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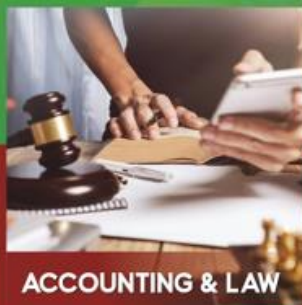
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CASE STUDY

THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE IN THE DIGITAL AGE: FINTECH AS A CATALYST FOR SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Danish Hussain, Iqra University - Karachi Main Campus (**Manuscript: #1364**)

Abstract/Description:

TBL's approach with categories of People (social impact), Planet (the environment), and Profit (revenue generation) establish a new corporate performance model in the age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This paper reviews the impact of Financial Technology, also known as Fintech, in the practice of sustainable business transformation in the context of the TBL model. Nevertheless, FinTech has great opportunities to contribute to and unlock financial inclusion and green finance and improve the overall efficiency of the economy. At the same time, its integration with TBL components as a unified model is still quite limited. This study used a case study approach involving M-Pesa, Ant Group, and a blockchain-based carbon credit platform case, and thematic analysis was employed to capture how FinTech enables TBL. Studies show that by providing financial services to previously excluded groups, green finance, and other sustainable financial technologies, FinTech instruments contribute to social, environmental, and economic sustainability. However, issues like digital literacy, high energy usage by blockchain, and regulatory constraints still emerge. This work provides an overview of FinTech mechanisms and relates them to TBL outcomes alongside synergy and complementary relationship insights. Consequently, this work advances knowledge in the areas of TBL and FinTech and provides recommendations to business executives and policymakers that they could implement to realize sustainable change through FinTech. Future studies should replicate the study by comparing quantitative results for the framework and identifying new wave FinTech innovation on sustainability in the next phase of digital transformation.

Keywords: *FinTech, Sustainability, Financial Inclusion, Green Finance, Digital Transformation, Triple Bottom Line.*

BRIDGING THE FINANCIAL GAP: FACTORS INFLUENCING CRYPTOCURRENCY ADOPTION IN PAKISTAN

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Yusra Shehzadi, Iqra University (**Manuscript: #1427**)

Abstract/Description:

PURPOSE: This study aims to explore the key factors influencing the adoption of cryptocurrency trading in Pakistan, focusing on behavioral intentions shaped by awareness, effort expectancy, perceived enjoyment, social influence, financial literacy, and perceived risk.

STUDY DESIGN: Using the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) as the theoretical framework, a structured questionnaire was distributed online to 506 respondents. Data was analyzed using structural equation modeling to test the proposed hypotheses.

FINDINGS: All hypotheses were found to be significant. Perceived enjoyment emerged as the strongest predictor of behavioral intention, followed by awareness, effort expectancy, social influence, financial literacy, and perceived risk. Interestingly, perceived risk positively influenced adoption, suggesting that informed users are willing to manage risks for potential benefits.

ORIGINALITY/VALUE: This study fills a critical gap by providing empirical evidence on cryptocurrency adoption in Pakistan, an emerging market with limited prior research, and extends the application of UTAUT in a novel context.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS: The study is limited to young adult users, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings across different age groups and socio-economic segments.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS: Findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, regulators, and crypto platforms to enhance user adoption through targeted education, user-friendly platforms, and trust-building measures.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Promoting crypto adoption responsibly can drive financial inclusion, support digital literacy, and integrate unbanked populations into the digital economy, contributing to broader socio-economic development.

Keywords: *Cryptocurrency Adoption; Blockchain Technology; Pakistan Digital Economy; Financial Inclusion; Behavioral Intention.*

EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS FOR SUSTAINABLE FINANCE: THE INTERPLAY OF FINANCIAL LITERACY, FINTECH ADOPTION AND FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Erum Fatima and Samina Parveen, DHA Suffa University (**Manuscript: #1464**)

Abstract/Description:

The authors investigate whether financial well-being in Pakistan is influenced by financial literacy and fintech adoption, specifically focusing on how fintech serves as a mediator in this relationship. An online questionnaire created by the research team was administered, and PLS-SEM was used to analyze the results. The analysis was performed on the 384 valid observations found in the survey. According to the findings, financial literacy enhances financial well-being, fintech use is associated with greater knowledge about financial matters, and fintech use can independently improve financial well-being. Our findings agree well with earlier research. This means the conclusions can support policymakers in developing the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) 2024–28. They play a crucial role in helping banks and FinTechs develop functional and user-friendly digital financial services. The 4% increase targets NFIS's aim to lift the financial inclusion rate from 64% to 75% by 2028. This research contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No Poverty) by demonstrating that financial literacy and the use of fintech can enhance a person's financial well-being and increase their sense of inclusion.

Keywords: *Financial literacy, Fintech use, Financial well-being, Financial Skills, Financial awareness, Financial Experience, Pakistan.*

FROM BULLION TO BLOCKCHAIN: TESTING THE ‘DIGITAL GOLD’ HYPOTHESIS FOR BITCOIN

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Sharjeel Abid, Institute of Business Administration Karachi (**Manuscript: #1476**)

Abstract/Description:

There has been a rising debate among block chain enthusiasts and traditionalists from quiet a long time whether the most dominant cryptocurrency Bitcoin, could serve as a safe heaven during difficult times as traditional gold does and claim the title of digital gold or it is just a speculative asset like any other option available in the financial market. From the day it

was introduced in 2009, the dominant cryptocurrency has been gaining value due to its increasing adoption and limited supply.

This study examines if Bitcoin functions as a safe haven asset in general or within the cryptocurrency universe during periods of high volatility. Using monthly data from 2015 to 2024, we examine the relationship between Bitcoin dominance and the VIX index, as proxy for investor fear. While applying the time-series techniques including OLS regression, and two-sample t-tests, we found no significant relationship between VIX Index and Bitcoin dominance. However, we noted that market share of Bitcoin known as dominance, decreases at times of high fear while significant capital flight is observed in other cryptocurrencies which are most likely stable coins. Our findings challenge the perception about Bitcoin as digital gold as it does not exhibit traditional safe-haven characteristics.

Keywords: *Bitcoin, Cryptocurrencies, Digital Gold, Safe Heaven, Strategic Bitcoin Reserve.*

ARE INDUSTRIAL PORTFOLIOS LEADING INDICATORS OF SECTORAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY?

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Javed Iqbal, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi (**Manuscript: #1340**)

Abstract/Description:

This study investigates whether in the US the prices of industry-specific stock portfolios can serve as leading indicators of sector-level economic activity. The study employs the bias-corrected Diebold-Mariano's test of equal predictive accuracy to evaluate the ability of industry-specific stock portfolios as the leading indicators of the associated sector's industrial production growth. The research aims to address concerns about aggregate stock prices yielding ambiguous signals due to varying business cycle sensitivities and liquidity levels across industries. It is found that the predictive signals of stocks over and above the lag industrial production growth for future sectoral economic activity are significant only for chemical, electronic equipment, tobacco and steel industries. The study provides new insights into the industry-specific nature of the present value model of stock prices.

Keywords: *Industrial Stock Portfolio, Leading Indicator, Industrial Production, Forecasting.*

GREEN FINANCE AS A CATALYST FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: EVIDENCE FROM PAKISTAN

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

SUMERA MEHMOOD, Iqra University, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1357**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose This study aims to assess the impact of green finance and renewable energy in enhancing environmental sustainability in Pakistan, focusing on how financial investments, policies, and renewable energy contribute to the country's environmental goals.

Study methodology

The analysis is based on data from Pakistan between the period 2017-2022. There is a wide range of variables, with mixed availability across indicators. Green finance is segmented into renewable energy investments, energy-efficient technologies, green bonds, energy transition, and reductions in pollution, with regression analysis to quantify the influence of green finance policy on environmental sustainability.

Findings The findings indicate that while green finance and renewable energy investments have social benefits and contribute to environmental sustainability, their effectiveness is hindered by financial limitations, political instability, poor infrastructure, and weak or ineffective regulatory frameworks.

Originality/value This study offers a unique examination of the relationship between green finance, renewable energy investments, and environmental sustainability in Pakistan, providing insights into the challenges and opportunities in promoting a green economy.

Research limitations

The study is limited by data availability and the challenges of accurately measuring the impact of green finance in an evolving regulatory and economic landscape. Future research may explore more detailed models and a broader range of variables to assess the effectiveness of green finance policies.

Practical implications

The study underscores the need for a comprehensive strategy that combines fiscal incentives, technological advancements, and institutional reforms to foster a more effective green economy in Pakistan.

Social implications

This research highlights the social benefits of green finance, particularly in terms of environmental sustainability, and calls for policy and institutional changes to maximize these benefits for the well-being of Pakistani society.

Keywords: *Green Finance, Renewable Energy, Environmental Sustainability, Pakistan, Carbon Emission, Climate Change.*

LEVERAGING FINTECH FOR BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY: INSIGHTS FROM PAKISTANI MSMEs

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Erum Fatima, DHA Suffa University (**Manuscript: #1388**)

Abstract/Description:

Micro, Small, and Medium enterprises worldwide are considered pillars of the economy, despite their significant contribution to economic development and growth. MSMEs are confronted with numerous challenges, including access to formal finance. Fintech emerges as a feasible enabler of sustainable growth and is restructuring the way these firms operate, manage funding, and achieve sustainability in the long run.

This paper intends to scrutinize the impact of the TOE factors on financial technology adoption and its subsequent impact on MSMEs' business sustainability in Pakistan. A Structured survey will be distributed to the selected MSMEs to collect cross-sectional data. For data analysis, PLS- SEM technique is adopted, and the hypothesis will be tested using SmartPLS Software. The results of the study will provide insights for the government, fintech companies, and MSMEs.

Keywords: *Business Sustainability, Digital Payments, TOE Framework, MSMEs, Fintech, Adoption, Pakistan.*

ESG AND STOCK PRICE SYNCHRONICITY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE U.S. MARKET

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Ayesha Asif, Institute of Business Administration (IBA) (**Manuscript: #1406**)

Abstract/Description:

This study examines the influence of ESG scores on stock price synchronicity of U.S. firms from 2002 to 2023. The findings suggest that ESG has a positive and significant link with stock price synchronicity and negative association with idiosyncratic volatility. The results support the noise-trading view of stock price synchronicity, suggesting that high-quality ESG information reduces uncertain investor expectations resulting in a more correlated response to new ESG information, thus also supporting the emerging view that idiosyncratic return variation captures noise rather than news.

Keywords: *ESG, stock price synchronicity, idiosyncratic volatility, information asymmetry, firm-specific noise.*

**THE IMPACT OF CROSS-BORDER M&AS ON CSR ACTIVITIES OF THE ACQUIRING FIRMS:
INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE ON FRENCH FIRMS**

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Aamir Khan, Cote d'Azur University (**Manuscript: #1344**)

Abstract/Description:

This study examines the impact of cross-border mergers and acquisitions on the CSR activities of the French acquiring firms using panel data from 235 French acquiring firms from 2000 to 2022, employing a generalized method of moment (GMM) technique. We also used a Sargan & Hansen test for instrument validity and the AR test for second-order autocorrelation. Both tests give support to the model. We found that cross-border mergers and acquisitions significantly positively impact the CSR practices of the acquiring firms in the French context.

Keywords: *CSR, M&As.*

**ASSESSING BUSINESS RATINGS OF ASSET MANAGEMENT COMPANIES: A CASE OF AKD
INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT LTD.**

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Ghadiya Abdullah, Subika Nadeem, Fiza Faisal and Ahsan Rizwan, NED University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi (**Manuscript: #1401**)

Abstract/Description:

This study critically examines the business credit rating of AKD Investment Management Limited, with a focus on understanding the factors influencing its current standing and identifying areas for strategic improvement. Drawing on qualitative insights, the research explores AKD's operational performance, financial structure, risk management practices, and market positioning. The analysis highlights key challenges, including declining equity fund performance, limited digital transformation, and the need for a more forward-looking investment philosophy. Stakeholder feedback emphasizes the urgency for innovation, enhanced client engagement, and improved service delivery, particularly for tech-savvy and younger investors. The findings suggest that while AKD holds a solid foundation in the asset management sector, it must embrace modernization and strategic reforms to enhance its creditworthiness and sustain long-term growth in a competitive financial environment.

Keywords: *Business credit rating, risk management, client engagement.*

BRIDGING ESG AND FINANCIAL RETURNS: THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE IN SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Bibi Fiza Shah, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University (**Manuscript: #1541**)

Abstract/Description:

Using data from S&P 500 corporations from 2016 to 2023, this study explores the strategic significance of corporate governance in linking Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) policies to corporate financial success. Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), it investigates how board features, especially size, gender diversity, and independence, mediate the link between ESG activities and financial performance, as evaluated by Return on Assets (ROA) and Return on Equity (ROE). The findings show that ESG performance has subtle effects: the Environmental pillar positively promotes board size, implying that significant sustainability concerns need broader knowledge, but strengthened governance procedures seem to favor smaller, more nimble boards. Gender-diverse boards show a substantial positive correlation with ROE, emphasizing the need for inclusive leadership. In contrast, higher board independence has a negative correlation with ROA, indicating potential trade-offs between supervision and short-term success. The report emphasizes the need for context-sensitive governance frameworks that may link ESG commitments with long-term financial benefit. Implications for corporate executives, investors, and politicians seeking to include responsible governance in business plans that benefit both people and the environment. Future study should look at these processes across many industries and institutional settings to help develop more flexible and sustainable governance structures.

Keywords: *Corporate Governance, ESG, Financial Performance, Board Diversity, Sustainable Business, Return on Assets (ROA), Return on Equity (ROE).*

VALUE PREMIUM AND TIME-VARYING MARKET VOLATILITY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Mujeeb Ur Rehman Bhayo, Dr., and Hilal Anwer Butt, Dr., Department of Finance, School of Business Studies, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan.

Ameet Kumar, Macquarie Business School, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. (**Manuscript: #1372**)

Abstract/Description:

We examine whether the value premium depends on ex-ante market volatility. Using U.S. equity data from 1963 to 2023, we sort stocks into Size-B/M portfolios and classify each month as low or high volatility according to the quartile of the rolling 60-month market variance. The value-growth (H-L) spread averages 0.48 % per month after low-volatility months but is economically trivial after high-volatility months. The effect is driven by the underperformance of growth stocks, is concentrated in micro- and small-capitalization stocks, and remains partially unexplained by the Fama and French (2025) five-factor and Hou, Xue, and Zhang (2015) q-factor models. We also show that institutions systematically sell growth stocks and buy value stocks following low-volatility markets, reversing these trades after high-volatility markets. This volatility-contingent rebalancing helps reconcile the conditional return pattern with duration risk theory.

Keywords: *Value premium; market volatility; institutional trading; duration risk.*

ANALYSIS OF SUBJECTIVITY ON SOVEREIGN CREDIT RATINGS THROUGH MACHINE LEARNING

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Areeba Siddiqui, Humayoon Jahanzeb, Kashmala Sohail and Maria Imran, NED University Karachi (**Manuscript: #1393**)

Abstract/Description:

Sovereign credit rating provided by credit rating agencies like S&P, Moody's and Fitch has always been of great importance, but these agencies have been facing criticism on their rating methodology which create subjectivity and potential biases. This harms the image of developing economies in international markets. This research is responsible to study subjectivity, its extent and evaluate the ML methodologies for better assessment of credit ratings through objective and transparent framework. The balanced panel data consisting of ten diverse countries from 2000 to 2023 is used. The study uses factors responsible for explaining credit worthiness of a country. These factors are divided into 5 WDI (World Development Indicators) and 5 WGI (World Governance Indicators) as independent variables. The dependent variable is considered as historical credit ratings of country. Nine distinct ML algorithms were tested starting from Linear Regression (baseline), KNN, SVR, Decision Tree, Random Forest, ANN, CatBoost, XGBoost and Light GBM. Results of these algorithms were evaluated by performance metrics such as R2, Adjusted R2, RAE, RMSE, MSE, Precision, Recall and F1 score. Results of these algorithms showed that nonlinear algorithm models outperformed the traditional models. Among all models tested, Light GBM emerged as the most robust model achieving highest adjusted R2 (0.7675) and lowest prediction errors such as (RMSE 0.4263), that shows model ability to capture largest proportion of variance explained by predictors with less predictive risk. Feature importance analysis provides insights with the best paramount indicators. Those indicators are labeled as Feature "CG" (Core economic strength) and I (Institutional Quality). This study explores the potential of ML algorithms to create objective rating framework that mitigate subjectivity in rating and to assess sovereign risk in the global financial landscape.

Keywords: *Sovereign Credit Ratings, Machine Learning, Subjectivity, Credit Risk Assessment, Economic Indicators, Institutional Quality, LightGBM, Transparency, Developing Economies.*

STOCK MARKET VOLATILITY AND ECONOMIC DOWNTURN: INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF INVESTOR GAMBLING BEHAVIOR DURING PERIODS OF HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION IN PAKISTAN

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Asif Raz, Wahab Ahmed, Abdul Sattar and Syed Muhammad Nabeel Ul Haq, Balochistan University of Information Technology and Management Sciences (**Manuscript: #1477**)

Abstract/Description:

This study investigates the relationship between lottery feature stocks, the lottery feature index, and future stock returns across different economic phases characterized by high or low unemployment rates, economic growth, and inflation expectations. Monthly data from December 2000 to December 2023 was collected from DataStream and the official website of the State Bank of Pakistan. The analysis focuses on common stocks traded on the Pakistan Stock Exchange during this period, utilizing the Fama-French six-factor model to examine how lottery-like characteristics in stocks influence future returns.

The study posits that stocks exhibiting stronger lottery-like features tend to underperform in terms of future returns, particularly during adverse macroeconomic conditions such as high unemployment and elevated inflation expectations. To

test this conjecture, the top and bottom 30 percentiles of stocks were analyzed based on their lottery-like features, using quantile regression to assess their performance across different economic conditions. The robustness of the results was further tested through Fama-MacBeth cross-sectional regression.

The findings reveal that investing in lottery feature stocks is riskier during periods of high unemployment and inflation expectations. More specifically, future returns were more negatively associated with the overall lottery feature index, idiosyncratic volatility, and the MAX effect, with higher values of these characteristics leading to lower subsequent returns. Conversely, stocks with low or high idiosyncratic skewness performed relatively better during economic downturns.

Keywords: *Lottery Feature Stocks, Gambling Behavior, Economic Downturn, Stock Market Volatility, Fama-French Six Factor Model.*

DEFAULT RISK AND STOCK RETURNS IN AN EMERGING MARKET: EVIDENCE FROM PAKISTAN (2006–2023)

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Shivam Kumar (**Manuscript: #1478**)

Abstract/Description:

This study examines whether default risk is priced in Pakistan's equity market and explores its implications for asset pricing in emerging markets. Using monthly data for 261 non-financial firms listed on PSX from 2006 to 2023, the analysis uses fixed-effects panel regressions with firm-level default probabilities sourced from the NUS Credit Research Initiative. Control variables include firm size, valuation and profitability. This study uses default probability scores directly provided by NUS-CRI for each firm giving it a forward-looking view. The results suggest a statistically significant negative relationship between default risk and stock returns across all forecast horizons. However, the study is limited to firm-level variables and does not involve broader macroeconomic variables. These findings are opposed to traditional models like CAPM and support distress risk puzzle. The results are relevant for investors who look to understand risk mispricing in less efficient capital markets. This shows influence of market inefficiencies, investor behavior and illiquidity in the Pakistani context. The findings show that understanding of risk can help investors trust and build market efficiency in Pakistan.

Keywords: *Default Risk, Distress Risk Puzzle, Stock Returns, Pakistan Stock Exchange.*

FINANCIAL LITERACY AND PARTICIPATION IN FINANCIAL MARKETS: EVIDENCE FROM PAKISTAN

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Zahid Bashir, PhD Scholar, Dr. Muhammad Aamir, and Dr. Muhammad Sabeeh Iqbal, Hailey College of Commerce, University of Punjab, Lahore

Dr. Abid Mehmood, Department of Business Studies, Bahria Business School, Bahria University, Karachi, Pakistan.

Dr. Muhammad Usman Arshad, Department of Commerce, University of Gujrat, Pakistan. (**Manuscript: #1349**)

Abstract/Description:

Financial literacy is a prime determinant that goes a long way towards enabling people to make knowledgeable choices around savings, investments, and day-to-day financial control. In new economies such as that of Pakistan, lack of financial literacy severely restricts involvement in organized financial markets (World Bank, 2020). In spite of numerous financial services and products, numerous people in Pakistan continue to use informal modes of savings or investments in gold

because of a lack of knowledge about organized financial systems (Khurshid & Abdullah, 2020). Such a lack of knowledge is especially worrisome in the face of increasing significance of financial inclusion in national economic development.

The research is important because it targets the essential subject of financial literacy in Pakistan, a factor directly related to people's involvement in the formal financial markets. It informs policy and financial education interventions by discussing the connection between market participation and financial literacy. The research can help improve financial inclusion by allowing people to make better-informed economic and financial decisions, and engender economic development by raising access to the financial system.

The paper contributes to an increasing body of literature addressing financial literacy by presenting empirical results from Pakistan, a nation with limited financial literacy and substantial market participation barriers. Both market participation and financial literacy are considered to provide insight into how socio-economic factors such as income levels, education, and gender influence financial behaviors. Policy and financial institutions can provide useful recommendations based thereon to design appropriate financial education programs that will promote financial inclusion and improved market participation by disadvantaged regions of Pakistan.

Keywords: *Financial Literacy, Financial Market, Pakistan Stock Exchange, Retail Investors, Households, Structural Equation Modelling, Partial Least Square.*

HOW INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL AND BIG DATA ANALYTICS EFFECT ON CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Mehwish Ilyas Ms., and Asim Mehboob, Mr., Muhammad Ali Jinnah University (**Manuscript: #1355**)

Abstract/Description:

This research aims to investigate the nexus of intellectual capital (IC), big data capabilities (BDC), and corporate performance (CP), further to provide a comprehensive quantitative analysis of these dynamics. Grounded in the Resource-Based Theory, the research examines how IC and BDC contribute to CP and the role of decision-making and policy implementation in achieving business objectives. The theoretical framework identifies IC as comprising three key dimensions: Human Capital (HC), Structural Capital (SC), and Relational Capital (RC), with BDC as a critical enabler of enhanced CP. The study employs a quantitative research design, collecting data through a structured survey questionnaire adapted from prior studies. The target population comprises officers in Pakistan, while the sample includes 120 respondents from the operational and middle management levels of leading organizations across various industries in Pakistan. Data analysis is conducted using SPSS for preliminary statistical tests and PLS (Partial Least Squares) for structural equation modeling, enabling the examination of both individual and combined effects of IC and BDC on CP. The analysis reveals significant positive relationships among all variables under study further, each dimension of IC exerts a meaningful impact on CP and also BDC complementing the role of IC in corporate outcomes.

Keywords: *Intellectual Capital (IC), Big Data Capabilities (BDC), Corporate Performance (CP), Resource-Based Theory (RBT), Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).*

THE EFFECT OF EXCHANGE RATE ON STOCK MARKET PERFORMANCE: AN ANALYSIS OF UNDERLYING MECHANISM

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Pardeep Kumar (**Manuscript: #1449**)

Abstract/Description:

This paper explores the effect of exchange rate on stock market performance in Pakistan, underscoring the underlying mechanism through interest rates. Using monthly data from August 2009 to August 2024, we performed a Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) and Granger causality tests to identify both short-run dynamics and long-run among the exchange rate, KSE-100 index, repo rate, and inflation. The findings shows that while FX shocks do not directly influence stock returns in the short run, they significantly affect inflation and repo rate, which leads to impact equity performance. Currency depreciation causes inflationary pressure and restrictive monetary policies, leading to lower stock returns. The evidence backs a portfolio-balance (stock-oriented) channel rather than a flow-based mechanism. These results demonstrate the important role of monetary policy in mediating financial linkages. When dealing with exchange rate volatility the government needs to pay attention to these factors since excessive rate increases may intensify stock market instability.

Keywords: *Exchange rate, stock market, Pakistan, monetary policy.*

EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF QUASI EQUITY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Alaiba Nazim, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1465**)

Abstract/Description:

Investigate how industry professionals interpret and apply the concept of virtual entities and quasi-equity in practice. And propose a framework for harmonizing regulatory and accounting standards in a way that preserves both financial integrity and Shariah principles.

Keywords: *Quasi-Equity, Unrestricted Investment Accounts, Disclosure, Shariah Governance, Transparency.*

THE INTERVENTION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOCUS BETWEEN GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Rana Tanveer Hussain, School of Business and Management Sciences, Minhaj University, Lahore, Pakistan.

Asma Naeem Khan, University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan.

Muhammad Akram Naseem (**Manuscript: #1501**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: Considering the contemporary significance of artificial intelligence in bringing prosperity, the primary objective of this study is to investigate how corporate focus on artificial intelligence explains the causal link between governance structure and financial sustainability. **Methodology:** Quantitative data was gathered from annual reports of non-financial firms listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange as panel data for the period from 2009-2022. The study applies content analysis of the more than three thousand annual reports for AI and dynamic panel regression for analysis.

Findings: The results of the study state that governance structure exerts a favorable influence on operating profitability and financial and stock market outcomes significantly. Unexpectedly, the governance mechanism does not affect the AI focus of the firm. However, AI focus enhances financial sustainability in terms of operating and monetary outcome and partially intervenes in the relations.

Originality/value: After evaluating the stated aim, this study presents novel insights into how AI can benefit a developing economy like Pakistan.

Research limitations/implications: the study limits itself to the given aim only for Pakistan-like economies.

Practical implications: AI governance frameworks are essential for organizations to manage AI-related risks and ensure ethical deployment. Core components of such frameworks include clear definitions, comprehensive inventories, established policies and standards, and a structured governance framework with controls.

Social implications: These elements collectively contribute to the responsible adoption of governance systems and AI technologies for financial sustainability in the support of stakeholders' interests.

Keywords: *Corporate governance, Governance Structure, Financial Sustainability, Artificial Intelligence Focus, Stakeholders.*

HARNESSING INDUSTRY 4.0 FOR ENHANCED CORPORATE PERFORMANCE: AN INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Meer Rujaib Naseem, Dr., Iqra University Karachi; Nayeem Ul Hassan Ansari, Dr, College of Business Management, Institute of Business Management (IoBM); Muhammad Irfan Khan, Dr., Department of Accounting and Finance, College of Business Management (**Manuscript: #1424**)

Abstract/Description:

This study investigates the nexus between Industry 4.0 technologies and company performance, focusing on key variables such as IoT, AI, big data analytics, and automation. It also examines the mediating roles of digital skills and operational efficiency and the moderating effects of organizational culture and regulatory environment to understand how these factors influence the adoption and effectiveness of Industry 4.0. Quantitative survey data was collected from 300 mid-to-large-scale companies across various industries and the data were analyzed using multiple regression, mediation, and moderation analyses to explore the relationships among the variables.

The results demonstrate that the adoption of Industry 4.0 technologies has a significant positive impact on company performance, mediated by digital skills and operational efficiency. The analysis also highlights that an innovation-driven organizational culture and a supportive regulatory environment enhance the positive outcomes of technology integration. The study underlines the importance of strategic investments, continuous workforce training, and robust digital infrastructure. The findings suggest that businesses should focus on upskilling their workforce and streamlining operational processes to maximize the benefits of Industry 4.0 technologies.

Policymakers are encouraged to create regulatory frameworks that support technological adoption while ensuring data protection and security. Investment in digital infrastructure and targeted programs for SMEs can drive more inclusive technological transformation.

Keywords: *Industry 4.0, IoT, AI, Big Data Analytics, Automation, Company Performance, Digital Skills, Organizational Culture, Regulatory Environment.*

FROM BANKING TO BYTES: INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GEN Z'S DIGITAL FINANCIAL LITERACY AND ADOPTION OF DIGITAL WALLETS IN PAKISTAN

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Rehma Dawood Shaikh and Dr. Saqib Sharif, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi (**Manuscript: #1359**)

Abstract/Description:

From a cash-based economy to a cashless society, recent advancements in financial technology (Fintech) are increasingly changing the way individuals access and use financial services. With the advent of digital financial services such as digital wallets or E wallets, individuals no longer need to carry cash to make transactions; instead, they can carry out an array of financial services, from a single app in their smartphone. Given the ease and convenience that digital wallets extend, it comes as no surprise that this is one of the most famous digital financial services, globally and locally. In Pakistan, digital financial services, particularly digital wallets have witnessed an upward surge in the last 7 years. Given this unprecedented popularity of digital wallets amongst young users it is important for us to understand Gen Z's level of digital financial literacy and its relationship with adoption and usage of digital wallets. It is in light of this, that the present research is situated. To explore the relationship between Gen Z's digital financial literacy and adoption of digital wallets, this study employs an exploratory correlational mixed methods approach. The current study is undertaken in two phases. In the first phase, the dominant methodology is a quantitative survey which are filled by Gen Z individuals living in Pakistan. This is complemented by a less dominant qualitative method, which include semi-structured interviews with Gen Z participants; this represents the second phase of the study. Based on 135 survey responses and 8 semi-structured interviews, it was revealed that there exists a moderate positive relationship between digital financial literacy and adoption of digital wallets. The results also highlighted that factors such as an individual's education and income play a mediating role between the two variables. These findings not only add to a nascent area of research but also carry important implications for policy makers, Governments, educators, and business owners, alike.

Keywords: *Digital financial literacy; digital wallets; Gen Z; cashless economy; Pakistan.*

A DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK FOR FINTECH ADOPTION SUPPORTING ESG GOALS: AN INTEGRATED AHP-TOPSIS TECHNIQUES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Kehkashan Nizam, Iqra University - Karachi Main Campus (**Manuscript: #1360**)

Abstract/Description:

PURPOSE: Technological innovation and convergence of sustainable finance have made the ESG considerations central to financial decision making. As banking systems transform from traditional to digital, financial institutions are increasingly expected to align digital transformation with the ESG goals. This study aims to develop a structured decision-making framework to prioritize and evaluate FinTech adoption strategies align with ESG goals in the banking sector.

STUDY DESIGN/METHODOLOGY/APPROACH: Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and Technique for Order of Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS) are utilized to address the multi-criteria complexity of FinTech adoption driven by ESG goals. ESG is the main criterion. It divided into nine sub-criteria.

FINDINGS: The results show the governance related factors such as regulatory compliance, data security and transparency are the most influential in FinTech adoption decision. Furthermore, the findings highlight the significance of environmental sustainability, social responsibility, ethical data, and technological innovation in shaping FinTech adoption.

ORIGINALITY/VALUE: The study investigates a novel AHP-TOPSIS based model, which effectively ranks and quantify positive ideal ESG aligned FinTech solutions. It bridges the gap between sustainability and technology innovation in financial decision making.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS: It is based on expert and professional input within a Pakistan, which may limit broader generalizability.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS: The model offers a practical tool for financial institutions to select FinTech solutions that drive innovation and comply with ESG standards to enhance long-term value.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS: By promoting ESG aligned technological adoption, it supports responsible banking practices. These practices contribute to ethical governance, environmental sustainability, and inclusive growth.

Keywords: *MCDM, ESG Goals, FinTech Adoption, AHP, TOPSIS, Banking Sector.*

MONETARY POLICY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSUMPTION IN PAKISTAN: IS THERE AN ASYMMETRIC RELATIONSHIP?

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Simran Jeswani, SZABIST University Larkana and Mustansar Hayat, SZABIST University Karachi (**Manuscript: #1489**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: In recent years, increasing concerns regarding environmental degradation have propelled the adoption of renewable energy. Yet, due to a multitude of socioeconomic factors, the ratio between non-renewable and renewable energy consumption remains low. Government policy decisions can be a good catalyst in this regard. Therefore, the current study investigates the Asymmetric effect of Monetary Policy on Renewable Energy Consumption in Pakistan.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study covers annual data from 1990-2021 and uses a Non-linear ARDL approach.

Findings: The Findings from the analyses document that in Pakistan, positive shocks in Monetary Policy i.e. broad money have a significant growing impact on the use of renewable energy, whereas a detrimental shock in Monetary Policy does not significantly increase sustainable energy sources consumption in the long-run. Thus, the Central bank through monetary policy in Pakistan must be persistent and sustainable to foster renewable energy consumption.

Originality/value: Lately, the researchers have shown growing interest in investigating the drivers of the use of renewable energy. However, the investigation of monetary policy as the driver of the use of renewable energy is less known, and this study adds to the body of knowledge in this domain.

Practical and Social Implications: The research findings will enable the policy makers to tailor the monetary policy decisions in such a way that renewable energy consumption can be promoted and dependence on fossil fuels can be reduced to save the country and its surroundings from the evil effects of carbon emissions on the climate.

Keywords: *Renewable Energy Consumption, Monetary Policy, Asymmetric Relationship, Non-linear ARDL Approach, Pakistan.*

BEYOND THE BORROWERS: THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIP QUALITY IN CREATING LOYAL CLIENTS FOR MICROFINANCE INSTITUTIONS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Aisha Ismail and Sadaf Ch, Virtual University of Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1492**)

Abstract/Description:

The success of microfinance providers, their sustainability and aim of achieving double bottom line objective is greatly depends upon relationship quality which helps in creating loyal customer base. In microfinance, loan managers or the personals directly interacting with the clients in play critical role in relationship quality, their interaction foster or hinders the client interaction with the institution and ultimately affects their loyalty, future purchase intentions and recommendations to others. Considering the significance of relationship quality, this study aims to explore key dimensions which contributes towards high relationship quality for microfinance clients. This study has used the lens of social exchange theory to explore this concept in microfinance at interpersonal and organizational levels. Semi-structured interviews have been conducted from the loan managers and top management of microfinance providers in Pakistan to collect data. Thematic analysis highlighted trust, commitment, satisfaction, communication and empathy as key dimensions contributing towards relationship quality. The study has implications for the microfinance providers, loan managers, policymakers and other relevant stakeholders to know the areas they must focus to achieve high relationship quality, i.e. a necessary ingredient for their financial sustainability.

Keywords: *Relationship quality, social exchange theory, loyalty, microfinance institutions, borrowers.*

DYNAMIC ACCOUNT RECEIVABLE AND ITS DETERMINANTS: A CASE OF PAKISTANI FIRMS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Maria Khoso, Sukkur Institute of Business Administration (**Manuscript: #1525**)

Abstract/Description:

This paper investigates whether Pakistani firms maintain a target level of accounts receivable and the speed at which they adjust toward that target. Using panel data from 2000 to 2023 and employing a partial adjustment model with GMM estimation, the study finds that key financial variables such as total assets, sales, cash flow, net profit, and debt increase with rising receivables. Results confirm the existence of target receivables and highlight the influence of firm size, age, leverage, cash flow, and profitability.

Keywords: *Accounts receivable, target adjustment, trade credit, firm characteristics, financial determinants, Pakistani firms, dynamic panel data, GMM estimation, corporate finance, working capital management, receivables policy, firm size, cash flow, short-term leverage, profitability.*

BOARD CO-OPTION AND EXCESS CASH HOLDINGS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Dr. Aitzaz Ahsan Alias SARANG, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi (**Manuscript: #1365**)

Abstract/Description:

This study examines how board co-option resulting from appointing directors after the chief executive officer (CEO) assumes office affects corporate excess cash holdings. An analysis of a sample of U.S. firms over the 1996–2018 period reveals a significantly positive relationship between co-opted directors and excess cash holdings. The results are robust to alternative variable definitions and persist after entropy balancing and a difference-in-differences analysis. Cross-sectional tests demonstrate that co-opted directors are more likely to hold excess cash in firms with weaker internal monitoring due to low director compensation and longer CEO tenure. Furthermore, external monitoring resulting from high institutional ownership and financial analyst coverage moderates the positive relationship between co-opted directors and excess cash holdings. Finally, the interaction between co-option and excess cash results in lower firm value.

Keywords: *Corporate governance; agency costs; board monitoring; chief executive officer (CEO); co-opted directors; excess cash holdings.*

BEYOND THE BENCHMARK: A COMPARITIVE ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVE INDEXING STRATEGIES IN PAKISTAN'S EQUITY MARKET

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Asra Shaikh, Shaheed Zulifkar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology University (**Manuscript: #1361**)

Abstract/Description:

In this study, the performance of alternative fundamentally-weighted (FW) indexes/portfolios is compared against the traditional capitalization-weighted (CW) indexes/portfolios. For this purpose, secondary data of net income (NI), earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT), book-value + intangibles (BV+I), cash flows (CF), and dividends (D) is gathered from Thomson Reuters from July 2000 to June 2024 to construct monthly indexes with composite (COMP) index using both latest & moving average (5-years) values. Moreover, Sharpe, Treynor, and Sortino ratios are used with regression considering various asset pricing models to investigate return-generating attributes of FW portfolios. The findings suggest, the CW portfolio dominates all alternative portfolios in the full sample period. However, the COMP index consistently outperforms the CW index during economic chaos (July 2000 to June 2008 & July 2014 to June 2019). Therefore, this cannot be recommended as a rational investment strategy under normal circumstances. This study explores alternative FW indexation as a practical investing strategy for investors offering higher risk and return trade-offs by mitigating the impact of noisy prices on portfolio weights/returns. This study is unique as it contributes to the scarce literature by constructing mean-variance efficient portfolios based on fundamental metrics rather than 'noisy' prices in Pakistan's equity market.

Keywords: *Fundamentally-weighted (FW) index, Capitalization-weighted (CW) index, Mean-variance efficient portfolio.*

THE DUAL CHALLENGE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Sumaira Chamadia, Shaheed Zulifkar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology University (**Manuscript: #1467**)

Abstract/Description:

The balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability has become a primary global concern in recent years. The factors necessary to drive economic development simultaneously deteriorate the environmental quality. This paper attempts to unearth variables that are essential for economic growth as well as for improving environmental quality such as economic freedom, trade, in low-carbon technologies and renewable energy consumption. The study is conducted

on a large panel of data which includes countries from all regions of the world. We find a significant negative impact of economic growth and globalisation on environmental quality. Whereas renewable energy, economic freedom and low-carbon technology imports all have a significant positive impact on environmental quality. Our extended analysis indicates that the impact of economic growth factors on carbon emissions varies between developed and developing countries.

Keywords: *Environmental degradation (ED), Economic growth (EG), Renewable energy consumption (REC), CO₂ emissions.*

CLIMATE RISK INSURANCE: BIBLIOMETRIC REVIEW ON PRESENT, PAST AND FUTURE

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Haris Ur Rehman Horani Mr., Muhammad Amin Mr., and Farhan Ahmed Dr, NED University of Engineering & Technology
(**Manuscript: #1382**)

Abstract/Description:

The paper aims to examine the interrelation between climate risk and insurance, focusing on emerging trends, the evolution of risk assessment methodologies, and the challenges and opportunities in leveraging climate insurance to mitigate climate change risks. The study utilizes bibliometric analysis, network analysis, and content analysis on the bibliometric data comprises 1,726 documents from the Scopus database, narrowed down to 1,688 documents published within the time span of 1975-2023. The research identifies significant trends in the literature, with notable contributions from the United States, China, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France. The evolution of risk assessment methodologies reflects a shift towards addressing systemic complexity, multi hazard risks, and forward-looking scenarios. The study also highlights the role of climate risk insurance in promoting sustainable development, encouraging adaptation strategies, and reducing long-term climate change costs. Policy makers and regulators can support the insurance sector's contribution to climate adaptation by promoting risk reduction measures and fostering public-private partnerships. Enhancing data collection and analysis, developing innovative insurance products, and integrating technological advancements can improve the accuracy of risk prediction models and the effectiveness of climate insurance. This study provides a comprehensive bibliometric review of climate risk insurance literature, offering valuable insights into the field's development and identifying future research directions.

Keywords: *Climate risk insurance, climate change, risk assessment, bibliometrics analysis.*

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: THE INTERPLAY OF AI ADOPTION, SDG BEHAVIOUR, AND MANAGERIAL PRACTICES IN MIDDLE EASTERN MANUFACTURING FIRMS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Ameenullah Aman, SZABIST University (Gharo Campus);

Isma Zaighum, SZABIST University (Karachi Campus);

Azam Anwer Khan, DHA Suffa University (**Manuscript: #1354**)

Abstract/Description:

This study investigates the impact of technological advancement, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-aligned behaviour, and digitalization management on the digitalization performance of manufacturing firms in the Middle East. Using data from a survey of 405 companies in the UAE and analyzed through partial least squares structural equation modelling, this

research explores how digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) adoption interact with managerial competencies and pro-social SDG behaviour to influence digitalization performance. The findings reveal that digital technologies alone do not directly enhance digitalization performance. Instead, digitalization management and SDG-aligned behaviour serve as critical mediators, underscoring the importance of strategic and socially responsible leadership in digital transformation efforts. The study highlights the need for robust managerial frameworks and ethical orientations to fully leverage the benefits of digital technologies. The findings offer valuable insights for practitioners aiming to design more effective digital transformation strategies in similar contexts.

Keywords: *Digital technologies, AI adoption, SDG pro-social behaviour, digitalization management, digitalization performance.*

RETHINKING GOVERNANCE: THE NEXUS BETWEEN NON-FINANCIAL AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FOR GCC COUNTRIES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Madeeha Omer and Dr. Sana Tauseef, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi

(Manuscript: #1346)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose

This study examines the direct effects of firms' governance on financial, environmental and social performance and investigates how governance moderates the relationship between financial and non-financial performance.

Design/methodology/approach

We performed the panel data regressions using a sample of 207 listed firms from five GCC countries: Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, over the period from 2015 to 2022.

Findings

Governance positively impacts financial, environmental, and social performance. Importantly, our results document a positive moderation effect of governance on the relationship between firm's non-financial and financial performance, such that the firms' environmental and social performance positively affect financial performance for firms with better governance.

Originality

This research is a first step in gauging the impacts of corporate governance for markets where business activities pose a significant amount of environmental risk in particular.

Practical implications

Strengthening corporate governance can provide direct financial benefits to firms while also improving the financial feasibility of their environmental and social initiatives. The findings of this research also hold value for policymakers and practitioners as it highlights the value of regulations and reforms in making business operations more sustainable.

Social implications

The findings of this research recommend enhancing governance in firms to improve the environmental and social initiatives that aspire to be in tune with the needs of the times.

Keywords: *governance, environmental performance, social performance, financial performance, sustainability, stakeholder theory.*

CONTEXTUAL DISCUSSION AND STOCK RETURNS: A CROSS-SECTIONAL ANALYSIS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Namarta Kumari Bajaj, Raja Shahzad Shaikh and Muhammad Shaique, Sukkur IBA University (**Manuscript: #1415**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose:

The research explores sector-specific themes in Management Discussion and Analysis (MD&A) sections of 10-K reports to study their duration-related changes and their effects on financial market participants.

Study design/methodology/approach:

The study analyzes extensive MD&A disclosure data from U.S. publicly listed organizations which spanned between 2004 and 2022 through Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modeling. The research tracks industry-specific heterogeneity levels then provides insights into how corporate statements evolved throughout the examined period.

Findings:

The analysis indicates that different business sectors use distinct topics within MD&A reports to respond to specific challenges and risks along with industry strategies. The analysis displays substantial changes in these subjects which match the transformations in macroeconomic aspects and technological innovation and regulatory environments.

Originality/value:

The literature benefits from this research because it examines the combined effect of industry groups and time frames on corporate disclosure topics which remains understudied in existing studies. The paper builds on current research by revealing detailed changes in sector-based topics that drive market sentiment modifications.

Research limitations/implications:

The research examines disclosure practices through U.S.-based firms only which might not encompass worldwide business practices. New investigations should study global businesses alongside developing financial data analytics to include in their research inquiries.

Practical implications:

Market participants can improve their predictive models and investment decisions through the utilization of sector-specific information. Corporate managers should use disclosure measures that match stakeholder expectations as well as sector industry standards.

Social implications:

The study promotes open and individualized corporate communications that benefits both financial market trust and helps investors make better investment choices.

Keywords: *Corporate Disclosures Topic Modeling Sectoral Analysis Financial Text Mining.*

RISKY BUSINESS OR DIGITAL GURU? HOW PAKISTAN'S INVESTORS NAVIGATE THE HYPE, FEAR, AND PROMISE OF AI-DRIVEN TRADING

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Zahid Bashir, PhD Scholar at Hailey College of Commerce, University of Punjab, Lahore; Dr. Abid Mehmood, Department of Business Studies, Bahria Business School, Bahria University, Karachi, Pakistan.; Dr. Muhammad Usman Arshad, Department of Commerce, University of Gujrat, Pakistan.; Dr. Muhammad Aamir, Hailey College of Commerce, University of Punjab, Lahore; and Dr. Muhammad Sabeeh Iqbal, Hailey College of Commerce, University of the Punjab, Lahore.
(Manuscript: #1350)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: This research work is conducted to analyze the impact of AI Perception (AIP) on Risk Tolerance (RT) and Investor Behavior (IB) of individual investors in Pakistan and understandings of AI-driven investment tools in decision making within financial markets.

Methodology: We adapted a quantitative research design and collected data through survey responses from 216 individual investors. A structured questionnaire was used to measure the key constructs; all the measures were based on established scales. We examined AIP-RT-IB relationships using structural equation modeling (SEM).

Findings: The results from the analysis indicated that a positive perception of AI significantly enhances risk tolerance as well as enhance investor behavior towards investment. Besides, higher risk tolerance shows a positive effect on investor's behavior, and the indirect effect of AI perception on investor behavior through RT has been proven partially. Finally, the research identified that higher level of risk tolerance weakens the positive impact of AI perception on investor's behavior.

Implications: These results suggest that improving AI perception among investors is still significant to increase their risk tolerance and overall investment behavior. This AI-powered tool can be fully utilized to educate the investors and engage them for more insightful decision-making by financial institutions.

Novelty: This work contributes to the emergent literature on investor behavior with valuable insights into how AIP affects RT and IB. It consequently points out the importance of AI perception in shaping investment decisions within emerging markets, hence addressing an important lacuna in prior literature on AI technology issues from the point of view of behavioral finance.

Keywords: *AI Perception, Investment Behavior, Risk Tolerance, Retail Investors, Financial Market.*

IMPACT OF IFRS 9 ON BANKS' PROFITABILITY AND CAPITAL IN PAKISTAN'S BANKING SECTOR

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Halar Siddiqui, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi (Manuscript: #1385)

Abstract/Description:

This study investigates the impact of adopting International Financial Reporting Standard 9 (IFRS 9) on bank performance in Pakistan, focusing on profitability and capital adequacy. Using panel data from 32 commercial and microfinance banks between 2019 and 2024, we assess how IFRS 9 influences return on assets (ROA) and return on equity (ROE) through fixed-effects regression analysis. Key explanatory variables include expected credit loss (ECL) provisions, a dummy for IFRS 9 adoption, and macroeconomic controls such as GDP growth, interest rate, and inflation. Diagnostic tests—including the Hausman test, Breusch–Pagan test, correlation analysis, and variance inflation factors—ensure model robustness. The findings reveal that IFRS 9 adoption significantly reduces ROA ($\beta \approx -0.22$, $p < 0.01$), while GDP growth positively contributes to profitability ($\beta \approx +0.05$, $p < 0.01$). However, ROE is not significantly affected. The Hausman test favors random-effects, and no heteroskedasticity is detected. Descriptive statistics show a decline in average ROA from 0.197 (pre-IFRS 9) to -0.051 (post-IFRS 9). Correlation analysis confirms a negative link between IFRS 9 and profitability. These results suggest that IFRS 9's forward-looking provisioning compresses short-term earnings, necessitating stronger capital buffers. The study provides critical insights for policymakers and banks navigating IFRS 9's financial implications in emerging markets.

Keywords: *IFRS 9, Expected Credit Loss (ECL), Return on Assets (ROA), Return on equity (ROE), Pakistan banking sector.*

THE INFLUX OF GREEN INNOVATION AND GREEN INVESTMENT IN SOUTH ASIA: SUSTENANCE EFFORTS IMPACTING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Dr. Muhammad Asif Shamim, Iqra University

Mohammad Omer, Department of Supply Chain Management, IoBM (**Manuscript: #1352**)

Abstract/Description:

As environmental challenges intensify, the South Asian region characterized by rapid industrialization, high population density, and fragile ecological systems faces a growing urgency to transition toward sustainable development pathways. This study investigates the role of green finance in mitigating environmental pollution while promoting sustainable growth in seven South Asian countries: Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Covering the period from 2000 to 2022, the analysis centers on evaluating both the short-run and long-run dynamics between carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and several key economic and environmental indicators.

Environmental pollution is proxied by CO₂ emissions (in kilotons), while natural resource depletion (NR), expressed as a percentage of Gross National Income (GNI), serves as an indicator of ecological stress. Green finance (GIFN) is operationalized as expenditure in US dollars toward environmental sustainability, environmental-friendly investments (EFI) are measured through investments in renewable energy, and green technology innovation (GTI) is captured via the number of environment-related patents filed. Additionally, GDP per capita, the Human Development Index (HDI), and population growth are incorporated as control variables. All data are sourced from the World Development Indicators (WDI) and the OECD.

The empirical methodology applies the Panel Auto Regressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model, which allows for the distinction between short-run fluctuations and long-run equilibrium relationships across the selected countries. Three estimators are utilized: Pooled Mean Group (PMG), Mean Group (MG), and Dynamic Fixed Effects (DFE). These estimators facilitate cross-country comparisons while accounting for potential heterogeneity in economic structures and

environmental responses. Stationarity of the panel data series is tested using both first-generation (Levin, Lin & Chu [LLC]; Im, Pesaran & Shin [IPS]) and second-generation unit root tests (ADF-Fisher and PP-Fisher).

The results of the unit root tests reveal a mix of I (0) and I (1) series, validating the appropriateness of the panel ARDL framework. The Hausman test is employed to determine the most efficient estimator, with results indicating that the PMG estimator is preferable due to its efficiency in long-run estimation under homogeneity constraints. The error correction term (ECT) in the PMG model is negative and statistically significant, confirming the existence of long-run cointegration among the variables.

Empirical findings reveal that green finance and green technology innovation have a significant negative effect on CO₂ emissions in the long run, indicating their critical role in reducing environmental pollution. Environmental-friendly investments also contribute positively to emission reductions, though with varying intensities across countries. GDP per capita exhibits a nonlinear relationship with CO₂ emissions, reflecting the Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC) hypothesis in some countries. HDI is found to correlate negatively with emissions, suggesting that improvements in education, health, and standard of living may foster environmentally conscious behavior. Population growth, however, exerts upward pressure on emissions, underscoring demographic challenges to sustainability.

In the short run, results from the MG estimator reveal heterogeneous impacts across countries, influenced by varying policy implementations, institutional capacities, and stages of economic development. The findings underscore that while green finance mechanisms are effective, their outcomes are context-dependent and moderated by socio-economic factors.

This study contributes to the literature by integrating environmental, financial, and developmental perspectives using a comprehensive econometric approach. It provides actionable insights for policymakers, financial institutions, and environmental agencies aiming to leverage green finance and innovation for sustainable development. The evidence supports the formulation of region-specific green finance strategies, investment in renewable energy technologies, and reforms in governance to enhance institutional readiness for climate action. Ultimately, the study affirms that aligning financial flows with environmental goals is not only desirable but imperative for South Asia's low-carbon transition and the achievement of long-term sustainability targets.

Keywords: *Green Innovation, Green Investment, South Asia, Environmental Protection.*

EMPOWERING RESPONSIBLE ADOPTION: ETHICS AND SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Chayma HOUMAMI, University Cadi Ayyad (**Manuscript: #1369**)

Abstract/Description:

This study investigates the integration of Ethical Sustainable Commitment (ESC) into the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to assess its influence on the adoption of digital financial services among Moroccan customers. It focuses on how ethical and environmental concerns shape users' evaluation of technological innovations, particularly in the context of mobile financial solutions. Special emphasis is placed on the moderating roles of long-term orientation (LO) and short-term orientation (SO) in the relationship between ESC and perceived usefulness (PU). While TAM has been extensively applied to technology adoption, limited research has explored how ethical dimensions such as ESC interact with users' perceptions and behaviors. This study addresses that gap by examining whether ESC significantly enhances PU and whether time orientation alters this relationship, ultimately affecting behavioral intentions and actual usage. A quantitative methodology was applied using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) combined with bootstrapping to test the proposed hypotheses. Data were gathered through a self-administered bilingual (French and Arabic) questionnaire from a

convenience sample of 300 Moroccan bank customers, including both current and prospective users. The findings reveal that perceived ease of use (PEOU) significantly influences PU and intention to use, underscoring the importance of user-friendly design. However, ESC did not significantly impact PU, nor did LO and SO exhibit significant moderating effects. These results suggest that although ethical concerns are acknowledged, they may not directly translate into perceived usefulness when temporal values are prominent. The study offers theoretical and managerial implications for integrating ethical considerations into user-centric digital finance strategies.

Keywords: *Ethical Sustainable Commitment (ESC), Adoption, Mobile Banking (M-Banking), Technology Acceptance Model 1 (TAM1), Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).*

CLIMATE CHANGE EXPOSURE: A CATALYST FOR MOMENTUM RETURNS?

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Ranjeeta Sadhwani, Sukkur IBA University; Mujeeb U Rehman Bhayo, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan; Suresh Kumar Oad Rajput, BizFlex Pvt. Ltd; and Raja Shahzad Shaikh, Sukkur IBA University (**Manuscript: #1421**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: This study examines the relationship between firm-level climate change exposure (CCRisk) and idiosyncratic momentum (*imom*) returns. Due to global warming and adverse effects of climate change, stakeholders are more concerned about the climate risk. Therefore, investors may require risk premium or change the asset allocation based on the firm's exposure to climate change.

Methodology: We conduct a panel regression analysis using monthly data from January 2002 to December 2020 for USA stocks. For robustness, this study also used Fama-Macbeth regression, Quantile regression, and portfolio analysis.

Findings: The results show that firm-level climate change exposure positively impacts *imom* returns. The higher climate change exposure, (i.e., more conversations on climate-related topics in earning calls) is associated with higher *imom* payoffs. The results remain robust to the firm-specific and business cycle-related control variables.

Originality: This study contributes to the literature on climate finance by analyzing impact of climate risk on momentum returns. To the best of our knowledge this is first study to analyze the impact of CCRisk on *imom* returns.

Research limitations: This study only analyzed the impact on stock of USA equity market, the future studies may consider other markets and different measures of climate risk for robustness.

Practical implications: Portfolio managers and investors may consider firm-level climate risk while considering momentum-based strategies. Incorporating climate exposure data can enhance risk assessment and enhance potential gains.

Keywords: *Firm-level climate change exposure, idiosyncratic momentum, Regression analysis, Panel data*

MARKET STATES, MARKET DYNAMICS AND IDIOSYNCRATIC MOMENTUM PROFIT

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Nadia Shaikh (**Manuscript: #1386**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: To investigate whether the profitability of idiosyncratic momentum (henceforth: imom) strategy is driven by market states, market dynamics in the context of Shari'ah compliant stocks.

Design: Using a sample of all primary domestic ordinary shares traded on the US equity markets, traded on US stock exchanges, such as NYSE, AMEX, and NASDAQ, covering the sample period from 1986 to 2020. The study implies simple ordinary least square (OLS) regression model by utilizing common asset pricing factor models.

Findings: Our empirical evidence indicates that imom profits are not driven by market states and market dynamics. Our robustness results show that profits are not sensitive to these tests. For instance, the macroeconomics risk factors, business cycle (i.e., expansion and contraction) and the alternative measure of in international markets affect profit. At the minimum, These findings suggest that strategy is robust at least in this sample data and yields anomalous profit.

Originality: To the best of authors' knowledge, this is the first study that examines whether the profitability of idiosyncratic momentum strategy is driven by market states, market dynamics in the context of Shari'ah compliant stocks.

Research limitations/implications: Factor data is region specific. These results have investment implications for investors and portfolio managers, as imom profit does not sensitive to market states and market dynamics.

Practical implications: Investors who follow Islamic finance principles could benefit from using imom strategy.

Social implications: Investors can acquire additional knowledge that can improve their investing performance on imom strategy.

Keywords: *Asset pricing market states, market dynamics, idiosyncratic momentum profit.*

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN IFRS 16 AND FAS 32

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Muhammad Majid Raza, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan

Haroon Tabraze, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1454**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of The International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 16 and Accounting and Auditing Organization Islamic Financial Institution (AAOIFI) Financial Accounting Standard (FAS) 32 with a focus on the accounting treatment of Ijarah-based lease contracts. It addresses key differences in recognition, measurement, presentation, and disclosure, and examines the implications for financial reporting in jurisdictions where both standards coexist.

Methodology: A comparative analytical methodology is employed, examining the conceptual foundations, historical evolution, and technical requirements of IFRS 16 and FAS 32. The analysis includes a thematic evaluation of initial and subsequent measurement, financial statement presentation, and disclosure obligations.

Findings: The study reveals fundamental conceptual divergences: IFRS 16 is grounded in economic substance and control, while FAS 32 emphasizes contractual form aligned with Shariah principles. These differences result in varied accounting treatments for the same Ijarah transaction, affecting comparability and transparency.

Originality/value: This paper fills a gap in the literature by offering the first comprehensive comparative analysis of IFRS 16 and FAS 32, providing valuable insights for regulators, practitioners, and scholars in both conventional and Islamic finance.

Research limitations/implications: The analysis is primarily theoretical and standard-based, with limited empirical data on implementation outcomes across jurisdictions.

Practical implications: The findings highlight the need for enhanced guidance for dual-compliant institutions and inform policymakers on standard harmonization challenges.

Social implications: Improved understanding and alignment of financial reporting standards can enhance stakeholder trust, accountability, and cross-border investment in Islamic finance.

Keywords: *Accounting, Ijarah, Leasing, IFRS 16, Islamic Accounting.*

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SHARIAH-COMPLIANT AND CONVENTIONAL BUY NOW PAY LATER (BNPL) MODELS IN BANKING: SHARIAH AND ACCOUNTING PERSPECTIVES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Shakir Ahmed, Institute of Business Administration (IBA)

Haroon Tabreze, Institute of Business Administration Karachi (**Manuscript: #1456**)

Abstract/Description:

The purpose of this study is to explore the Shariah and accounting aspects of Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) models currently practiced in the banking industry. The research compares the BNPL models of conventional and Islamic banking institutions, focusing on their alignment with Shariah principles and financial practices. A qualitative approach was used, with primary data collected through interviews with participants from the digital, product development, sales, and Shariah departments of both conventional and Islamic banks in Pakistan. Thematic analysis was conducted on the collected data using NVivo software. The study finds that Shariah-compliant BNPL products adhere to Islamic finance principles by eliminating interest-based transactions, ensuring risk-sharing, and avoiding speculative elements, whereas conventional BNPL models typically incorporate interest, leading to non-compliance with Shariah. Furthermore, the accounting treatment of BNPL products is consistent across conventional banks, but varies within the Islamic banking sector due to differences in the underlying Islamic financial modes. The findings provide valuable insights for financial institutions and policymakers, advocating for the development of ethical and inclusive Shariah-compliant financial products. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this paper is among the first to compare Shariah-compliant BNPL products with conventional models, while integrating AAOIFI standards, offering a unique perspective on the application of Islamic finance in contemporary payment solutions.

Keywords: *BNPL, Conventional Banks, Islamic Banks, AAOIFI, Shariah, Samsarah.*

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF WAQF SYSTEMS IN PAKISTAN AND TÜRKİYE: CONCEPTUAL, LEGISLATIVE, AND ACCOUNTING DIMENSIONS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Osama Ali Mr., Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1461**)

Abstract/Description:

This study aims to explore and compare the conceptual foundations, legal structures, and accounting practices of Waqf organizations in Pakistan and Türkiye. The core research questions investigate how legal and accounting frameworks influence the management of Waqf assets, the transparency of financial reporting, and societal impact. By analyzing these dimensions, the research seeks to identify best practices and suggest policy reforms to enhance Waqf management's effectiveness in both contexts.

Keywords: *Waqf, Legislation, Accounting, Public Policy, Pakistan, Türkiye*

STANDARD SETTING PROCESS OF AAOIFI FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING STANDARDS (FAS)

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Hassan Raza (Manuscript: #1488)

Abstract/Description:

This paper investigates the standard-setting process of the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI) Financial Accounting Standards (FAS). While Islamic finance and accounting have a rich history rooted in Islamic principles, the modern era necessitated standardized accounting frameworks for Islamic financial institutions (IFIs). AAOIFI was established to fulfill this need, playing a crucial role in shaping Islamic accounting standards. Despite AAOIFI's significance and the growing importance of Islamic finance globally, there is a notable gap in the existing literature examining the standard-setting process itself. Most studies focus on the content or adoption challenges of AAOIFI standards rather than the institutional mechanisms, stakeholder involvement, procedural stages, and decision-making processes involved in their development.

Employing a qualitative exploratory research design, this study seeks to understand the intricacies of how AAOIFI develops its accounting standards. Data are gathered from secondary sources, including official AAOIFI documents and relevant literature, and primary sources, specifically expert interviews. A qualitative approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews, allows for an in-depth exploration of the practical realities of standard-setting within the Islamic finance ecosystem.

The significance of this research lies in providing a deeper understanding of the standard-setting mechanisms underpinning Islamic financial reporting, contributing to enhanced transparency, comparability, and credibility within the industry. By shedding light on AAOIFI's process, the study aims to inform IFIs, regulators, and other stakeholders and potentially identify areas for improving global harmonization and adoption of Islamic accounting standards. This research contributes to filling a critical gap in academic inquiry by focusing specifically on AAOIFI's internal procedures for drafting, reviewing, and issuing financial accounting standards.

Keywords: *Islamic Accounting, AAOIFI, Standard Setting, Financial Accounting Standards, Islamic Finance, Qualitative Research, Accounting Regulation.*

THE IMPACT OF GENDER DIVERSITY ON HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT DISCLOSURE: A CASE OF PAKISTANI COMPANIES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Shahid Ali IBA University; Komal, Shaheed Zulifkar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology; and Muhammad Shaique, IBA University (Manuscript: #1507)

Abstract/Description:

This basic purpose of this study is to investigate impact of board gender diversity on human capital development disclosure from annual reports in the context of Pakistani public limited companies. We have performed automated textual analysis to develop a robust firm-level human capital development disclosure index based on bigram dictionary based approach. Our final data sample contains 138 non-financial firms ranging from 2014 to 2023.

Our empirical results have shown that gender diversity has positive and statistically significant impact on human capital development disclosure of Pakistani companies. The results have shown consistency across its sub-dimensions, industry & year fixed effects and heterogeneity analysis. Our heterogeneity analysis have shown that the impact of gender diversity on human capital disclosure is more pronounced for the firms with female representation >10%, for SECP post regulations and for large-sized corporate board.

The findings of this study provides important implications by acknowledging the important role of gender diversity in promoting human capital transparency and corporate accountability. Its methodological contribution includes development of novel firm-level human capital development disclosure index based on bigram dictionary method which has advantage over traditional bag of word approach. The policy implications for regulators and firms are that they should promote gender equality to so they can achieve sustainability and can meet SDG goals.

Keywords: *Board Gender Diversity, Human Capital Development Disclosure.*

COMPARITIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN IFRS 15 AND FAS 28

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Zeeshan Ahmed Sheikh, Institute of Business administration (**Manuscript: #1514**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of IFRS and IFAS with a focus on the accounting treatment of Murabaha transactions. It addresses key differences in recognition, measurement, presentation, and disclosure, and examines the implications for financial reporting in jurisdictions where both standards coexist.

Study design/methodology/approach: A comparative analytical methodology is employed, examining the conceptual foundations, historical evolution, and technical requirements of IFRS and IFAS. The analysis includes a thematic evaluation of initial and subsequent measurement, financial statement presentation, and disclosure obligations.

Findings: The study reveals fundamental conceptual divergences: IFRS is grounded in economic substance and control, recognizing Murabaha transactions based on their underlying nature—either as financing arrangements or sales—aligning with IFRS 15. IFAS, conversely, emphasizes the contractual form of Murabaha, recognizing transactions as sales with profit recorded on a straight-line basis, irrespective of the time value of money. These differences result in varied accounting treatments for the same Murabaha transaction, affecting comparability and transparency.

Originality/value: This paper fills a gap in the literature by offering a comprehensive comparative analysis of IFRS 15 and IFAS 28 in the context of Murabaha, providing valuable insights for regulators, practitioners, and scholars in both conventional and Islamic finance.

Research limitations/implications: The analysis is primarily theoretical and standard-based, with limited empirical data on implementation outcomes across jurisdictions.

Practical implications: The findings highlight the need for enhanced guidance for dual-compliant institutions and inform policymakers on standard harmonization challenges.

Social implications: Improved understanding and alignment of financial reporting standards can enhance stakeholder trust, accountability, and cross-border investment in Islamic finance.

Keywords: *Murabaha, IFRS, IFAS, Standard, Deffered.*

REFLECTION ON THE ACCOUNTANT’S ROLE IN GREEN ACCOUNTING IN PAKISTAN A DECADE LATER

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Ghias ul Hassan Khan, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1517**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose

This study examines green accounting as a framework that incorporates environmental costs into financial systems. It reviews literature from 1990 to 2024, tracing its evolution through milestones like the UN’s SEDA and corporate adoption of EMA. By comparing national implementations in Pakistan, China, and Botswana, along with corporate practices from Unilever and Siemens, the study highlights benefits and challenges, including data gaps, valuation issues, and institutional barriers.

Study design/methodology/approach

As environmental crises such as climate change and biodiversity loss intensify, the limitations of traditional economic indicators particularly Gross Domestic Product (GDP) have become increasingly apparent. Ethical concerns regarding the monetization of nature are also addressed, with an emphasis on hybrid approaches combining monetary and non-monetary metrics.

Findings

The findings suggest that while green accounting offers a critical means to align economic activity with environmental sustainability, its broader adoption requires political commitment, regulatory support, and methodological innovation.

Originality/value

This study adds value to the literature by focusing on factors that influence environmental performance through green accounting. This initial research observes the influence of EMA and green accounting practices on environmental performance. Finally, our research can provide benefits to researchers, students, and managers.

Research limitations/implications

Green accounting adoption in Pakistan faces challenges such as limited awareness, inadequate training, and weak regulatory frameworks. Additionally, the lack of green financial products and debates over monetizing ecosystem services hinder progress. Collaboration among the government, the private sector, and academia, along with integrating diverse indicators, can improve implementation and effectiveness.

Practical implications

Ultimately, the study affirms green accounting as an essential tool for redefining progress and supporting sustainable development in the 21st century.

Social implications

Improved understanding and alignment of green accounting, which can enhance trust in the eye of stakeholders with respect to environmental protection accountability in society.

Keywords: *Green Accounting, Environmental accounting, Gross Domestic Product, Environmental Management Accounting, Sustainable development, and Corporate sustainability accounting.*

ASSESSING CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GRI, TCFD, AND ESRS STANDARDS IN THE TOP FIVE EUROPEAN COMPANIES BY MARKET CAPITALIZATION

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Akhtar ali, University of Siena (**Manuscript: #1506**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose:

This study aims to explore how leading European corporations approach sustainability reporting by examining their use of three prominent frameworks: the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), and the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS). The goal is to understand how these standards are applied in practice and what insights they offer into corporate sustainability efforts.

Study Design/Methodology/Approach:

A qualitative content analysis was conducted on the most recent sustainability reports from the top five European companies by market capitalization. The analysis focused on how each company aligns with the GRI, TCFD, and ESRS frameworks, assessing the depth and breadth of their disclosures. Data analysis tools, including Python and Excel, were utilized to systematically code and evaluate the reporting content.

Findings:

The study found that while all companies demonstrate a commitment to sustainability reporting, there is variability in how comprehensively they adopt and integrate the three frameworks. GRI is widely used for detailed sustainability metrics, TCFD provides structured climate-related financial disclosures, and ESRS, being relatively new, shows varying levels of adoption and integration among the companies.

Originality/Value:

This research offers a comparative perspective on the practical implementation of GRI, TCFD, and ESRS within leading European corporations. It contributes to the ongoing discourse on harmonizing sustainability reporting standards and provides insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with multi-framework reporting.

Research Limitations/Implications:

The study is limited to five companies, which may not represent the broader European corporate landscape. Future research could expand the sample size and include longitudinal analyses to assess how reporting practices evolve over time.

Practical Implications:

The findings can assist corporate sustainability officers and policymakers in understanding the practical implications of adopting multiple reporting standards. This understanding can inform strategies for more integrated and coherent sustainability disclosures.

Social Implications:

Enhanced transparency and comparability in sustainability reporting can empower stakeholders, including investors, consumers, and regulators, to make informed decisions. This, in turn, promotes corporate accountability and supports sustainable development goals.

Keywords: *Sustainability Reporting, GRI, TCFD, ESRS, Corporate Disclosure, ESG Standards, European Corporations, Comparative Analysis, Sustainability Frameworks, Non-Financial Reporting.*

FROM AUTOMATION TO COLLABORATION: UNDERSTANDING AI CHATBOT EFFECTIVENESS IN CUSTOMER VALUE CO-CREATION

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Maheen Ather, Bahria University, Pakistan and Hadiqa Riaz, Bahria University, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1402**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose

As businesses increasingly adopt advanced AI chatbots, understanding what drives meaningful customer engagement is crucial. This study explores how perceived interactivity, personalization, and ease of use influence customer value co-creation. It also investigates the moderating role of customer AI literacy a factor often overlooked in existing literature.

Study Design/ Methodology

The study is based on data collected from 300 respondents in Karachi who have prior experience using AI chatbots. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Smart PLS was employed to assess both direct effects and moderating relationships.

Findings

Results indicate that perceived interactivity and personalization significantly enhance customer value co-creation. However, perceived ease of use does not show a direct significant effect. Customer AI literacy moderates the relationships between personalization and value co-creation, and between ease of use and value co-creation, but does not moderate the effect of interactivity.

Originality/ Value

The study contributes to AI-driven service research by incorporating customer AI literacy as a moderating variable. It offers a nuanced understanding of how different chatbot features contribute to value co-creation, especially when user capability is considered.

Research Limitation

The research is limited to one geographic location and uses self-reported data, which may introduce bias. Additionally, it does not account for potential mediating factors such as trust in AI.

Practical and Social Implications

E-commerce platforms should enhance chatbot personalization and interactivity while promoting AI literacy through user-focused education to improve value co-creation. Besides, Fostering AI literacy and user-centric chatbot design can enhance digital engagement, inclusivity, and consumer well-being.

Keywords: *AI Chatbots, Perceived Interactivity, Perceived Personalization, Perceived Ease of Use, Customer AI Literacy, Value Co-Creation.*

IMPACT OF CONSUMER XENOCENTRISM ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING: MEDIATING ROLE OF AUTONOMY AND MODERATING ROLE OF IMPULSIVE AND COMPULSIVE CONSUMPTION

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Fatima Shahid (**Manuscript: #1413**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose - The purpose is to examine the effect of consumer xenocentrism on psychological well-being autonomy is mediating the relationship, while impulsive and compulsive consumption are the two moderators. This research is built on System Justification Theory, Ryff's Model of Psychological Well-Being, Self-Determination Theory, Addiction Model of Compulsive Buying, and Impulse Buying Theory.

Study design/methodology/approach – This research employs a quantitative approach, using a survey with validated multi-item scales. Exploratory Factor Analysis will be done to find the underlying structure, then Confirmatory Factor Analysis will verify the measurement model. Structure Equation Modeling will be done to test the hypothesized relationships.

Findings – This is a work-in-progress paper, hence the results are not established. The paper hypothesizes a positive relationship of consumer xenocentrism with psychological well-being. Autonomy mediates this relationship. Impulsive and compulsive consumption moderates this relationship.

Originality/value – The study enriches the scarce literature on consumer xenocentrism by studying its impact on psychological wellbeing.

Research limitations/Implications – This research uses self-reported data will can bring social desirability bias. This research can guide marketing strategies and advance consumer wellbeing and autonomy.

Social implications – Socially the findings can inform people about consumer xenocentrism, psychological well-being and the consequence of impulsive and compulsive consumption in a globalized world.

Keywords: *Consumer Xenocentrism • Psychological Well-Being • Autonomy • Compulsive Consumption • Impulsive Consumption.*

EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL BRAND ATTACHMENT ON BRAND CREDIBILITY, CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND THE MEDIATION EFFECT OF BRAND CREDIBILITY, CONSUMER SATISFACTION ON CONSUMER BASED BRAND EQUITY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Abdul Majid, Al-Hamd Islamic University Quetta (**Manuscript: #1433**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose – The continuous increase in the number of social media user provide evidence that user have emotion-based attachment (EBA) with apparel brands on social media. We want to examine how EBA on social media creates CBBE. The purpose of this paper is to develop an understanding of social media platform based on apparel brands.

This paper wants to explore how emotional brand attachment on social media platforms creates CBBE through consumer satisfaction and brand credibility. The data is collected from 300 social media users through an online questionnaire for empirical testing.

Keywords: *EBA Emotional Brand Attachment.*

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN USER EXPERIENCE, PLAYER-AVATAR IDENTIFICATION AND CO-CREATION BEHAVIOUR IN THE CONTEXT OF METAVERSE GAMING

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Ambreen Bashir Haris, Institute of Business Management; Syed Muhammad Fahim Dr., Isra University; and Shumaila Kashif (**Manuscript: #1521**)

Abstract/Description:

The metaverse is a dynamic and rapidly expanding virtual environment that integrates gaming, social interactions, and advanced technologies. Marketers increasingly recognize the metaverse as a key avenue for reaching younger demographics and as a crucial channel for engaging with younger audiences. The metaverse offers interactive platforms for users to engage with brands leading to collaborative content and personalized experiences. This research examines the relationship between user experience, player avatar identification, and co-creation behaviour within gaming platforms in the metaverse, with a particular focus on the moderating effect of interaction with technology and social influence. Grounded in social presence theory, the study explores how avatar identification influences users' engagement in co-creation activities, including content creation, strategic planning, and knowledge exchange. Additionally, it examines the role of social influence, such as community involvement and peer norms, in shaping these behaviours. By addressing these interconnections, the research provides critical insights into how organizations can utilize the metaverse to drive user engagement, strengthen brand loyalty, and promote value co-creation. This is a quantitative research study and will be using PLS4 to evaluate the results. The findings will contribute to the expanding literature on the metaverse, offering a deeper understanding of its implications for enhancing consumer experiences and redefining marketing and communication strategies.

Keywords: *Massively Online Games, Co-creation Behaviour, Player-Avatar Identification, Immersiveness, Sociability, Environment Fidelity, User experience.*

FROM HASHTAGS TO HABITS: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SHAPING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Aisha Murtaza Shaikh, Bahria University, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1439**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose:

To determine the part that social media plays in developing sustainable consumer behavior, this study looks at the function of the platforms, the effect of the influencers, the efficiency of the campaigns, demographic reactions and obstacles to the use of the sustainable practices.

Study Design/Methodology/Approach

To collect the data, a qualitative research method was used and in-depth interviews and focus groups were conducted among eco conscious consumers, influencers & marketing professionals. For the analysis of the influence of social media on sustainable consumer behavior, thematic analysis was employed in order to identify key themes and patterns.

Findings:

It was found that social media improves understanding and awareness on sustainability as well as spurs the development of a sense of community and offers practical resource that helps advancement towards sustainable practices. Consumer habits are shaped by influencers who are very credible, authentic, and their influence is very important. #ZeroWaste and #SustainableLiving campaigns have proven to be successful campaigns which have pushed unstoppable changes in consumer behaviors, which different demographics will react in different ways to sustainability messages.

Originality/Value:

It provides insights to the literature about the claims how social media affects consumer behavior, and then provides practical implications for a number of stakeholders.

Research Limitations/Implications:

The study may be limited in generalization due to the qualitative nature of the study. Further research should utilize quantitative methods to elicit the role played by new platforms and contexts of culture in adoption of sustainable practices.

Practical Implications:

It provides strategies for sustainable campaigns, authenticity for brands to avoid greenwashing, social platforms for policy makers to communicate for climate, education and NGOs to raise awareness for sustainability.

Social Implications:

With the roles identification of social media as a means to enhance sustainability, the stakeholders are able to formulate more relevant and potent approaches to facilitate a more conducive future for the sustainability.

Keywords: #Marketing #sustainability #Ecofriendly #HashtagsToHabit #ConsumerBehaviour #ConsumerInfluence #Sustainability.

FROM BELIEF TO BUY: ANALYZING HALAL COSMETIC PURCHASE INTENTIONS AMONG PAKISTANI WOMEN

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Dr. Sara Rashid and Asadullah Lakho, Iqra University - Karachi Main Campus (**Manuscript: #1390**)

Abstract/Description:

This study examines the key factors that influence the purchase intention of halal cosmetics among consumers in Pakistan, with a particular focus on Muslim women. Utilizing a quantitative approach, data were collected from 200 respondents and analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS software to investigate the roles of subjective norms, religious beliefs, halal brand image, and knowledge about halal cosmetics. Results indicate that both subjective norms and religious beliefs significantly impact consumers' intention to purchase halal cosmetics, underscoring the powerful influence of cultural and religious values in shaping consumer behavior. Although the direct effects of halal brand image and halal product knowledge were not statistically significant, knowledge exhibited an indirect effect on purchase intention through a positive influence on consumer attitudes. These findings suggest that promoting halal awareness and aligning marketing strategies with religious and community values can strengthen consumer engagement in this niche yet growing segment. The study provides actionable insights for marketers, policymakers, and halal product developers aiming to better cater to the needs of faith-driven consumers. Future research should consider qualitative and cross-cultural studies to expand understanding of global halal beauty trends.

Keywords: *Halal cosmetics, purchase intention, subjective norms, religious beliefs, halal brand image, knowledge about halal cosmetics, Pakistan.*

WHERE DOES RELIGION END AND CULTURE BEGIN? EXPLORING RELIGIOUS SELECTIVITY IN PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND BODY MODIFICATIONS AMONG PAKISTANI CONSUMERS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Angbeen Mushtaq (**Manuscript: #1531**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose – While much has been written about religious influence on consumer behavior, fewer studies have explored how individuals in Muslim-majority contexts selectively interpret religious teachings around personal appearance. This study explores how Pakistani consumers navigate the blurred lines between religion and culture in choices related to body modification and self-presentation.

Design/methodology/approach – This study adopts an interpretive phenomenological approach and uses in-depth interviews to explore how participants experience, interpret, and make sense of religious and cultural expectations in their everyday lives.

Findings – The findings reveal that religious adherence is often selective and convenience-based, shaped by cultural norms, personal comfort, and gendered expectations. Participants used both quiet and vocal strategies to navigate judgment and restriction. The line between religion and culture is unclear and is often strategically shifted to justify control, especially over women.

Originality/value – This study contributes to literature on religion and consumer behavior in Pakistan by focusing on the nuanced, everyday negotiations individuals make between cultural norms and religious expectations. It also highlights how religious selectivity, cultural misogyny, and moral inconsistency shape consumption and identity.

Keywords: *Religion and consumer behavior, Cultural influence, Misogyny in consumption norms, Pakistani consumers, Religious selectivity.*

USERS INFLUENCE THE USERS: HOW POWERFUL ARE THE USER-GENERATED CONTENT IN SHAPING THE OTHER USER PURCHASE BEHAVIOR

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Muhammad Adnan Bashir Dr., Institute of Business Management (**Manuscript: #1412**)

Abstract/Description:

With the extension of the internet from computers to mobile, the flow of information has evolved around the globe. Whether it is the choice of a restaurant or buying a new car, people flick it on their phones to make a decision. As a result, the trend of reviews has become a vital source of information for internet users that also affects the sales of various products and consumer picks, as is evident from the studies.

Keywords: *User-generated Content; Purchase Intention; Prior Knowledge; Tie Strength; Perceived Credibility; Trust in Information.*

CAN ISLAMIC MARKETING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES BE A SOURCE OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE FOR SHARIAH-COMPLIANT COMPANIES? AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF FMCG FIRMS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Ayesha Latif Shaikh, SZABIST University, Karachi and Dr. Shumaila Kashif, IoBM (**Manuscript: #1511**)

Abstract/Description:

There is a notable research gap regarding the practical implementation of Islamic marketing strategies and practices in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector and their role in achieving sustainable competitive advantage. Despite Islamic marketing's growing academic and practical prominence, empirical inquiries into its effect on competitive performance in emerging markets like Pakistan are limited. Specifically, clarity is needed on how Islamic marketing strategies translate into distinctive competitive advantages compared to conventional marketing approaches.

To address this gap, this study is guided by three research questions: 1. Why Islamic marketing strategies and practices are implemented by Shariah-compliant FMCG companies in Pakistan; 2. How they provide a competitive advantage to these companies; and 3. What challenges are faced during implementation.

The methodology employs a qualitative-inductive approach within the philosophical lens of critical realism. An embedded case study strategy is used, with the marketing function of Shariah-compliant FMCG companies in Karachi, Pakistan as the main case and marketing managers/decision makers as the unit of analysis. Participants will be selected using purposive and snowball sampling, targeting 12-15 individuals for data saturation. Data collection will primarily involve semi-structured interviews analyzed using thematic analysis. The study has a cross-sectional time horizon.

The potential contribution of this research is multifaceted. It aims to enrich empirical literature on Islamic marketing in the FMCG sector from a strategic marketing management viewpoint and add to the understanding of sources of competitive

advantage. Furthermore, findings can assist marketing professionals in Shariah-compliant firms develop effective, ethically-aligned strategies and provide valuable insights for policymakers and Shariah advisory bodies.

Keywords: *Embedded case study, Islamic marketing strategies, fast moving consumer goods, sustainable competitive advantage.*

BOYCOTT AND BOYCOTT: DIGITAL ACTIVISM THROUGH FACEBOOK COMMUNITY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Farah Naz Baig, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi (**Manuscript: #1419**)

Abstract/Description:

Following the escalation of the Gaza genocide in October 2023, consumers took a stand on the crisis by boycotting and buycotting brands. This research aims to understand people's engagement in political consumerism (Stolle et al. 2005) through participatory actions such as boycott and buycott (Deth 2014) of Israeli-made goods and goods made by countries supporting Israel. The purpose of such actions is to showcase consumer power by voting for (against) the appropriate (inappropriate) practices of parties (Ciftci, 2020).

Facebook is an important platform that helps political consumers connect, communicate, understand, belong, and propagate their concepts and identities. This paper presents a netnographic study analyzing narratives that shape political consumerist identities in the Global South. This research explores posts from the public Facebook group Pakistan Goes Local from its inception in November 2023 till November 2024. This group promotes “buy local” and “buy Pakistani” themes in the wake of the Gaza conflict. This Facebook group has 51,000 members who share posts about their opinions about local brands to support the local economy through a buycott and engage in the boycott movement. This research highlights the role of digital community in enabling participatory consumer actions. From the point of view of theoretical and practical implications, this exploratory work in progress adds to the political consumerism and consumer behavior literature.

Keywords: *Political consumerism, boycott, buycott, netnography.*

GREEN MARKETING FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET: ANALYZING THE GREEN MARKETING MIX (7PS) AND GREEN KNOWLEDGE IN REPURCHASE INTENTIONS FOR NESTLÉ BOTTLED WATER IN PAKISTAN

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Sapna V Khemani, Shaheed Zulifkar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology, and Mazhar Ali Dr, Shaheed Zulifkar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (**Manuscript: #1441**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose - This study investigated the effect of 7P's green marketing mix on consumer repurchase intentions in the bottled water sector of Pakistan incorporating mediating effect of green knowledge.

Design/ methodology/ approach - The research employed a quantitative approach. Four hundred respondents were chosen using the purposive sampling technique.

Findings – The study's findings indicated that green knowledge mediated the relationship between green marketing mix (green products, green prices, green places, green promotions, green people, green processes, and green physical evidence) and repurchase intentions.

Practical Implications – The study guides to develop products and processes that effectively communicate the green attributes that will eventually help build a strong and loyal customer base.

Originality/ value - The study broadens our knowledge of the green marketing mix, green knowledge, and repurchase intention for a major bottled water brand in Pakistan. It uses marketing mix theory to reveal the positive implications of green marketing on consumers.

Keywords: *Green marketing mix, Green people, Green process, Green physical evidence, Repurchase intention, Green Knowledge.*

INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF PRODUCT CATEGORY ON CONSUMER GUILT LEVELS: A STUDY OF EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO PURCHASE INTENTIONS OF BOYCOTTED PRODUCTS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Saad Asif Khan, Tashfeen Khan, Rumaisa Aamir, Ansh Kumar, and Laiba Shahid, Institute of Business Administration (IBA) (**Manuscript: #1471**)

Abstract/Description:

This study investigates how product categories influence consumer guilt when purchasing boycotted products, particularly in politically charged contexts like the Israel–Palestine conflict. By distinguishing between utilitarian and hedonic product types, the research examines variations in emotional responses and purchase intentions among Pakistani consumers. Using qualitative responses and quantitative analysis, the study finds that consumers experience higher guilt levels when purchasing hedonic products from boycotted brands. These insights contribute to understanding ethical consumer behavior and can inform brand strategies in conflict-sensitive markets.

Keywords: *Consumer Guilt, Boycott Behavior, Product Category, Ethical Consumption, Political Consumerism, Israel vs Palestine Conflict, Brand Perception.*

UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER PURCHASE INTENTION THROUGH MASSTIGE BRAND VALUES: THE MODERATING ROLE OF BRAND FAMILIARITY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Alina Amin, Bahria University, and Hadiqa Riaz, Bahria University (**Manuscript: #1452**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose In the evolving landscape of consumer behavior, masstige brands occupy a unique position between luxury and mass-market appeal. This study investigates how different types of brand value functional, financial, individual, and social affect purchase intention. It also explores the moderating role of brand familiarity in these relationships. **Study Design/ Methodology** A quantitative research approach was adopted. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire from 300 masstige brand consumers in Karachi who had made purchases within the past six months. Purposive sampling was used, and data was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). **Findings** Financial value emerged as the strongest driver of purchase intention, followed by functional value, Individual and social values also had significant effects, as consumers preferred brands that reflect personal identity and social status. Brand familiarity moderated the impact of financial and individual values on purchase intention by enhancing trust and reducing uncertainty, but showed limited moderating effects for functional and social values. **Originality/ Value** This study adds to the limited body of research on masstige branding by incorporating multiple value dimensions and examining the moderating role of

brand familiarity. It offers a comprehensive understanding of how consumer perceptions shape buying decisions in the masstige segment. Research Limitations The study is limited to Karachi and the fashion industry, with a cross-sectional design. Future studies should consider broader geographic and industry coverage and explore mediating variables like brand credibility. Social Implications Masstige brands should focus on enhancing financial and functional value, maintaining brand familiarity, and aligning products with consumer identity and lifestyle. Practical Implications Strengthening brand familiarity and value perception can promote informed and confident consumption, enhancing overall consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Keywords: *Masstige brands, financial value, functional value, individual value, social value, purchase intention, brand familiarity.*

FROM TREND TO TRANSFORMATION: SHOPPING MOTIVATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE BEAUTY PRODUCTS IN PAKISTAN

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Asiya Zaheer and Zehra Mukhtiar, FAST NUCES Karachi (**Manuscript: #1484**)

Abstract/Description:

This research investigates the effects of hedonic (HM) and utilitarian (UM) shopping motivations on green purchase intentions (GPI) for sustainable beauty products in Karachi, with consumer perceived value (PV) acting as a mediator and customer engagement (CE) as a moderator. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Value-Attitude-Behavior (VAB) theory, and Customer Engagement theory, the study involves a quantitative approach. The target population consists of consumers of sustainable beauty and personal care products based in Karachi, Pakistan. Data was collected using a purposive sampling approach using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed via Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

Findings indicate that HM exerts a positively significant influence on both GPI and PV. Conversely, UM negatively affects GPI but has a positive influence on PV. Moreover, PV serves as a significant mediator between HM and GPI, as well as between UM and GPI. Customer engagement (CE) negatively moderates the relationship between PV and GPI, while positively moderates the link between HM and GPI. However, CE does not significantly moderate the association between UM and GPI.

The results suggest that both hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations shape consumers' green purchase intentions, with perceived value and engagement levels playing crucial roles. These insights emphasize the importance of marketing strategies that balance emotional appeal, functional benefits, and active consumer engagement to foster sustainable purchasing behavior.

Keywords: *Sustainable Consumer Behavior, Shopping Motivations, Customer Engagement, Organic Beauty Products, Pakistan.*

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ACTIVITIES AS A CATALYST FOR SUSTAINABLE FAST FASHION: A STUDY OF BRAND LOVE AND CONSUMER BUYING INTENTION

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Rao Aqib Gohar, Iqra University, Pakistan and Minhaj Ikram, Iqra University, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1426**)

Abstract/Description:

This study examines the impact of customer community identification, engagement, and brand love on purchase intention in the context of online sustainable apparel, emphasizing the role of social media marketing (SMM) in Pakistan. Data were collected from 405 Pakistani consumers using a purposive sampling method. Respondents, who purchase clothing via social media, completed a structured online questionnaire. Structural equation modelling was used for data analysis. SMM activities significantly enhance customer engagement. Community identification positively influences engagement, which strongly affects brand love. Brand love, in turn, significantly drives purchase intention. The study contributes to limited research on sustainable fashion and SMM in emerging markets, particularly Pakistan. Sustainable fashion brands can increase customer loyalty and purchasing behavior by fostering community identity and emotional connection through targeted SMM strategies.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing Activities, Sustainable Fast Fashion, Consumer Community identification, Customer engagement, Brand Love and Buying Intention.*

IMPACT OF ECO-DESIGN PACKAGING ON FIRMS' ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE AND MODERATING EFFECT OF GREEN REGULATORY PRACTICES – A CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN'S FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

MALIHA -. KHAQAN MPhil, Greenwich University - Pakistan and Mohammad -. Shaiq Dr, Greenwich University - Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1391**)

Abstract/Description:

Sustainable packaging plays a critical role in mitigating the environmental impact of high carbon footprint food and beverage industry. This study focuses on eco-design aspect of packaging as well as its offline information sharing role on firm's environmental performance. The study employs a quantitative research design, collecting data in a structured online survey from 100 senior and middle management professionals in the food and beverage industry in Pakistan. Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), the results of the study reveal a significant positive relationship between eco-design packaging and environmental performance, confirming that eco-design principles like recyclable material, minimalistic packaging design, reduced hazardous waste and substances, increase sustainability efforts and image. Moreover, the information sharing role of packaging like environmental labelling for transparent communication, also positively impacts firm's environmental performance. However, there is dual moderating effect of green regulatory practices on the relationships. While the impact of eco-design is strengthened on environmental performance, it has a negative moderating effect on information sharing role, indicating inadequate support of regulatory frameworks for packaging as an information sharing tool. The study is unique with respect to the dynamic relationship between variables and results of this study make a valuable contribution as they clearly underscore the need for a comprehensive regulatory framework to be enforced for eco-friendly design, specially to encourage transparency in environmental communication. The study has significant social, managerial and academic implications respectively for environmental impact reduction, strategic decision making, regulatory compliance, enhancing sustainability efforts in emerging markets, and future studies.

Keywords: *eco-design packaging, information sharing role of packaging, firm environmental performance, green regulatory practices, food and beverage industry in Pakistan.*

INTEGRATION OF INDIGENOUS ART AND CRAFT IN SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN BRAND HERITAGE AND PROMOTION OF LOCAL SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN THE FMCG INDUSTRY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Zahid Hussain Mr (Manuscript: #1370)

Abstract/Description:

This study aims to locate sustainable embedded and indigenous art and craft packaging as a mediating mechanism in bridging the gap between brand heritage and promotion of local sustainable practices in the FMCG industry in Karachi, Sindh. In the context of this research, the integration of the cultural aspect into the packaging not only brings the brand's heritage to life but also serves to improve awareness and engagement with the localized sustainability efforts among consumers. 215 respondents, including FMCG brand managers, packaging designers, and sustainability experts from Karachi, were sampled, and the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the data. The findings also point out that brand heritage has a considerable direct influence on the promotion of local sustainable practices. What is more important is that the relational sustainability between CPGs and suppliers can be significantly mediated by indigenous art-integrated sustainable packaging that calls out its cultural, ecological, and market sustainability. This research shows that this mediating mechanism has rarely been empirically tested, yet it is a key potential source of competitive advantage for firms operating in a global setting, particularly in an emerging market such as South Asia. Consequently, this research provides practical implications for FMCG firms who wish to localize sustainability, support circular economies, as well as develop consumer–brand authenticity by adopting culturally rich packaging solutions.

Keywords: *Brand Heritage, Sustainable Packaging, Sustainable Practices, Indigenous Art and Craft, FMC.*

INVESTIGATING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF E-TRUST ON E-SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS AND E-PURCHASE INTENTIONS IN THE E-COMMERCE SECTOR IN PAKISTAN

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Muhammad Haris, KSBL (Manuscript: #1353)

Abstract/Description:

This study investigated the mediating role of e-trust on the relationship between e-service quality dimensions (website efficiency, website system availability, website privacy, and website usability quality) and e-purchase intentions in the e-commerce sector in Pakistan. Using a cross-sectional survey, data were collected from 350 respondents in Karachi through a structured questionnaire. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to test the hypothesized relationships. Results indicated that e-service quality positively influences both e-trust and e-purchase intentions, with e-trust serving as a significant mediator. Among the dimensions, website usability quality demonstrated the strongest influence on consumer trust and purchase behavior, whereas privacy concerns highlighted areas for improvement. The findings underscored the critical role of trust in fostering online consumer engagement and provided actionable insights for e-commerce platforms to enhance service quality and consumer trust. This research offered theoretical contributions to understanding e-commerce consumer behavior and practical guidance for optimizing digital marketing strategies in developing economies like Pakistan. Limitations and future research avenues included exploring additional e-service quality dimensions and conducting longitudinal studies for broader generalization.

Keywords: *E-Service Quality, Website Efficiency, Website System Availability, Website Privacy, Website Usability Quality, E-trust, Online Purchase Intention, E-Commerce, PLS-SEM.*

IMPACT OF SELF-CONSTRUAL ON ETHICALLY MINDED CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN THE PURCHASE OF APPAREL

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Fatima Shahid (**Manuscript: #1411**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose - Purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between self-construal and ethically minded consumer behavior in the purchase of apparel.

Study design/Methodology/ Approach - The research employs a quantitative approach, survey responses were received from 163 participants. This is a work in progress paper, once 300 responses are received Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be done to validate the hypothesis.

Findings- Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was done through principle component analysis with varimax rotation. KMO = 0.863; Bartlett's Test $p < 0.001$ which shows sample adequacy and suitability for factor analysis. All communalities were above 0.50, and five factors accounted for 63.41% variance which indicates a strong and meaningful factor structure

Research limitations/implications – This is a work in progress study hence only Exploratory Factor Analysis is done.

Practical implications – Findings from this study can be used to make marketing strategies for ethically minded consumers, while taking into account self-construal, attitude and social norms.

Social implications – By identifying the psychological drivers of ethical buying behavior this study can help to guide sustainable consumption patterns in the apparel industry.

Keywords: *Self-Construal, Ethically minded Consumer, Apparel, Attitude, Social Norms.*

GENDER LENS INVESTING AND SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURIAL MARKETING: A NEW PARADIGM FOR WOMEN-LED STARTUPS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Mehwish Jaweed (**Manuscript: #1448**)

Abstract/Description:

This study explores the intersection of Gender Lens Investing (GLI) and Sustainable Entrepreneurial Marketing (SEM) to assess their combined impact on the performance of women-led startups. As global economies increasingly prioritize gender equity and environmental sustainability, GLI has emerged as a strategic financing approach that empowers women entrepreneurs while promoting inclusive growth. Simultaneously, SEM practices enable startups to align their branding, communication, and operations with sustainability goals, responding to the growing demand for ethical and eco-conscious consumption. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from 200 women-led startups across emerging economies. A structured questionnaire, adapted from validated instruments, was employed to measure perceptions of GLI, implementation of sustainable marketing practices, and indicators of business performance. The study proposes and empirically tests a conceptual model wherein SEM mediates the relationship between GLI and startup success. The findings

reveal that GLI not only facilitates financial access for women entrepreneurs but also encourages the integration of sustainability values into marketing strategies. SEM, in turn, significantly enhances startup performance in terms of revenue growth, customer loyalty, and brand equity. These results highlight the synergistic effect of GLI and SEM, suggesting that investor emphasis on gender equality and sustainability can drive long-term entrepreneurial success.

Keywords: *Gender Lens Investing (GLI); Sustainable Marketing; Women Entrepreneurs; Entrepreneurial Marketing; Startup Success; Sustainability; Inclusive Growth.*

ASSESSING AD RECALL IN NON-SKIPPABLE PRE-ROLL YOUTUBE ADVERTISEMENTS IN HUMOROUS AND EDUCATIONAL VIDEO CONTEXTS FEATURING A NEUTRAL AD

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Syeda Umyma Faiz, Omaama Khan, Emaan Ayaz, Ayesha Afzal and Momina Imran, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi (**Manuscript: #1460**)

Abstract/Description:

This study explores how video context, humorous versus educational, impacts viewer recall of neutral, non-skippable pre-roll YouTube ads. Grounded in the Limited Capacity Model of Motivated Mediated Messages (LC4MP), it examines the role of cognitive load and content congruence in ad memory retention. A mixed-methods design was employed: focus groups (N=14) revealed viewer experiences and recall patterns, while an experiment (N=100) tested recall after exposure to a neutral Ghirardelli ad shown before either a humorous clip (Brooklyn Nine-Nine) or an educational documentary.

Qualitative findings indicated greater irritation with ads during goal-oriented educational content, though pre-rolls were less disruptive than mid-rolls. Recall was shaped by visual appeal, narrative engagement, and personal relevance, with VPN usage increasing ad annoyance. Quantitative analysis (factor analysis, ANOVA, regression) identified constructs like Ad Engagement and Ad-Video Congruence, but none significantly predicted recall outcomes. Visual elements (brand name, product, packaging) were more memorable than auditory ones (music, tagline).

These findings emphasize the complex interaction between cognitive processing, media context, and ad effectiveness. While statistical predictors were limited, qualitative insights suggest advertisers should align ad tone with content and focus on strong visual design to optimize non-skippable ad performance.

Keywords: *Ad Recall, Non-Skippable Ads, YouTube Advertising, Video Context, Cognitive Load, Context Congruence.*

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIGITAL MARKETING (DM) TOOLS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PAKISTANI MICROBUSINESSES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Misbah Amin Ms., Dr. Irfan Butt and Khola Modi, Institute of Business Administration (IBA) (**Manuscript: #1472**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose:

Current research evaluates the effectiveness of digital marketing tools from the perspectives of Pakistani microbusinesses. The study performs an extensive literature review and developed a conceptual framework based on technology acceptance model and theory of planned behavior.

Methodology:

The study adopts a mixed method in which both qualitative & quantitative methods are included. The qualitative research included one focus group and two interviews. Thematic analysis is performed and presented. The quantitative research involved data collection using a deductive approach, and online survey data collection method from a sample of 98 respondents.

Findings:

The data was cleaned and analyzed using SPSS. Frequency analysis, chi-square and cross-tab analysis are presented. The analysis reveals Facebook (50.7%) and Instagram (20.3%) are found highly effective for business promotion. Social media platforms (77.3%) most effective for achieving marketing goals. Facebook ads (54.3%) and Instagram ads (26.1%) lead in conversion rates. Google Analytics (38.6%) and SEO tools (47.7%) effective for increasing website traffic. Social media (77.9%) most effective in lead generation.

Originality or Value: The data collected is original.

Research Implications or limitations:

Small sample size due to limited time to collect data. Collected sample using convenience sampling technique due to accessibility issues. Data had a greater sample of females in both; focus group and quantitative survey. This may inculcate biases in the analysis

Keywords: *Digital Marketing (DM) Tools, Pakistani Microbusinesses.*

EMOTIONAL BRANDING & CONSUMER INSIGHTS: THE ROLE OF DOPPELGÄNGER BRAND IMAGES (DBI)

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Kainaat Zulfiqar, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1434**)

Abstract/Description:

This review paper aims to provide a detailed understanding of what are doppelgänger brand images (DBIs), their impact on brands across multiple industries, and how they influence consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior. DBIs emerge as a paradoxical consequence of emotional branding strategies, challenging the authenticity of a brand's emotional narrative. This phenomenon can turn a brand's most loyal customers, who were once its 'best friends,' into its 'worst enemies' when the brand deviates from its initial promises and claims (Geisler, 2012). DBIs serve as early warning signs for brands, indicating potential upcoming failures in their emotional branding strategies. By recognizing these signs, brands can refine their approaches to avoid major backlash from consumers. This paper includes a detailed analysis of emotional branding strategies applied in an eight-year longitudinal investigation of Botox Cosmetic (Geisler, 2012). This case study will illustrate how DBIs are formed, how they function, and how the brand successfully overcame them using effective strategic tools.

Overcoming DBIs results in the process of market creation (Geisler, 2012), where brands must legitimize their authenticity to consumers. This review paper adopts a consumer-centric approach to understanding DBIs, their formation, and their consequences. It is based on the article Impact of Doppelgänger Brand Image on Consumer Behavior by Shivangi Mishra, Shivika Marwah, Manu Sreelatha Subby, and Neha Prusti, published in the International Journal of Management and Humanities (IJMH) in November 2020. The purpose of this review is to add to this article's understanding of DBIs by not

only looking at them from a consumer-centric approach, but also from the view-point of other stakeholders, like managers and business owners.

Keywords: *Doppelgänger brand images, marketing strategies, authenticity, emotional branding, market creation stakeholders, consumer behavior, consumer-centric approach.*

FROM LOVE TO ACTION: HOW BRAND LOVE DRIVES ENGAGEMENT AND COBRAS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Adan Asif, institute of Business Management (**Manuscript: #1493**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: This study investigates the role of brand love in shaping Consumers' Online Brand-Related Activities (COBRAs) while examining the mediating role of brand engagement and the moderating influence of brand value.

Methodology: A quantitative research approach was adopted, involving 250 respondents selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using a structured online survey and analyzed using SPSS for statistical analysis, including regression and correlation tests.

Findings: Results reveal that brand love significantly impacts COBRAs both directly and indirectly through brand engagement. Additionally, brand value moderates the relationship between brand engagement and COBRAs, amplifying consumer participation. These findings highlight the critical interplay between emotional, cognitive, and perceived value factors in online consumer behavior.

Originality/Value: This study contributes to existing literature by providing a comprehensive framework integrating brand love, engagement, and value in the context of COBRAs, specifically within the food sector, offering valuable insights for interactive marketing strategies.

Keywords: *Brand love, Attitudinal brand engagement, Online brand-related activities, COBRAs, Brand value, Online consumer behaviour, social media platforms, User-generated content, UGC, Food companies.*

INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ADVERTISEMENT USING SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS VERSUS CELEBRITIES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Shugufta Shoaib, SZABIST University, and Jawaid Qureshi (**Manuscript: #1495**)

Abstract/Description:

The advent of social media has brought about a substantial change in the way of businesses' advertisement style. Traditionally, companies used to depend on celebrities to advertise their products and services for maximizing their customer reach. However, the rise of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc., has changed advertising trends. This is due to the fact that social media influencers have become a prevailing instrument for businesses to market their products to a wider range of people. People often see them as more relatable and trustworthy now. So, this has ultimately increased the collaboration of businesses with the social media influencers more than celebrities. Hence, it has led to a significant shift in advertising trends, with businesses increasingly turning towards social media influencers to reach their target audience. A few studies have been examined how famous personalities like influencers and celebrities can change the behavior of followers.

This study examines the effectiveness of advertisements by inquiring how organizations use social media influencers and celebrities' trustworthiness, attractiveness and expertise to influence consumers' attitude. Hence, this study is conducted to see the change in advertisement style from celebrities to social media influencers in Pakistani context. The population of the study comprises of university students doing jobs too and industry professionals. A survey experiment was conducted by using a convenience sampling method. Data was analyzed through SPSS and AMOS, while AMOS is considered as a robust software for SEM. The results demonstrate that both celebrities and social media influencers altogether affect promotions. Advertisements with celebrities and 'popular' social media influencers significantly and positively affect attitude towards advertisements. Advertisements affect source credibility with attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness of celebrities and social media influencers affect attitude towards advertisements. Source credibility with attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness mediate the relationship between advertisements and attitude towards advertisements. This study's implications will bring a change in the advertising landscape, because marketers can rely not only on celebrities for conventional advertising but 'popular' social media influencers for advertising, branding, and promotional strategies.

Keywords: *Social Media, Social Media Influencer, Celebrities, Source Credibility, Attractiveness, Expertise, Trustworthiness.*

SWAY OF GEN Z'S FOOD FAVORABILITY FACTORS ON THEIR PURCHASE INTENTION: A STUDY FROM PAKISTAN

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Wajiha Saghir Dr., Dow University of Health Sciences (**Manuscript: #1405**)

Abstract/Description:

This study investigates the impact of food favorability characteristics on the purchase intention of Gen Z consumers, namely food attribute, social endorsement, affordability, environment, and food standard with a mediating role of Gen Z's attitude. To analyze data acquired from a sample of Gen Z individuals, a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) technique is used. The results show that there are strong positive connections between food favorability characteristics and purchase intent. According to the overall effects, food favorability has a significant impact on purchase intention, with food standard and social endorsement having the largest relationships. These associations are further supported by the correlation coefficients, emphasizing the relevance of good impressions in generating purchase intention. The findings highlight the need of catering to Gen Z customers' tastes and beliefs in the food sector, such as promoting positive food attributes, social endorsement, affordability, environmental sustainability, and high food standards. These findings can help marketers and policymakers build focused tactics that appeal with Gen Z customers and increase their purchase intent.

Keywords: *Food Favorability, Attribute, Social endorsement, Affordability, Environment, Standard, Attitude, Purchase Intention, Consumer Behavior.*

ETHICAL AI IN BUSINESS: LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR PEOPLE-CENTERED TRANSFORMATION

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Hassan Arif Siddiqui, Department of Business Administration, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University of Veterinary and Animal Science, Sakrand;

Javed Ahmed, Department of Business Administration, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Nawabshah;

Zehra Abdul Ahad, Department of ORIC, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Shaheed Benazirabad (**Manuscript: #1384**)

Abstract/Description:

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into business operations has ushered in a new era of innovation, efficiency, and growth, enabling organizations to streamline processes, enhance decision-making, and unlock new revenue streams. However, the widespread adoption of AI also brings with it significant ethical challenges that must be addressed. These concerns include algorithmic bias, data privacy infringements, lack of transparency in decision-making, and the displacement of human workers due to automation. These challenges have raised critical questions about how AI can be implemented in a way that not only advances business goals but also aligns with broader societal values and ethical principles. This study aims to explore the role of ethical AI in driving people-centered transformation in businesses. By employing a mixed-methods research design, this study investigates the ethical dilemmas businesses encounter during AI implementation and the strategies they adopt to address these concerns. The research is divided into two components: qualitative case study analysis and quantitative survey data collection. The qualitative component involves an in-depth analysis of three case studies from diverse industries, including healthcare, finance, and retail, where AI technologies are currently being implemented. These case studies provide real-world insights into the ethical challenges faced by businesses and the mechanisms used to mitigate these challenges. The quantitative component consists of a survey administered to 250 business leaders and AI professionals across various sectors. The survey aims to capture data on their awareness of ethical AI principles, the ethical challenges they encounter, and the steps taken to implement AI responsibly within their organizations. The findings from both the case studies and the survey are used to develop a comprehensive framework for ethical AI governance. This framework emphasizes the importance of aligning AI deployment with principles of fairness, accountability, transparency, and inclusivity. The research proposes that businesses must take a holistic approach to AI implementation, incorporating both technical efficiency and ethical considerations, to ensure that AI contributes to people-centered transformation. By focusing on equity and social responsibility, the study provides valuable insights into how businesses can use AI to drive positive, sustainable change while minimizing the risks of harm.

Keywords: *Ethical AI, People-Centered Transformation, Business Ethics, AI Implementation, Fairness and Transparency.*

IMPULSIVE BUYING IN THE DIGITAL AGE: OMNICHANNEL USAGE AND PAYMENT METHOD PREFERENCE

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Muhammad Bilal Ahmad, Hailey College of Banking & Finance, University of the Punjab, Lahore; Adia Tallat, Hailey College of Banking & Finance, University of the Punjab, Lahore; and Fizza Rizvi, Hailey College of Banking & Finance, University of the Punjab, Lahore (**Manuscript: #1499**)

Abstract/Description:

Background: As shopping increasingly evolves across digital and physical platforms, consumers are more frequently exposed to triggers impulse purchases. Omnichannel strategies allow users to switch seamlessly between apps, websites, and stores, while social media algorithms deliver personalized shopping content through influencers and targeted ads. In this environment, impulsiveness becomes more likely, particularly when financial friction is reduced through credit card options, installments, and BNPL services. Despite increased research on impulsive buying behavior, limited attention has been given to how these technological and psychological factors interact. This study fills that gap by exploring the cumulative impact of omnichannel engagement, social media impulsiveness, normative evaluation, and payment methods on impulsive buying.

Purpose: This study aims to explore how omnichannel usage and digital payment preferences influence impulsive buying behavior in today's hyperconnected retail landscape. The research specifically investigates the role of social networking

impulsiveness and normative evaluation as mediating and moderating factors respectively. With the emergence of payment technologies such as Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) and the growth of social commerce, understanding how these trends shape spontaneous consumer decisions is increasingly important for marketers, policy makers, and behavioral researchers.

Design / Methodology / Approach: A quantitative research methodology was adopted. Structured questionnaires were administered in two phases to consumers experienced in shopping through multiple channels and familiar with various digital payment methods. The constructs measured included impulsive buying behavior, social networking impulsiveness, omnichannel usage, normative evaluation, and payment preferences. Data collection followed a convenience sampling technique.

Data was analyzed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), an ideal approach for exploring complex models involving latent variables. SPSS was used for descriptive statistics, and multigroup analysis was conducted to compare the impact of payment preferences (cash vs. credit card) across online and in-store shopping.

Findings: Omnichannel usage significantly influences impulsive buying. Consumers exposed to diverse retail platforms are more susceptible to spontaneous purchases due to constant stimulation and ease of access.

Social networking impulsiveness is also a predictor of impulsive buying, particularly when consumers engage with personalized content, influencers, and algorithmically recommended products.

No mediation effect was found between omnichannel usage and impulsive buying via social network impulsiveness. This indicates that while both variables independently influence buying behavior, they do not form a causal chain as initially hypothesized.

Normative evaluation moderates the impact of social networking impulsiveness on impulsive buying. Consumers with stronger personal or societal value frameworks are better equipped to resist social-media-induced impulsivity.

Payment preferences impact impulsivity, with BNPL and credit card users showing a higher tendency toward impulsive buying compared to cash users. These methods reduce the psychological barrier of immediate expense, making it easier for consumers to justify unplanned purchases.

Research Limitations / Implications: While the study provides important insights, it has several limitations:

The use of convenience sampling may affect the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. The study relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to biases such as social desirability or memory distortion. The cross-sectional nature of the research does not allow for causal inferences or the analysis of behavior over time.

Future research could benefit from longitudinal or experimental designs to better understand how impulsive buying evolves. Including additional psychological constructs like Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) or compulsive buying tendencies could offer even deeper insights. Cross-cultural studies would also help determine how different demographics or cultural norms shape impulsive buying in omnichannel settings.

Practical Implications: For Marketers: The results confirm the effectiveness of omnichannel strategies in enhancing engagement and sales. However, ethical boundaries must be maintained to avoid exploiting consumer impulsivity. Tools like spending trackers, product delay timers, and reflective prompts could help balance engagement with consumer well-being.

For Retailers: The significant role of payment preferences in impulsive buying suggests that offering installment-based options can increase conversions. However, over-reliance on such schemes may risk encouraging financial irresponsibility among consumers.

Keywords: *Impulsive Buying, Omnichannel, Digital Age.*

LEADERSHIP STRUGGLES AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE: ANALYZING THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Almaas Pervez, PhD Student (Leadership and Management) and Dr. Muhammad Zia-ur-Rehman, HOD (Leadership and Management), National Defence University, Islamabad (**Manuscript: #1431**)

Abstract/Description:

This research explores leadership struggles within organizations, particularly during periods of crisis. By examining challenges such as goal misalignment, unclear priorities, accountability issues, and lack of focus, this study provides insights into how leadership practices can impact organizational efficiency. Using a qualitative approach, 12 corporate leaders were interviewed, and themes related to leadership struggles and strategies for overcoming them were identified. A framework based on the findings is presented to guide future leadership practices. The study contributes to the field by highlighting the role of shared leadership, existential leadership, and organizational resilience in navigating difficult times.

Keywords: *Corporate Leadership, Shared Leadership, Organizational Resilience, Leadership Struggles, Accountability.*

TRAPPED AT THE TOP: WHEN LEADERS' FEAR SERVE AS A BARRIER TO THRIVING LEADERSHIP

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Dr Wasim Abbas Awan, Bahria University Karachi Campus (BUKC); Hina Amin and Sana Riaz, SZABIST University Ghara Campus (**Manuscript: #1425**)

Abstract/Description:

Information channels are increasingly widening with the crazy growth of the Internet and mobile social media. Meanwhile, the well-versed concept known as the FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) has also made inroads into the professional life. Despite being explored in work contexts with a focus on employees' FOMO, understanding of leaders' FOMO and its consequences is lacking. The present study seeks to analyze the relation of leaders' FOMO and thrive at work, using transactional stress theory. A data of 202 respondents in IT industry of Pakistan were compiled using convenience sampling. The findings irradiate the mediating role of hindrance stress in relations between leaders' FOMO and thrive at work. Also, the study finds the moderating role of role breadth self-efficacy in relation between leaders' FOMO and hindrance stress. This research extends the larger understanding of workplace FOMO, expanding the scope of investigation by unpacking the differential impact of leaders' FOMO on their job-related outcomes. The paper then provides implications and future work.

Keywords: *Leaders' FoMO, hindrance stress, thrive at work, role breadth, self-efficacy, IT industry, Pakistan.*

HOW DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP LEADS TO ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT? MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEES' TRUST IN LEADER AND MOTIVATION

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Qurat Imran, Iqra University, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1497**)

Abstract/Description:

Based on social exchange theory, this study examines the effect of distributed leadership on employees' organizational commitment. Further, investigates the mediating role of employees' trust in leader and motivation between distributed leadership on employees' organizational commitment. This study adopted a quantitative research strategy and collected data through questionnaire from 634 employees working in the education sector of Pakistan. Results shows that distributed leadership positively influence organizational commitment. Moreover, employees' trust in leader and motivation mediates the relationship between distributed leadership and employees' organizational commitment. This study extended the leadership and organization commitment literature by adding new mechanism (i.e., employees' trust in leaders and motivation). Implications, limitations and future directions are also discussed.

Keywords: *Distributed leadership; trust in leader; employee motivation; organizational commitment; social exchange theory.*

EVALUATING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP'S ROLE IN ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE THROUGH GREEN HRM: EVIDENCE FROM PAKISTAN

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Abida Shaheen and Ume Sumayya (**Manuscript: #1410**)

Abstract/Description:

This study seeks to examine the extent to which Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices contribute to Green Organizational Performance, with Green Employee Engagement serving as a mediating variable and Sustainable Leadership acting as a moderating factor. Amid the current economic downturn, achieving Green Organizational Performance has emerged as a global priority, with green initiatives increasingly recognized as the most effective means to attain this objective. Because of the increased attention this issue has received from regulators and recent research, the current study looked at sustainable leadership role in implementing Green Human Resource Management practices in banks of Karachi. An investigation was conducted into the moderating effect of perceived Sustainable leadership role on the relationship between Green Human Resource Management practices, Green Employee Engagement, and Green Organizational Performance in banking sector of Karachi. The smart PLS-SEM was used to test the hypotheses after the questionnaires approach was employed to gather data. The findings showed a strong and direct correlation between Green Human Resource Management (GHRM), Green Employee Engagement (GEE), Sustainable Leadership (SL), and Green Organizational performance of banking sector in Karachi. The results also showed that the relationship between all the variables strongly moderated by organizational support. In addition to guiding future researchers on this area, the current research assists regulators in developing policies.

Keywords: *Green HRM, Sustainable Leadership, Employee Engagement.*

EXPLORING CHALLENGES OF TRANSFORMATION FROM TRADITIONAL HR TO TALENT MANAGEMENT IN PHARMACEUTICAL SECTOR OF KARACHI

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Huma Hanif and Dr Muhammad Azam Ramay, Ziauddin University (**Manuscript: #1392**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: This study explores the barriers hindering the transformation from traditional HR practices to modern talent management in Pakistan's Karachi-based pharmaceutical sector. It identifies key challenges and proposes mitigation strategies to facilitate this transition.

Design/methodology/approach: This research study possesses an interpretive framework. The qualitative data was collected through interviews with 35 corporate employees and HR experts from multinational and local pharmaceutical firms. The content analysis technique was utilized to synthesize themes, followed by focus group discussions to validate findings.

Findings: The study identifies four primary barriers: structural rigidity, resource scarcity, cultural resistance, and operational inefficiency. These challenges stem from outdated administrative focus, poor communication, and lack of strategic alignment. Mitigation strategies include agile restructuring, resource optimization, cultural alignment, and process streamlining, supported by transformational leadership.

Practical implications: The findings provide actionable insights for organizations seeking to modernize HR practices, emphasizing the need for leadership commitment, employee engagement, and technology adoption. The study also highlights alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8, 9, and 13.

Originality/value: This research contributes to HR literature by contextualizing transformation challenges in a developing economy, offering a framework tailored to cultural and structural nuances. It bridges the gap between global HR models and local realities, providing empirical evidence for policymakers and practitioners.

Keywords: *Traditional HR, Talent Management, HR Transformation, Pharmaceutical Sector, Pakistan, SDGs.*

FROM DIVERSITY TO PROACTIVENESS: UNVEILING THE PATH THROUGH CARING CLIMATE AND POSITIVE AFFECT

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Khola Modi, Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1397**)

Abstract/Description:

This cross-sectional study design seeks to explore relationship between Diversity oriented HRM and the various organizational outcomes of caring climate, positive affect, and employee proactiveness. Other control variables such as age, gender, tenure, education etc have also been included to isolate specific impacts of DHRM. The approach is important in realizing the potential benefits of diversity oriented (DHRM) practices and also contributes to the understanding of roles that the workforce engages in.

Keywords: *Diversity oriented HRM, caring climate, caring climate, positive affect, employee proactiveness.*

FAMILY FIRM INTERNATIONALIZATION AND ROLE OF CONTEXTUAL RESOURCE AVAILABILITY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Dr. Kanza Sohail, Dr. Sana Tauseef and Dr. Yasir Kundi, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi (**Manuscript: #1520**)

Abstract/Description:

The current body of research has highlighted the importance of familiness in firm performance and internationalization but the specific firm-level conditions, and the role of contextual resources in the form of government support are largely

unexplored. To address the gap, this study attempts to extend the conceptualization of the Resource-based view (RBV) at the industry level by proposing government support as an essential, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resource that grants competitive advantage to the industry. Using the sample of 100 family firms listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), findings reveal that contextual support, especially in the form of resource availability from government plays an important role in family firm internationalization. Furthermore, it was identified that firm performance, profit retention, and leverage are key boundary conditions for family involvement and internationalization in the absence of government support. The study has important theoretical and practical implications for future researchers, policymakers, and family firms.

Keywords: *Family involvement, internationalization, Resource-based view, textile industry, firm-level resources.*

NAVIGATING REGIONAL TRADE COMPLEXITIES BETWEEN PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN AND UNITED KINGDOM-IRELAND: ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND ETHNICITY IN SHAPING SHARED DILEMMAS ACROSS DIVERSE REGIONS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Shah Rukh Hashmi Dr., and Umme Farwa Ms., Sukkur IBA University (**Manuscript: #1549**)

Abstract/Description:

Transforming into a highly integrated global trade system, International Trade is vital for nourishing countries' economies. Trade has been a cornerstone of economic growth and global development. However, regional complexities in trade sometimes cause damage to countries' economic growth. This paper compares the complexities; shared ethnicities across borders, and legal dilemmas of bilateral trade between Pakistan-Afghanistan and the post-Brexit United Kingdom-Ireland. It sheds light on how these two pole-apart regions are victims of transit trade and how their economies suffer owing to their shared ethnic identities. Explaining the historical background, the role of international law, and relations among masses of both cases the study looks for mutual solutions. With the framework of ethnicity as compulsion and international law as an obligation the paper explores the central question; how shared ethnicity between countries, and international law bind states into a relation that hampers national and regional ties, how historical patterns and national compulsions compress nations not to formulate strong trade policies to check illegal transit trade in their respective regions; and finally how illegal trade adversely affects economies.

Keywords: *Transit Trade, Pakistan, Afghanistan, UK-Ireland.*

INVESTIGATING KNOWLEDGE HIDING BEHAVIOR THROUGH THE LENS OF SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Sadaf Choudhary (**Manuscript: #1368**)

Abstract/Description:

In this competitive environment an organization's success is based on how knowledge is acquired and exchanged among employees. Informal structure among employees is more significant for knowledge exchange. Social network of individuals represents the informal structure of a unit. Every individual in a network holds a certain position which depicts his/her social ties, influence, power and resourcefulness. Network density and network centrality are the most common measures to identify the network position an individual holds within a specific network. Limited research is conducted in exploring knowledge hiding behavior from social network perspective. Therefore, this study has selected social network positions

depicting informal structure of knowledge intensive teams to investigate the knowledge hiding behavior. Furthermore, the relationship between network density and knowledge hiding, mediated by trust will be examined. These relationships between social network positions and knowledge hiding behavior will be studied quantitatively using a survey method. The results of the study will fill the theoretical and contextual gap in the literature of knowledge hiding by investigating it through the lens of social network analysis.

Keywords: *Ego-centric network, network density, network centrality, social network analysis, knowledge hiding.*

THE IMPACT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN BLUE-COLLAR WORKFORCE AND THEIR TEAM EFFECTIVENESS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Mushtaque Ali and Mustaghis Ur Rahman Dr, Bahria University, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1537**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: This study investigates the role of psychological safety in enhancing team effectiveness among blue-collar employees. Focusing on the manufacturing sector in Pakistan, it examines how a supportive work environment, where employees feel safe to express ideas and take interpersonal risks, fosters collaboration, trust, and overall team performance in their employment life cycle.

Study Design/Methodology: The research employs a quantitative approach. Through the Psychological Safety Survey (PSI) - 2023 and Team Effectiveness (LIL)-2020, 5-Point Likert surveys data were collected from 215 blue-collar workers from various manufacturing units. Statistical analysis, including regression models, was utilised to identify relationships between Psychological Safety and Team Effectiveness.

Findings: The study reveals a significant positive correlation between psychological safety and team effectiveness in the blue-collar life cycle. Teams with high psychological safety demonstrated improved communication, higher productivity, and better problem-solving capabilities. The results also highlight cultural and structural challenges in creating psychologically safe environments within blue-collar workplaces in Pakistan.

Originality/Value: This research addresses a critical gap by focusing on psychological safety within blue-collar workforces in a developing country context. It contributes to the broader literature by providing empirical evidence on the unique dynamics of psychological safety and team performance in labour-intensive industries with workers' employment life cycle.

Practical Implications: The findings emphasise the need for management practices prioritising psychological safety through training, leadership development, and policy interventions. Organisations can enhance team effectiveness by fostering environments where workers feel valued, respected, and confident in their ability to voice concerns or share ideas in the blue-collar workforce.

Social Implications: Improving psychological safety in blue-collar workplaces can improve employee well-being, reduce workplace conflicts, and enhance organisational cohesion. This research underscores the broader societal benefits of equitable and inclusive workplace practices, paving the way for sustainable industrial growth in Pakistan and similar economies.

Keywords: *Psychological Safety, Blue- Collar Workforce, Team Effectiveness.*

IMPACT OF WORKPLACE OSTRACISM ON NEXT DAY'S WORK ENGAGEMENT: A QUANTITATIVE DAILY DIARY STUDY OF NON-STANDARD EMPLOYEES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Gulshan Imam Baksh and Dr. Yasir Mansoor Kundi, Institute of Business Administration (IBA) (**Manuscript: #1379**)

Abstract/Description:

This quantitative diary study investigated the daily impact of workplace ostracism on next-day work engagement among Non-Standard employees for example project based or 3rd party employees. Utilizing Bayesian multilevel modeling, the study examined the mediating roles of emotional dissonance and daily resources like physical strength and emotional energy. Findings revealed that daily experiences of ostracism significantly impacted emotional dissonance, which in turn depleted both physical strength and emotional energy. The study highlights the daily resource depletion pathway through which exclusion at person level undermines Work engagement.

Keywords: *Workplace ostracism, non-standard employees, conservation of resources theory, emotional dissonance, work engagement, daily diary study, Bayesian multilevel modeling.*

IS THERE MORE? A DEEP DIVE INTO THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SOCIOEMOTIONAL WEALTH THROUGH EXPLORATORY QUALITATIVE STUDY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Asma Abdul Rahim Chang, Shaheed Zulifkar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology, Sarah Wali Qazi, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan

Mahvish Kanwal Khaskhely, Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, Jamshoro (**Manuscript: #1453**)

Abstract/Description:

The study adopted an in-depth qualitative approach to explore the family firm owners' and managers' perception about socioemotional wealth with the intent to uncover more factors that may fill in the missing gaps in the construct. Using purposive sampling, 13 semi-structured interviews were conducted with private family firm owners and managers. We found that each family has a different perception of socioemotional wealth depending on different family dynamics. The thematic analysis revealed many additional factors such as CEO or the key figurehead's age and marital status, the interest level of family firms, the family environment at home, and the relationship with extended family that influence the extent of socioemotional wealth for different family firms. We also came across some interesting findings, such as the dimensions like binding social ties and identification of family members with the firm may not even be applicable in the Pakistani context or may have a different understanding. The study also addressed the misconception that all dimensions may have an equal valence. We conclude that more work may be needed to re-conceptualize and re-operationalize the socioemotional wealth construct.

Keywords: *Socioemotional wealth, SEW, family firm, family businesses, entrepreneurship.*

DEVELOPMENTAL FEEDBACK: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW FOR ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Faiza Channa, Gul Afshan and Shafaq Maqsood, Sukkur IBA (**Manuscript: #1420**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to gain insights into existing empirical studies on developmental feedback. It categorizes the antecedents and consequences of developmental feedback, in the dimension of performance management.

Study design/methodology/approach: This study undertakes a systematic literature review of articles published in Google Scholar (Emerald, Taylor and Francis, Wiley, Sage, Springer, Elsevier). The search result generated 168 articles.

Findings Based on the inclusion criteria some of the themes were generated. New insights were gained from the analysis of 35 articles related to developmental feedback in the context of performance which advances our understanding of different categories of antecedents and consequences of developmental feedback.

Originality/value: This is a systematic review that suggests the evolution of developmental feedback over time and the potential research gaps. As there is no systematic literature review available on developmental feedback, this research contributes to the field in this way.

Research limitations/implications: The author has provided a future research agenda in the context of performance management. Future studies may investigate the role of different categories of antecedents and consequences, the influence of different types of feedback to enhance the performance of employees.

Practical implications: This paper offers deep insights into literature of developmental feedback which is useful for both practitioners and scholars in thinking about the factors that may be critical for managing performance.

Social implications: This study provides guidelines for the managers in terms of enhancing performance through feedback and developing employees in the organizations which enhances growth of the organization.

Keywords: *Developmental feedback, Continuous feedback, Frequent feedback, Ongoing feedback, Real time feedback, employee feedback, performance feedback.*

REMOTE WORKING: SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Shafaq Maqsood, Gul Afshan and Faiza Channa, Sukkur IBA University (**Manuscript: #1458**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to consolidate existing literature on Remote Working (RW). It categorizes the antecedents and consequences of Remote Working. Additionally, the study also examines key authors, prominent journals, emerging trends in the context of remote working.

Study design/methodology/approach: This study considers a systematic literature review of articles published in Elsevier and Springer. Review was proceeded with key terms “Remote Work”, “Virtual Work”, “Work at Home”.

Findings: After applicability of inclusion criteria several core themes emerged, 36 articles relevant to remote working in empirical studies were considered relevant for review. Helped in understanding antecedents, consequences, relevant journal, authors, and trends related to remote working.

Originality/value: This study offers a novel contribution by systematically doing literature review on remote working. It highlights specific trends in context of remote working. Also, examines remote working relevancy in antecedents and consequences.

Research limitations/implications: Key limitations of the study is that the study relied on specific key terms. Besides, it limits the broader scope of Remote Working. Future studies might consider diverse key terms to be explored.

Practical implications: This paper provides diverse literature and scope for various researchers. It has several managerial implications for practitioners. It provides relevant applicability of remote working in different contexts.

Social implications: This study provides pathway for the managers in applicability and relevancy of remote working in the organizations which shows crucial contribution in digital era.

Keywords: *Remote Work, Virtual Work, Work at Home, Online Work Environment.*

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Umme Farwa Ulro UFU and Gul Afshan, Sukkur IBA University (**Manuscript: #1469**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to harmonize the scattered literature on performance management of these employees (PME) and the hospitality industry across numerous countries, thereby augmenting the literature breadth and fashioning a gap. Next, it takes care of information on how much scholarly work has concentrated on considering scholarly work in the interrelatedness of the concepts mentioned above.

Design/methodology/approach: A congruent literature search was undertaken using key search items: “employee performance” and” hospitality sector.” Additionally, this paper is unique in that it focuses on the concept of performance management for employees in the hospitality sector (536) or hospitality industry (1000).

Findings: Based on the analysis of fifteen different articles related to the theme of performance management in the hospitality industry, a clear insight will help academicians and practitioners to get a deeper view of performance management through this review paper.

Originality: This is a systematic review that suggests the evolution of developmental feedback with the passage of time and research gaps. This paper is unique in that it focuses on the concept of performance management for employees in the hospitality sector or hospitality industry. As there is less literature review is present on this topic so this paper will provide a comprehensive insight from present literature in summarized form.

Research Limitations/Implications: This paper will assist researchers and managers to understand how performance management is taking place in the hospitality industry. Further, how the tools can better be used in future for measuring the performance of employees in the best possible manner.

Practical Implications: This paper offers deep insights into literature of performance management which is useful for both academicians and practitioners in thinking about the factors that can help in performance management.

Social Implications: This study contributes for the guidance of managers in terms of enhancing performance by analyzing performance management in hospitality industry and exalt performance of employees in hospitality industry.

Keywords: *Performance management, Performance management of employees, hospitality sector, or hospitality industry.*

NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL SHIFT: HOW AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP AND AI FOSTER SUSTAINABLE WORK-LIFE BALANCE FOR EMPLOYEES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Shahida Jahangir Niazi, Virtual University, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1496**)

Abstract/Description:

This research reveals how AI's integration into workplace is far-reaching and has potential to greatly enhance employee's ability to balance work and personal life in presence of effective leadership. Extensive research has explored the benefits of AI in enhancing workplace efficiency, yet its implications on human elements, such as work-life balance, remain underexplored (Korteling et al., 2021, Zhang et al., 2021). These studies also reveal that while AI-driven systems reduce manual workloads, they may inadvertently lead to an "always-on" culture. Existing literature underscores the necessity of aligning AI capabilities with organizational values to foster a supportive environment (Xu et al., 2021). Moreover, Artificial Intelligence (AI) enhances effective leadership by providing data-driven insights, automating repetitive tasks, and improving team management. AI tools like predictive analytics help managers to overcome challenges, allocate resources efficiently, and create strategies that support work-life balance and employee satisfaction. (Yannick Peifer, 2022). This study seeks to explore all types of complexities, focusing on how AI can enhance work-life balance by assisting authentic leadership positively.

Keywords: *Authentic Leadership, Work-Life Balance, Artificial Intelligence, transformational leadership, leadership effectiveness.*

FOSTERING INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR THROUGH EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: A STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE FROM THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Mahira Answer, Zoha Khalid, and Dr. Samina Qasim, Bahria University (**Manuscript: #1516**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: This study explores how empowering leadership and an innovative organizational culture influence employees' innovative work behavior. It also examines whether perceived organizational support plays a role in linking these factors to innovation at work.

Study Design: The research followed a quantitative, cross-sectional design and used a deductive approach. Data was gathered from 200 employees working in pharmaceutical companies based in Karachi, using purposive sampling. SPSS and Smart PLS 4 were used to analyze the responses.

Findings: The results show that both empowering leadership and a culture that supports innovation significantly contribute to encouraging innovative behavior among employees. Perceived organizational support also positively impacts innovation. However, its mediating role between leadership, culture and innovative behavior was not found to be statistically significant.

Originality: This study brings a fresh perspective by focusing on the pharmaceutical sector in Karachi—a field where research on leadership, culture, and innovation is still growing. It offers insights into how these elements interact in real workplace settings.

Research Limitations: Since data was collected only from pharmaceutical employees in Karachi, the findings cannot be applied to other industries or regions. The limited timeframe also restricted the scope of the research.

Practical Implications: Pharmaceutical companies are encouraged to create environments that promote leadership styles and cultures that support innovation, helping employees feel empowered and motivated to contribute creatively.

Social Implications: Building a supportive and innovative workplace can lead to more engaged employees and a more dynamic, forward-thinking organizational culture that benefits society as a whole.

Keywords: *Empowering leadership, innovative organizational culture, innovative work behavior, perceived organizational support.*

HOW ETHICAL LEADERSHIP SHAPES THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE FRIENDSHIPS ON EMOTIONAL CULTURE OF JOY AND JOB PERFORMANCE

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Sadia Sheikh and Yasir Riaz, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi (**Manuscript: #1455**)

Abstract/Description:

Many Scholars have called for more research on the role of friendships in the workplace so that their effects are better understood (Ferris et al., 2009; Methot et al., 2015; Pillemer and Rothbard, 2018). Workplace friendships have been called as a hot research topic and double edged sword in organizational management (Lee & Duffy, 2019; Wang et al, 2022) and given its conflicting nature and lack of consensus on the effects of its role on personal and organizational perspectives, this research seeks to provide answers to the debate through empirical research on the effects of Workplace Friendships on Job Performance and understand underlying mechanism by introducing the variable emotional culture of joy, and a boundary condition in ethical leadership.

Keywords: *ethical leadership, workplace friendship, job performance, culture of joy.*

BARRIERS AND IMPACTS OF SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT IN SMES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING ECONOMIES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Wajeeha Naeem and Sania Sajid, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi (**Manuscript: #1345**)

Abstract/Description:

This paper presents a comparative analysis of barriers and impacts of Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM) in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in developed versus developing countries. Through an extensive literature review of more than 20 scholarly articles, the paper has identified the key barriers in the way of SSCM adoption in SMEs, including financial issues, limited expertise and resources, and insufficient technology, or lack thereof. The research is further supported by a quantitative study to explore the barriers while also revealing significant differences in the practices of developed versus developing economies. The study contributes extensively to academia by highlighting critical success factors towards a successful SSCM important for overcoming the barriers.

Keywords: *Sustainable Supply Chain Management, Emerging Economies, Small and Medium Enterprises, Green Supply Chain Management.*

IMPACT OF THE INFORMAL ECONOMY ON THE EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY OF PAKISTAN'S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Jovera Shakeel, Munazza Nadir and Iman Attique, Lahore University of Management Sciences (**Manuscript: #1356**)

Abstract/Description:

According to the Ministry of Finance, more than 40 percent of Pakistan's GDP is attributed to the informal sector. Nearly 75 percent of Pakistan's working-age population is employed in the informal sector, according to the Labour Force Survey (2020-2021). The widespread persistence of the informal sector has several manifestations in the country's agricultural economy. This study analyses the impact of the informal economy on agricultural productivity in Pakistan by applying Stochastic Frontier and Principal Component Analysis models using the Pakistan Standards of Living Measurement (PSLM) farm-level data collected in 2014, 2016, and 2019. It is the first regionally and nationally representative study of the informal economy's impact on agricultural indicators using the country's largest dataset. These findings show, as prior literature has suggested, that farms utilizing formal economic relations, including better working employment contracts, more access to proper credit resources, and better irrigation systems, produce higher yields than farms that operate within informal structures. In addition, crop diversification and resource allocation were found to be significant in raising the efficiency of agriculture. But there is also a geographical dimension to productivity - some of the agro-climatic regions are lagging consistently implying a case for focused attention.

Keywords: *Agricultural Productivity, Farm Efficiency, Cropping Patterns, Agro-climatic Zones, Crop Diversification, Informal Economy, Stochastic Frontier Analysis, Resource Allocation.*

A MULTI-OBJECTIVE HEURISTIC APPROACH TO ENHANCING PERISHABLE SUPPLY CHAIN EFFICIENCY VIA PROGRESSIVE DATASET PARTITIONING

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Syed Rehan Ashraf; Muhammad Asim Butt Dr, University of Management and technology; and Muhammad Imran Shafi Mr, University of Management and technology (**Manuscript: #1416**)

Abstract/Description:

Efficient transport systems are crucial to reducing logistics costs and improving the performance of supply chains, particularly in the dairy sector, where the decomposition of milk requires timely and cost-effective collection. This study can bridge the gap between cost control and the transportation of perishable goods by optimizing a milk collection network for dairy processors. The proposed algorithm reduces the network, dividing the problem into subproblems, and applying MST iteratively for each truck and passing through the next truck until the last truck exhausts the entire network. The results show that the optimized route significantly reduces operational costs, travel distances and collection time while preserving the vulnerability constraints. The proposed algorithm is applied to the Sahiwal district of Punjab, Pakistan. Comparative analysis reveals that our proposed MST-based iterative heuristic, approach exceeds many of the methods mentioned in the literature on the data set. These findings provide logistical planners and dairy companies with flexible and scalable decision support tools to ensure sustainable and cost-effective milk transportation.

Keywords: *Perishable Supply Chain, Minimum Spanning Tree (MST), Capacitated Vehicle Routing Problem (CVRP), Supply Chain Optimization, Milk Routing Problem.*

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN PROJECT BASED EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Wasiq Khan and Dr. Kamran Ahmed Soomro, Shaheed Zulifkar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology University
(Manuscript: #1444)

Abstract/Description:

This qualitative study compared DEI practices in modern and traditional private-sector education organizations in Pakistan. Twelve interviews were conducted with leads, managers, associates, and HR personnel, half from each organization type. The study explored how DEI relates to core organizational elements such as communication, leadership, and strategy, identifying challenges and opportunities for implementing DEI principles. The interview data was transcribed, and themes and sub-themes were identified through thematic analysis. The themes of this study are 1) Effective diversity support system in education organizations, 2) Inclusion and equity for people of diverse & underrepresented background, 3) Clear and swift communication for stable DEI culture, and 4) Leadership role in promoting DEI culture.

Keywords: *DEI, Project Management, Educational Organizations, Thematic Analysis, Qualitative Study.*

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS TRANSFORMING BUSINESS FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET: A CASE STUDY FROM PAKISTAN

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Aysha Khatoon (Manuscript: #1351)

Abstract/Description:

This case study explores the dynamics of women-owned and women-managed businesses in Pakistan, drawing from the World Bank Enterprise Survey (WBES) 2022. Using descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations, we investigate how gender influences access to finance, experiences with corruption, the adoption of ethical and environmental business practices, and innovation within formal firms. The findings underscore that women-led firms, though severely underrepresented (with only 4.9% reporting female ownership), face disproportionately greater financial and institutional barriers. Yet, these businesses show resilience by adopting ethical practices and training programs, and by navigating corruption with greater integrity. This research contributes to the global discourse on inclusive economic growth by offering firm-level insights into gender-specific constraints and strategies, with implications for gender-sensitive economic policies in Pakistan.

Keywords: *Women Entrepreneurs, Institutional Barriers, Ethical Business Practices, Environmental Sustainability, Innovation, Corruption, WBES.*

TRANSFORMING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESSES FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Syed Aamir Alam Rizvi, Institute of Business Management Karachi, and Dr. Hasan Raza, University of Karachi, Pakistan
(Manuscript: #1358)

Abstract/Description:

Objective: This study explores how women entrepreneurs adapt to and understand the ever-evolving technological, digital environment and sustainable economy.

Methodology: The research employs Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, using semi-structured interviews for data gathering. Thematic analysis was used to uncover themes, and NVivo 14 was utilized for data analysis.

Findings: The study's results reveal that the dynamics of entrepreneurship have changed, requiring the development of digital, technological, and sustainability-related skills. This work argues that the contemporary expanding embeddedness of the service sector in digitalization is opening new vistas of success for potential women entrepreneurs. Silent and swift transformation of the entrepreneurial landscape in the form of digitalization of diverse dimensions of business offers entrepreneurial opportunities to women. This research views the inclusion of women entrepreneurs in terms of the promotion of the SDGs of advancing quality education and reducing inequalities, particularly within the country. This inclusion may partially but significantly contribute to enhancing the prospects of overcoming the continuing threat of ecological calamities.

Theoretical contribution: Liberal feminist theory demands equal liberty for women. This study supports Carol Gilligan's work related to liberal feminism that women have equal liberty to do work like a man, and by establishing that women's essential caring behavior aligns with sustainable development goals.

Practical contribution: The findings provide a substantial understanding of the intricate interplay between gender, digitalization, technology, and sustainability in entrepreneurship. It has practical relevance for lawmakers, business support organizations, educators, training institutes, and ambitious female entrepreneurs.

Keywords: *Digitalization, Digital Transformation, Entrepreneurship, Sustainability, Sustainable Economy, Skills, SDGs, Service sector, Technological revolution, Women Entrepreneurship.*

HARNESSING NETWORKS FOR INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP: MOTIVATION AND INTENTIONS AS DRIVERS OF SUCCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Talha Yousaf and Owais Anwar Golra, National University of Science and Technology – Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1428**)

Abstract/Description:

Several studies have unveiled that Networks positively affect performance and success at work and in businesses. However, the literature has overlooked the critical gap in the current understanding of the entrepreneurial experiences of People with Disabilities (PwDs). This study hypothesizes that Networks directly and indirectly lead to entrepreneurial success/performance through intention. The moderating role of motivation in the entrepreneurial intention link is also examined in this study. Data for the proposed relationships was collected from PwDs for almost a year. The findings provide invaluable insights for practitioners and policymakers, emphasizing the need to leverage social networks to empower disabled entrepreneurs and contribute to inclusive entrepreneurship.

Keywords: *Inclusive Entrepreneurship, People with Disabilities (PwD), Networks, Performance, Motivation, Intention.*

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Muazam Ali and Sohail Raza, HITEC University

Safia Sharif, Sindh Education and Literacy Department (**Manuscript: #1540**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: This research aims to examine the entrepreneurial intentions of university students in Pakistan, applying the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and specifically investigating the moderating effect of entrepreneurial education on these intentions.

Study design/methodology/approach: A survey method was employed to collect data from university students in Pakistan. The collected data was analyzed using SMART PLS and SPSS to assess the direct and moderating effects of TPB constructs and entrepreneurial education on entrepreneurial intentions.

Findings: The study revealed that attitudes toward behavior and subjective norms significantly predict entrepreneurial intentions among university students across both public and private institutions, aligning with the TPB. Moreover, entrepreneurial education moderates the relationship between perceived behavioral control and entrepreneurial intentions, particularly within the context of public sector universities.

Originality/value: This research contributes to the entrepreneurship literature by providing nuanced insights into the role of entrepreneurial education as a moderator within the TPB framework in a developing economy context, specifically Pakistan.

Research limitations/implications: The study's findings are based on cross-sectional survey data, limiting the ability to establish causality. Future research could explore these relationships longitudinally.

Practical implications: For policymakers and educators in Pakistan, the findings underscore the importance of designing entrepreneurial education programs that not only impart knowledge but also bolster students' perceived ability to control entrepreneurial outcomes.

Social implications: By identifying factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions among university students, this research offers insights that can inform strategies to foster a more entrepreneurial mindset within the youth population of Pakistan. This, in turn, could contribute to economic growth, innovation, and job creation within the country.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Intentions, Theory of Planned Behavior, Entrepreneurial Education, comparative study.*

GREEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Muhammad Nawaz Tunio, University of Sufism and Modern Sciences, Bhitshah, Pakistan. (**Manuscript: #1378**)

Abstract/Description:

This study explores the transformative role of green entrepreneurship and innovation in building climate resilience within vulnerable communities of Pakistan. Positioned at the intersection of environmental sustainability, economic empowerment, and social inclusion, green entrepreneurship is investigated through a qualitative lens by examining the lived experiences of 20 entrepreneurs from key sectors, including renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism, and waste

management. Using semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis via NVivo software, the research identifies five core themes: motivation, innovation, barriers, resilience building, and support mechanisms. Findings reveal that these entrepreneurs are driven by strong ecological values and community-oriented goals, innovating through adaptive, frugal, and often indigenous knowledge-based approaches. Despite facing institutional, financial, and socio-cultural barriers, they significantly contribute to local resilience by promoting sustainable livelihoods, climate education, and community capacity-building. The study emphasizes the need for enabling ecosystems through policy reform, decentralized support, and inclusive financing to mainstream green entrepreneurship in climate adaptation strategies. This research advances the discourse on sustainability and resilience by highlighting grassroots innovation as a critical tool in addressing climate challenges in the Global South.

Keywords: *Green Entrepreneurship, Climate Resilience, Eco-Innovation, Sustainable Practices, Community-Based Solutions.*

REIMAGINING MANAGEMENT CURRICULUM: INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO SHAPE FUTURE-READY PROFESSIONALS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Dr. Maryam Ahmad, Virtual University of Pakistan. (**Manuscript: #1429**)

Abstract/Description:

The corporate environment is changing due to the combination of global sustainability issues and the quick development of artificial intelligence (AI), necessitating a radical change in management education. Future leaders cannot be adequately prepared to navigate and lead in this complicated, AI-driven, and sustainability-constrained world by traditional management curriculum, which are frequently based on profit-maximization and siloed disciplines. In order to develop the interdisciplinary skills necessary for moral leadership, conscientious innovation, and long-term value generation, this conceptual paper promotes the incorporation of sustainability and artificial intelligence into management education. This paper presents a theoretical framework for curriculum integration across three tiers: foundational knowledge, interdisciplinary applications, and experiential learning. It is based on a new educational philosophy that prioritizes long-term thinking, ecological awareness, and stakeholder-centric strategies. In order to train professionals capable of tackling linked technology and environmental concerns, it highlights critical future-ready abilities such as sustainability literacy, AI and data literacy, systems thinking, ethical reasoning, and strategic foresight. Alongside institutional reforms in curriculum governance, industry engagement, and faculty development, pedagogical innovations including problem-based learning, AI-enhanced simulations, and collaborative, case-based instruction are suggested. The contextual requirements of emerging nations, where inadequate educational infrastructure may impede integration efforts, are given particular consideration. In the conclusion, the paper offers practical suggestions for stakeholders, policy makers, and academic institutions to reimagine management education as a means of developing tech-enabled, mission-driven professionals in a world that is becoming more digitally connected and sustainability-focused.

Keywords: *Management, Curriculum, Sustainability, Artificial Intelligence, Reimagining.*

CANDIDATE PERSPECTIVES ON AI-DRIVEN HIRING: NAVIGATING ETHICAL CONCERNS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Sonia Darshan and Dr Imtiaz Arif, DHA Suffa University (**Manuscript: #1435**)

Abstract/Description:

Emerging technologies are reshaping the industries across all sectors, including human resource management (HRM). It has transformed the recruitment process by using artificial intelligence-based technologies which is enhancing efficiency, reducing cost and improving candidate matching process. While ai based recruitment has improved the efficiency, it has also raised significant ethical concerns from the candidates' perspective. The training of ai systems with historical hiring data could strengthen existing bias which might create discriminatory situations during candidate selection phases. The decisions taken by the ai algorithms have often been found to increase the biases that leads towards the discriminatory results. The research aims to reveal applicant views regarding ai recruitment systems through an evaluation of their ai-based hiring preferences and a review of ethical elements that affect advanced recruitment technology acceptance. Different theories have been discussed in the literature review including the technology acceptance model (tam), unified theory of acceptance & use of technology (UTUAT), organizational justice theory, deontological ethics, stakeholder theory and value sensitive design. These theories generate various variables which are significant for the study. The extensive research investigates recruitment systems which require clarity as well as moral integrity and a candidate-centered approach. A structured close ended questionnaire (Likert scale) was developed, and a survey method was used to collect the data from both prospective and past candidates who have experienced ai driven hiring tools. The non-probabilistic method was employed to draw a sample and data was analyzed using the multiple linear regression (MLR) statistical technique via SPSS.

Keywords: *Artificial intelligence tools, AI based recruitment, candidates' perspective, ethical concerns.*

TEACHING FOR A LIVING PLANET: A REFLECTIVE JOURNEY IN SUSTANABILITY EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Masood Ahmed, Shaheed Zulifkar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology University (**Manuscript: #1436**)

Abstract/Description:

This paper offers a reflective narrative on teaching a Corporate Sustainability course at a Pakistani business school, focusing on how personal passion and moral purpose can transform sustainability education. Using an autoethnographic approach, it draws from firsthand experiences in the classroom and within institutional structures to explore the challenges and possibilities of teaching for a "living planet" in a context where sustainability is often marginalized. The reflections highlight how a value-driven educator—through authenticity, emotional engagement, and critical dialogue—can inspire students to move beyond compliance-based understandings and connect deeply with planetary and social concerns. While the insights stem from a single educator's journey and may not capture all faculty perspectives, they provide an important lens into how personal commitment and pedagogical presence can drive meaningful learning. The paper urges business schools, especially in the Global South, to support such educators and create environments where sustainability is not just taught but lived. Ultimately, it argues that transformative sustainability education can cultivate graduates who are not only professionally skilled but morally grounded in the service of people and planet.

Keywords: *Sustainability education, Corporate sustainability, Autoethnography, Transformative teaching, Moral purpose, Business Schools.*

BUILDING COMMITMENT, GROWING GREEN: THE ROLE OF HR DEVELOPMENT AND GREEN WORKFORCE INITIATIVES IN REDUCING TURNOVER INTENTIONS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Naba F. Rafiq, Reema Farooghi and Minhaj Ikram, Iqra University, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1445**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: The objective of this study is to investigate the connection between employee turnover intentions and green workforce initiatives. This study aims to determine how funding ecologically focused training and development initiatives that influences workers' decisions to stay with or leave a company as more and more businesses embrace sustainable practices. The study also looks at organizational commitment's mediation function, evaluating how employees' professional and emotional ties to the company boost the retention effects of green workforce initiatives.

Design: Employees in Karachi were given structured surveys to complete as part of a quantitative research strategy. Despite possible regional restrictions, the results offer insightful information about important factors such as organizational commitment (ORC), turnover intention (TOI), and green workforce efforts (GWI). These show how Human Resource Management's (HRM) goals are changing, particularly the move toward sustainability and readiness to meet the green economy.

Findings: The findings show that organizational commitment and green workforce initiatives are strongly positively correlated. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that green efforts significantly reduce the intention to leave, suggesting that participation in sustainability-driven development programs increases employee retention. The study also demonstrates that this relationship is mediated by organizational commitment, which increases the efficiency of green workforce programs in lowering employee turnover.

Originality/Value: By emphasizing the value of green workforce efforts as a tactical tool for employee retention, this study contributes to the body of research on human resource management. It offers factual proof that development with a sustainability focus not only supports international environmental objectives but also increases employee satisfaction and lowers plans for turnover. The research supports the growing recognition of green HR practices as essential for building a committed, future-ready workforce.

Keywords: *Green Workforce Initiatives, Turnover Intention, Sustainability, Employee Retention.*

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE IN PAKISTAN'S MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY: THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES, LEAN PRACTICES, AND GREEN SUPPLY CHAINS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

SYED IMTIAZ ALI, Iqra University, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1450**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose: Many businesses face existential threats due to disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely impacted supply chain sustainability. This study explores the factors affecting business performance during crises, focusing on how firm capabilities influence Lean Manufacturing (LM) and Green Supply Chain Management Practices (GSCMP), and their role in achieving Sustainable Environmental Performance (SEP).

Study design/methodology/approach: A theoretical model grounded in Dynamic Capability (DC) theory was developed and tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Data were collected from 162 professionals involved in supply chain operations across various manufacturing sectors in Pakistan.

Findings: Results show that firm capabilities—such as technology, innovation, and relationship management—significantly impact the implementation of LM and GSCMP, both of which positively influence SEP. The study confirms the central role of dynamic capabilities in fostering resilience and sustainable performance during disruptive events.

Originality/value: This research uniquely integrates DC theory with LM and GSCMP in a crisis context. It adds to the literature by demonstrating how internal capabilities can drive sustainability and operational continuity in emerging economies under turbulent conditions.

Research limitations: Data variability, limited variables, cross-sectional design, and self-reported bias may restrict generalizability beyond Pakistan's manufacturing sector and long-term insights.

Practical implications: Manufacturers should invest in dynamic capabilities to adapt to disruptions, drive sustainable practices, and ensure long-term performance.

Social implications: Enhanced supply chain sustainability supports environmental stewardship, community welfare, and industrial resilience in times of crisis.

Keywords: *Technology Capability, Innovation Capability, Relationship Management Capability, Lean Manufacturing, Green Supply Chain Management Practices, Sustainable Environmental Performance.*

ENHANCING SME SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION: A DUAL-METHOD ANALYSIS OF GREEN KNOWLEDGE SHARING, INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL, AND INNOVATION

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Jan Muhammad Sohu and Wajhat Baig, Sukkur IBA University

Sonia Najam Shaikh, Jiangsu University, China (**Manuscript: #1494**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose – This study delves into the complex relationships among green knowledge sharing (GKS), green intellectual capital (GIC), green innovation (GI), environmental knowledge (EK), and environmental performance (EP) within the framework of the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory. It investigates how knowledge-based resources drive operational efficiency and support environmental sustainability, particularly within manufacturing SMEs.

Design/Methodology/Approach – The research adopts a dual-method approach, combining Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) and Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA). These methods allow the exploration of both linear and non-linear relationships between the core variables. Data was gathered from top management, including CEOs, executives, and managers from production and HR departments via online and offline surveys.

Findings – The analysis reveals that GKS significantly boosts GIC, which in turn positively influences both GI and EP. Furthermore, GI mediates the relationship between GIC and EP, demonstrating its role in driving sustainability and improving business processes. The study also highlights that EK acts as a moderator in the GI–EP link, showcasing how environmental awareness enhances the impact of innovation on performance. These results contribute to advancing knowledge management and process efficiency in SMEs.

Originality/Value – This paper introduces a novel framework linking green knowledge sharing, intellectual capital, and environmental outcomes. By employing both PLS-SEM and fsQCA, it addresses methodological limitations and offers new insights into how SMEs can leverage knowledge-driven resources for improving both operational efficiency and environmental sustainability.

Keywords: *Green Knowledge Sharing, Green Intellectual Capital, Green Innovation, Environmental Performance, Environmental Knowledge, PLS-SEM, fsQCA.*

IMPACT OF REMOTE WORK ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Sejal Anand, Ms., Sukkur IBA University (**Manuscript: #1546**)

Abstract/Description:

Because of COVID-19, most organizations are depending on remote work now. Currently, this type of technology is used as a lasting solution by many industries instead of as a quick answer. This work examines how remote working influences employees' productivity, mainly by reviewing how technology and at-home/work balance matter in the field of digital marketing in Pakistan. To do this kind of research, researchers rely on numbers and use a deductive method guided by positivism. Slipstream Culture asked 130 people such as students, teachers, HR officials and staff working remotely from their organization or companies to complete the surveys. Because the study was still a pilot and involved people from different fields, we kept the findings since Cronbach's Alpha was less than what is normally required.

Employees were found to be more productive at home owing to their access to new tools and having a better work-life balance. As well as helping to resolve conflicts, tech support simplified tasks and soothed concerns about computers, while enhancing the work-life balance raised worker productivity and encouraged happiness on the job. The study allows leaders, HR teams and policymakers to improve the performance of tasks performed from home.

Keywords: *Working Remotely, Boosting Productivity at Work, Technology, Good Health, Digital Marketing, Pakistan.*

REFLECTION ON ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS IN SOUTH ASIA

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Imtiaz Badshah Dr., Østfold University College, Norway, and Sajida Imtiaz Mrs., Stupe Junior High School, Halden, Norway (**Manuscript: #1538**)

Abstract/Description:

In order to strengthen the capacity of public sector, historically public sector has been changing continuously through introducing various reforms packages. The recent reforms in various countries is aimed at the digitalization of public administration. In some countries such as Pakistan these public sector reforms packages are based on the World Bank experience, while other countries may have formulated their own reforms strategy for improving the institutional capacity of their public sector. However, the outcome of these reforms varies substantially across societies. Therefore, this article underpins the public sector reforms in South Asia, and we try to provide reflection on research questions including how public sector reforms are formulated and to what extent these forms have been changed the structure and functions of public administration. This is an exploratory comparative case study in nature and we include countries such as Bangladesh, India and Pakistan in investigation. The documents published by various governments and international organizations may provide way out for understanding reforms in selected countries. For the purpose of this study we will pay our attention to

recent reforms introduced in the period of 2000-2021, and study will take tax reforms into consideration to give an understanding to the public sector reforms in respective countries. The findings of the study may indicate that indigenously formulated reforms may bring successful outcome than externally motivated reforms because indigenously initiated reforms are backed by ministerial and political commitment bringing incremental change in the public sector.

Keywords: *Reforms, public sector, South Asia*

DRIVING INNOVATION THROUGH DIGITAL HR AND BIG DATA ANALYTICS: THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT SUPPORT AND EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOR

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Sonia Najam Shaikh, Ms. and Fatima Zahra Kherazi, Ms., School of Management, Jiangsu University, China

Li Zhen and Jan Muhammad Sohu, Department of Business Administration, Sukkur IBA University, Pakistan

(Manuscript: #1366)

Abstract/Description:

This study investigates how Digital Human Resource Management Practices (DHRMP) influence Innovation Performance (IP) within the broader framework of Digital Transformation (DT), emphasizing the mediating roles of Big Data Analytics Capabilities (BDAC) and Digital Employee Behavior (DEB), and the moderating role of Top Management Support (TMS). Guided by the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Social Identity Theory (SIT), the research explores how digital HR strategies and employee behaviors drive innovation in manufacturing SMEs in Pakistan. A structured survey was conducted among 389 employees using stratified random sampling to ensure sectoral and regional representation. Measurement instruments were adapted from established scales and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings demonstrate that while DHRMP has a limited direct impact on IP, its effects become substantial when mediated by BDAC and DEB. Furthermore, TMS positively moderates the BDAC-IP relationship, highlighting the critical role of leadership in leveraging data capabilities for innovation. The study offers valuable implications for organizations seeking to integrate digital HR, analytics, and behavioral factors to enhance innovation outcomes in an increasingly competitive and data-centric landscape.

Keywords: *Digital Human Resource Management Practices, Big Data Analytics Capabilities, Digital Employee Behavior, Innovation Performance, Digital Transformation, Top Management Support*

ACHIEVING WORKPLACE NONVIOLENCE THROUGH GRATUITOUS BEHAVIOUR CONSTRUCTIVE DEVIANCE: MODERATING EFFECT OF DESIRABLE BEHAVIOURS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Dr. Muhammad Zia Ur Rehman and Nimra Farooq, National Defence University, Islamabad **(Manuscript: #1430)**

Abstract/Description:

Achieving workplace nonviolence through gratuitous behaviour constructive deviance: Moderating effect of Desirable behaviours.

Workplace violence is an ongoing problem that affects employee safety and health, organizational productivity, and the general climate (Sheppary et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2023). Although most studies focus on the antecedents of aggressiveness

in the workplace, few have investigated the proactive behavioural strategies that prevent violence (Cai et al., 2023). The current study deals with gratuitous behaviors—that is, acts that are altruistic and voluntary, going beyond mere formal role requirements—in building nonviolent environments while actively engendering constructive deviance, type of behavior wherein employees intentionally violate organizational norms in favor of organizational benefit. It will also study how desirable behaviors (e.g., self-regulation and empathy) regulate these relationships.

The research aims specifically to:

- Identify the causal mechanisms through which gratuitous behavior mitigates workplace violence.
- Assess the extent to which the constructive deviance engendered by such behavior is conducive to a nonviolent climate.
- To investigate the moderating influence of desirable behaviors in these processes.

The research contributes to organizational behavior theory by simultaneously integrating prosocial discretionary behavior with the literature on deviance to provide another view on reducing violence. Practically, this will instruct managers concerning how to build interventions that deploy employee goodwill and resilience to avert conflict escalation.

Keywords: *workplace ethics, beharious, management, non violence, constructive deviance*

A PATHWAY TO WORK ENGAGEMENT: EXAMINING THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN WORK LIFE BALANCE, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AMONG WORKING MOTHERS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Saliha Anwar and Uzma Hanif, Virtual University of Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1490**)

Abstract/Description:

The increasing participation of women in the workforce marks a significant societal shift that contributes substantially to the nation's economy and brings diverse perspectives to various organizational settings. Based on social exchange theory, this study examined the impact of emotional intelligence on work engagement, with work-life balance serving as a mediator and perceived organizational support as a moderator of the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance.

This cross-sectional and quantitative study employed a survey method to collect primary data from working mothers. A convenience sampling technique was used. A 7-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire. To measure emotional intelligence, the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale was used. Work-life balance and perceived organizational support were measured by using 8 and 9-item scales, respectively. Work engagement was measured using a shortened version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS and Hayes' PROCESS macro. The findings confirmed a significant direct impact of emotional intelligence on work engagement and a partial mediating role of work-life balance (WLB) in this relationship, indicating complementary mediation. Crucially, POS significantly moderates the relationship between EI and WLB, showing that higher POS strengthens the positive effect of EI on WLB.

This study contributes to the literature by empirically testing a moderated mediation model that provides a nuanced theoretical contribution by elucidating the conditional indirect pathway of emotional intelligence to work engagement. Furthermore, it can guide organizations in developing targeted strategies to enhance work engagement by fostering emotional intelligence and providing organizational support to improve work-life balance, thereby boosting overall work engagement and performance.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Work Engagement, Work-Life Balance, Perceived Organizational Support*

WHEN PRIDE MEETS FATIGUE: HOW EMOTIONAL LABOR CONTRIBUTES TO EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION IN EMPLOYEES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Nazia Rafiq and Ambreen Sarwar, Virtual University of Pakistan

Abdus Sattar Abbasi, COMSATS University Islamabad (**Manuscript: #1367**)

Abstract/Description:

This study examines how emotional labor contributes to emotional exhaustion, using the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory as a framework. Specifically, it explores whether depression acts as a mediator in this relationship, and whether pride in work moderates the effect of depression on emotional exhaustion. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire using a convenience sampling method from 322 frontline employees working in four-star and five-star hotels in Punjab, Pakistan. The data were analyzed using SPSS v23, Amos v23, and the PROCESS macro. The results show that depression significantly mediates the link between emotional labor and emotional exhaustion. Additionally, pride in work was found to buffer the negative impact of depression on emotional exhaustion. These findings offer valuable insights for hotel management to support employee mental well-being and enhance job performance. The study also has important social implications, such as reducing emotional labor, minimizing emotional exhaustion, and improving overall mental health among employees.

Keywords: *Emotional labor, surface acting, deep acting, psychological ill – being, depression, pride in work, emotional exhaustion.*

REVOLUTIONIZING PERFORMANCE: A JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION AT A LOCAL PUBLIC SECTOR UNIVERSITY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Wajiha Saghir, Dr., Institute of Business and Health Management, Dow University of Health Sciences, and Ume Amen, Dr., Institute of Business and Health Management, Dow University of Health Sciences (**Manuscript: #1348**)

Abstract/Description:

A Local Public Sector University faced significant challenges due to the absence of a structured performance management system. The lack of a formal mechanism for evaluating employee performance led to difficulties in fostering accountability and achieving strategic objectives. Recognizing this gap, the newly appointed HR director spearheaded the design and implementation of a comprehensive performance management system tailored to the institute's unique needs. This initiative aimed to establish clear performance expectations, introduce structured evaluations, and provide developmental opportunities to drive institutional growth. By adopting a systematic performance management framework, the Local Public Sector University aspired to enhance employee engagement, improve performance outcomes, and build a thriving academic environment dedicated to excellence in healthcare education and research.

Keywords: *Performance Management System, Employee Performance, Strategic Goals, Healthcare Education.*

TRUST, CONTROL, AND THE BUSINESS OF DATES: DR. FAROOQUE'S DILEMMA IN FARM PARTNERSHIP

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Qavi Ali, Sukkur IBA University, and Asad Ali Qazi, Sukkur IBA University (**Manuscript: #1362**)

Abstract/Description:

This case study examines the operational, financial, and emotional complexities of managing a date farm in Pakistan through the lens of Dr. Farooque, a retired medical professional turned date farmer. After facing mismanagement and financial setbacks from leasing his farm to a contractor, Dr. Farooque is presented with a partnership offer from a fellow farmer, Dr. Ahsan. While the partnership promises shared responsibility and improved outcomes, it also revives past fears of exploitation and unequal profit-sharing, rooted in a family member's failed partnership experience. The case challenges students to evaluate strategic alternatives—including partnerships, hiring professional managers, renegotiating contracts, or involving family members—while considering the dynamics of trust, control, and long-term sustainability. Set against the economic backdrop of Pakistan's thriving date farming sector, particularly during peak demand periods like Ramadan, this case invites critical thinking on small agribusiness management, partnership risks, and the role of informal trust in business decisions.

Keywords: *Date Farming; Agribusiness Management; Partnership Challenges; Trust and Control; Small-Scale Farming; Pakistan Agriculture..*

UNIFOAM'S STRATEGIC FINANCIAL TRIAGE

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Mujeeb Ur Rehman Bhayo Dr., Department of Finance, School of Business Studies, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan. and Syed Mohsin Amir Mukhtiar Dr., Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Sukkur IBA University. (**Manuscript: #1373**)

Abstract/Description:

Unifoam, a second-tier Pakistani foam manufacturer, entered 2020 with razor-thin margins, rising borrowing costs, and a bulky, USD-indexed raw-material bill. Panic buying of TDI in January, followed by a two-month national lockdown (March–May 2020), left the firm over-stocked and cash-starved just as sales collapsed.

By the end of June 2020, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) offered two subsidised facilities: (i) a six-month salary-support loan at 3 percent and (ii) a ten-year machinery-refinance line at 5 percent. CEO Faraz Khalid Shaikh must decide whether the liquidity benefits outweigh higher leverage, covenant pressure, and the employment-retention clauses.

Immediate teaching issues

- Interpreting historic and pro-forma financial statements under stress.
- Using ratios, common-size, and sensitivity analysis to test liquidity, solvency, and profitability.
- Valuing subsidised loans: explicit interest savings vs. implicit conditions.

Framing a board recommendation when strategic and family objectives are intertwined.

Keywords: *Financial distress; Liquidity management; Working-capital optimisation; Family-owned SME; Crisis decision-making; COVID-19 impact.*

THE PLOUGHING GAMBLE

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Ubedullah Amjad Ali, Iqra University - Karachi Main Campus; Muhammad Omer Rafique, SZABIST University - Karachi; Muhammad Asif Qureshi, Bahria University - Karachi; Imam Uddin, institute of Business Management - Karachi; Zahid Hussain, Khadim Ali Shah Bukhari Institute of Technology (KASBIT) - Karachi; and Liaqat Ali, Bahria University - Karachi
(Manuscript: #1374)

Abstract/Description:

CASE SUMMARY

The case shows how Arshad faces agricultural financing challenges as a Pakistani farmer because his land requires funds, but costs of farming inputs are rapidly increasing. Arshad received unsupportable lending terms that included exploitation from his local landlord alongside unappealing banking conditions with high interest rates. Then he sought advice from his finance graduate nephew Ayaan. The case describes realistically how rural populations struggle to obtain fair credit services because of their financial vulnerability.

Ayaan shows Arshad an alternative financial choice through Meezan Bank's agricultural funding programs which operate as Pakistan's primary Islamic bank. Meezan Bank offers farmers three Islamic financial tools named Murabaha for cost-plus financing Ijarah for leasing and Salam for advance payment that support farmers through the seasons without charging interest.

The case demonstrates how Islamic finance achieves social-cultural proficiency through its moral basis and adaptable financial mechanisms. Islamic banking operates through sharing risks equitably while creating better conditions than traditional and informal financial practices. Through his decision to undertake Islamic finance Arshad turned toward both financial independence and dignified approaches to funding which includes sustainable practices. The case serves as a starting point for discussions concerning Islamic finance together with agricultural economics as well as ethical banking topics.

Keywords: *Islamic Banking and Finance, Agricultural Credit Systems, Shariah- Compliant Financing, Conventional vs Islamic Banking Models, Interest-Free Loans, Risk Sharing in Agricultural Finance.*

AL-HABIB PHARMACEUTICALS: NAVIGATING REGULATORY CHALLENGES AND SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTIONS IN CANCER TREATMENT

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Faryal Rao Dr., Salim Habib University (Manuscript: #1400)

Abstract/Description:

Al-Habib Pharmaceuticals (AHP) had not applied for any new product registration since 2012 due to various internal and external environmental challenges up until November of 2020. During these eight years regulatory compliance had become stringent and the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) had made it mandatory to submit complete CTD (Common Technical Document) dossiers for product registration.[1]

As an importer of anti-cancer drugs for more than two decades they had always comply to the regulator and ensured Common Technical Document (CTD) dossiers were all up to date for product registrations. But even than Al Habib

Pharmaceuticals (AHP) was facing registration challenges due to extrinsic factors beyond their means. Moreover, the company had been entirely dependent on a single Korean supplier, Korea United, for a wide range of anti-cancer drugs. Almost 30 vital anti-cancer drugs were imported from Korea United, including Cisplatin, Flurouracil, Carboplatin, Methotrexate, Carboplatin, Hydrin, Docetaxel, Doxorubicin and many others that were part of many cancer regimen. Although the cancer treatment landscape was shifting towards more targeted therapies including the Biosimilar, nanoparticles targeted therapy and Monoclonal Antibodies (MAB). Despite this shift, the demand for some traditional cancer treatment drugs remained critical.[2]

Mr. Azeem Ullah, the CEO of Al Habib Pharmaceuticals (AHP), was concerned about the deteriorating economic and political conditions of Pakistan and the global sourcing challenges risen through the pandemic COVID-19 and could foresee the potential sourcing disruptions for their anti-cancer drugs. The looming threat was realized when Korea United halted the distribution of Doxorubicin, a crucial drug used in many cancer treatment regimens, due to the decreasing profit margins from Pakistani and comparatively lower minimum order quantity (MOQ) in comparison to various other importing countries. Al Habib Pharmaceutical, which was the second-largest supplier of Doxorubicin in the Pakistani market and covered almost 21% of the national need for this drug now was in disarray and the drug unavailability posed a critical threat to Cancer patients' treatment in the country. This disruption posed a significant challenge, and Mr. Azeem Ullah realized that immediate action was required to avoid a shortage of this life-saving drug.

Now, Mr. Azeem faced a critical decision: Should he agree to the Minimum Order Quantity (MoQ) imposed by Korea United and import at higher prices to ensure the availability of Doxorubicin in the market even when DRAP has put a price ceiling to the drug prices, or should he take a more strategic and long-term approach to ensure sustainable drug availability for cancer patients?

Keywords: *Doxorubicin, Supply Chain Disruption, DRAP, Regulatory Compliance, Oncology, Supply Chain Management, Drug Registration.*

GHOURI'S – NAVIGATING GROWTH IN A COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Mohsin Amir Mukhtiar Syed Dr., Department of Business Administration, Sukkur IBA University; Mariyam Saeed, Sukkur IBA University; Mahnoor Rehman, Sukkur IBA Univeristy; and Amna Sattar, Sukkur IBA Univeristy (**Manuscript: #1446**)

Abstract/Description:

Ghouri's, a family-owned retail business rooted in Sukkur, Pakistan, faces a pivotal moment as its long-successful clothing segment contends with shifting consumer tastes and new branded competitors. Meanwhile, the firm's supermarket and restaurant ventures show promise but require substantial investment to maintain growth in a challenging economy. Under CEO Amir Ghouri's leadership, the company must reconcile its 75-year-old tradition of quality and community focus with evolving market dynamics. Should Ghouri's concentrate on revitalizing its flagship clothing enterprise, or allocate scarce resources to expand supermarkets and restaurants? This case challenges students to examine strategic prioritization, operational agility, and the delicate interplay between legacy and innovation in an emerging market environment.

Keywords: *Family Business; Strategic Prioritization; Retail Industry; Legacy vs. Innovation; Emerging Markets; Operational Agility; Resource Allocation.*

DIAMOND PAINTS - CRAFTING STRATEGIES IN THE DYNAMIC PAINT INDUSTRY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Syed Mohsin Amir Mukhtiar, Sukkur IBA University; Uzaif Ali, Sukkur IBA University; Mansoor Arif, Sukkur IBA University; and Bisharat un Nisa, Sukkur IBA University (**Manuscript: #1447**)

Abstract/Description:

On October 2, 2024, Mir Shoaib Ahmed, CEO of Diamond Paints, sat in his Lahore office, surveying the company's 350,000-square-foot manufacturing facility. Under his leadership, Diamond Paints had captured 20% of Pakistan's decorative paint market and 40% of the organized sector, with monthly sales exceeding PKR 1 billion and annual net income averaging PKR 2.2 billion. The company had also expanded internationally to markets including the United States, Europe, Qatar, Afghanistan, and Kazakhstan. Yet, despite these achievements, Diamond Paints faced a series of complex challenges. The Pakistani paint industry—valued at \$400.82 million and projected to grow at a 4.18% CAGR—was saturated with competition from multinational giants and over 2,000 unregulated local players appealing to cost-sensitive rural consumers. Rising demand for eco-friendly solutions, substitutes like wallpapers, volatile exchange rates, and raw material costs consuming 82% of production expenses added further pressure. At this crossroads, critical questions emerged: Should Diamond Paints consolidate its domestic leadership and focus on short-term profitability, or should it accelerate innovation and sustainability efforts to meet evolving customer preferences? And as global markets beckon, can the company successfully navigate regulatory hurdles, fierce competition, and logistical complexities to secure its place on the international stage?

Keywords: *Strategic Decision-Making, Sustainability Innovation, Emerging Markets, Competitive Strategy, International Business Expansion.*

MACTER INTERNATIONAL - NAVIGATING CHALLENGES IN PAKISTAN'S PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Mohsin Kazmi, Sukkur IBA University; Mahnoor Rehman, Sukkur IBA University; Amna Sattar, Sukkur IBA University; and Mariyam Saeed, Sukkur IBA University (**Manuscript: #1457**)

Abstract/Description:

Macter International, a prominent Pakistani pharmaceutical firm, faces the crossroads of navigating a highly regulated market while simultaneously pursuing growth opportunities. Led by CEO Asif Misbah, the company contends with government-imposed price caps, intensifying competition for talent, and cost pressures from currency depreciation. Yet Macter also envisions expanding its export footprint and entering the higher-margin wellness segment. Balancing short-term profitability with long-term innovation in biologics, the firm must evaluate whether to solidify its domestic market position or diversify geographically and into new product categories. This case prompts rich discussions on strategic decision-making, risk management, and leadership within a complex, evolving industry environment.

Keywords: *Pharmaceutical Industry; Price Regulation; Strategic Decision-Making; Emerging Markets; Balance Scorecard; Innovation; Growth Strategy.*

REAL ESTATE INNOVATION THROUGH AUGMENTED REALITY: THE CASE OF ZAMEEN.COM IN KARACHI

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Javeria Waseem Khan, Dow University of Health Sciences (**Manuscript: #1462**)

Abstract/Description:

Purpose:

This case explores how Zameen.com, the leading property platform in Pakistan, is transforming the real estate sector by integrating Augmented Reality (AR) features into its online listings, allowing prospective buyers to explore properties virtually without needing to visit in person.

Study design/methodology/approach:

Using a decision-focused approach within a case study framework, this analysis set in 2024-2025 investigates Zameen.com's strategic decisions surrounding the integration of AR in Karachi's competitive real estate market. The data collection process involves market research, user input, and an assessment of environmental impacts.

Findings:

The integration of AR technology significantly improves convenience for both buyers and renters while simultaneously minimizing the environmental effects linked to property visits. The findings indicate a notable increase in engagement metrics for listings enhanced with AR, with these properties attracting 312% more views and experiencing a 43% boost in inquiry rates compared to traditional listings.

Originality/value:

This study offers fresh insights into how technological innovations are disrupting conventional real estate markets in the context of an emerging economy, emphasizing the intersection of digital advancements and sustainability within property technology.

Research limitations/implications:

Although this research is concentrated on a single entity within a specific urban market, the findings enhance our understanding of technology adoption trends in emerging economies and offer valuable perspectives on digital transformation strategies in traditional sectors.

Practical implications:

The case provides real estate platforms and professionals with a framework to assess strategies for implementing AR, ensuring a balance between innovation, market readiness, and the interests of various stakeholders.

Social implications:

Beyond commercial factors, this study illustrates how digital property technologies can lower carbon footprints, improve accessibility for international investors and individuals with mobility constraints, and support environmental sustainability in urban environments.

Keywords: *Zameen.com, Augmented Reality, Real Estate, Karachi, Technological Innovation, Sustainable Business.*

NATIONAL FOODS LIMITED: The Margin Squeeze Dilemma

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Syeda Umyma Faiz, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi; Areesha Aslam, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi; Areej Azam, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi; and Mustafa Zubair, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi (**Manuscript: #1468**)

Abstract/Description:

This case study examines the strategic response of National Foods Limited (NFL), a leading Pakistani FMCG company, to a major margin squeeze in 2023. Despite reporting net sales of PKR 64.3 billion, NFL's Savory Condiments division, pickles segment, faced profitability pressure due to hyperinflation (37.97%), rising raw material costs (mangoes +30%, oil +50%), increased import duties, packaging cost hikes (+33%), and currency devaluation.

Led by the Brand Manager, NFL evaluated four strategic levers: direct price increases, local raw material sourcing, packaging optimization, and product reformulation. A multi-pronged approach was adopted, implementing tiered price hikes (up to 55% on premium SKUs), localizing inputs (saving 15–25%), optimizing packaging (8–12% savings), and adjusting formulations based on consumer testing.

Though this initially caused a 10–15% dip in sales and brand metrics, follow-up marketing efforts enabled a swift recovery. Sales rebounded by 15–20%, alongside improvements in Top-of-Mind Awareness and Brand Equity. This case provides actionable insights for FMCG firms in volatile markets, emphasizing how integrated cost strategies and consumer-centric execution can preserve profitability without compromising long-term brand value.

Keywords: *Margin Squeeze, Cost Optimization, Pricing Strategy, FMCG, Pakistan, National Foods Limited.*

BETWEEN REFORM AND RESISTANCE: RESTRUCTURING POSTGRADUATE STUDIES AT SML

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Nabeela Arain, Sukkur IBA University; Qamarunnisa Aziz; Nabeel Nisar, Sukkur IBA University; and Ali Raza, Sukkur IBA University (**Manuscript: #1470**)

Abstract/Description:

This case study is designed to enhance students' decision-making skills by immersing them in the real-world challenges faced by postgraduate education institutions, specifically focusing on the difficulties encountered at SML. It encourages students to think critically and make decisions in a complex academic environment, where faculty resistance, administrative challenges, and a disconnect between student experiences and institutional claims are prevalent. The case provides an opportunity for students to explore the intricacies of academic governance and reform, helping them understand the dynamics of South Asian higher education institutions, where such case studies are rare. The methodology involves primary and secondary data, including interviews with faculty, administrators, and students, as well as an examination of relevant institutional documents. The originality of this case lies in its focus on the unique challenges of South Asian universities, where institutional inertia and power imbalances often hinder reform efforts. The practical implications emphasize the need for students to recognize the complexities of managing academic change in such environments. By exposing students to the ground realities of institutional operations, this case helps them develop managerial decision-making skills essential for navigating challenging environments and leading effective reforms in their future careers.

Keywords: *Institutional Reform, Strategic Management, Change Management, Decision-Making Challenges.*

PRICE OF PROGRESS - CLEARPATH ORTHODONTICS' STRATEGY FOR EMERGING MARKETS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Mohsin Amir Mukhtiar Syed Dr., Department of Business Administration, Sukkur IBA University; Amna Sattar Rajpoot Ms., Sukkur IBA university; Mariyam Saeed, Sukkur IBA University; and Mahnoor Rehman, Sukkur IBA Univeristy
(Manuscript: #1474)

Abstract/Description:

This case study explores ClearPath Orthodontics' strategic challenges and growth opportunities in Pakistan's emerging orthodontics market. Founded in 2007, ClearPath evolved into a global leader in clear aligner technology, boasting a 65% market share domestically. However, systemic hurdles such as low consumer awareness, counterfeit products, and high pricing have hindered profitability. The company faces a strategic crossroads: reinforce its dentist-led model, launch a disruptive direct-to-consumer (DTC) brand, or adopt a hybrid approach. Through strategic frameworks like SWOT Analysis, Ansoff Matrix, and Stakeholder Theory, students evaluate ClearPath's options, balancing innovation, affordability, and stakeholder relations. This case provides valuable insights into strategic decision-making, ethical dilemmas, and sustainable growth in emerging markets.

Keywords: *Market Penetration Strategy, Direct-to-Consumer (DTC) Model, Hybrid Business Model. Competitive Positioning, Stakeholder Management, Strategic Decision-Making.*

PRESERVING LEGACY OR EMBRACING CHANGE? MARKETING STRATEGY AT HAFEEZ WEDDING CARDS SUKKUR

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Shoaib Ahmed Mr., Sukkur IBA University, Sukkur (Manuscript: #1479)

Abstract/Description:

Hafeez Wedding Cards, a family-owned business based in Sukkur, Pakistan, has been a trusted name in wedding stationery for over three decades. Starting from a modest typing and printing shop on Dhak Road in the early 1990s, the business steadily built a reputation for reliable service, quality materials, and elegant card designs. In 2010, to accommodate growing demand and a wider product range, the business shifted to a larger, purpose-built showroom and godown on Barrage Road — a more prominent commercial location.

Under the leadership of Mr. M. Deen, the business thrived on close customer relationships, word-of-mouth referrals, and a deep understanding of local traditions. The process of designing and ordering cards was deeply personal, often involving multiple visits and custom touches. However, by 2024, signs of change had become impossible to ignore. The foot traffic in the shop began to decline, especially during off-peak months. A new generation of customers was emerging — one that preferred convenience, speed, and digital engagement.

Rising paper prices, increased competition from local shops and online vendors, and a growing demand for eco-friendly alternatives all pressured the business model. Digital-first competitors offering WhatsApp-based order tracking, online design catalogs, and nationwide delivery were starting to capture market share, especially among younger, tech-savvy couples.

While Hafeez Wedding Cards still held strong goodwill among older customers, the shift in consumer behavior meant the traditional, service-heavy model was no longer enough. Mr. Deen was faced with a difficult but timely question: Should he

embrace digital tools and marketing strategies to meet modern demands, or continue operating with the personal-touch approach that had built the business's name?

With the 2025 wedding season approaching — typically the busiest and most profitable period — Mr. Deen stood at a crossroads. His sons, now involved in the business, were advocating for digital change, including a social media presence, mobile cataloging, and a modest investment in design updates. But every change risked altering the very identity of the business.

This case explores the strategic dilemma faced by Hafeez Wedding Cards as it navigates the balance between preserving legacy and embracing transformation in the evolving business landscape of Sukkur.

Keywords: *Digital transformation, Traditional marketing, Wedding cards, Small business, Succession planning, Customer behavior, Business modernization, Pakistan retail market.*

CASE STUDY: NAVIGATING CAREER GROWTH AND PERSONAL CHALLENGES: A RELOCATION EXPERIENCE

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Khuram Raza Mr., Zubair Shah Mr., Nyla Aleem Ansari Dr., Hammad Qasim Mr., and Shayan Ashraf Mr. (**Manuscript: #1526**)

Abstract/Description:

Finally, relocation arises due to personal ambitions, organisational requirements or external factors and massively impacts the employees. Working in a new city, state or even country can bring huge professional, cultural and even personal growths but also comes with lots of problems-professional, financial and emotional stress, social disruption. The experiences of an electrical engineer (Named as Mr. Raza), who used to work in a multinational renewable energy company i.e., Green Door Energy (GDE), is moved from Karachi to Lahore from Pakistan is explored in this case study. While leakage benefits were secured, last minute changes caused a great deal of stress to claimants who faced challenges in finding accommodation, dealing with financial burdens, and problems with work life balance. This study critically investigates the impact of such transitions on the employees and also how organizations can evolve their relocation policies to facilitate smooth transition. In addition, it offers suggestions to employers and employees in order to provide improved relocation experiences.

Keywords: *Relocation, Challenges, Positive impact, Resolution, HR Policies, Hardworking.*

BEYOND THE BRAND HOUSE: HOW LIPTON NAVIGATED A CORPORATE BREAKUP

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Sukaina Salman, Institute of Business Administration (IBA); Unzaila Nadeem, Institute of Business Administration (IBA); Dr Nyla Aleem Ansari, Institute of Business Administration (IBA); and Muhammad Hamza, Institute of Business Administration (IBA) (**Manuscript: #1527**)

Abstract/Description:

ABSTRACT

This case study examines the transformation of Lipton from a long-standing brand under Unilever's umbrella to an independent global tea company. The separation marked a major shift in strategic direction, prompted by evolving market dynamics, changing consumer preferences, and Unilever's focus on streamlining its business portfolio.

The transition involved significant operational and organizational restructuring, including the creation of new systems, leadership teams, and a redefined cultural identity. At the heart of this change was the need to manage stakeholder expectations, ensure employee retention and morale, and maintain business continuity across more than 100 markets worldwide.

This study explores the rationale behind the separation, the key challenges encountered during the transition, and how Lipton navigated uncertainty while preserving brand equity and preparing for long-term growth. It offers insights into the complexity of corporate carve-outs and the importance of leadership alignment, clear communication, and early wins in driving successful transformation.

Through Lipton's journey, this case presents practical lessons on managing large-scale change in legacy organizations operating in fast-evolving industries.

Keywords: *Change management, Organizational Restructuring, Employee Engagement, Leadership Alignment, Strategic Transition.*

GLOBAL MOTORS: NAVIGATING THE LEADERSHIP CRISIS AMIDST EXPANSION

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Muhammad Ghazi Mr., Zoha Naqvi Ms., Muhammad Asif Ghafoor Mr., Nyla Aleem Ansari Dr., and Rabia Nauman Ms., Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1529**)

Abstract/Description:

Global Motors: Navigating the Leadership Crisis Amidst Expansion explores the challenges faced by a high-performing automotive export company as it embarks on an ambitious growth journey. Known for its strong internal promotion culture and low turnover, Global Motors finds its leadership pipeline ill-prepared to meet the demands of rapid expansion. With 30 managerial roles urgently needing to be filled — and external hiring off the table — the company faces a strategic dilemma. The case examines the limitations of its current performance management system, the strain on internal development, and the cultural risks of evolving leadership models. It invites students to assess organizational alignment, recommend sustainable leadership development strategies, and balance growth with cultural integrity under pressure.

Keywords: *Leadership Development, Talent Management, Performance Management System, Succession Planning, High-Performance Culture, Employee Retention, Organizational Development, Leadership Crisis.*

LEADERSHIP UNDER PRESSURE: MANAGING RESISTANCE IN A TRADITIONAL ORGANIZATION

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Muhammad Talha Bari, Anas Inam, Dr. Nyla Aleem Ansari, and Owais Ahmed, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1532**)

Abstract/Description:

The below case study highlights and examines the complication of changes in organization i.e. leadership transition and resistance which were faced by the senior management of International Textile Limited, a business built from the ground up and driven for modernization in the textile sector of Pakistan by the son of the original owner Azad Khan's son Adnan Khan. ITL initiated the modernization process under the leadership of Adnan Khan. This initiative was taken to improve operational efficiency and competitiveness via technological advancement and being the pioneer in implementing SAP in

textile sector. Ali Murtaza a top performing Finance expert and a key player in digital transformation, is promoted to the Finance Manager amid reorganization. While attempting to establish data driven system, Ali face significant opposition from Bilal, a senior team member devoted to conventional practices who views the technological advancement as burden and unnecessary for organization. Disagreement between Ali's forward approach towards the technology and Bilal's resistance to adjust to changes being made resulted in clashes and delays in reporting. The resistance and clashes adversely affected the team morale, productivity and cooperation between departments. Ali encountered leadership challenges, juggling between tasks to achieve outcomes while preserving team unity. This case features analysis of strategies for managing change, leadership and way forward to for resolving conflicts. It provides important perspective for the readers and professional on managing resistance, promoting organizational harmony and maintaining transformation initiatives amid significant cultural and individual resistance.

Keywords: *Parental Leadership, Resistance in Change Management, Digital Transformation, Organizational Culture, Conflict Management.*

CASE STUDY “K-ELECTRIC SUKUK-6 ISSUANCE BASED ON DIMINISHING MUSHARKAH”

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Muhammad Majid Raza, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan (**Manuscript: #1534**)

Abstract/Description:

This case study explores the issuance and structure of K-Electric's Sukuk-6, a landmark transaction in Pakistan's Islamic finance landscape. Structured on the principle of Diminishing Musharakah, the Sukuk represents a joint ownership between K-Electric and Sukuk holders in key transmission infrastructure assets. Over a 7-year tenor—with a 2-year grace period—K-Electric gradually repurchases investors' shares through quarterly installments, achieving full ownership by maturity. The transaction is governed by a comprehensive legal framework, including agreements such as the Investment Agency, Musharakah, Asset Purchase, Service Agency, and Purchase Undertakings. The Sukuk-6 issuance was oversubscribed, reflecting strong market confidence and institutional interest. It set a benchmark for future corporate Sukuk by ensuring transparency, robust Shariah compliance, and alignment with ethical investment goals. Proceeds from the Sukuk supported the development of K-Electric's transmission network, illustrating the potential of Islamic finance to fund critical infrastructure. The case also highlights the positive regulatory environment, investor appetite, and growing depth of Pakistan's Islamic capital markets. As a pioneering asset-backed Islamic financing model, K-Electric Sukuk-6 serves as a blueprint for other corporates seeking long-term, Shariah-compliant capital solutions, and signals a promising future for corporate Sukuk issuance in Pakistan across various sectors.

Keywords: *Sukuk, Islamic Bonds, Diminishing Musharakah, K-Electric.*

CONFLICT RESOLUTION – ORGANIZATIONAL DILEMMA IN A FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Ibad Imran, Shaikh Muhammad Ahsan, Syeda Sabahat Zehra, Syed Ozair Ahmed and Dr. Nyla Aleem Ansari, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi (**Manuscript: #1536**)

Abstract/Description:

This case explores a leadership dilemma at Ikramullah Energy Ltd., a third-generation family-owned business in Pakistan, transitioning from informal governance to a structured, policy-driven organization. The conflict centers around Danial, the recently promoted Head of Technical Operations, who receives a formal complaint from Raza—a respected site lead—

regarding verbal abuse and intimidation by Ahmed, a technically proficient engineer with informal access to the company's Chairman.

Ahmed's behavior not only violates company policy but echoes prior unresolved misconduct. Danial must decide how to address the issue: escalate formally through HR, attempt an informal resolution, or stay neutral. His response will have implications for organizational trust, policy credibility, and the success of ongoing cultural reforms.

The case highlights themes of conflict resolution, psychological safety, HR enforcement, and leadership under political constraints. It is suited for MBA and Executive MBA courses in Organizational Behavior, Leadership, and HR Management. Students are encouraged to apply theories such as the Thomas-Kilmann conflict model, leader-member exchange (LMX), and Edgar Schein's cultural framework to diagnose root issues and develop practical interventions for reforming team dynamics in family business environments.

Keywords: *Conflict Resolution, HR, Leadership, Family-owned Business.*

BIG TOBACCO'S MOVE TOWARDS E-CIGARETTES: A MORAL DILEMMA FOR SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT FUNDS

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Muhammad Abdullah and Junaid Ashraf, Dr, Lahore University of Management Sciences (**Manuscript: #1486**)

Abstract/Description:

The case study follows the strategic move made by Big Tobacco companies towards smokeless tobacco alternatives and the key decision which managers of socially responsible funds need to take regarding the exclusion of Tobacco companies from their investment portfolios. All the key information has been shared in the case that equips the students to suggest and justify their positions regarding which decision should be taken by the funds. If they should still exclude tobacco firms from their investment portfolios despite changing ethical landscape of the Big Tobacco industry, accept the move towards smokeless alternatives as an ethical enterprise and the revise the exclusion criteria or not only include tobacco firms in their investment portfolio but also actively engage in shareholder activism to expediate Big Tobacco's ethical transformation. The key variable which students may consider include the historical moral conduct of Big Tobacco, the emergence of e-cigarettes, arguments that support Big Tobacco and the counter argument by the critics, the degree of revenue contribution of smoke-free alternatives in Big Tobacco etc.

Keywords: *Business Ethics, Critical Management Studies, Big Tobacco, E-cigarettes, Discursive Power.*

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ZAREA LIMITED AND BARKAT FRISIAN AGRO LIMITED IPOs ON THE PAKISTAN STOCK EXCHANGE

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Zeeshan Ahmed Sheikh and Ahmed Ali Siddiqui, IBA Karachi (**Manuscript: #1533**)

Abstract/Description:

This case study presents an in-depth comparative analysis of the Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) of Zarea Limited and Barkat Frisian Agro Limited, two prominent listings on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in early 2025. Both IPOs marked strategic milestones, enabling the companies to raise significant capital for expansion and growth. Zarea Limited, a pioneer in the digital commodity trading sector, raised PKR 1.03 billion with a 1.9 times oversubscription, reflecting investor interest

in technology-driven procurement solutions. The capital raised is intended for technology upgrades, logistics expansion, and diversification into commodities like coal, chemicals, and grains. However, its moderate subscription rate indicates the need for stronger logistical capabilities and market penetration strategies.

Conversely, Barkat Frisian Agro Limited, a leader in the pasteurized egg products industry, generated PKR 1.23 billion through its IPO, achieving an impressive 16.25 times oversubscription. The overwhelming market response highlights strong investor confidence in the agri-food processing sector, driven by rising demand for safe and high-quality food products. The funds are allocated towards the establishment of a new production facility in Faisalabad, expected to increase capacity by 71%, thereby enhancing its competitive edge in both local and export markets.

The comparative analysis evaluates the strategic goals, use of proceeds, investor confidence, financial performance, and sectoral impacts for both companies. Findings reveal that while Zarea Limited is focused on technological expansion to optimize digital trading efficiency, Barkat Frisian Agro Limited emphasizes tangible capacity growth to capitalize on increasing food security demands. Sectoral insights suggest that the agri-processing industry, as represented by Barkat Frisian, is perceived as more resilient and growth-oriented compared to the emerging digital trading sector of Zarea.

This study concludes with strategic recommendations for optimizing capital utilization, improving logistical capabilities, enhancing regulatory compliance, and exploring new market opportunities. These insights serve as a roadmap for future IPO strategies, offering valuable lessons for companies in technology-driven procurement and agri-food processing aiming to access public markets in Pakistan.

Keywords: *IPO, Zarea, Barkat Frisian, Analysis.*

AIRTIME-BASED SUKUK ISSUANCE FOR SHARIAH-COMPLIANT SYNDICATED FINANCING: A CASE STUDY ON PMCL'S RURAL NETWORK EXPANSION

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Shakir Ahmed and Ahmed Ali Siddiqui, Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi (**Manuscript: #1535**)

Abstract/Description:

In 2012, Pakistan Mobile Communications Limited (PMCL), a leading telecommunications company operating under the brand name Mobilink, sought capital for its rural network expansion. PMCL explored Shariah-compliant financing facility offered by Islamic banks to meet its capital expenditure (CAPEX) needs. The innovative solution came in the form of a Sukuk-based syndicated financing facility, utilizing prepaid airtime as an underlying asset. This approach marked one of the first instances of airtime being used as an asset for Sukuk issuance. The facility amounted to USD 60 million (PKR 5.76 billion), with a Green Shoe Option of PKR 960 million, and was supported by a Partial Credit Guarantee (PCG) of PKR 806 million. This case study examines the transaction's structure, Shariah-compliant mechanisms, and regulatory considerations. It highlights how prepaid airtime, typically viewed as an intangible service, was transformed into asset-backed instrument that was fully compliant with Islamic finance principles. The study also discusses the broader implications of this transaction for both PMCL and the Islamic finance industry at large. This financing solution not only addressed PMCL's immediate funding needs but also paved the way for future innovations in Shariah-compliant financial products.

Keywords: *Sukuk-based Financing, Shariah Compliance, Prepaid Airtime, Islamic Finance, Rural Network Expansion.*

STITCHING DREAMS AND WEAVING IMPACT THROUGH “KREATE YOUR MARK” : AN INITIATIVE OF WEAVES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Shumaila Kashif, Dr., and Aisha Anwar Ali, Ms., Institute of Business Management (**Manuscript: #1543**)

Abstract/Description:

Weaves Corporation Limited, a leading fashion and lifestyle brand in Pakistan, has embarked on a transformative social entrepreneurship excellence initiative called "KYM - Kreate Your Mark" aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs through expert mentorship and visibility by sharing retail space. Under the leadership of CEO Shamoon Sultan, this initiative provides women with the opportunity to showcase their talents and products by allocating prime retail space at the front of their fashion retail brand “Khaadi” flagship stores known as Khaadi experience Hub. This platform is inspired by Sultan’s belief in women, names “Kreators” who “dream fearlessly” and are determined to drive their passion. It not only helps them enhance their product line visibility but also empowers them through access to resources and mentorship from experienced team on various aspects of retail operations. This initiative started out in November 2022 at one of the experience hub at Karachi with only nine applicants and is now dealing with more than 900 Kreator’s applications contesting for space at three major cities of Pakistan.

This case study explores the strategic framework of social entrepreneurship excellence initiative "Kreate Your Mark," its impact on women's entrepreneurship, and how it aligns with Weaves Corporation broader mission to promote cultural heritage while supporting social entrepreneurship. It also highlights the retail operational, supply chain and branding challenges faced by KYM “Kreators” with its parent brand Weaves. By analyzing the operational model, and outcomes of this initiative, the study highlights various aspects of balancing the retail operational nuisances with the significance of broader societal impact.

Keywords: *Retail Brand, Retail Experience, Retail as a Service, Retail Incubator, Social Entrepreneurship, Sustainability.*

THE AI DILEMMA: IS HR STILL HUMAN?

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Nabeela Arain, Sukkur IBA University (**Manuscript: #1459**)

Abstract/Description:

The AI Dilemma: Is HR Still Human? explores the strategic and ethical crossroads faced by HR leaders as artificial intelligence rapidly transforms organizational processes. Set in Karachi in 2024, the case follows Zara Siddiqui, HR Director at InnovateX Solutions, as she navigates a high-stakes mandate: draft a five-year HR transformation strategy amid rising AI adoption pressures. With global automation trends, executive divisions, and workforce anxieties converging, the case raises urgent questions about the future of human-centered leadership. Students must assess trade-offs between efficiency and empathy, apply change management frameworks, and recommend a sustainable, future-ready HR strategy. This case invites robust classroom debate on technological disruption, ethical decision-making, and the evolving identity of human resources in the age of AI.

Keywords: *AI in HR, HR transformation, ethical AI, change management, human-centered leadership, strategic HRM.*

THE SHARE BUYBACK EFFECT: SUCCESS OR SLUMP? A CASE OF BANK ALFALAH

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Dr. Sana Tauseef and Madeeha Omer Lakhani, IBA Karachi (**Manuscript: #1508**)

Abstract/Description:

On December 23, 2022, Syed Akbar Ali, Head of Capital Markets and Aasim Wajid Jawad, Group Head Strategy, Bank Alfalah, had to decide about the immediate completion of share buyback versus postponing it for few weeks. The buyback execution started on December 14 and the share price had been declining since then. With the uncertain market conditions, they experienced minimal shares being bought back on that day and so were faced with the challenge of making strategic decision regarding the remaining five months of the buyback period.

With no prior history of buyback in Pakistan's banking sector and given the large size, Alfalah's buyback transaction took more than twelve months in planning and finalizing. The stakes were high and Akbar and Aasim had to prepare reports for the upcoming investors' deck and board meeting, respectively based on their decision at hand.

The case allows a discussion on factors involved in equity buyback decision and the challenges faced in the buyback process in a market which is experiencing uncertain times and where capital reduction by banks is a rare phenomenon. The case serves to highlight the practical considerations of the buyback execution including signaling effect, capital structure implications and regulatory aspects. The case also provides an opportunity to students to perform the analysis of a bank's financial position.

Keywords: *Share buyback, financing, bank, Pakistan.*

OPTIMIZING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES BY USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: DYNAMICS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHING

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Mahreen Akhtar, Irfan Ullah and Muhammad Akhtar, National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences. (**Manuscript: #1466**)

Abstract/Description:

Case Overview:

Optimizing learning opportunities using artificial intelligence are very crucial in rapidly evolving world. Every individual as well as every industrial unit face unique challenges to operationalize the best economic decisions. The way out could be the application of artificial intelligence techniques to gain maximum with minimum resources. This case mainly focuses the dynamics of the applied side of the artificial intelligence in the process of university learning environment. Further, it discusses the challenges and benefits faced by the teachers and students of the use of AI techniques in academia.

Expected Learning outcomes:

To be able to understand the importance of AI in the field of business and academia. Understand the relevance of the AI techniques to solve the business problems. Be able to understand the foundations of business scenarios using AI techniques. To understand the application and usefulness of artificial intelligence in academia. Apply and develop analytical approach towards the use of best use of AI techniques. To understand the reliability of AI techniques in research. To understand the challenges faced by academia in the presence of AI techniques.

Keywords: *Optimizing, Opportunities, Artificial Intelligence, University Teaching.*

OSAKA LIGHTING'S STRATEGIC RESPONSE TO EMERGING CHALLENGES

Presenter(s)/Author(s):

Mohsin Amir Mukhtiar Syed, Dr., Department of Business Administration, Sukkur IBA University, and Mujeeb Ur Rehman Bhayo, Dr., Department of Finance, School of Business Studies, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan.

(Manuscript: #1510)

Abstract/Description:

Osaka Lighting, a Pakistani company founded in 1984 as NADEEM IMPEX, initially focused on manufacturing PVC tapes before diversifying into the lighting sector in 2001. Its flagship product, energy-saving bulbs, utilized Surface Mounting Technology (SMT) and offered a one-year free replacement warranty, disrupting the market where multinational companies dominated with expensive, short-warranty bulbs. Osaka's value proposition was not only its cost leadership—selling bulbs at half the price of its competitors—but also its commitment to quality. The company quickly gained market share, positioning itself as a local, affordable alternative to international brands.

In 2007, Osaka expanded its product line to include floodlights and streetlights, further cementing its position in the Pakistani market. Osaka's success was driven by its strategic focus on local manufacturing, using Japanese technology, and ensuring product quality and customer satisfaction. With over 225 dealerships across Pakistan and 1,600 employees, Osaka Lighting has become a household name.

However, the company faces significant challenges. The lighting industry in Pakistan is competitive, with multinational corporations (MNCs) and cheap Chinese imports exerting strong pressure on prices. Furthermore, the lack of regulatory protections for local industries exacerbates the threat of unfair competition from cheaper foreign products. Osaka also contends with the institutional voids in the market, including the absence of protective tariffs and subsidies for local manufacturers.

Despite these obstacles, Osaka Lighting has maintained a competitive edge by continually focusing on innovation and quality while advocating for favorable government policies. This case explores Osaka's strategic positioning, competitive challenges, and future growth strategies, particularly in terms of expanding its sustainability initiatives and potential export opportunities.

The case offers insights into how local companies can navigate competitive and regulatory challenges while contributing to sustainable development. It also highlights the role of strategic management in overcoming institutional voids and positioning a company for long-term success in a dynamic market.

Keywords: *Strategy Strategic Management, Lighting Industry, Institutional Theory, VRIO Analysis, Porter's Generic Strategies.*