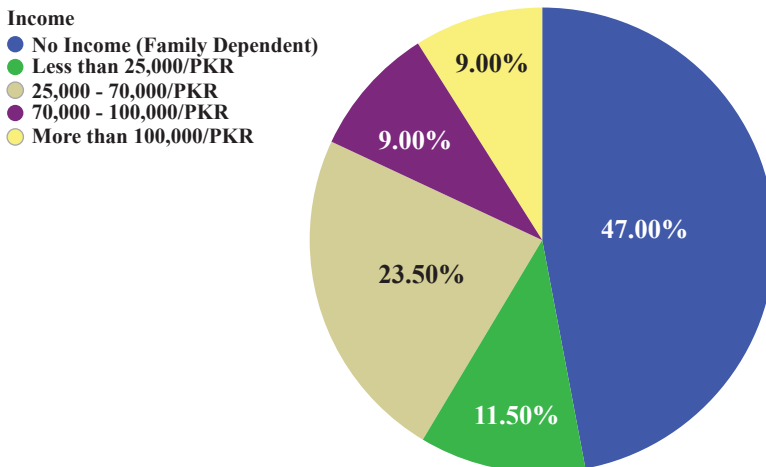


The frequency of the respondents’ education is shown in the table above as well as graph. It states that out of a total of 200 participants, 13 have matriculation/O Level degree, 50 have Intermediate/A Level, 97 have Graduate degree, 37 have Post graduate degree and 3 have Doctorate degree.

**Table 4: INCOME**

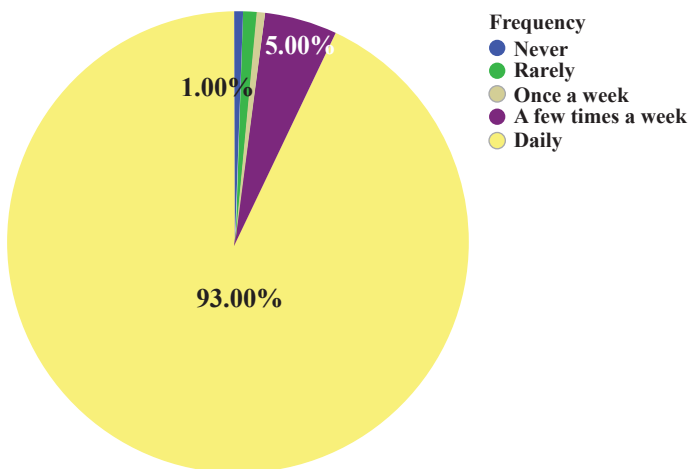
Categories	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No Income (Family Dependent)	94	47.0	47.0
Less than 25,000/PKR	23	11.5	58.5
25,000 - 70,000/PKR	47	23.5	82.0
70,000 - 100,000/PKR	18	9.0	91.0
More than 100,000/PKR	18	9.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

The level of the respondents’ income is shown in the table above as well as graph. It states that out of a total of 200 participants, 94 dependent on their family members, 23 earn below 25k, 47 earn between 25k – 70k, 18 earn between 70k – and 100k and 18 earn above 100k.



**Table 5: FREQUENCY**

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	1	.5	.5
Rarely	2	1.0	1.5
Once a week	1	.5	2.0
A few times a week	10	5.0	7.0
Daily	186	93.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	



It has been seen by the above table as well as graph that how frequently the respondents visit to social media sites. 93 percent of the respondents visit the social media sites on daily basis, 5 percent respondents visit the social media sites fewer times in a week. The other options have negligible percentages.

### 4.2. Descriptive Statistics:

**Table 6:** Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Quality Content	1.00	5.00	3.6180	.83713	-.645	.144
Trustworthiness	1.33	5.00	3.6217	.87759	-.454	-.352
Credibility	1.00	5.00	3.4400	.93179	-.543	-.543
Consumer Buying Decision	1.00	5.00	3.4138	.87741	-.562	.009

The descriptive analysis shows the fundamental characteristics of the data collection, including the mean, standard deviation, maximum, and lowest statistics. In this study, the variable's minimum and maximum values are respectively 1 and 5. The average score for quality content is 3.6180, with a standard deviation of .83713, for reliability it is 3.6217, with a standard deviation of .87759, for credibility it is 3.4400, with a standard deviation of .93179, and for consumer purchasing decisions it is 3.4138, with a standard deviation of .87741. The bell shape of the data pertaining to the study's variables is on the negative side, as indicated by the negative skewness values associated with the variable under investigation. The data pertaining to the study's variable is normally distributed, as indicated by the kurtosis values for the variable falling between -3.5 and +3.5.

### 4.5. Correlation:

**Table 7:** Correlation Statistics

		Quality Content	Trustworthiness	Credibility	Consumer Buying Decision
<b>Quality Content</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.750**	.711**	.779**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	200	200	200	200
<b>Trustworthiness</b>	Pearson Correlation	.750**	1	.759**	.765**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	200	200	200	200
<b>Credibility</b>	Pearson Correlation	.711**	.759**	1	.799**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	200	200	200	200
<b>Consumer Buying Decision</b>	Pearson Correlation	.779**	.765**	.799**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	200	200	200	200

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



The decision to buy made by consumers is favorably and significantly correlated with the quality of the material ( $r=0.779$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Additionally, there is a strong and positive correlation between trustworthiness and consumer purchasing decisions ( $r=.765$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Similarly, a customer's decision to buy is positively and significantly correlated with credibility ( $r=.799$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). All of the independent variables in this study have weak associations ( $r$  values  $<0.80$ ), which supports the lack of multicollinearity problems.

**4.6. Regression:**

**Table 8: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square
1	.862	.742

R square value exhibits that all the study’s independent variables jointly elucidate 74 percent variance in the dependent variable i.e. consumer buying decision.

**Table 9: ANOVA**

Model	F	Sig.
1	188.26	.000

F value is around 188 higher than the threshold limit of 7 demonstrating the model fitness which is also confirmed by the sig value  $< 5$  percent.

**Table 10: Coefficient**

Model	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig. Beta
1 (Constant)		2.784	.006
Quality Content	.337	5.807	.000
Trustworthiness	.206	3.293	.001
Credibility	.403	6.830	.000

The study's hypothesis outcomes are shown in the final table. With a sig value of less than 5%, or 0.000, the effect of high-quality content on consumer purchasing decisions is statistically significant. According to the beta value, a one-unit improvement in the quality of content will result in a 34% rise in consumer purchasing decisions. Likewise, trustworthiness's influence on consumers' purchasing decisions is statistically significant, with a sig value of less than 5%, or 0.001. According to the beta value, a unit change in trustworthiness will result in a 20% rise in consumer purchasing decisions. Furthermore, the influence of trustworthiness on the purchasing decision of consumers is statistically significant, with a sig value of less than 5%, or 0.000. The value of beta tells that a unit change in credibility will increase the consumer buying decision by 40 percent.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

Social Media Influencer (SMI) characteristics such as quality content, trustworthiness and credibility are the components that impact the consumers while they buy a product on Instagram. The goal of the study was to find out how the characteristics were influencing the consumer to look at an endorsement or take interest in it through online advertising and marketing which initially motivates the consumer to buy the product which they saw on an Instagram influencer post. It has been observed that in today's time the consumer looks at the quality of the information provided regarding a product and is attracted by content that provides the entertainment as well while making a buying decision. Consumers follow social media influencers (SMIs) who they think are producing content matching their interests and are relevant to their buying choices. They are also influenced by different Instagram features used by SMIs in their content such as aesthetics images, video posts, IGTVs, reels, stories etc. The second highest characteristic that impacts the buying decision of a consumer is the perceived trustworthiness of a social media influencer (SMI). Honest reviews and endorsements by SMIs enhance the trustworthiness of an influencer. And the usage of a product by an influencer himself is what makes the consumer trust them. When a consumer looks at an SMI post, he is more likely to make a buying decision if the post is sponsored and if there are authentic comments on it, keeping in mind the number of likes and views as well because all of this makes the SMIs recommendations and reviews regarding brands and products believable and makes the consumer perceive them as a credible sources while making a buying decision about a particular product. An SMI who regularly posts on his Instagram profile and keeps it updated is also perceived as credible.

### **Findings & Recommendations**

The findings discovered through primary research are discussed in this report. All findings suggest that SMI characteristics have an impact on the consumer's buying decision and how Instagram further affects the buying decisions of people. To arrive at a conclusion, all results of the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS Statistics. According to Pearson's Correlation, all variables have a statistically significant link with Consumers' Buying Decisions.

Based on these findings, it is advised that the following recommendations be taken into account:

- Businesses and brands who want to promote their products / services and increase sales must use online platforms like Instagram to market and advertise their products and should focus on creating content that is relevant to their audiences.

- The marketers should select appropriate social media influencers (SMI) in accordance with their varying marketing strategies and campaigns so that the consumer is able to connect with the influencer perceiving them as someone who fits the brand/product that is being endorsed and has a clear perception of the message they want to convey so that it increases their buying behavior of products/services.

### **Implications of Study**

At the moment, the above-mentioned participants are not playing their part correctly in order to fix the situation regarding the consumers' buying decisions.

The findings and recommendations of the research may be helpful for other brands and businesses who use online platforms such as Instagram for the marketization and promotion of their products and will also help marketers choose social media influencers (SMIs) who produce content that fits their self-brand image and is relevant to their audience as well so that they are able to trust and believe these influencers for making the right buying decisions. The ultimate goal of this research is to examine how consumers buying decision is being affected by the quality content, trustworthiness and credibility of the influencer.

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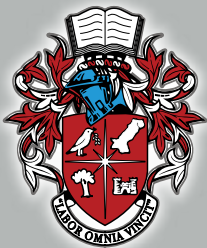
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